

**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 2, 2020**

The members of the City Council of the City of Phenix City, Alabama met at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time for the regularly scheduled work session on Monday, March 2, 2020, in the third floor conference room of the Municipal Building located at 601 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Phenix City, Alabama. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Councilmember Arthur L. Day, Jr., Councilmember Vickey Carter Johnson, Councilmember Steve Bailey, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Councilmember R. Griff Gordy was not present. Also present were City Manager Wallace B. Hunter, City Clerk Melony Lee, and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance were: Building Official Gil Griffith, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, City Engineer Angel Moore, Utilities Director Stephen Smith, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, IT Manager Mike Bauer, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Golf Course Director Mike Barber, Library Director Michele Kilday, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks & Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, Police Chief Ray Smith, Graduate Engineer John Spraggins and Waste Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Charles Woody.

Upon a quorum being established, Mayor Lowe called the meeting to order.

The invocation was led by Councilmember Day.

Mayor Lowe called upon Betty S. LeBlanc to address council, as listed on the agenda. Ms. LeBlanc came forward to address Council. Ms. LeBlanc stated that she was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana, and became a resident of Phenix City after Hurricane Katrina. Ms. LeBlanc also stated that she loves the City, and she is glad that she made Phenix City her home. Ms. LeBlanc further stated that she has two major concerns to discuss with Mayor and Council: her neighborhood in District Two and Healthcare. Ms. LeBlanc stated that her neighborhood is a quiet area with the majority of residents being either senior citizens, retired or disabled. Ms. LeBlanc also stated that it has been brought to her attention that the City and the Phenix City Housing Authority has plans to build a City Park and apartments near the Public Library in her neighborhood. Ms. LeBlanc further stated that she is afraid for her safety and the safety of others and that her property value would decrease. Ms. LeBlanc further stated that she cannot understand how HUD can come in and take over an area without notifying the neighboring residents. Ms. LeBlanc stated that she went to the Housing Authority and spoke with the Executive Director Mary Mayrose, but feels as if her voice was not heard. Ms. LeBlanc also stated she decided to go a step further and speak with City Council. Mayor Lowe stated that the City Council has no control over Healthcare. Mayor Lowe also stated that the City Council has the citizens of Phenix City best interest in mind. Mayor Lowe further stated that HUD does not initiate projects in any community. Mayor Lowe stated that someone in the community has to contact HUD first with their concerns before any decisions are made. Mayor Lowe also stated that as a citizen, Ms. LeBlanc has a right to voice her opinion. Ms. LeBlanc stated that after she had spoken with Ms. Mayrose and HUD, she was under the impression that the new project was a combined decision with the City Council and the Housing Authority. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated citizens should speak up if they feel they have been treated unfairly. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City supported the upgrade of existing Housing Authority property. Councilmember Johnson stated that several citizens in District Two have voiced the same concern. Councilmember Johnson also stated that she invited them to the Work Session but they were unable to attend. Councilmember Johnson further stated that the citizens have the right to voice their concerns. Councilmember Johnson stated that the City Council is not in one hundred percent agreement with all of the Housing Authorities decisions. Councilmember Johnson also stated that City Council will always

make decisions that are best for the city. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. LeBlanc for coming to speak with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Tim Simpson to address council, as listed on the agenda. Mr. Simpson came forward to address Council. Mr. Simpson of Barrett Simpson Inc., thanked Council for the opportunity to speak before them. Mr. Simpson stated that Scott Chambers purchased property off Highway 80, near A-1 Roofing Company, going all the way to the City limits. Mr. Simpson also stated that Phenix City Sewer is on the back side of the subdivision and Phenix City Water is available on the front side of Highway 80, which will allow fire protection, if needed. Mr. Simpson asked Mayor and Council if the area could be annexed as a R2 residential property which is about 10.9 acres. Mr. Simpson stated that on the front side of the property is about 11.54 acres for commercial usage. Mr. Simpson also stated that there is approximately 4 acres of land that is not included due to the owner not wanting to sell at this time. Mayor Lowe inquired about the overall plans of the property for residential and commercial usage. Mayor Lowe stated that the City must stay consistent with annexation. Mayor Lowe also stated that the master plan must be in compliance. Mr. Simpson stated that on the map presented to Council, the R2 portion of the property is what they are presenting to the City at this time. Mr. Simpson also stated that the R3 commercial property does not have a layout and is for future usage. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the plans will need to be reviewed to see how it will benefit the City. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City has a moratorium in place concerning annexations. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that the moratorium allows for exceptions based on financial feasibility. Mr. Smith also stated that it costs the City more to provide services to residential areas than the City generates in revenue. Mr. Smith further stated that it would be difficult to justify annexing the R2 without the R3. Mr. Simpson stated that the builder and developer are one in the same and will have no issues with annexing the residential and commercial portions of the property. Councilmember Bailey stated that an increase in the amount of residence in an area brings about commercial need. Mr. Smith stated that a meeting should be set up to discuss the plans in detail. Councilmember Johnson inquired about the phases in the development from residential to commercial. Mr. Simpson stated that the request for annexation will be submitted for the residential and commercial portions at the same time. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Simpson to meet sometime in the near future to discuss plans, process, procedures, and expectations. Mr. Simpson agreed. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Simpson for coming to speak with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Doug Jefcoat to address council, as listed on the agenda. Mr. Jefcoat came forward to address Council. Mr. Jefcoat stated that he, along with his associate Carla Barnette, wanted to address the council concerning a lighting issue at Ms. Barnette's place of employment. Mr. Jefcoat also stated that Ms. Barnette is the business manager of a new college in the City, 101 Technical College, located at 703 Industrial Circle. Mayor Lowe exercised his right to privilege and called Ms. Carla Barnette to address council. Ms. Barnette stated that 101 Technical College is a fast tract school where a certification in the medical field can be obtained in 6 to 12 weeks for less than \$2,000.00. Ms. Barnette stated that lighting outside the college is a safety issue for the students. Mr. Jefcoat stated that the school is currently operating under a temporary license from the State of Alabama Department of Technical Education. Mr. Jefcoat also stated that the building that the school is located in, does not have adequate parking in front of the building but additional parking is available across the street. Mr. Jefcoat further stated the State of Alabama is requiring additional lighting along Industrial Circle. Mr. Jefcoat stated that a pole was installed by Alabama Power 260 feet away, towards the over flow parking area. Mr. Jefcoat also stated that Tyrone Stanford from the Engineering Department stated that the pole must be 300 feet away in distance. Mr. Jefcoat asked Mayor and Council for permission to use the pole installed by Alabama Power, of 260 feet away, instead of installing another pole at 300 feet. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the pole must be 300 feet away in distance

in order for the City to pay the electrical bill on the street light. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City will not pay for the installation of the light, but the City pays the electric bill for street lights in compliance with the law. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that Alabama can place a light on the existing pole but the school must pay the electric bill. Mr. Jefcoat stated that the options will be discussed. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Jefcoat and Ms. Barnette for coming to speak with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Angel Moore, City Engineer, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their February 25, 2020 meeting.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Clerk Melony Lee who discussed the following with Mayor and Council:

1. Reminded Council that the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast will be held on March 5, 2020 at 7:00 a.m.
2. Advised Council that Daylight Savings time begins on Sunday March 8, 2020.
3. Advised Council that Councilmember Bailey will be out of town March 11-16, 2020.
4. Reminded Council that the March 17, 2020 Council Meeting will be held at Martin Idle Hour Community Center at 6:00 p.m.
5. Informed Council of pocket item concerning Legislative Bill updates.
6. Informed Council of the Alabama League of Municipalities Voting Delegate registration form deadline. Councilmember Day stated he will be the Voting Delegate and Councilmember Bailey stated that he will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate Voting Delegate.
7. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the outcome of the TAP Grant meeting concerning 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that one of the contractors had questions about some of the bid documents. Ms. Moore also stated that to allow more time for clarification and understanding, the bid date was changed to March 6, 2020.

Councilmember Johnson stated that she had a few questions for the Building Department. Councilmember Johnson asked if photos of abandoned structures that were on the list for demolition approval could be included as supporting documents. Gil Griffith, Building official, stated that pictures are taken and can be included as requested. Councilmember Johnson inquired about accepting bids from a new vendor, Great Southern Furniture, for demolition of proposed structures. Mr. Griffith stated that the company is not new to the City. Mr. Griffith also stated that Josh Palmer and Great Southern Furniture takes lumber and recycles it for furniture. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that a structure does not come before Council for demolition until it has met all qualifications. Mr. Hunter also stated that it is not a fast process and the several attempts to reach the owner have been made. Councilmember Bailey stated that a structure would not make the list for demolition if the owners are diligently working to bring the structure up to code standards.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the opening of the new Roses Department store. Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Manager, stated that the contractors are making great progress and the front of the store is looking really nice. Mr. Culligan also stated that there isn't a definite opening date. Mr. Culligan further stated that the old Kmart Shopping Center on 280 By-Pass across from Applebee's has been purchased and in the process of being cleaned out so that the City can market the property.

Councilmember Day inquired about the opening of Renfroe's Market on Highway 431. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that he is meeting with Mr. Renfroe on March 3, 2020 and will have more information after the meeting. Mr. Smith also stated that there is still work that needs to be done and permits that need to be obtained before the store can be opened. Mr. Smith further stated that the weather and back ordered equipment pushed back the expected opening date. Councilmember Day inquired about other business in the shopping center. Mr. Smith stated that no announcements can be made at this time.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on 5<sup>th</sup> Street South. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the amount of rain lately has slowed the process down.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the replacing or repairing pavilions at Arthur Sumbry Park. Councilmember Day stated that one pavilion is leaking and the other still has yellow tape around it from vandalism. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the insurance claim has been processed and now we are waiting on the contractors to come in and complete repairs. Mr. Hunter also stated that the weather has played a factor in the pavilion repairs not being completed.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on building a City Conference Center. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated several sites are being cleared and a team is being organized to survey site. Mr. Hunter also stated that building a center will not be an easy process but an ongoing one.

Councilmember Day inquired about the upgrades on the Municipal building. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the project will probably start this summer.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the Miracle Park Project. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that plans are in the infant stage. Mr. Hughes also stated that he has a meeting with an architect soon. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there is no investors or grants in place at this time. Mr. Hunter also stated that fundraising efforts has not yet begun.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the weather and the amount of constant rain fall having an effect on the City's baseball and softball season. Councilmember Bailey asked if one field was in worst condition than the others, and questioned how that would affect the season. Todd Hughes, Park and Recreation Director stated if one field is rained out, then all the fields are rained out. Mr. Hughes also stated that the fields may look dry but they are saturated with water on the Airport Fields.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about how the rain was affecting the City's Golf Course. Councilmember Bailey asked if any sides had to be closed down and are the golf carts able to maneuver around the course. Mike Barber, Golf Manager, stated that during the heavy moments, some holes had to be changed to walking holes only due to carts getting stuck or not being able to move about. Mr. Barber also stated that golf hole-nine was able to open back up. Mr. Barber further stated that there were six days that no rounds were played at the golf course due to the rain. Mr. Barber stated that on rained out days, maintenance staff painted the snack bar and performed other updates on the inside building.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the Columbus Storm team playing at Garrett Harrison Stadium. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that the Columbus Storm

football team is a part of the APDFL (Amateur to Professional Developmental Football League). Mr. Hughes stated that six games are scheduled at the field, which brings revenue to the City.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that he spoke with a member of the Homeowners Association concerning Summerfield Subdivision. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City's Engineering Department has worked with Alabama Power to change out some of the lights within the subdivision. Mr. Hunter further stated that there was no light in the cul-de-sac which is now required by subdivision regulations. Mr. Hunter stated that the Homeowners Association was also concerned about the brightness of the lights. Mr. Hunter also stated that in other cases, if the Homeowners Association wanted to make changes beyond standard regulations, they would be responsible for the upgrade charges and not the city. Mr. Hunter further stated that the Homeowners Association would need to contact Alabama Power.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that he spoke with the Department Heads concerning the latest epidemic, the Coronavirus. Mr. Hunter also stated that the city will take the necessary precautions to help protect City employees and citizens. Mr. Hunter further stated that the use of masks, gloves, Lysol disinfectant spray and hand sanitizer stations would help prevent the spread of the disease. Kris Kennedy, Fire Chief, stated that just like with any other infectious disease, employees should make sure to use hand sanitizer and wipe down work stations with Clorox disinfectant wipes.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham stated that there were no agenda claims to review with Council.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham asked for an Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation for 10 minutes, from which the meeting would adjourn.

Councilmember Day moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Pending Litigation for 10 minutes, from which the meeting would adjourn. Councilmember Johnson seconded said motion. All were in favor.

Council went into Executive Session at 5:25 p.m.

Council came out of Executive Session at 5:32 p.m.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, March 16, 2020.