

8-21-19

Editor,

Wow, looks like Inez City government is working to keep their positions. I would never have thought that allowing the residents of the city to vote to keep or dissolve city government would have created such a defensive reaction.

They have listed 7 “services” provided as reason enough to continue to pay city taxes; mow the grass, pick up the trash; put salt on the curves and hills (don't tell them there are no hills in the city limits). Hang up banners and put up a Christmas tree.

As I'm sure everyone noticed, they never mentioned how much tax money was collected from the city property owners nor what they did with it. I'm sure you remember a few years ago the city commissioners were going to levy a tax on the insurance premium and when asked what they were going to do with the money their response was: “we don't know”. Two members of that commission is on this commission. I have been told they have imposed a tax on the bank. When asked: “what are you going to do with the money”?, the response was: “ I don't know”. Do we really know what tax they will come up with next? They may need the money to put up new lites on the Christmas tree.

Did you notice that they seemed to forget to state who gets what money? Did you notice that though they said that Dave Muncy and I almost bankrupt the city, they forgot to mention what it was that caused so much money to be spent. Dave, Arlen and I cut the city light bill by close to \$5,000.00 a year. We cut the street worker 25 % because there's not that much grass to cut nor decorations to hang on the poles. The Christmas tree comes only once a year.

We cut the clerk 25% because there is little to no work to do in city hall. Maybe 24 hours of actual clerical work a month. As soon as this current commission came in they immediately restored the 25% pay time to both employees.

They say the city is in the best financial shape it has ever been but then said Dave and I spent 2 years and almost bankrupted the city. (I know that's redundant) Creative writing?

Ask them to publish the amount of tax money collected from the residents and businesses and how much money is paid to the clerk and street worker. I'm not saying that those folks are not good folks, I'm just talking about your money. The state law is this: The cost of either renting or owning a City Hall building together with the utilities and a clerk is considered “administration” and can only be paid from local taxes collected. Other things can be paid from local taxes also but there must be money to do it.

Then there are the state funds. Municipal Aid Road Funds, (MARF) can only legally be used to build and maintain city streets. It cannot be used for street lights nor grass cutting. Then there is the LGEA (Local Economic Aid Funds) money which comes in from the state which can be used for almost anything (except administration) such as grass cutting and sweeping, putting up Christmas lites, providing police protection and running up and down the road.

The Commission needs to publish the budget, as is required by law, and not just a summary, which is not legal ! The people need to know where the money comes from and for what it is spent ! The city cannot continue to collect \$30,000 a year in taxes, at the current rate, and pay out \$12,000 for rent, \$4,000 for utilities, and almost \$20,000 for a clerk. To make this work, there's going to have to be a tax increase ! Or, there's going to have to be some cuts ! Severance tax ? Yes, it can be used to pay the street worker, street lites and put up Christmas lites but it cannot be used for administration. Also, even though there is a spurt, coal severance is over !

I challenge the City Commission: Tell us what you were going to do with the money from the bank tax. Tell us what you are doing to reinstate police protection, not what you are planning. Don't tell us what the sheriff is going to do. We told you over a year ago that the sheriff was broke. He said it too. He told us to lock-'n-load. He was honest about it. By-the-way, when the sheriff (deputy) drives into town on the way to the court house, that is NOT patrolling the streets !

Tell us what grant applications you have in and for what purpose. I know the meetings are open to the public and if the folks are interested they can come and see for themselves. The only thing that seemed to interest the folks is the threat of being annexed. What were the questions asked by the folks at those meetings? "What will we get for our money?" The answer, of course, was "nothing". Being a member of the Commission is not like a club membership. There is a legal duty to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the citizens. Although it's nice, there's more to it than hanging banners and sweeping the walk track. Please explain how hanging banners and raising a Christmas tree is a service.

I challenge the Commission to annex the clerk's residence ! It can be done in 120 days and I'm sure the clerk will acquiesce.

I like my little town ! I grew up here. I intend to stay here. I like the whole county. There's a lot of nice people here, including those on the city commission. Good folks, on the wrong track.

The reason for this vote is simple: Over the two years that I was a commissioner the complaints that I heard was "I get nothing for my taxes!". So, let's put it to the test. If the majority of the folks want to keep it the way it is with the possibility of having taxes raised, for who knows what, then the folks can vote to keep it and if more folks want to dissolve it they may do so. Let the people speak !

It's interesting that this statute that allows for this "recall" vote to dissolve the city seems to be available to all cities in Kentucky, not just little ones.

Some states have statutes which allow for a "recall" vote for elected officials. It's interesting that we can dissolve the city but can't recall the mayor, ect.

The Bible says that the people perish without a vision. A vision for brighter lites on a Christmas tree or a new and bigger walk track, although nice items, do not improve the place of abode. Our whole county had and has this problem. The county has spent, in the last 20 years, over \$25 million on buildings and none on our water system. Who had that vision?

Dick Young