

From the Desk of Mayor Debra Smith

On March 1, 2021 in a Special Meeting the members of the Timpson City Council voted, upon my recommendation, to close the City of Timpson Police Department. The vote passed 3 for and 1 against, with one council member absent. Following the vote to close the department the council voted on the Reduction in Force for the last remaining police department employee, Chief of Police Kent Graham, effective March 4, 2021. This vote passed 4 voting to RIF Chief Graham and none opposed.

As mayor I am responsible for the City's financial recommendations and budget. In September the budget was presented and passed for one officer to remain on staff with the understanding that close attention would be paid as the fiscal year progressed to the overall general fund's financial stability.

After 4 months, 1/3 of the fiscal year, the general fund only showed an increase of slightly over \$2200. Prior P/L statements for the first four months of prior fiscal years have varied in their fund increase but none have been this low. For the same period last fiscal year, the fund increase was approximately \$35,000.

With the department closure there will not be a city employed police officer on duty. This does not mean there will not be law enforcement in the City of Timpson! Shelby County Sheriff's Office and the office of Shelby County Constable will be apprised of the closure and the SCSO will be dispatching officers when 9-1-1 is called. Timpson has three highways within the city limits and we will be notifying DPS that the city department has closed. I'm sure they will step up traffic enforcement to ensure our highways are safe. The city council will look into mutual aid agreements with the SCSO and the office of Constable as well as getting bids from private companies that offer contracted security officers for special events, holidays, and/or watchmen.

I value the opinions of citizens and our business owners. Like most of you, I valued having our own Police Department and felt that it was within our budget each year. Many factors effect a city's budget, but none have had the impact COVID-19 have. In addition to our municipal court revenue being impacted, sales tax and property tax have both seen a decline, more than likely due to higher unemployment and less spendable income. The City of Timpson has a sound financial base and should weather through this downturn if we make sound financial decisions. With so many other "general fund" needs: road work, sidewalks, right of way maintenance, support toward the TVFD and general operations of City Hall I felt it was prudent to alleviate the strain on the General Fund budget by immediately eliminating the payroll and operations of the Timpson Police Department which is estimated at approximately \$100,000 per year.

Thank you,

Mayor Debra Smith