

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
August 3, 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, August 3, 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 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 Steve Smith, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, IT Manager Mike Bauer, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Library Director Michele Kilday, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks & Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Director of Human Resources Stephanie Chastain, Chief of Police 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 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 July 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. Reminded Council that the Budget Public Hearing will be held on August 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Community Center.
2. Reminded Council that the Mayor's Ball Scholarship Award Ceremony will be held on August 6, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. at the Amphitheater immediately following the Budget Public Hearing meeting.
3. Reminded Council that the Municipal Election and the Phenix City Board of Education Election will be held on August 25, 2020.
4. Advised Council that City Offices will be closed on September 7, 2020 in observance of Labor Day Holiday.
5. Advised Council that the September 15, 2020 Council Meeting is scheduled to be held at the 5th Street South Youth Center at 6:00 p.m. Council was in agreeance to hold the meeting by Zoom Video Conference at 9:00 a.m.
6. Advised Council the National League of Cities Convention scheduled for November 18-21, 2020 will be held as a Virtual City Summit.
7. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Day stated that he has received positive feedback on the 5th Street South Project. Councilmember Day thanked all of the departments that played a part on the completion of the 5th Street South Project.

Councilmember Day inquired about how the COVID-19 Pandemic has affected crime and traffic violations in our community. Chief of Police, Ray Smith, stated that because of the Pandemic, people are traveling less which decreases the number traffic citations. Chief Smith also stated that about fifteen percent fewer calls are coming into the Police Department and arrest have slightly decreased.

Councilmember Day inquired about the number of participants for the Parks and Recreation Summer Program. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that programs have a limited number of participants due to the Pandemic and extra safety measures that have been put in place. Mr. Hughes also stated that will all things considered, everything is going well.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the Saddlebrook Drainage Lot Project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the project is about ninety percent complete. Ms. Moore also stated that the drainage structures are in place and a small irrigation system with sod will be installed soon. Councilmember Bailey stated that the work that has been completed thus far looks good.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the sewer line project in the Bridgewater Subdivision. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that the City has a contract with Constantine Engineering Company. Mr. Smith also stated that Constantine Engineering Company are in the designing stages and should be finished with a suitable design in a couple of months.

Councilmember Johnson thanked the Public Works Department and the Utilities Department for the good and timely response to work orders completed in District Two. Councilmember Johnson stated that she has received phone calls and even a visit from citizens expressing their gratitude for draining sitting water from a City lift driveway and picking up leaves and debris in the community.

Councilmember Johnson stated that she has received several phone calls concerning speeding in neighborhoods and streets throughout the City and especially in District Two. Councilmember Johnson asked if the speed detecting devices can be rotated throughout the City. Councilmember Johnson stated that Ingersoll Drive and Sanford Road would be great areas for the speed detecting devices to reduce speeding in those areas. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that the speed detecting devices are rotated throughout the City. Chief Smith also stated that the devices are strategically placed in high traveled areas that warrant more time and attention. Chief Smith further stated that the devices record the number of drivers in the area as well as the speed of the drivers. Chief Smith stated that the Police Department is in the process of purchasing more speed detecting devices to cover more areas in the City and those areas will be considered. Councilmember Johnson stated that one of the calls was from a parent who was concern for the children in the neighborhood's safety on Ingersoll Drive.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the reopening of the Central Activities Center on August 17, 2020. Councilmember Johnson asked if the entire Center will be open or just a portion. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that the Center will be open with limitations and within the guidelines set by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control). Mr. Hughes also stated that exercise classes, pottery classes and possibly art classes will be available during certain times of day with a limited number of participants. Mr. Hughes further stated that only current members will be able to call and reserve a seat for the classes. Councilmember Johnson stated that it is good that the Center will be open for our seniors and still be able to follow the guidelines set by the CDC for social distancing. Mr. Hughes stated that the senior members can call the Central Activities Center at 334-291-4743 for more information on the Coronavirus precaution measures that are being followed, class schedules or to reserve a time slot for a class.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the renaming of a portion of 5th Street South. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that on Wednesday August 5, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. a portion of the street will be dedicated to the memory of Arthur Sumbry Sr. Mr. Hunter also stated that the street will still be 5th Street South and only a portion of it will be called Arthur Sumbry Sr. Parkway. Mr. Hunter further stated that Mr. Sumbry contributed greatly to the City Council and the entire community. Councilmember Day stated that Mr. Sumbry represented District Three very well and he is honored to be able to continue the precedent that Mr. Sumbry set and represent District Three.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed agenda claims with Council.

Councilmember Johnson thanked the Citizens of Phenix City, Alabama for staying safe and practicing social distance during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Councilmember Johnson encouraged everyone to continue to wear a mask or face covering while out in public. Councilmember Johnson stated that the City follows the guidelines set by Alabama Governor Kay Ivey and the CDC.

Councilmember Johnson stated that the Phenix City School Superintendent Randy Wilkes and his team have come up with a great reopening plan for the 2020-21 school year. Councilmember Johnson also stated that the plan is stepped out in stages to assure the safety of administrators as well as the teachers and students. Councilmember Johnson wished everyone a safe and successful school year.

City Manager Wallace Hunter asked everyone to pray for the family of Lee County Commissioner Johnny Lawrence, who recently passed away. Mr. Hunter stated that Mr. Lawrence was a retired Fire Chief and an Instructor at CVCC. Mr. Hunter also stated that he and Mr. Lawrence trained together several years ago. Mr. Hunter further stated that Mr. Lawrence will be missed by all that had a chance to meet him.

City Manager Wallace Hunter encouraged everyone to please take the COVID-19 Pandemic seriously because the number of people who have contracted the disease is steadily rising in our community and people are dying. Mr. Hunter stated that safety measures are put in place for the safety of all.

Mayor Lowe encouraged everyone to put others first and think about others safety as well as our own.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, August 17, 2020.