

The Mayor and Board of Aldermen met in regular session April 14, 2015 at 7:00 P.M. in Selmer City Hall. Mayor John Smith presided with all five Board of Aldermen as follows: John Finlayson, Johnny Norris, Paul Simpson, Edward Smith, and Chris Tull.

The meeting opened with prayer by Bro. Jeremy Weekley of 4th Street Church of Christ followed by the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag of America led by Building Inspector Jim Replogle.

Motion by Paul Simpson and seconded by Edward Smith to accept the minutes. All five voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Edward Smith and seconded by John Finlayson to accept the financial statement. All five voted yes. Motion carried.

Department reports were given. Fire Chief Anthony Carr reported that his department had worked diligently to achieve a lower ISO fire rating, which has been recently lowered and will take effect June 1, 2015. The old ISO Rate was 4/9, 4 in the city and 9 in the county, and has now gone to a Class 3. He stated that only 43 cities in the state have a 3% rate and that the County could see a 30 to 35% savings in residential fire insurance premiums depending on their carrier and the city should see a 5% reduction.

Recreation Director Sybil Dancer announced that the new “Welcome to Selmer Signs” were finally underway.

Motion by Paul Simpson to pass on first reading an Ordinance amending the FY 2015 Budget. Motion seconded by Edward Smith. All five voted yes. Motion carried. 1st Reading Passed.

Mayor Smith read an ordinance that was presented to him calling for an amendment to Section 8-209 of the Selmer Beer Ordinance that would remove the present 1000 ft distance requirement from any church, school, or public gathering place to sell beer.

Motion by John Finlayson and seconded by Johnny Norris to pass on 1st reading an ordinance to amend Title 8 of the Municipal Code of the Town of Selmer relative to the distance requirement for an establishment to sell beer. (Roll call shown on next page.) (Motion carried, 1st reading passed.)

Motion by Paul Simpson and seconded by Edward Smith to table action on the above Beer Ordinance Amendment until City Attorney Abernathy could render an opinion and report to the board. Roll Call on Motion to Table: John Finlayson---No, Johnny Norris---No, Paul Simpson---yes, Edward Smith---yes, Chris Tull---No. Motion to Table failed. Discussion and comments against changing the Beer Ordinance were heard from some pastors and concerned citizens prior to calling the roll on the above Beer Ordinance Amendment.

Bro. Jeremy Weekley asked, “Have you counted the cost?” He warned, “You should be very careful about changes!” “Ordinances are in place for a good reason.” “Does it make our community better or does it make it worse?” Bro. Weekley began by quoting statistics from a 2009 Alcohol Research and Control System study that said that binge drinking was directly related to density, the number of facilities within one half mile radius of their home. “Do you really want to expose our Children?” He also shared statistics from a 2006 underage drinking study that estimated the cost for a society to have to deal with these issues found that 16% of the alcohol sales were underage drinking and further that the actual tax dollar received was a minor amount of the revenue derived. He stated that the concern he had was because he had children. He said that making money is not everything there is for a community. He stated that there would be more burdens on our people with children being exposed at an earlier age, and that this change would bring more burdens on them and on our law enforcement. “Doesn’t it make sense that we are going to have more problems with it?” Bro. Weekley stated that he had heard people say that this was a reason industry was not in Selmer so he called someone on the industrial board and asked if any industries had ever given such a reason, and was told that industries are looking at workforce not if a town has an antiquated ordinance. Upon quoting, a statement written by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:23 he explained that although Paul was talking of religious matters it also applied to the secular world as well in that many things were lawful, but not all things edify or were profitable. “Who among

you gentlemen really thinks this is a good idea?" "Who among you on Sunday can say before God that you made a Godly decision should you vote for the removal?" Again, he warned, "Count the Cost!"

Bro. J.D. Matlock introduced his position against the amendment with the word, "Respect!" "Consider God's House with Respect!" "As time goes on less respect is given to the church!" "Respect, please consider respect!"

Bro. Jetta Forsythe said that little by little he was seeing changes. He felt that this change would cause more beer to be sold. He reviewed liberal changes and board actions that had taken place concerning selling in our town. Jetta reminded, "You eat an elephant one bite at a time!" Bro. Jetta told the room that he remembered when the law said 2,000 ft and now it is 1,000 ft., the beer law being changed to allow a Pizza place to sell by the drink on Hwy 45 North, and not too long another change allowing beer to be sold on Sundays. "If you are a Christian with teachings of Jesus Christ we should not vote for anything that will bring harm to our fellow man!"

R.A. Johnson expressed that he agreed with Jetta about these changes and viewed the situation as our society one-step at a time deteriorating. "Drug problems start with alcohol!" "It is our responsibility as Christians to stop this!" He stated that four people had died from overdose recently that he was working with and, "All of them in a range from 22 to 30 years old and each with 3 children." "It breaks my heart!" He spoke of his jail ministry and told the board that it would be a good time for them to go to the jails and see what alcohol does to young people and to families!" "If you are a born again Christian you will pray for these people!" R.A. stated that the problem started with beer because it was more convenient to obtain. "I just wish people could go and see the broken homes because of alcohol!" "Beer starts out continual deterioration!" "I pray for Revival!" "There is a group at Michie First Baptist Church and at West Shiloh Baptist Church praying for this meeting right now." "We need to be on our knees praying!"

Bro. Jerry Prather said, "It needs to be God's way or the Highway!" "Strong drink brings rage!" "I don't want a beer joint next to our house!" "Reverence God more and God will fix the situation!" "Don't need it next to our children!" "If we want the best, we must keep the worst away from them!"

Jeff Sisk said, "I'm not anti-alcohol, but I am pro-respect!" "I don't want to see the alcohol sold by the school and church!" "This action will directly affect the vote in the election!" "Put them out of here!"

Mary Ann Nash said, "If you are a Christian, do what you should!" "Letting Beer be sold next to a Church or School is not respect!"

Carol Bodiford stated, "It appears your minds are already made up, but we voted for you, and we should have a voice!" "I ask you to please think about what the people of this community want!"

Mayor Smith stated that he knew that a motion was on the floor, but "My recommendation is to resend the motion!"

Edward Smith stated that if the Lord came, he would hate to have to face him if he voted for it.

(Roll Call on Beer Ordinance Amendment)

Discussion ended and the roll was called on the original motion to amend the Beer Ordinance. Roll Call: John Finlayson—yes, Johnny Norris---yes, Paul Simpson---No, Edward Smith---No, Chris Tull---yes. Motion carried. 1st Reading Passed.

Paul Simpson explained that the board would have to pass a second reading on the ordinance before it became effective so everyone would have a chance again next month. “There is nothing worse than selling beer next to a school or church!” He said that he hoped that they spread the word and everyone would be here for next month’s meeting.

Molly Cherry asked how many names would have to be on a petition to stop the action.

Paul Simpson reminded that the election was this year and Chris Tull was up for election.

John Finlayson explained that this was not what the ordinance was about, further explaining that it would entice a good restaurant, not a beer joint, and the restaurant would have to show sells of 75% food.

Shelia Willis told that she had grown up with three alcoholic stepfathers and had raised her children alone to prevent them from experiencing what she endured. She complained of all the drug people now on her street and with people walking up and down drinking beer and never seeing a police officer. “You need to get your bible down and read it!”

Mary Ann Nash said, “It is the dollar!” “Please reconsider your vote!”

Meeting Adjourned.