

## MEETING MINUTES STATE OF THE CITY, JANUARY 17, 2019

The members of the City Council of the City of Phenix City, Alabama met at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time at the Martin-Idle Hour Park Community Center, located at 3743 Moon Lake Drive, Phenix City, Alabama for the purpose of conducting the 2019 State of the City Address. Mayor Eddie N. Lowe, Councilmember Steve Bailey, Councilmember Vickey Carter Johnson, and Councilmember Arthur L. Day were present. Councilmember R. Griff Gordy was not present. City Manager Wallace B. Hunter, City Clerk Melony Lee, and Office Manager Shannon Davis were also present. Department Heads in attendance were: Chief Building Official Gil Griffith, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, City Engineer Angel Moore, Assistant Engineer Director Michael Pattillo, Finance Director Labrita King-Copland, Utilities Director Stephen C. Smith, IT Manager Mike Bauer, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Phenix City Russell County Library Director Michelle Kilday, Municipal Court Director Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, Police Chief Raymond Smith, and Utilities Engineer John Spraggins. Also present were: City Attorney James P. Graham and City Honorable Judge Greg Waldrep.

Mayor Lowe welcomed everyone to the presentation of the State of the City.

Mayor Lowe asked Reverend Issac Hudson of Nichols Chapel AME Church to deliver the invocation.

Mayor Lowe asked Troy University-Phenix Vice Chancellor Dr. David White to lead with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Lowe introduced Council, Department Heads, and Staff.

Mayor Lowe delivered the State of the City Address. Mayor Lowe informed the citizens of the Board sign-up sheet for anyone that is interested in serving on a City board. Mayor Lowe reviewed the financial statement of the City and compared it with the past five years; he discussed the status of city projects and where the city is headed; and he advised the city has maintained its AA-/ Stable Credit Rating from Standard & Poors. Mayor Lowe stated that the Effective Buyers Income (EBI) is up by five percent from last year; with a higher rating it would likely follow a significant expansion of the economic base.

Councilmember Day asked Mayor Lowe to elaborate on the Whitewater Classic. Mayor Lowe stated that the Whitewater Classic has had a huge positive economic impact on the City of Phenix City.

Upon conclusion of the presentation, the floor was opened to questions and comments from the audience.

1. John B. Senn of 1909 5<sup>th</sup> Street South asked if tractor trailer trucks were allowed on the road near his home. Chief Ray Smith explained to Mr. Senn that the only trucks that were allowed were the ones that have access to get to their business near that location; however, other trucks that do not travel to that business will be ticketed. Mayor Lowe informed Mr. Senn that he will have to rely on the Police Department to do their jobs of patrolling that area.
2. Pat Waldrop with Heritage Insurance Agency at 1610 Broad Street commended Mayor Lowe on doing a great job with the presentation. Ms. Waldrop also stated she is delighted with the way everything is going in Phenix City. Ms. Waldrop stated that

her only concern was the bid process. Ms. Waldrep stated she had watched a televised council meeting and saw that an award was given for an insurance bid. Ms. Waldrep stated there are four Insurance Agencies in the area and was not sure why she did not receive an invitation. Utilities Director Steve Smith explained to Ms. Waldrop that the City does not solicit insurance bids and that the insurance process is public information. Mr. Smith further stated that under the Purchasing Law, the City it is not required to let bids due to professional services; however, anyone that would like to make a proposal to the City for insurance is free to do so. Mr. Smith informed Ms. Waldrop this has been City policy for a very long time. Mr. Bailey asked if the City can make it easier for locals to bid. IT Manager Mike Bauer stated that his Department can add a page on the website to accommodate the citizens. Mayor Lowe stated that he does not want anyone to feel like the City is deliberately keeping anyone out from bidding. Mayor Lowe explained there are insurance companies that are very aware of when the bids are going to be.

Councilmember Johnson thanked everyone for coming out. Councilmember Johnson further stated she would like to encourage the citizens to utilize the businesses and to keep the City clean. Councilmember Johnson stated that Positively Phenix City is growing and that everyone has to make sure that the sustainability and quality of life continue to exist in our City. Councilmember Johnson reminded everyone of the Board sheet for anyone that would like to serve on a City board. Councilmember Johnson thanked everyone for coming out.

Councilmember Bailey complimented Mayor Lowe on doing a great job with the presentation. Councilmember Bailey spoke on the expansion of companies in Phenix City and Phenix City moving forward. Councilmember Bailey advised citizens to contact the City if they have any questions. Councilmember Bailey stated that if anyone is interested in serving on a City board to please fill out the signup sheet. Councilmember Bailey spoke on Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. Councilmember Bailey stated that love and peace will bring people together and it will never be taken off of this earth. Councilmember Bailey further stated that everything can be accomplished if it is done the correct way for the correct reason. Councilmember Bailey thanked everyone for coming out.

Councilmember Day thanked everyone for coming out. Councilmember Day spoke on the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge. Councilmember Day stated that when the bridges were completed, it saved schools money. Councilmember Day asked the citizens of Phenix City to take pride in their city and to help with keeping it clean.

City Manager Wallace Hunter added that there is close to \$40,000,000.00 in Capital Fund money in the bank at this time. Mr. Hunter informed everyone that the City is getting ready to start on the Public Safety Building project. Mr. Hunter stated he has been City Manager for 10 years and he took over during one of the worst recessions in the United States. Mr. Hunter further stated that the City gained over \$35 million dollars' worth of grants during that time. Mr. Hunter explained to the citizens that there is a bid process as well as a professional service process. Mr. Hunter stated that the Professional Service process is in place in case a business does not perform to the standards. Mr. Hunter stated the City has never turned anyone away from bidding and anyone is welcome to come and do business in Phenix City, as no district is ignored. Mr. Hunter stated there are always businesses that contact the City to see when bids are coming up. City Manager Wallace Hunter thanked the Department Heads for doing a great job.

Councilmember Day spoke on the training that Council takes with the National League of Cities and explained how it helps Council to do a better job in serving the City of Phenix City. Councilmember Day stated that when he travels to the National League of Cities Convention he informs every one of the City's AA credit rating.

Mayor Lowe stated that he is very encouraged for the City of Phenix City's future. Mayor Lowe asked the citizens to not be a part of the problem but to be the solution, and that the biggest threats are the people. Mayor Lowe thanked everyone for coming out.

There being nothing further to discuss nor anyone else wishing to come forward to address council, the meeting concluded at 7:27 p.m.