

## Fence for Cemetery

Contributed by Tina Tidmore

At a vote of 3-2, the Clay City Council approved spending up to \$4,000 to put in a fence around the Wear Cemetery to protect it from vandalism. The cemetery is owned by the city. It is located behind an Alabama Power substation close to Countryside Estates. Revolutionary War veteran Samuel Wear is buried there. Councilwoman Jackie Hambrick said 31 markers are in the cemetery.

Hambrick said the city will apply for a CAWACO grant, but the city will have to match funds. She said she hopes the ultimate cost to the city will be less than \$4,000.

Pat Feemster, a member of the Clay Historical Society, said she got phone quotes ranging from \$5,771 to \$7,415 for the fence. This is not based on an inspection of the site.

Feemster said the deadline for the grant application is March 31, which means the city must act quickly. If the city is awarded the grant, then CAWACO will contribute \$4,000 of the cost. If the lowest phone quote is accurate after the company does an onsite inspection, then the city will end up paying about \$2,900.

If the city were to miss the March deadline, then they would have to wait until September to apply again.

Councilman Kevin Small asked what fund it would be taken from.

Councilman L.B. Feemster said it would likely come from borrowed money, the AMFund, as a capital improvement.

Small and Councilman Charles Webster voted against the motion. In a later interview, Webster said he did not like that it was presented to the council and a vote taken in the same night. He said he wants to have more time to consider new expenses before voting. Also, he said he didn't like that the exact expense is not known.

Small said in a later interview that he is concerned that the city does not have a budget, so he can't even be sure the city will have the money to afford this by the end of the year. He also said he felt that since the city's income has decreased, then he thinks the priority of spending should be on things that bring a direct benefit to Clay residents, such as increased law enforcement. Small said he did not know the city owned the cemetery.

Hambrick said if the city doesn't get the grant, "Then we'll have to go to plan B."

