

**TOWN OF CINCO BAYOU
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 8, 1998**

SILENT PRAYER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL: Mayor Drabczuk
Councilman Beard
Councilman Kendrick
Councilwoman Leach
Councilman Payne
Councilman Skelly

REGULAR BUSINESS

1. COUNCIL APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes, Council Meeting - December 11, 1997
- B. Financial Report - December, 1997
- C. List of Deposits and Checks, December, 1997

3. ACTION ITEMS

- A. FY97 Audit Report
- B. Accrued Leave Payment, E. Bell
- C. Paving Projects Financing
- D. Town Clean-Up
- E. Town Manager Ad & Selection Process

4. ENGINEER'S REPORT

5. ATTORNEY'S REPORT

6. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

7. PUBLIC REQUESTS/COMMENTS (LIMIT PRESENTATIONS TO 3 MINUTES)

8. COUNCILMEMBERS REPORTS/COMMENTS

9. CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Letter, Panhandle LOC - Issues
- B. Letter, Florida LOC - Nominations
- C. Letter, Humana - Rate Increases
- D. Letter, Mr. Tom Leach

10. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

11. ADJOURN

**TOWN OF CINCO BAYOU
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 8, 1998**

Mayor Drabczuk called the Regular Town Council meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Following the silent prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, roll call was taken.

PRESENT: Mayor Drabczuk
Councilman Kendrick
Councilwoman Leach
Councilman Payne
Councilman Skelly

ABSENT: Councilman Beard

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Borchik, Attorney McInnis, Engineer Griswold, Secretary Payne, Kim Payne, Sally Borchik, Tom Leach, Eli Skelly, Irene Balsley, Jim Bratton, Lee Forst and Ed Connors.

1. COUNCIL APPROVAL OF AGENDA - Councilman Payne made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented, seconded by Councilman Skelly. The motion was unanimously approved.

2 CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes, regular Council Meeting, December 11, 1997
- B. Financial Report - December, 1997
- C. List of Deposits and Checks, December, 1997

Councilman Payne made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilwoman Leach. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. ACTION ITEMS

A. FY97 Audit Report - The Mayor and Council were presented with the draft of the Audit Report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1997. Mr. Kevin Bowyer, Creel, Bryan & Gallagher, asked the Council to review the report and if there were any comments, suggestions or recommendations, he would meet with them to discuss them. The final audit report will be presented at the February Council meeting. Mr. Borchik reminded the Council that the draft copy of the report is for their eyes only and needs to be returned.

B. Accrued Leave Payment, E. Bell - After a lengthy discussion concerning Mr. Bell's accrued leave time, Councilman Payne made a motion to table this issue until all records and associated information are obtained from Creel, Bryan & Gallagher and the Sheriff's Department, seconded by Councilwoman Leach. The motion was unanimously approved. Attorney McInnis will advise Mr. Pinkerton of the Council's decision.

C. Paving Projects Financing - To date, only Compass Bank has made a proposal for financing the proposed paving projects. A copy of their letter was enclosed in the Council packets for review. Ready Bank had been contacted but requires additional information prior to submitting a proposal. Mr. Borchik stated that he will attempt to obtain additional funding information for the Council for the "Vision" Meeting on January 24, 1998.

D. Town Clean-Up - Mr. Borchik advised the Council that there will be a special rubbish and trash pick-up for all Town residents on Friday, January 30, 1998. A newsletter will be mailed to all residents in the Town giving the time and place and conditions for this special pick-up. Arrangements are being made to have the streets swept and estimates for sweeping are being requested.

E. Town Manager Advertisement & Selection Process - Manager Borchik asked the Council to review and approve the proposed advertisement for the Town Manager position. The advertisement will appear in the Northwest Florida Daily News and the League of Cities "Datagram" on January 16, 1998. Following a short discussion, it was decided that the application cut-off date will be February 27, 1998. This will give the new Councilmembers an opportunity to participate in the selection process. Manager Borchik will check on running the ad in the National City Manager Association newsletter. Councilman Payne made a motion to accept the Town Manager advertisement with the date changes, seconded by Councilwoman Leach. The motion was unanimously approved.

On a separate matter, Mayor Drabczuk suggested moving the Town Potluck Supper to the 3rd Thursday instead of the 3rd Tuesday of the month. After Council discussion, Councilman Skelly made a motion to change the Town's Potluck Supper to the 3rd Thursday of each month, seconded by Councilwoman Leach. The motion approved 3 to 1 with Councilman Payne voting "No". The newsletter will announce this change and the telephone committee will be notified.

4. Engineer's Report - No Report

5. Attorney's Report - No Report

6. Town Manager Report

A. 1099's have been prepared and distributed to those individuals who received \$600.00 or more during 1997.

B. A summary of the 1st quarter revenues and expenditures was presented and it appears that revenues and expenditures are about where they should be for the 1st quarter. There are, however, some revisions that are needed and the "Visions" meeting may produce additional changes. It is planned to have a proposed budget revision to present at the February meeting for action in March.

C. Presented a draft of a newsletter for the Town. It will cover the Town election, the special and regular trash pick-up information and similar information for the Town's residents. The format will be the format used pending Council review and approval. Following a discussion concerning the printing and mailing of the newsletter, Councilman Payne made a motion to continue with the printing and mailing of the newsletter, seconded by Councilman Skelly. The motion was 3 to 1 with Councilman Kendrick voting "No".

D. The Community Map Company was getting ready to publish map of the Town, however, they were requested to delay until after the Town election in order to have the new Councilmembers listed. They agreed.

E. Reported that Mrs. Ruth Usery, a long time resident of the Town, had died.

F. Received a proposed landscaping plan from Mr. Chris Beal, Beal's Nursery, that covers the areas to be landscaped and the replanting of the areas already planted. The plan was also presented to the Tree Committee and they will meet with Mr. Beal prior to the "Vision" Meeting to discuss the plan.

7. Public requests/Comments - None

8. Councilmember Reports/Comments

A. Councilman Payne:

1. Announced that he had retired from Incredible Edibles Catering.

B. Councilwoman Leach:

1. Called the Council's attention to the letter from Mr. Leach and asked each Councilmember to review the letter and respond to it.

C. Councilman Kendrick:

1. With reference to Mr. Leach's letter, Councilman Kendrick expressed concern with the allegations made on people's character. Councilman Kendrick said that these allegation's stated in the letter made him take a second look at the questions being raised and it appears that Mr. Leach must know more about this situation than the Council knows and now that these allegations have been made, maybe there should be an investigation into the charges. Councilman Kendrick indicated that if there was no concrete evidence, then there should be a public apology. Attorney McInnis stated that the audit performed by Creel, Bryan & Gallagher was a very thorough audit and had already cost the Town a significant amount of money. Attorney McInnis reminded the Council that there is still an on-going investigation and that all the records are sealed. Attorney McInnis advised the Council to wait until the audit is released before going any further with these allegations and that some of Mr. Leach's question might be answered in the audit. Councilman Kendrick asked Mr. Leach if he would agree to wait until all records were released and the final audit presented. Mr. Leach agreed to wait.

Correspondence

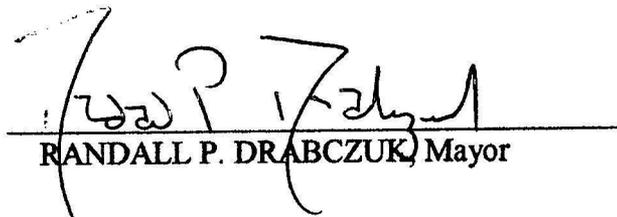
- A. Letter, Panhandle LOC - Issues - No Action
- B. Letter, Florida LOC - Nominations - No Action
- C. Letter, Humana - Rate increases - No Action
- D. Letter, Mr. Tom Leach - No Action

10. Mayor's Comments/Announcements

Mayor Drabczuk reminded every one of the Potluck supper on Tuesday this month, January 20, 1998, at 6:30 PM.

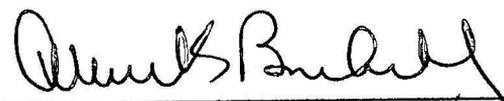
Councilman Payne congratulated Councilman Skelly for receiving the Outstanding Mental Health Professional of the year Award at the recent Mental Health Association Awards Ceremony.

There being no further business, Mayor Drabczuk adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.



RANDALL P. DRABCZUK, Mayor

Attest:



ALBERT S. BORCHIK, Jr. Town Manager/Clerk



Compass Bank

1229-97

1183 177

Compass Bank
198 Eglin Parkway NE
P. O. Box 2799
Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32549-2799

W. H. Tinstley
President

December 23, 1997

Albert S. "Al" Borchick, Jr.
Town of Cinco Bayou
10 Yacht Club Drive
Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548

RE: \$120,000.00 Loan to Pave Streets
in the Town of Cinco Bayou

Dear Mr. Borchick:

In response to our conversation the other day concerning a loan request of \$120,000.00, the Bank will consider the following terms and conditions:

Loan Request:

Borrower:	Town of Cinco Bayou
Amount:	\$120,000.00

Rate and Terms: The interest rate will be fixed at 5.98% for five years. Principal and interest shall be repaid in monthly installments. The term shall not exceed a five year amortization.

Fee: No origination fee or commitment fee shall be charged by the bank. Borrower will be required to pay all closing costs, fees due to attorneys, recording fees, ect.

Financial Covenants None.

Collateral Unsecured.

Other Conditions: The Town of Cinco Bayou must provide a resolution that the loan requested qualifies for a tax free rate under Internal Revenue Code Section 265(b)(3).

Purpose: Pave roads within the city limits of the Town of Cinco Bayou

December 23, 1997
Albert S. "Al" Borchick, Jr.
Town of Cinco Bayou
Page 2

This letter is intended to be a proposal only, based on the conditions set forth herein, and is not a commitment. Such a commitment can only be made after we have completed a full credit and legal review of the transaction with our credit and legal counsel. Any such offer shall only be binding set forth in writing on terms that are mutually agreeable.

We appreciate this opportunity to make our services available to the Town of Cinco Bayou and look forward to hearing from you in this regard.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Scott McCormick". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "W." and last name "McCormick" clearly legible.

W. Scott McCormick
Vice President / Senior Lender

WSM/sfh

TOWN OF CINCO BAYOU

The Town of Cinco Bayou has an opening for the position of Town Manager/Town Clerk

Salary range \$28,000 - \$ 32,000 depending upon qualifications and experience. The Town has a Mayor and Five member Town Council elected at large.

Candidate should have a minimum BA/BS in Public Administration or Business Administration or related field with a minimum of two years public/private sector management experience. Prior local governmental experience a plus!

Position requires knowledge of financial management practices and procedures, contract administration, grant application, intergovernmental relations and negotiations along with State of Florida Statutes and laws relating to municipal government.

Submit application/resume to: Mayor Randall Drabczuk, 10 Yacht Club Drive (Cinco Bayou), Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548-4436 by January 30, 1998.

PROPOSED TOWN MANAGER/CLERK SELECTION PROCESS

* ADVERTISEMENT WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY NEWS ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JANUARY 10 & 11 AND ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, JANUARY 17 & 18. THE AD WILL ALSO RUN IN THE LEAGUE OF CITIES "DATAGRAM" ON JANUARY 16.

* MAYOR AND COUNCIL WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

* DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN FEBRUARY, THE MAYOR AND EACH COUNCIL MEMBER WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF ALL APPLICATIONS/RESUMES RECEIVED.

* REVIEW AND RANK TOP 5 BY FEBRUARY 12 (FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING) OR SPECIAL MEETING IF DESIRED. DETERMINE TOP CANDIDATES AND SET SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEWS.

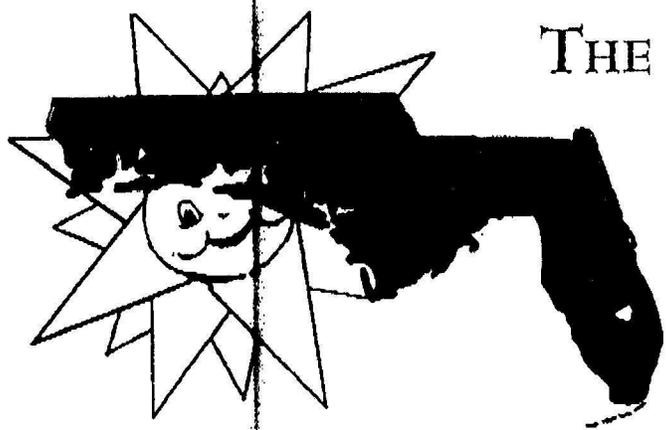
* INTERVIEWS, SELECTION (FEBRUARY/MARCH)

* CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS - APPROVAL (MARCH/APRIL)

* BEGIN EMPLOYMENT (APRIL/MAY)

RECEIVED
12/26/97
ASB

THE PANHANDLE LEAGUE OF CITIES



Howard Milton, Jr., President
City of Marianna
Brenda Hendricks, Vice President
and FLC Director
City of Parker
Clay Ford, Vice President
City of Gulf Breeze
Judy Strickland, Treasurer
City of Callaway
Randall Wise, Past President
City of Niceville

Gayton Williams, Legislative Ch.
City of Graceville
Samuel Hayes, Legislative Vice Ch.
City of Crestview
A.O. Campbell, Director
and FLC Director
City of Defuniak Springs
Rita E. Jones, Director
City of Pensacola

MEMORANDUM

TO: PLC Member City Officials
FROM: Clint Fuhrman
SUBJECT: 1998 Legislative Planning Session
DATE: 12/22/97

The Panhandle League of Cities is currently making preparations for the upcoming legislative session. The league has built a tradition of strong and effective lobbying, and we are looking forward to continuing those efforts this year. The league will meet to finalize the 1998 legislative policy on Thursday, January 29 at Okaloosa-Walton Community College, Niceville campus. All officials of member cities are invited and encouraged to attend this meeting (Details will follow). The agenda will include an opportunity for round-table discussion of issues of concern. The league's lobbying efforts should include a focus on issues which are particular to our local region and our local communities, and your input is needed to identify these. Attached you will find a return form with space for comments. Please use this form to make us aware of any legislative issues you would like to see addressed at the January meeting. Please return the form by fax no later than Thursday, January 15. You will receive further details of the meeting on the 29th soon, so mark your calendar now! Thank you for your participation. Please do not hesitate to call if there are any questions or concerns.

Clint



1598

11/13/97

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.

Public Risk Services

Memorandum

DATE: December 29, 1997

TO: Members
Florida Municipal Insurance Trust

FROM: Sandra Braun

RE: Trustee Nominations

The Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (the FMIT) is a pooled self-insurance program, whose membership consists of local governments. The FMIT provides liability, workers' compensation, property, and health coverages to its membership. The FMIT's Board of Trustees oversee the FMIT's operations. The purpose of this letter is to solicit nominations for election to the Board.

At its' meeting on December 12th and 13th, 1997, the Board of Trustees of the FMIT elected to re-solicit nominations for filling vacancies on the Board because the Board could not determine whether a number of nominations were offered by the municipalities participating in the FMIT.

The FMIT's governing documents provide that Trustees must be elected officials from municipalities that are members of the FMIT. Trustees may serve no more than two full consecutive three-year terms and may continue to serve only so long as they remain an elected official from the member from which they were selected and so long as the member continues to participate in the FMIT.

The FMIT's governing documents further provide the Board, at least annually, shall solicit nominations from municipalities that are members of the FMIT and such nominees shall constitute the basis for election to the Board. Following the solicitation of nominations, Trustee vacancies are filled by the Board, by a majority vote, from the nominees offered by the members.

As nominations must come from municipalities, your letter of nomination should reflect the nominee has been endorsed by your municipality's governing body. In addition, a resume, reflecting the nominees background and qualifications to serve, would be greatly appreciated.

Should you wish to submit a nomination to the Board, please complete the enclosed nomination form and return it to the Florida League of Cities, Inc., Orlando office, no later than February 2, 1998. Thank you.

KB
T-7

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

December 30, 1997

Town Of Cinco Bayou
10 Yacht Club Dr
Fort Walton Bea FL 32548

Re: 5035815

TOWN OF CINCO BAYOU

Dear Elvin C Bell:

Thank you for being part of the Employers Health family. As you know, we take great pride in providing you the employee benefits you need with the excellent service you deserve. Your group is due to renew with Employers Health on March 01, 1998.

The attached exhibit page details rate changes for each line of coverage for your group.

We know our clients are always looking for ways to contain costs, yet provide their employees quality benefits. As the leading provider of Small Group Employee Benefits, Employers Health can offer you many options. Here are a few you may want to consider at this renewal time.

- Specialty & Voluntary Products - You have chosen to design employee benefits with a focus on products that have good price stability. With Employers Health, you have access to a full portfolio of these products, including Income Replacement (Long and Short Term) and Voluntary Life.
- P.O.P. Plan - Premium Only Plans allow employees to use pretax dollars for contributions to certain types of benefit plans, including Income Replacement plans. Using pretax dollars saves the employee state and local taxes on their wages and saves you F.I.C.A. and state taxes on these contributions. Employers Health provides a low cost P.O.P. benefit to all groups, or P.O.P. is available at no cost to groups with our medical coverage.
- Medical - Employers Health provides a broad spectrum of medical products designed to provide maximum benefits at low cost. You can choose the traditional or network-based managed care plan that best suits your needs. (Check with your agent to see which products are available in your area.)

Your agent, James F Plantholt, has full details on these and many more Employers Health options that can save you money. Your group is important to us and we look forward to working with you to meet all your employee benefit needs.

Sincerely,

Kerry Schneider
Underwriter

Renewal Exhibit Page
Re: 5035815

Name	Plan Description	Plan #	Type	Current Rate	Renewal Rate
Edward F Connors	Life	0	-	\$18.75	\$28.47
	AD&D	0	-	\$0.75	\$0.98
	Dep Life	0	-	\$2.00	\$2.00
Albert S Borchik	Life	0	-	\$36.06	\$54.65
	AD&D	0	-	\$0.49	\$0.64
	Dep Life	0	-	\$2.00	\$2.00
Tincey F Payne	Life	0	-	\$6.75	\$10.14
	AD&D	0	-	\$0.75	\$0.59

Life Total:	Current \$61.56	Renewal \$93.26	Pct Change 52%
AD&D Total:	Current \$1.99	Renewal \$2.21	Pct Change 11%
Dep Life Total:	Current \$4.00	Renewal \$4.00	Pct Change 0%

12 Nov 97

31 Dec '97



Tom Leach
254 Kidd St. NE
Ft. Walton Bch, Fl 32548

Town Council Members
Cinco Bayou Florida

Dear Council:

I've attached a copy of my address to this council on 10 Oct 96, just a year ago. Mr. Bell is at last gone. All of us, certainly myself included, have learned something from the little tragedy that played out in our community. My hope is that each of you as council members will do your best to insure this doesn't happen again.

First, I will confess to being an activist. For some members of the council, I guess this is a little hard to take. Therefore, I must accept the fact that no matter what I might bring to your attention, you may well be throwing up some type of emotional block and missing what I am trying to impart. But I would encourage you to recall not just my questions to you during Mr. Bell's tenure, but all those that were brought up by others. I witnessed an elderly lady in tears before you. I watched our town engineer of years resign. I watched an honorable business man come before you and say, hey, I don't think I'm getting a straight shot at this, and he was ignored. It took a letter from the base commander at Eglin before you would believe what several military in the audience told you the night of the incident when Bell divined he could purchase for our town at the commissary and BX. These people were all indicating there was a lack of truthfulness and all were ignored.

So, I ask all of you to listen to each of us, the loud, and the quiet ones. We are the people you serve.

Secondly, when any of you on the council ask a question, you deserve a reasonable answer in a reasonable time. So do each of us who actively participate and contribute. Over the past couple of years many items have fallen thru the cracks and vanished. Absolutely no followup, never a question again. I have great hope those days are in the past.

Last of all I do not think the Bell thing is completely over. As a council I would think you would want to know exactly what type of pressure was put on existing and past employees by Mr. Bell. Were workers rights violated? Was Mr. Ron Magee fired by Mr. Bell for reason? Was Mr. Magee in anyway directly involved in a deception to take money from Cinco Bayou? Was the former mayor aware of any of Mr. Bell's questionable actions? Did that have any influence on the former mayor not running for re-election? Why were town checks pre-signed by the current

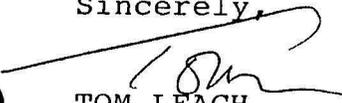
mayor therefore allowing Mr. Bell to do what he did? Just as the audits only represented the basic balances and did not reveal the true transactions, the investigation to date only reflects the obvious. It does not represent the observations of those who had possible knowledge of how all this transpired.

Cinco Bayou is not the same community. During this time we lost an elected official who had much to contribute. She was not only not listened to, but was openly attacked by a fellow member of your council. Another senseless victim. Had some type of council rule concerning conduct been in place, maybe the whole process would have been over months ago.

I think you owe it to yourselves and those innocents caught up in this web to set the record straight. I in no way suggest that the law necessarily has to be brought back into this. Rather you need to do a little work on your own to tie up the loose ends. I don't believe you can just take the money and say all is well now. Too much has been simply left hanging. I would hope I would be granted the courtesy of some serious answers to the questions I have posed.

I thank you for listening.

Sincerely,



TOM LEACH

Attached: 10 Oct 96 address to council by Tom Leach

P.S. Now we're moving & I've held off on this letter because of Al's announcement. I do feel it is important I believe personally that our workers' rights may have been violated, and I don't think I should be the only one asking that question! Mr. Bell's "vacation pay" is not a single issue. You may have dropped the old charges, but I don't feel you have a clear road not to at least consider new charges concerning his use of his personnel.



On March 14th of this year I addressed the council concerning the general appearance of the town of Cinco Bayou and how I thought at that time it looked worse than ever. I placed the responsibility firmly on the town manager and asked that you as a council charter him on his real responsibilities. I pointedly asked, WHOS ON FIRST, WHOS IN CHARGE AND WHO WAS GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE REAL CONCERNS OF THE CITIZENS OF CINCO BAYOU.

Well tonight I've come back to give you some observations. If you think they are just mine, then you need to contact others in your constituencies and find out for yourselves.

Cinco Bayou isn't getting better, and the best possible view we could have is that we are just treading water. But more appalling, you voted last month to give the person responsible for all this a raise.

I'd like to review some real life specifics about the person you have given this raise to:

When the no wake zone was first being considered a wise person of the council, Jim Kendrick, asked that we make sure we coordinate our intentions with our neighbors in Ft. Walton Beach. I thought a prudent request and the town manager assured him he would. Since the council never followed up on that I did. ON 18 Mar I talked with Mr. Silverboard and Mr. Bell never contacted him concerning the no wake zone. Neither was Monte Jackson his public works director, the only other person concerned. All I ever heard Mr. Kendrick ask for was normal prudent followup and it never happened. I believe much of what followed, the unruly debates, the course and rude accusations of one council member toward another might all have been avoided if some simple ground work had been done.

Our town manager assured this council he could purchase for our town at the BX / Commissary not on one but several occasions. This was an embarrassment to anyone who has ever served in the military to hear such a claim. Again our concerns fell on deaf ears. It took a letter from Col. Shambo, the Eglin Commander to finally get this cockamamie idea stopped.

When you as a council asked for more work in the Code enforcement area, rather than take a common sense small town neighbor approach and talk with citizens he hammered an elderly lady with a letter which brought her before this council in tears. I'll let you tax your own memories of your own recollections of how he responded that night.

This same town manager provided you with monthly financial reviews filled with errors and impossible for you as members to make reasonable decisions. My request ended up in a full scale audit rather than giving you simple data you could read. Even the auditor volunteered to come back and help this council

*Council's question
is all the
money there
No money
papers
there!*

*absolutely no
followup by council.*

put together a good document, and that has not been followed up on.

→ Francis park has fixable malfunctions that anyone with common sense could fix. Our town managers response was to get an engineering study. The bottom line is , nothing has changed and now we no longer have a town engineer.

No new trees were planted last spring and no lost ones replaced. One cannot overlook our town managers obvious conflict with our company contact in that area. That contractor was as gracious as anyone I've seen speak before this council. His treatment by our manager was questionable and that is as kind as I can be.

In the end, I question whether Mr. Bell has what it takes to manage Cinco Bayou. His lack of support for this council, his lack of reasonable communication with our contractors, his lack of accuracy in providing even proper financial data have all been subject to question. I use Councilman Skelleys numerous requests for FEMA info as a prime example.

I think not only did Mr. Bell not deserve a raise but I think it is time this council starts considering if Mr. Bell should continue to be retained.

10 Oct 96

I moved
20 Cubic
Yards of Soil
& put new
Soil down &
Seeded myself
We are 2 1/2
years behind
on trees now.



Cast from the shackles and chains that once restrained people in psychiatric hospitals, today NMHA's Bell rings out hope, vision and liberty for people with mental illness.

Fall 1997
Vol. 3 No. 1

THE BELL

The Newsletter of Okaloosa/Walton
Mental Health Association

Annual Awards Banquet Honors Mental Health Achievements

**Mental Health Association Hosts
Lois Benson as
Keynote Speaker**

The Mental Health Association of Okaloosa-Walton Counties hosted its annual awards banquet to honor local humanitarian efforts and achievements to the field of mental health over the past

More than 100 mental health professionals and advocates came out to Ft. Walton Beach Yacht Club to enjoy an evening of dining and recognition as eight individuals were honored for their efforts to advance the issues of mental health in a positive direction.

"The Mental Health Association has made some tremendous strides in our local area over the past year," commented MHA Board President Jim Lee. "Our local professionals and volunteers are working harder than ever to improve the quality of life for our community."

The keynote address for the evening was presented by Lois Benson, Chairman of the Congressional TriCare Committee, on the recent issues surrounding TriCare and the steps being taken locally to improve reoccurring difficulties.

The Outstanding Mental Health Professional of the Year Award was presented in correlation to these issues to Joe Skelly, LMHC, for his determination in helping bring the



Lois Benson, Chairman of the Congressional TriCare Committee, focuses her attention on the recent issues involving TriCare during her keynote address at the annual awards banquet of the Mental Health Association.

obstacles presented by TriCare to the forefront.

"Mr. Skelly has become a David taking on the Goliath of managed care," read one of his nominations. "Instead of a stone in his slingshot, he has used the weapons of truth, integrity, persistence, and courage in addressing the issues that are compromising to providers and patients."

The Jr. MHA Award was presented to the Wheelettes of Ft. Walton Beach High School for volunteering to fill 400 ditty bags with the MHA's Project Cheer program. This award, which is in its second year of recognition, was created by Betty Harrison to bring awareness of mental health to area students.

Dale Fuqua, recipient of the Outstanding MHA Board Member Award, has served on the Board of Directors for two years. She is affectionately known as the "Bag Lady" of the Mental Health Association for her efforts to make 400 cloth ditty bags to use with Project Cheer efforts. Dale is also instrumental in keeping the MHA's bookkeeping in order.

THIS NEWSLETTER...

is provided to you through the underwriting efforts of Bristol-Myers Squibb, a leading pharmaceutical company.

WHAT'S INCLUDED...

- 1997/98 Board of Directors
- Professional Spotlight
- 1997 MHA Awards
- ... and much more