

## CITY ISN'T PAYING FOR BILL ADVERTISING



The mayor, Sherman Guyton, has announced that the City Council and he will be opposing the legislation that was proposed by Rep. Craig Ford. The legislation that was proposed would change how the Gadsden Civil Service Board would be appointed. The mayor also states that the city will not be paying for the advertisement of the bill. However, while Guyton has made this statement, the state law claims that the city is actually obligated, by legal means, to pay for the advertisements of a local bill. Guyton announced on Tuesday to the City Council that the city had recently receive a bill from The Messenger. The bill was for \$600 and was for the bill that had been advertised by Ford. With the legislation in place, the Civil Service Board would go from five members to seven members. The Gadsden Police Department, Fire Department firefighter association, the mayor, City Council, and legislators would each receive an appointment. The Civil Service Board appointments are actually now set up by the governor. Before a bill can be introduced, it will need to be advertised for at least a month beforehand. Guyton made it known that The Messenger is actually owned by Ford. He says, "We're not going to waste our money on a bill we don't want, police and fire do not want, Rep. Galliher (Blaine, R-Rainbow City) will not let out of committee." He also said, "What is the point of this? Politics." During an interview that took place after the meeting, the City Attorney, Roger Kirby, said that he did not know that the mayor took a position of not paying for the advertisement. Kirby also stated that it is the responsibility of the city to pay for the advertising, regardless if it had requested legislation or not. The Alabama Code, Section 11-3-6, clearly states that county commissions are completely responsible for the cost of advertisements of the local bills, which need to be advertised for a month prior to being introduced. The code also states that commissions will need to reimburse the cities if those cities are affected by legislation. Guyton claims that during last year, in 2011, Ford told him that he would be of assistance with the legislation. Guyton claims that once the bill was prepared and set up, Ford changed his mind. Once he changed his mind, the other legislators refused to go with the legislation that was backed by the city in the removal of the police chief as well as the fire chief from the Civil Service Board and its particular jurisdiction. Guyton says, "The mayor and council are not in favor of the bill at all." He also says, "We were not notified he was going to advertise the bill." Ford has made it very clear that he refuses to support legislation that would put the chief of both departments directly under control of the mayor.

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