



This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers [here](#) or use the "Reprints" tool that appears above any article. [Order a reprint of this article now.](#)

Meeting to address bingo, sales taxes, tornado recovery

Council hosting state legislative delegation

By Jason Morton

Staff Writer

Published: Monday, February 6, 2012 at 3:30 a.m.

TUSCALOOSA | The Tuscaloosa City Council is hosting the city's state legislative delegation today to address its position on bills that could come before the Alabama Legislature this session.

Delegates will hear the city's position on several issues, ranging from support for an adequate mental health hospital to opposition to a streamlined sales tax model that would move collections of local sales taxes to the state instead of county-based offices.

The City Council unanimously approved these and 10 other topics last week in a formal resolution.

Councilman Kip Tyner said he also plans to bring up another topic: support for a Tuscaloosa County bingo bill.

Across the state, 16 counties have received approval from the Legislature to allow bingo operations for charitable purposes.

Tyner said last year's crackdowns on paper bingo operations have hurt several organizations in Tuscaloosa County that used the proceeds for charitable purposes, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6022 in Cottondale.

"Here we've got, mainly, a group of people who have given their life for this country, and here they are, living out the rest of their days and fellowshiping — of all things — by playing bingo, one of the first games we learned as kids," Tyner said. "There's no doubt that they're giving it back to the community."

Walter Turner, post commander of the local VFW, said the loss of bingo proceeds has rendered the organization unable to provide small scholarships to K-12 students who participate in its annual essay contest and eliminated cash awards for police officer, firefighter and emergency medical technician of the year, among others.

"That's what a lot of that money goes to," Turner said. "We're not doing bingo to buy liquor for the bar."

The City Council's resolution detailing its stances on possible legislation will be presented to the state legislators representing Tuscaloosa:

- Support for building an Alabama Department of Mental Health Facility to a capacity that will meet mental health needs and consumer demand.
- Opposition to legislation adverse to the operations of the city's Water and Sewer Department.
- Support for Lake Tuscaloosa extra-territorial zoning, which will expand the city's regulatory powers around the lake.

-Opposition to statewide business licensing and streamlined sales tax collections, which could limit the ability of local governments to determine the amount of taxes they are owed by businesses operating within its jurisdiction.

Copyright © 2012 TuscaloosaNews.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.

-Opposition to drug sales exemption from gross receipts for the determination of business licenses.

-Support for groceries to be exempt from state sales taxes, but not local governments because of the "lack of alternative funding source."

-Support for adequately funding the state General Fund budget, thereby eliminating unfunded mandates requiring local governments to fund criminal corrections, mental health systems, the Department of Forensic Sciences or other governmental aspects that will "pass financial burdens to local governments without accompanying state funding."

-Support for the efforts of the Alabama Voters for Responsible Animal Legislation to ban inhumane euthanasia of animals. The group is seeking to stop the use of poisonous gas to kill unwanted animals, something the Tuscaloosa Animal Shelter already has eliminated.

-Support for modernization of bicycle laws to ensure safe conditions for all modes of transportation.

-Opposition to legislation that would redistribute tax proceeds in Tuscaloosa County that now go to local governments and the Tuscaloosa County Park and Recreation Authority.

-Support for local input on legislative redistricting that is required as a result of population shifts reflected in the 2010 Census.

-Support for ongoing tornado recovery efforts.

Reach Jason Morton at jason.morton@tuscaloosaneews.com or 205-722-0200.