

**MEETING MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
JULY 14, 2022
PROPOSED FY 2022-2023 BUDGET**

The members of the City Council of the City of Phenix City, Alabama met for a public hearing on the proposed budget for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 on July 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. EST, at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center located at 3743 Moon Lake Drive, Phenix City, Alabama. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Councilmembers Arthur L. Day, Jr., Vickey Carter Johnson, and Steve Bailey. Council Member At Large R. Griff Gordy and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe were not present. Also in attendance were City Manager Wallace B. Hunter and City Clerk Melony Lee. The following Department Heads were present: Deputy Building Official Ray Rogers, Director of Engineering and Public Works Angel Moore, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Planning Director Tracie Hadaway, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Assistant Fire Chief Kerry Bragg, Phenix City Russell County Library Director Tammy Henry, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, Utilities Engineer John Spraggins, Police Chief Ray Smith, and Assistant Police Chief George Staudinger. Members of the media were present.

City Clerk Melony Lee advised that because Councilmember At Large R. Griff Gordy and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe were not present, a motion is needed to appoint one of the councilmembers present at tonight's meeting as Mayor Pro-Tem in order to conduct the Public Hearing. Councilmember Day moved to appoint himself as Mayor Pro-Tem. Councilmember Johnson seconded said motion. Upon said motion being put to a vote, the following vote was recorded: YEAS: Councilmembers Day, Johnson, and Bailey. NAYS: None. ABSTAINS: None. The motion thus passed.

Mayor Pro-Tem Arthur L. Day, Jr. called the meeting to order and asked City Clerk Melony Lee to call roll. Upon calling roll, the following members answered present: Councilmember Arthur L. Day, Jr., Councilmember Vickey Carter Johnson, and Councilmember Steve Bailey.

Mayor Pro-Tem Day delivered the invocation.

Mayor Pro-Tem Day opened the floor to City Manager Wallace Hunter to begin the meeting.

City Manager Wallace Hunter thanked everyone for their hard work on the budget. He advised this has been a difficult budget to assemble due to the current economic situation affecting not only our community, but the whole country.

City Manager Hunter called upon Finance Director Labrita King-Copeland to present the proposed 2022-2023 Budget Message to Council and the audience. Finance Director Labrita King-Copeland reviewed the Budget Message

BUDGET MESSAGE

Mayor Pro-Tem Day thanked Ms. Copeland.

Mayor Pro-Tem opened the Public Hearing and advised if anyone wanted to come forward and address council regarding the 2022-2023 Proposed Budget, now is the time.

Toni Shah of The Phenix Citizen questioned the amount of the ARPA Funds in the budget showing around five million when it should show eleven million. Mr. Hunter advised the amount should be eleven million; however, the city has not received those funds from the state (which should have been received in June). He advised the city has been in contact with the state regarding the date of disbursement. He advised we are projecting what we have in our back up plan in case the city does not get the funds in a timely manner.

Mr. Hunter spoke on employees retiring at record numbers – not just in our area – but across the state and across the nation. He advised the city is fortunate to have retained many veteran employees.

Mr. Hunter advised more citizens need to be involved in their government and come forward to ask questions that they may have. He spoke on other cities failure to keep up with economic changes. He challenged the citizens to keep up with the news reports on the ongoing problem with getting and retaining employees. He advised employment incentives have changed. He spoke further on the economic challenges of the city and the need for the sales tax rate increase.

Mayor Pro-Tem Day advised anyone who has questions regarding the city to contact the City Clerk's Office.

Mayor Pro-Tem Day spoke on the city's Double A Rating.

Mr. Hunter advised there are four major functioning systems that service the area's citizens, and they are: the Russell County Government, the City Government, the School System, and the Housing Authority. He further advised that there have been changes in the School System and the Housing Authority; and that the majority of people in Russell County reside inside the city limits of Phenix City. Therefore, the city keeps reserves in place to keep our Double A Rating – which affects the ratings of the other entities.

Mr. Hunter explained how property taxes are collected by the county and disbursed to the city. Mayor Pro-Tem Day advised that every rooftop in the city gives a portion of the property tax to the county. He advised this is just one example of how the city helps to support the county.

Councilmember Johnson asked if the General Fund Budget's \$76,000.00 surplus is based off of the approval of the proposed sales tax. Mr. Hunter advised no. He further explained the personnel rate changes cannot be reflected unless the sales tax is approved. He advised that the Charter allows him to go in and make those changes after October 1st.

Councilmember Johnson asked about the Confiscated Funds of \$5,000.00. Mr. Hunter called upon Police Chief Ray Smith to speak about the Confiscated Funds. Chief Smith advised

the \$5,000.00 is a very conservative amount. He further advised the city has to account for that money. Mr. Hunter advised it is a line item that happens and so it has to be in the budget.

Neither hearing nor seeing anyone else come forward, Mayor Pro-Tem Day closed the Public Hearing.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting thus adjourned at 7:44 p.m.