

**CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
JUNE 24, 2014
7:00 PM**

The City Council Special Called Meeting was called to order at 7:16 p.m. by Mayor Kathie deNobriga. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Megan Pulsts and Council Members George Chidi, Mike Stuckey, Lynn Ehrlicher and Erika Brown. Also present was City Administrator Valerie Caldwell. Chief Sari Green was absent due to training.

PUBLIC HEARING ON MILLAGE RATE

Mayor deNobriga stated that the meeting was the third and last public meeting for the millage rate. She said that the current millage rate is 29.824 and that Council will vote tonight on the millage rate. She said in order to maintain the same level of revenues of ad valorem the mill could be rolled back to 27.102 and that the advertised rate was 29.824. Mayor deNobriga talked about 24 hour policing and building a cash reserve funds and then opened the floor for public comments.

Council Member Brown stated she will be attending the Georgia Academy of Economic Strategy Workshop in the fall and that there may be some assistance that the city could benefit from.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Melanie Hammett 648 Laurel Road asked if there was a collective strategy for the city for the millage rate. The Mayor answered that there is a long term strategy evolving for revenue with one being the Rockbridge Road properties and doing inventory on the 40+- properties in the city that are showing in the county tax records worth \$10,000 as a means of capturing revenue.

Tommy Conlon 603 Iris Road requested clarification of the \$32,000 difference as it relates to the millage rate or the roll back rate.

Melanie Hammett stated that the way the millage rate was set the city was barely treading water year after year and asked about the opportunity of advancing. She also said that the city has been operating below standards for years.

Karen Bertimer 495 Club House Drive favored the roll back rate. Ms. Bertimer also said that property values were recovering.

Amy Colburn Laurel Road stated that she is concerned about both and the increase of property values and wants to wait a year for the roll back.

Tommy Colon stated that the roll back rate is a 10% deduction and that he is excited about the long term strategy. He said that the city has always treaded water and that the administration department has done a great job getting a handle on expenses. He said that a cash reserve was a luxury. Conlon stated that the city made a promise last year that the increase was temporary and that he would like to see the city keep it.

Katrina Davis 498 Spring Drive said that last year's assessment went up 20% and asked how the increase would benefit the city. Ms. Davis asked Council to consider the roll back rate.

Sheri Durden 4665 Orchid requested council to keep the rate as it is for another year and that she had good experiences from the prior year. She also said that Chief Green and the Police Department were doing a good job.

Karen Kennedy 611 Ivy stated that her assessment went up 30% and that incomes were down. She said that the city has to figure out what to do to make people stay and not move out.

Karen Sykes 445 Spring Drive stated that she has live in Pine Lake for 14 years and that last year citizens were told that due to decrease in the assessments the city needed to make balance and to increase the millage rate. She said that the citizens were promised that the millage rate would decrease and that she would like to challenge the politicians to live up to their promise.

Bitsy Pitts stated that she is in favor of keeping the millage rate the same. She also said that she is seeing signs of improvement with the economy and that the city needs to get better with the turning point.

Susan Lightcap 451 Club House Drive made the comment that people get emotional about promises not kept by council. Ms. Lightcap said that they were elected in good faith. She also said that the millage rage is high and was in favor of maintaining the millage rate and not rolling it back.

Melanie Hammet asked for the leadership to get Rockbridge Road and the commercial district activated.

Tommy Conlon addressed the funk in Pine Lake and the individuals that reside in the community. He said that if the taxes are continually increased it will affect the artist and persons on a fixed income. Mr. Conlon stated that he is against raising taxes and that the community needs to be preserved.

Barbara Davis 49 Spruce Drive said that the same millage rate conversation has been repeated with no results. She said that she lives across the street from a non-maintained house for over a decade with no code enforcement done and that the sources of revenue are not collected.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Brown said that she will assist if anyone was interested in protesting their taxes and would also walk them through the Board of Equalization process.

Chidi commented that strategy is the most important thing and that his plan is to get Rockbridge Road annexed and 24 hour policing. He also stated that he is not in favor of an increase unless it establishes a reserve fund and 24 hour policing.

Pulsts recommended a reduction of the tax rate as soon as possible and that she is not in favor of the 29.8 millage rate. She also said that she is not in favor of the roll back rate.

Ehrlicher said that she is in favor of the roll back rate and recommended the City fining the owners of the abandoned forty properties that are not maintained. She also said that DeKalb County fine vacant property owner \$1,000.00 per day for their abandoned properties. She said that Pine Lake has the highest millage rate in the state and it may affect the sales of homes at a certain point. The Mayor stated that it is not forty abandoned homes.

Stuckey had no comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Pulsts motioned to adjourn with a second from Brown and approved 5-0 at 7:52 PM.

Missye Varner, Administrative Assistant

Approved minutes are posted on the website at <http://www.pinelakega.com/city-government/minutes/archive-minutes/>