

**Glen Alpine Board of Alderman
Regular Meeting: August 6, 2019**

Present: Mayor Benfield, S. Perkins, T. Suttles, R. Cox, G. Meise, J. Falls
Clerk S. Farris, Attorney R. Denton

-Call to order

Moment of Silence – Chief Cox spoke about Officer Roy Moseley passing, presented his “Last Call” and had a moment of silence in his honor.

-Invocation

-Pledge of Allegiance

-Public Comments

-Chelsea Mackenzie – See attached letter below

Reid Scott – On the approval of the minutes at the last meeting, it stated that I said that the Fire Department budget went from 19 to 27 percent. That’s not what I said. I said it went up 19% the year before and 17% last year. Now this year it went up 18.5% more. In 2017-18 FD budget was \$42,000, this one is \$66,000, that’s a big jump. I want to reiterate what Joe said last time. We got people working on the budget, on the FD and the city budget, that don’t live in the town, don’t work in the town, don’t pay taxes in the town, why are they getting to spend my money? That’s not right. We don’t go to Russia and get them to do our budget for the United States. I don’t see why Glen Alpine gets somebody to do our budget. The Police Department, in 2017-2018 the budget was \$240,344, now its \$293,001, when’s it gonna stop. I have asked several times about comp time. It always gets pushed off and buried. Most of what I’ve seen, what do have that we need that extra time? It’s mismanagement in my book. For example, I walk Glen Alpine 4 to 5 times a week, back in the Spring I walked from my house to the Post Office. There was a telephone line laying across the road in front of Paul Powell’s house. It come loose from the house across the street. There was a fire truck at Lail Road, and a police car and they had a police car at Cemetery St routing the traffic all around through there. How much comp time did that take? That same telephone line is rolled up around a pole in front of Paul Powell’s house. Its real dangerous. I don’t understand how we are spending more and more for less and less.

Linda Helms – I’m Linda Helm’s, I’ve lived in Glen Alpine all my life. I just wanted y’all to know how disappointed I was to pick up the paper on Sunday and read that. Do you understand what people, the people I work with think it’s a laughing stock, what y’all done. I was in the Ladies Auxiliary for 39 years and I’ve heard an seen an done and everybody just shakes it off and goes on. But no, its just like they can’t. There’s other things that goes on in the town that never hits the paper so why do y’all want to pick on certain ones? You know, if you can’t take the heat, stay out of the kitchen.

-Approval of Agenda: Motion made by Falls, Passed 4-1

-Approval of Departmental Reports: Motion made by Cox, Passed 5-0

-Approval of Minutes: Motion made by Falls, Passed 5-0

Mayor's Comments- See attached below of the issues that Mayor Benfield covered from last meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Recycling Update – Clerk updated on status of recycling situation; trailer will be taken once a month for now to see what the costs will end up being.
2. House on Cemetery St reference mowing – House has been taken back by SECU, they will keep yard mowed
3. Watermelon Donation – Attorney Denton presented Clerk with a check for the watermelons for the festival. Mayor thanked Mr. Denton for his donation.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Reminder of 2019 Festival – Oct 4th & 5th, Mayor went over some of the activities that will be taking place.
2. Fire Dept. presentation – Fire Chief David Beane presented Ronald Taylor with a plaque for his many years of service with the Fire Department.

-Public Comment

Frank Taylor – Just like Linda Helms said, I been in the Fire Department this long I have heard a lot of stuff go on in that Fire Department, but we have never singled any individuals out because of something that was said. We worked it out within the department and we kept quiet about it. I don't like hearing stuff, you don't go pointing fingers. You go in a fire, you go in together.

-Beth Benfield - I will back you 100% on that. Can I say something? I've talked to several people in the community. I am a born, bred and raised Oak Hill girl, for 38 years. I moved to this town 15 years ago and I love it. I have praised it more than I have ever praised Oak Hill. And back in the day, you couldn't ask for better neighbors. In the last year, in the last six months, the only question I have to this community is What has happened to us? We used to be neighbors, and if we seen this neighbor doing something struggling, we was across the fence helping. It ain't this ones doing this and this ones doing that, well I don't like him so I'll will take it up against him. Has anybody ever stopped to think what this little town could do as a community if we even halfway come together as a team? Instead of behind everybody's back? This is where I live, I want it better and there is some hard feelings between some people in here, even with me but if the day come I ever found out they needed something, there's about six people in this room that I could point at that will have my back on this. Regardless if I like you or don't like you, I'd be there to help you. And its time all of us do that because if we don't, were not going to have a town, its done. Life is too short for the craziness people. Everything is working against me, you, you, you, you. Just in todays world. So everybody that tried to stab each other, shoot each other, cut each other or whatever, why don't for once we try to be the first one to say let me give just a little bit. And lets see where that goes. Because that right back there, no, I've missed one meeting, that right there is why I'm speaking tonight. I'm going home.

Mayor Benfield – She hit it right on the head. We are a small town and we do need to work together instead of condemning each other and looking in the garbage can so to speak. She is exactly right. You don't get anywhere knocking people down. We got an election coming up and from what I'm seeing it not going to be pretty, that's not what Glen Alpine is all about. We've got a rich heritage. Fluff and Terry is running against Jack and Rodney. There is no sense in people being bitter enemies. That's the thing that bothers me, that's between four people. We've got to decide ourselves whichever way it comes out. Right now, I'm not happy with it because our employees are forced to be involved in it. We got people coming by filming our employees, out in the field, hiding behind trees. That's not what this is all about guys. It's unity, its community. At the end of this election we should come out and pat you on the back and congratulate you, not cut each other's throat. Fluff I've known you for years and everybody here, Jay and Terry. I would love to leave this whole election thing and we all still be friends. It don't need to be this way. Jack and Rodney is the same way, you know lets make a campaign and leave everybody else out of it. That's words from me from somebody that loves Glen Alpine, not just as the Mayor.

- Alderman Suttles asked to speak before we get to the tax collection – I asked the Secretary, Clerk or whatever about 3 months ago to check on what it costs Glen Alpine for the total for the year for Burke County collecting our taxes and I'd like to know if she came up with a price. Clerk replied that it is 1.5% and here it is if you would like to look at it. Suttles stated that he would like a total, again Clerk replied here it is if you would like to look at it. Suttles replies if he is reading this correctly \$5,933.80 the county charged us to collect our taxes? Clerk stated if that is what the total says then that is correct. Mr. Suttles stated that he would like to make a recommendation that we try to collect taxes for one or two years and that could be a big jump to help start to collect back some of the money we are spending. It seems that we have time to collect these taxes at the rate that things is going on here and I look at that as a benefit to help the town. Mayor Benfield explained that we currently get a 98.5% collection rate and we would never get that here and also attorney fees, etc. Alderman Falls explained the costs and fees, sending notices, follow up, follow up and we only have one person. Alderman Suttles stated that he was just trying to justify the hours we pay out for the work that we get. Alderman Meise asked about how many municipalities were having taxes collected by the county.

- Motion made by Suttles to that we try to collect taxes for one to two years, Failed 2-3.

Alderman Cox recommended that we look into it. Mayor Benfield recommended that we table it and form a committee to look into it. Attorney Denton explained that the county has to sue to collect taxes and that for every delinquent tax request it would be \$230-\$260 cost each time. The you would have to show up in court. Alderman Perkins stated that there is also costs associated with the computer program and the paper that goes along with it as well.

- ITEMS FOR DECISION:

- 1. Approve Order for the Tax Collector to Collect Taxes for 2019 – Motion made by Cox, Passed 4-1,
 2. Approve the Audit Contract – Motion made by Perkins, Passed 5-0.

Motion made by Falls to go into closed session, Passed 5-0.

CLOSED SESSION:

1. Personnel Issue
2. Grant re-evaluation

-Motion made by Cox to go into open Session, Passed 5-0.

-Motion made by Falls to adjourn, Passed 5-0.

This is for Alderman Suttles,

How dare you sit there in that seat and think you are deserving of this position and think you deserve to serve the people of this community.

Previous events that have recently come to the surface have finally given me the courage to stand up to you and say, how do think your words made us feel? How do you think this made our husbands feel? We trusted you and looked up to you as an officer with fire department as well as an Alderman and now that trust is broken. I know that you are a Christian man and I a Christian woman and we all make mistakes, the difference between you and I, is that I will admit and own up to mine and most of all I will apologize. Which is all that you really needed to do, two simple little words that we learn when we are just little children, "I'm Sorry", those 2 words can go a long way.

During the June meeting I asked to speak and you practically threw your hand in my face when I asked to speak and raised your voice at me and told me NO! You had your chance!

Everything that you have done has been very disrespectful and not the way an Alderman should treat or talk people in their community that they are representing.

If you don't treat the people in the community, you represent with the respect they deserve and you won't listen to the people in your community...then who will you listen to? What makes you deserving of that seat? How can we trust you to make the best decision for our town if you don't listen to us and listen to what we want? How can the future of this town succeed if we can't trust you, how do we know that the candidates you are supporting for the upcoming alderman seats are not the same as you?

Question and Concerns form June 2019 meeting addressed by Mayor

- 1. Anyone that doesn't own property or a business in Glen Alpine should not have a say in the budget – ALL RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN HAVE A SAY**
- 2. Comp Time – Lots of Officers here, do they get Comp Time for being here – NO< OFFICERS THAT ARE HERE DO NOT GET COMP TIME FOR MEETING.**
- 3. Oak Hill, Salem, Hildebran have no Police Departments – OAK HILL AND SALEM ARE NOT TOWNS, THEY ARE COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTY, HILDEBRAN CONTRACTS WITH COUNTY.**
- 4. Aldermen don't know how many reserves we have- POSTED IN CLERKS OFFICE RIGHT INSIDE DOOR**
- 5. Taking patrol car home if live in other community- AS CHIEF HAS EXPLAINED SEVERAL TIMES, CAR HAS OFFICERS EQUIPMENT IN AND WOULD BE READY IF NEEDED.**
- 6. Why is budget from last year not side by side with current one?- PAST BUDGETS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE, CAN BE DOWNLOADED AND PRINTED IF NEED TO, RESIDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO THESE DOCUMENTS 24/7.**
- 7. Time Clock, Accountability - ENORMOUS COST, IF THERE WAS EVER A CONCERN ABOUT AN EMPLOYEE NOT WORKING, WE JUST INSTALLED ASECURITY SYSTEM AND CAN PULL UP ANYTIME AND SEE WHEN EMPLOYEES COME IN, ALSO KEY CARDS SCAN DATE AND TIME ANYTIME THEY ENTER BUILDING, CAN BE CHECKED BY THIS ALSO.**

8. How many days spent on budget? – YEAR ROUND PROCESS

9. Budget – 21% Police increase, Fire Dept – 50% increase

ACTUAL CORRECT PRECENTAGES

POLICE DEPARTMENT	BUDGET AMOUNT	% of INCREASE/DECREASE
2016-2017	\$269,996	-----
2017-2018	\$240,344	-10.98% decrease
2018-2019	\$225,110	-6.33% decrease
2019-2020	\$293,001	30.1% increase

Overall, in last 4 years, there was an **8.52% increase** in the Police Department budget.

FIRE DEPARTMENT	BUDGET AMOUNT	% of INCREASE/DECREASE
2016-2017	\$107,500	-----
2017-2018	\$42,000	-60% decrease
2018-2019	\$55,700	32.6% increase
2019-2020	\$66,000	18.49% increase

Overall, in the last 4 years, there was a **-38.6% decrease** in the Fire Department budget.

- 10. Drexel has 4.8 million budget, their clerk has 25 employees, ours has 6-7.** Contacted Drexel Clerk. They have 3 people in the office, the clerk and utility collector help each other and do payroll. The Town Manager does the Finance Officer duties. Our Clerk does Clerk duties, Payroll, Finance Officer 25 employees/3 workers = 8.33 per each office staff.

11. Comment made about there being a whole lot more money paid to the current Zone/Code Enforcement Officer –

	Former	Current
Hours worked per week	20	30
Rate per hour	\$13.21	\$13.50
Per Year (hrs per week X2 X26 pay periods)	\$13,738.40	\$21,060.00
60 Hours Vacation per year (hourly rate x 60)	\$792.60	N/A
96 hours Sick Time per year (hourly rate x 96)	\$1,268.16	N/A
401K (Rate last year worked was 7.75% x Salary)	\$1,064.72	N/A
Full insurance coverage (health, vision, life and short term disability) rate last year worked was \$1,005.69 x 12 months)	\$12,068.28	N/A
Totals	\$28,932.16	\$21,606.00
	Also received comp time for any hours over 20 per week	N/A

Former employee with all benefits totaled **\$28,873.32** per year as compared to current employee with no benefits totals **\$21,606.00** per year.

The Town now pays **\$7,267.32 less** per year for this position. **-27% less** now.