

**April 28, 2016****6:00 PM****City Hall**

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Officials Present:	Mayor Sharon Sewell, Council Member Dobby Harris, Council Member Salli Thomason, Council Member Jai Otwell, Council Member Terry Crawford
Admin Present:	City Manager Perry Hicks, City Attorney Sam Price, Operations Manager Mike Thompson, City Clerk Amy Ridley

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**Purpose of Special Called Meeting**

The purpose of this special called meeting was to have a General Workshop and to discuss the goals that each of the council members would like to reach and what they would like to accomplish.

**Call to Order**

Mayor Sewell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and stated that she would like to put a time limit on the meeting and adjourn by 8:00 pm.

**Discussions**

Mayor Sewell asked Council Members what each of their goals are and where they would like Bremen to be in ten years.

Council Member Harris stated that he would like to see Bremen offer a good quality of life. He stated that, to him, that would be four areas (1) Education (2) Growth, physically and mentally through Recreation and maybe an Amphitheater (3) Safety (4) Economic Development. He said he would like to see Bremen be able to see businesses come to Bremen that could bring 200 or more jobs. We need to find our niche and build on that.

Council Member Otwell stated that he would like to see the Recreation Department grow. He stated that kids leave this town to go play ball somewhere else. We need a recreation complex somewhere that can accommodate all of our recreation programs. If we had a recreation complex for the soccer fields to go, the current soccer field site would be the perfect place for an amphitheater. Councilman Otwell then mentioned the vacant buildings in town such as the Hubbard building and stated that those would be great for putting restaurants and small shops in town.

Council Member Thomason stated that her concerns are economic development in Bremen and she said Bremen needed to have some mom & pop type of economic development so that we can keep our small town charm. She said she would like to see Bremen become a "day trip" type of town. She also stated that she believes a train platform would be something that we can do downtown at a small cost and then later add to it when funds are available. The railroad lines cross in Bremen and we could build on that.

Council Member Crawford stated that we need economic development downtown but in order for that to happen; we need to reactivate our Downtown Development Authority and come up with a long-range plan. He stated that the people who own the downtown buildings do not care whether they rent them out or not. Then some of the businesses that look into these downtown buildings do not want to follow our building code guidelines. That is why we need a Downtown Development Authority with active members.

Mayor Sewell stated that she grew up in a town where we were spoiled to having the clothing industry and those business owners would donate the funds for anything that was needed in Bremen. All we had to do is ask Mr. Hubbard to help and ask Mr. Sewell to help and they were always willing to help Bremen get anything they needed. We do not have that anymore. She stated that when she took office in 2002, the city was on the verge of bankruptcy. She said she would like to tell the new council members what all we have done so that they can come to the table with respect and appreciation. Mayor Sewell stated that there was a million dollar outstanding debt owed to regions bank for the golf course that we had to handle right away. We completed the multipurpose building. We had the Honda Lock tax abatement, which meant a lot of money to the city, and that agreement was made by the Haralson County Development Authority and was for a long period. We have also dealt with the tax differential with the county. That was money being taken away from Bremen citizens for taxes and we have fought with the county commissioners ongoing over this. She stated that we have not done anything that you can visibly see but we have worked hard to get us to where we are and have done it without raising taxes.

Council Member Harris stated that we are very appreciative of everything that the previous council members have done. We are not saying anything negative about them in any way. We are just trying to build Bremen and there are people in town that have private funds that would be willing to help us with some of the projects that we want to do if they could see that we are doing something.

Council Member Crawford stated that he has researched and looked for grants but it's hard to find grants for cities who have a population of less than 10,000. He stated that House Bill 170 allows grants for walking trails and sidewalks.

Council Member Thomason stated that the Garden Club used to help with beautification but they are no longer an active club.

The mayor and council discussed different ways to revitalize Bremen. The train platform idea was revisited and Mayor Sewell stated that we could build something like that downtown and landscape around it and then add to it at a later time as the funds became available.

There was discussion between the mayor and council on how to get businesses to come to Bremen. Council Member Harris said we need to come up with a plan that would allow us to be able to offer new businesses an incentive for coming to Bremen.

Council Member Harris stated that we need to get people involved but in order to do that, we are going to have to show them that we're doing something.

Mayor Sewell stated that we are going to take what we have discussed tonight and set it all out so that we can put a plan together and see where we need to start. She said we could then have another work session to discuss putting some of these things in place and begin to do something.

### **Adjourn**

Mayor Sewell asked for a motion to adjourn the special called meeting. Council Member Crawford made a motion to adjourn the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.