Kenny Howell

Managing Editor

A reorganization of city employees and an ordinance finalizing the liquor store rules were deferred at Monday's meeting.

The liquor store rules were deferred on the advice of City Attorney Gino Marchetti, who said they were close, but some things still needed to be ironed out.

The reorganization of employees involved installing a new position of Public Safety Director to oversee both the Mt. Juliet Police and Fire Departments.

"This is not in the best interest of the city," said Police Chief Andy Garrett in citizen comments. Garrett feared that it would add another level of bureaucracy, as the chain of command would have him going through the Public Safety Director to get to City Manager Kenny Martin. He said that several cities have eliminated the position after creating it because it wasn't effective. He also stated that he was hired on an agreement that he would make a certain salary, and the ordinance would decrease his salary.

“It’s totally different than any other in the state,” said Martin. “If anything, it would be more efficient.”

The ordinance would adjust several salaries. It would decrease public safety salaries by $18,600, and increase City Manager salaries by $3,800, City Planner by $1,400, Parks salaries by $2,000, Finance salaries by $2,000 and IT salaries by $2,000.

“It’s not fair to the individual,” said Commissioner Ray Justice. Justice said while he didn’t fully agree with the ordinance he applauded what Martin was trying to do.

Martin pointed out that the City of Lebanon paid their Police Chief $70,000 a year, and Wilson County paid $81,000. Mt. Juliet is paying $93,000 currently.

Commissioner Jim Bradshaw said that the way he looked at it, they would be cutting some salaries and raising others, and he didn’t feel comfortable with that.

The item was agreed to be deferred by a 4-1 vote to the Jan. 10 meeting. Bradshaw was the only one that voted against deferral.

The preliminary master development plan for Providence Central, the new development between South Mt. Juliet Road and Central Pike, passed by a vote of 3-2. The development will be a mixture of high end office space, retail, high density living and single family homes. It will be nearly twice the size of the existing Providence, and would eventually add an I-40 exit at Central Pike.

Both Bradshaw and Justice had concerns that the growth is becoming too much for the City to handle. The added pressure on South Mt. Juliet Road would be immense until they can get the Central Pike exit, which could still be a few years down the road. Both voted against it for fears the infrastructure of the city could not handle the expansion.

There will be no second meeting in December because it would fall on Christmas Eve. The next meeting will be Jan. 10.