

# The Opp News

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## Electronic bingo in Florala is 'on go'

By DORIS WISMER

*The Opp News*

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The Florala City Council opened their meeting Monday with prayers for two gravely ill residents and it's a sure bet the leaders also requested guidance on the topic on every citizen's mind – bingo.

Earlier this month the council passed an ordinance laying out rules and regulations for electronic bingo operations within city limits.

This was the first council meeting since the bingo ordinance passed and a large crowd – both pro and con – was expected. A sign-up sheet for those

wishing to speak during the open forum was passed around and returned without one signature.

"I expected a large contingent of both pros and cons" Mayor Robert Williamson said and he was surprised when no names appeared on the clipboard.

The mayor said the project was still "on go" and described the process as "full steam ahead" despite warnings from Alabama Attorney General Troy King and County District Attorney Greg Gambriel.

Councilman Danny Thames said he took "exception" to Gambriel's press release concerning the bingo ordinance.

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"I didn't like his comments about coming down here and arresting us and prosecuting us to the fullest extent of the law," Thames said. "We haven't been in contact with him."

Williamson said there were several aspects to his and the council's economic plans for Florala and he was "moving forward and exploring all options."

He said he considered the ordinance a preemptive strike.

"Our whole motivation was to put some stipulations and regulations on it since the county commission hasn't - and we want to make money on it also," he said.

Williamson said that electronic bingo was not the

agenda for bettering the economic situation in the city, referring to Monday's approval of funding for the Downtown Redevelopment Authority, and re-incorporating the Airport Authority.

"I think the (DRA) board will begin to make a significant impact on the look of downtown," he said. "The re-incorporating of our Airport Authority will allow us to compete for grant funds.

"It's all a part of a complete package to better our city."

Williamson would not comment on any plans or meetings he had, or may have had, regarding electronic bingo in Florala.

"I don't want to do anything that might mess up anything that might be in progress," he

In other business, council also:

- approved spending \$5,000 for repair of a culvert on Third Street and Eighth Avenue.

- appropriated funds for an additional police repeater. The City of Lockhart will be asked to contribute to the cost as Florala handles dispatching duties for their police and fire departments.

- approved funding for the five-member panel of the newly created Downtown Redevelopment Authority.

- approved revisions to the mobile home ordinance prohibiting mobile homes in commercial or industrial areas.

- approved five-year hazard mitigation plan.