

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
May 18, 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 18, 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 City Manager Wallace B. Hunter, City Clerk Melony Lee, and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance by Zoom Video Conferencing 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, Director of Human Resources Stephanie Chastain, Police Chief Ray Smith, Assistant Chief of Police Gail Green Gilliam, 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 Day.

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 May 12, 2020 meeting. Ms. Moore advised the meeting was cancelled due to no Agenda items.

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

1. Reminded 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.
2. Advised Council that City Offices will be closed on May 25, 2020 in observance of Memorial Day Holiday.
3. Advised Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities Convention scheduled for May 16-19, 2020 has been rescheduled to a one day convention on July 23, 2020.
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. Informed Council that a date for the Budget Work Session needs to be selected. Ms. Lee stated that three days need to be allotted with suggested dates between June 16, 2020 and June 30, 2020.
7. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the deadline for attending the ALM Convention on July 23, 2020. City Clerk, Melony Lee, stated that a deadline for registration has not yet been published. Councilmember Johnson stated that she would follow up with Mrs. Lee once a decision has been made.

Mayor Lowe stated that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Mayor's Ball has been canceled, however scholarships will still be awarded. Mayor Lowe also stated that students from Central High School, Russell County High School and Glenwood High School have submitted their scholarship applications and they are now being reviewed by the Scholarship Committee. Mayor Lowe further stated that the community should rally together to support our students during this Pandemic. Mayor Lowe stated that donations are being accepted and no amount is too small. Mayor Lowe also stated that August 6, 2020 is the tentative date to award the scholarship. Mayor Lowe further stated that this year's Scholarships will be funded by reserved funding from previous Mayor's Ball sponsorships and donations. Mayor Lowe stated that the Scholarship Committee will follow the guidelines set in place by Governor Ivey and the safer at home orders and maintain social distancing when giving out the certificates.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he was contacted by attorney Mike Raiford concerning erosion issues in the Bridgewater Subdivision. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that she is not aware of any issues. Ms. Moore also stated that if given a contact name or number, she would follow up on the concerns.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed agenda claims with Council.

Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that the City will save almost 4 million dollars with a present day value of \$ 3,990,000.00 in refunding bond issues. Mr. Smith also stated that over 10 million dollars have been saved in 2020 alone. Mr. Smith further stated that the City has been fortunate to take advantage of the lower interest rates. Mr. Smith stated that the issues are designed from the beginning with refunding possibilities. Mr. Smith also stated that since he has been with the City of Phenix City, he has not seen a larger savings in one setting. Mr. Smith further stated that the City's credit rating plays a major part in being able to refund bond issues. Councilmember Day stated that the amount of the savings is great news for the City. Councilmember Bailey stated that it takes years of planning and analyzation to secure such a generous amount of savings. Mayor Lowe inquired about the City's previous credit rating. Mr. Smith stated that the City was at a single A rating in 2006. Mr. Smith also stated that in less than 15 years the City went from a single A rating to a AA minus rating which shows that the City is moving in the right direction and it has taken a lot of hard work and dedication. Mr. Smith further stated that Phenix City has the same rating as the state of Alabama. Mayor Lowe stated that 2008 was a difficult time economically for the United States as a whole and it speaks volumes for the City to be where we are today. Councilmember Johnson inquired about the next rating that the City can achieve. Mr. Smith stated that the next rating is AA and as the City continues to grow and build, the AA credit rating may be achievable. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City has a great finance team that has put together a plan to restructure an aging city and grow the revenue. Mr. Hunter stated that it has taken years to see the vision come into fruition.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that during the COVID-19 Pandemic, some business in the City have taken an economic hit and some like Wal-Mart, Publix and Home Depot have had an increase. Mr. Hunter stated that in times like these the City must come together and support each other. Mr. Hunter also said that it takes patience and time. Councilmember Bailey stated that a lot of Cities are probably taking a hit but certain business are doing well because people are staying at home. Councilmember Bailey also stated that the Utilities Department and Public Works Department are working hard during this Pandemic to keep our City clean.

Councilmember Johnson thanked City Manager Wallace Hunter, Assistant City Manager Steve Smith and the leadership for the strategic plan created years ago that has lead the City to the Credit Rating that we are experiencing today. Councilmember Johnson stated that the City is in a good place for continued growth.

Todd Hughes, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that all of the Recreation Centers are currently closed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Mr. Hughes also stated that all summer camps have been canceled and paid registration fees have been refunded. Mr. Hughes further stated that the Parks and Recreation Department has worked with other Departments throughout the state to revise Summer Camp plans. Mr. Hughes stated that instead of an all summer long camp, there will be four Mini Camps that last two weeks each with a maximum of 20 kids per day. Mr. Hughes further stated that guidelines have been set up to minimize contact to ensure the safety of participants and staff. Mr. Hughes stated that temperatures will be checked before entry into the minicamp, state mandated spacing restrictions will be enforced, and online registration. Mr. Hughes stated that the mini camps are different from what Parks and Recreation have done in the past but the department wants to give the children some sense of normalcy during the summer months. Mr. Hughes further stated that plans may change depending upon the Safer at Home orders set in place by Alabama Governor Kay Ivey. Mr. Hughes stated that notifications for the changes have been mailed to parents and the tentative date for the first minicamp is June 1, 2020.

Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that weather permitting, work will begin on the 14th Street TAP Grant May 26, 2020. Ms. Moore also stated that the road will remain open but an alternate route for commuters in that area is suggested.

Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that on May 20, 2020 work will began on the Saddle Brook Drainage Project. Ms. Moore also stated that Saddle Brook's Homeowner Association has been notified that construction will begin. Ms. Moore further stated that the project should take a couple of weeks to complete.

Councilmember Day inquired about the old DHR Building off of Opelika Road. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that it is a State project and not a City project.

Councilmember Bailey asked if a new design was created for the Saddle Brook Drainage Project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the original design was constructed with rocks added to the back slope, due to drainage and erosion issues.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, June 1, 2020.