

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
May 4, 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, May 4, 2020, by the way of Zoom Video Conferencing. Upon roll call, the following members were present by the way of Zoom Video Conferencing: Councilmember Arthur L. Day, Jr., Councilmember Vickey Carter Johnson, Councilmember Steve Bailey, Councilmember R. Griff Gordy, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Also present by the way of Zoom Video Conferencing were Assistant City Manager Steve Smith, City Clerk Melony Lee, and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. City Manager Wallace B. Hunter was not present. Department Heads in attendance by Zoom Video Conferencing were: Building Official Gil Griffith, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, City Engineer Angel Moore, 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, Director of Human Resources Stephanie Chastain, Police Chief Ray Smith, Graduate Engineer John Spraggins and Superintendent of Waste Water Treatment Plant Charles Woody.

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

The invocation was led by Councilmember Johnson.

Mayor Lowe advised there were no Requests to Address Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Angel Moore, City Engineer, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their April 28, 2020 meeting which was held by Zoom Video Conferencing.

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

1. Informed Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities Convention scheduled for May 16-19, 2020 has been changed to a one day convention in July 2020.
2. Informed Council that the Council meeting on May 19, 2020 will be held at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
3. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on May 25, 2020 in observance of Memorial Day Holiday.
4. Advised Council that a public meeting will be held on June 11, 2020 at 4:00 pm at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center to discuss Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Fund application.
5. Advised Council that the June 16, 2020 Council Meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Activities Center.
6. Advised Council that the Mayor's Ball scheduled for June 20, 2020 has been canceled.
7. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Johnson stated that in the past, she has held a Meet your Council Representative of District Two meeting at the Central Activities Center prior to the scheduled Council Meeting. Councilmember Johnson also stated that this year's meeting at the Central Activities Center will be held on June 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmember Johnson further stated that the delivery of important information or concerns for the citizens of District Two, may be affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. City Clerk Melony Lee stated that Governor Kay Ivey will

make a statement on May 15, 2020 to update the State of Alabama on the Safer at Home Order. Ms. Lee also stated that whether or not the Work Session and Council Meetings will be held in person or by Zoom Video Conferencing will be determined under the direction of Governor Ivey.

Councilmember Day inquired about the number of applicants interviewed and the number of new City Employees during the Pandemic. Stephanie Chastain, HR Director, stated that interviews were conducted by Zoom Video Conference. Ms. Chastain also stated that six full time positions were filled in the month of April.

Councilmember Day stated that he is aware that only the walking and nature trails of the City's parks are open at this time. Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the pavilion at Arthur Sumbry Park. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that the new tin roof for the pavilion should be completed this week.

Councilmember Day inquired about the number of traffic accidents that have occurred in the City for the month of April. Councilmember Day asked if the number of accidents were higher than usual. Chief of Police, Ray Smith stated that on average there are about 169 accidents occurring in the City.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Mother Mary Mission Outfall Relocation project. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that a small portion of the sewer main that drains that area was washed out, due to the recent amount of heavy rainfall. Mr. Smith also stated that the line has been re-routed. Mr. Smith thanked Mr. Bickerstaff for allowing the City to be on his property to change the easement and reroute the line.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the traffic signal at the new shopping center on Highway 431. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that the City is waiting on the approval from ALDOT (Alabama Department of Transportation). Mr. Smith also stated that as of right now, the shopping center will consist of Renfroe's Super Market, a gas station, and a pizza restaurant. Mr. Smith further stated that Renfroe's Super Market opening may be delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and not being able to stock inventory.

Councilmember Day stated that he has received positive feedback on the resurfacing of the streets near Ridgecrest Elementary. Councilmember Day also stated that the citizens in that area are very pleased with the outcome.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the old DHR building off of Opelika Road. Gil Griffith, Building Official, stated that construction is ongoing in that area. Mr. Griffith also stated that the contractors are working on the exterior and there is no estimated completion date to report at this time.

Councilmember Day inquired about what role if any, the City plays in the building of the Multi-Purpose building at Ridgecrest Elementary. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the City reviews the plan and make sure that the codes are met. Ms. Moore stated that the project belongs to the Phenix City Board of Education.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the 5th Street South project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the contractors are working on installing the curb and gutter forms. Ms. Moore also stated that the once the driveways are in, the work will be able to flow smoothly.

Councilmember Day inquired about the morale of the Emergency Response Team during the Coronavirus Pandemic. Fire Chief Kris Kennedy stated that morale is as expected. Chief Kennedy also stated that the Responders are responding to calls and taking all necessary precautions to remain safe.

Councilmember Bailey asked the Engineering Department if there have been any traffic issues since the closing of the Bridge on Old Opelika Road near the Castle Fuels on Stafford Road. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that there have been no new complaints. Mr. Bailey stated that a concerned citizen stated that the traffic light does not give enough time to clear traffic. Ms. Moore stated that the issue has been addressed.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the lot that's draining water in the Saddle Brook Subdivision. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the subdivision was not pleased with the size of the rocks previously in place. Ms. Moore also stated that the contractors are working on an updated design. Ms. Moore further stated that Alabama Power has lines in the area that need to be moved before work can begin.

Councilmember Johnson stated that she has received several phone calls from citizens in District Two expressing their gratitude to the Mayor, City Council, and the City Manager for insuring the citizens' safety during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about healthcare insurance for City Council. Councilmember Johnson stated that she has reached out to the Alabama League of Municipalities to compare Phenix City's ordinance concerning healthcare for City Council to other cities in Alabama. Councilmember Johnson also stated that she is aware that there is an ordinance in place but ordinances can be amended. Councilmember Johnson further stated that she will bring the information to the City Council for possible review, once data from other cities have been collected.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about an update on the Ladonia Commercial Project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the contractors on site are installing curb, gutter and water lines. Ms. Moore also stated once final plat has been approved, lots can be divided and used for commercial purposes. Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Manager, stated the developers are looking to recruit fast food chains and neighborhood centric retail stores. Councilmember Johnson stated that she is so excited about the growth in Phenix City. Mr. Culligan stated that the Coronavirus Pandemic has had an impact on the retail industry.

Councilmember Johnson stated that she received a call concerning the requirement for building permits. Councilmember Johnson asked if a separate permit is needed for framing, plumbing heat and air, electrical and gas installations. Gil Griffith, Building Official, stated that all major crafts must have a separate permit which is state mandated. Councilmember Johnson asked if a license for the County and a license for the City are both required. Mr. Griffith stated that a license from Russell County and the State of Alabama both are required through the Russell County Office. Mr. Griffith also stated that the City issues the permit.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about an update on the Auburn Road and Highway 80 traffic signal upgrade. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that new poles and new signal heads have been installed and the project is complete and has been signed off by ALDOT.

Councilmember Johnson thanked the Library Department for making mask for Library participants to use once the Library re-opens. Michele Kilday, Library Director, stated that the staff is using collected material to make masks for staff and Library participants.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he received a phone call concerning yards being flooded due to heavy rainfall at Summerville Place and an abundance of mosquitos have been seen in that area. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that Lee County has a pipe going into the ditch, which has become overgrown and the Public Works Department is in the process of scheduling time to clean it out. Ms. Moore also stated that cleaning out the ditch will help the problem but will not totally solve the problem because the low line area retains water.

Councilmember Day stated that he has received several phone calls concerning the lack of Police patrolling in South Phenix City and Ladonia, off of Highway 80 behind Wendy's. Chief of Police, Ray Smith stated that South Phenix City and Ladonia are patrolled on a regular basis. Chief Smith also stated that most of Ladonia is in the Phenix City Police jurisdiction. Chief Smith further stated that over 167 arrest were made in April to keep the streets of Phenix City safe.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

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

Mayor Lowe stated that he received a phone call concerning the usage of Garrett Harrison Stadium for Glenwood School's Graduation Ceremony. Mayor Lowe also stated that he consulted with Representative Chris Blackshear to make sure it would be in compliance with the Safer at Home Order in place by Governor Kay Ivey. Mayor Lowe further stated that Glenwood was a private school and the City would not be held liable for the schools decision.

Councilmember Bailey asked if Councilmember Johnson's research on Insurance availability for City Council warrants an amendment to the Ordinance. Councilmember Bailey further inquired if it will affect the current City Council members. City Attorney Jimmy Graham stated that a change in the ordinance would not have an effect on the present Council.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on Phenix City Conference Center. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that the Conference Center is a long term project and there is no expected date of completion at this time.

Councilmember Day inquired about an ATM machine in the new shopping center off of Highway 431 near Renfroe's Market. Mayor Lowe stated that the decision for ATM locations would be up to a financial institution.

Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that on Wednesday May 6, 2020, a portion of South Railroad Street near Stadium Drive and 280 By-Pass will be closed due to a drainage pipe failure. Ms. Moore stated that it may take up to two weeks to repair the pipes. Ms. Moore further stated that signs will be placed and labeled specifically for South Railroad Street Detour.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham stated that any actions taken concerning insurance for Mayor and Council needs to be taken into consideration after the August 2020 election. Mr. Graham also stated that the new terms will affect the next elected Council after November 2020.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham asked for an Executive Session to discuss Good Name and Character for 30 minutes, from which the meeting would adjourn.

Councilmember Day moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Good Name and Character for 30 minutes, from which the meeting would adjourn. Councilmember Gordy seconded said motion. All were in favor.

Council went into Executive Session at 4:33 p.m.

Council came out of Executive Session at 4:50 p.m.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, May 18, 2020.