

**MINUTES OF THE OKALOOSA COUNTY
LEAGUE OF CITIES
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2001**

CALL TO ORDER

President John Thomas called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. at Cinco Bayou Town Hall.

THOSE PRESENT:

Treasurer Councilman Dutch Payne, Cinco Bayou
Councilwoman Brenda Bush, Crestview
Mayor Ken Beaird, Destin
Mayor Glenda Glover, Fort Walton Beach
Councilwoman Fay Miller, Laurel Hill
President Mayor John Thomas, Mary Esther
Councilman Al Swihart, Niceville
Mayor Gary Combs, Shalimar
Vice President Commissioner Heyward Strong, Valparaiso
Commissioner Shirley Ransom, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

ALSO PRESENT:

City Clerk Laura Houchens, Mary Esther, Recorder

GUESTS:

Mayor Randall Wise, Niceville

MINUTES

Motion made by Councilman Dutch Payne to approve the regular minutes of Thursday, January 4, 2001 meeting. Motion was seconded by Mayor Gary Combs and passed unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Councilman Dutch Payne reported that as of 1 February the balance was \$2,089.54. Four checks were written in January: two for Board lunches, one for the incorporation kit, and one for registration fee with the Secretary of State. The ending balance is \$1,801.67. The treasurer's report was filed for audit.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mayor Glover led a follow-on discussion regarding the Resolution supporting the Yellow River Project, stating that County Commissioner Burkett had received all but three of the requested resolutions from the Cities. Mayor Glover asked if the cities could please forward one to Comm. Burkett. Ms. Houchens also said she needs all resolutions for the OLoC Board file, and Mayor Glover said she would have the former recording secretary provide those to her. The three cities were named as Cinco Bayou (who said they had but would follow up), Destin and Niceville. Councilman Swihart thought theirs had been forwarded as well.

NEW BUSINESS

The One-Cent Sales Tax Referendum was discussed, with Mayor Glover recounting what Pensacola did to educate the public. A pamphlet with exactly where the money would be spent was distributed in 1989, and the referendum failed because the details were too specific. The past years it has been successful, and this year the referendum passed for another eight years. She thought if we mimicked their effort we might have better results. Comm. Ransom was briefed on the history of the referendum. Comm. Strong had a copy of some of the pertinent correspondence for Comm. Ransom. Several who were present spoke of the needs they envision this tax funding. The tax term of four or five years was discussed, with the consensus being that four years and no longer than five would be adequate.

Incorporation of the Okaloosa League of Cities has been accomplished, and the following was disclosed:

The Okaloosa County League of Cities was incorporated on October 10, 2000. The document number of this corporation is N00000006752. All original records are on file in the office of the City Clerk, City of Fort Walton Beach, 107 Miracle Strip Parkway SW, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548.

A Uniform Business Report (UBR) is required to and will be filed annually with the State of Florida, Dept. of State at a cost of \$61.25. This report must be filed between January 1 and May 1 of each year. A Federal Employer Identification (FEI) must be included on the report.

The name and Florida street address of the registered agent is:

Helen Spencer, 107 Miracle Strip Parkway, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

Cmbr. Swihart passed out information regarding the Library Co-Op from Debbie Marrs, Coordinator. He said that her letter is a plea for assistance in maintaining funds for the PLAN (Panhandle Library Access Network). This is one of six (LAN) organizations throughout the State, and it affords linking of resources throughout the region. The co-op is concerned that this year there are no funds in the State budget for LANs. Cmbr. Swihart motioned that the letter should be prepared and sent to each representative in our area. Mayor Beard seconded the motion. Mayor Glover asked if these were a victim of funding cuts, and how successful were LANs. Cmbr. Swihart said he wasn't aware of the entire situation, but heard that they were overlooked. Comm. Ransom said she wanted to know the entire story, and others echoed this. Mayor Combs said his residents would have to pay \$8 each to join the Library Co-Op (\$5000 for the City of Shalimar). Comm. Ransom offered to check on this for him. There was a motion to table this by Mayor Glover, seconded by Mayor Combs. The motion was put to a vote. **AYES: Glover, Miller, Payne, Bush, Thomas, and Combs. NAYS: Swihart, Strong, and Beard. THE MOTION PASSED.** It was determined to bring this up at the next meeting when more information was available.

The Communications Services Tax was discussed by Cmbr. Payne, who asked Comm. Strong to enlighten the group on the status in Tallahassee. He said that the information from all municipalities is forwarded to the State, and they receive all tax. They then charge "fees" to each franchise. Mayor Thomas said that the Cities stand to lose money from this change, although Comm. Strong said it's not supposed to work that way. Comm. Strong agreed that we wouldn't know until we go through it once. Comm. Ransom said her opinion is that the funds should go directly to the Cities. There was more minor discussion with no resulting action.

ANNOUNCEMENTS / REPORTS FROM CITIES

Cinco Bayou. Councilman Payne reported that security lights were installed in front of Town Hall, and a grant for hurricane shutters was approved. Three FRDAP grants are pending on their parks. The hurricane shutters grant was approved, and three FRDAP grants are pending on their parks. Five people are running for three seats this spring. **Crestview.** There are two of the five council seats that have opponents. The City Clerk is in place as of December following Al Jackson's passing. The 6th Annual Wings of Freedom Tour at Bob Sikes Airport went very well, with many veterans and students there. The downtown revitalization grant is still underway, and some problems have been encountered with paving. The Library groundbreaking will occur this month, and new businesses abound! Publix and Ruby Tuesdays are two of the newest.

Destin. The Council voted, after three nights of meetings and many resulting professional fees, 4-3 against a new Home Depot store. They may move further east in Walton County. Traffic is a concern with it either way, and also with the middle school's entry and exit on 293 with the sports facility being constructed. Highway 98 in Destin is being resurfaced, with new curbing, sidewalks, and stormwater drains being installed. There should be groundbreaking on the new Library (near the cemetery) soon.

Fort Walton Beach. FDOT finally approved a traffic light at Brooks and Highway 98. There are new signs for the Commerce and Technology Park on Mary Esther Cut-off, Hollywood and Doolittle, and Hill at Lovejoy. The Magnolia Grill reopened yesterday. Two commercial buildings and three condominiums on Brooks Street have received permits. RFPs for Library contractors have been sent out.

Laurel Hill. There are 311 registered voters, and much of the talk of the town is centered on politics. Tonight there will be voting on rezoning for a restaurant.

Mary Esther. Hollywood Blvd. Extension is the hottest topic in Mary Esther, Mayor Thomas informed the group, and let that be the extent of his report due to time constraints.

Niceville. Cmbr. Swihart reported that they are in the process of building a new water tower, which should be done in two or three months. Four ball fields will surround it. The walkway (about 1500' long) for the Nature Trail is almost complete, which is a boardwalk with picnic tables and plant identification labels by the Boy Scouts. The bridge is still under construction on Highway 20, with approximately six months left until completion. Mayor Wise added that they are getting

a new funeral home, a bank, opening a new ladies diagnostic center, and the emergency room at the hospital is being expanded. Mayor Beaird spoke about the schools having a weather station, and that one could visit "weatherbug.com" to view data by zip code.

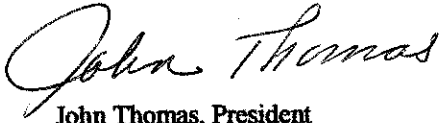
Shalimar. Mayor Combs had no new report other than Town Hall is closed for renovations.

Valparaiso. Playground equipment will be installed by 1 March, and Wolverine bypass is very close to completion. The internet was put on cable, but contracted out to a company that was bought out and the new owner terminated this service. The equipment was offered to the City at half price. They now have a T1 line for internet, and a backlog of waiting customers at least three months long. The NW Florida League of Cities Board of Directors meeting is in Fort Walton Beach on the 15th.

County. Commissioner Ransom reminded all of their workshop on the local option sales tax on the 20th at 9 am at the Water/Sewer Bldg. Their vote would be taken at the next meeting (on March 6th in Crestview). She said one of her proposals was to give funding to the municipalities for recreation needs rather than keeping the County from building a recreation department, and said she did not want to proceed with this if the cities were not in favor of it. She asked the cities for their consensus, and Comm. Strong said that the cities had all signed in agreement on a letter several months ago. Comm Ransom said she would like to see it work like the Co-Op effort. She continued by stating that she had visited with Col. Byrd, who is interested in attending these meetings as an observer. The history of base attendance and level of involvement was discussed, with the consensus being to send a standing invitation from the President of the Board to each of the base commanders with a note that they should alert if they would like for lunch to be provided for them. Comm. Ransom concluded that another of her projects is to expand water/sewer service in the north end of the County, and the Garnier's treatment plant will need to be relocated. A final site has not been determined yet.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Wise said that on March 22 the City of Niceville would be sponsoring the OLoC dinner. Council member Bush said she was very encouraged with the attendance from each City today, and that she was very glad to see Comm. Ransom and Mayor Wise today. Ms. Houchens asked if the box lunch was a good idea, and there was concurrence. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:15.



John Thomas, President

Vh

