

Childersburg council urges residents to speak their mind in Montgomery

BY CHRIS NORWOOD

The Daily Home

Members of the Childersburg City Council encouraged each other and their constituents to reach out to the local legislative delegation and express their opposition to bills pending in the Alabama Legislature that would negatively affect city services.

Although all four council members present agreed (Councilman Wesley Allen was absent), the discussion took place before the meeting began, and no formal action was taken.

As Mayor Ken Wesson explained, the issue arose when Childersburg was named one of the 70 plus municipalities in the state that did not submit newly required paperwork for revenue collection in their police jurisdiction. Wesson said the city had submitted the necessary forms the day after becoming aware they were past due, and said he had hoped the legislation would provide an extension that would allow collections to continue.

Instead, House Bill 466 and Senate Bill 169 would allow businesses to deduct any federal, state and local excise taxes when calculating their gross receipts for business license purposes.

Wesson said that taxes and licensing fees collected in the jurisdiction are used to provide emergency services, including police, fire and ambulance, to those same areas outside the city limits.

"Just last year, we had 1,276 ambulance calls in the jurisdiction alone," he said. "Our police department already covers about 95 percent of the calls in

Bon Air, which is technically in the sheriff's jurisdiction. We do it to help out the sheriff, who is understaffed. We need to extend the deadline, or we're going to end up leaving a lot of people without any coverage. They are legislating a problem by not doing that. They're going to be leaving citizens in the lurch. People need to get hold of their senators and representatives and express their displeasure."

"We were really hoping good sense would win the day," he added. "But if these bills go through, we are going to have to pull back. We have expenses. You know, gas may be a few cents higher here, but I always try to buy it in town because it pays for things like police and fire protection. Same with everything else."

Also Tuesday, the council:

- Discussed approving a resolution honoring Childersburg native Gerald Wallace, who was recently inducted into the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame.

- Announced that the electronics and paper recycling event would be held at City Hall May today starting at 10 a.m.

- Announced that the Senior Fish Fry would be May 22 at the recreation center starting at 4:30 p.m.

- Announced that the city will be hosting the 12-Year-Old District Baseball Tournament from June 15 through 17, including teams from Ashland, Lineville, Wedowee, Woodlawn, Horseshoe Bend, Roanoke and Childersburg.

- Announced that this year's Grits Festival at the Kymulga Grist Mill had drawn 1,520 guests earlier this month.

Please see COUNCIL I Page 7A

COUNCIL

Continued from Page 1A

- Approved travel and training for personnel in the police department.

- Approved the purchase of two LED light modules for ambu-

lances from Williams Fire Equipment for a total cost of \$2,979.90, including installation.

- Approved the installation of a 5-ton Silver 14 Split air conditioning unit at the Rainwater Library by Sleeping Giant for \$8,389.

- Approved the replacement

of a 7.5 ton Daiken Commercial air condition at the library, also from Sleeping Giant, for \$12,477.

- Approved Christina Phillips as full-time permanent rural transportation driver at \$10 per hour.

- Approved online training for elected officials.

- Changed the second council meeting in June from June 20 to June 22.

- Heard from a woman who wanted to know when the council would be voting to remove fluoride from the city's water system, based on what she claimed was new research on the topic. The

council said they were still in the process of gathering information and speaking with their constituents, and thus would not be voting on the issue. (Complaints about fluoridation of public drinking water have persisted since the 1950s, when some regarded it as a tool of communism.)

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