

**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 1, 2021**

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 1, 2021, 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 R. Griff Gordy, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Councilmember Steve Bailey was not present. Also present by the way of Zoom Video Conferencing were City Manager Wallace Hunter, City Attorney Jimmy Graham, and City Clerk Melony Lee. Department Heads in attendance by Zoom Video Conferencing were: Building Official Gil Griffith, City Engineer Angel Moore, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, IT Manager Mike Bauer, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Golf Manager Mike Barber, 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, Acting Utilities Director Charles Woody and Graduate Engineer John Spraggins.

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

Councilmember Johnson led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Veronica Walker to address council, as listed on the agenda. Ms. Walker was not present by the way of Zoom Video Conferencing at the appointed time. Mayor Lowe stated that if Ms. Walker were to log on at a later time, he would allow her to address Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Angel Moore, City Engineer, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their February 23, 2021 meeting.

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

1. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on March 2, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. over the platform ZOOM.
2. Advised Council that the Historic Preservation Commission Board will meet March 3, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.
3. Reminded Council that Daylight Savings time begins on March 14, 2021.
4. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on March 15, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. over the platform ZOOM.
5. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on March 16, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
6. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on April 5, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. over the platform ZOOM.
7. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on April 6, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. over the platform ZOOM.
8. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on April 19, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. over the platform ZOOM.
9. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on April 20, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. over the platform ZOOM.
10. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet April 27, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.
11. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

City Clerk Melony Lee stated that the Alabama League of Municipalities 2021 Annual Convention Meeting will be held in Huntsville, Alabama May 12, 2021 through May 15, 2021. Ms. Lee also stated that a Voting Delegate and 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate Voting Delegate needs to be selected and turned into the Alabama League of Municipalities along with the date of the decision. Ms. Lee further stated that there are three Councilmembers attending this year's convention and they are Councilmember Day, Councilmember Johnson and Councilmember Bailey. Councilmember Day stated that he was designated as the Voting Delegate for the past two years and would like to give the opportunity to Councilmember Johnson or Councilmember Bailey. Mayor Lowe stated that a decision would not be made at this time due to the absence of Councilmember Bailey. Mayor Lowe also stated the decision will be voted on at the next Council Meeting on March 16, 2021.

Councilmember Johnson asked if it would be possible to update the name of the East Alabama Mental Health - Mental Retardation Board. Councilmember Johnson stated that the word "retardation" could be seen as offensive and is not commonly used in today's society. Councilmember Johnson also stated that the Alabama Mental Health Board might be a more fitting title. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that Councilmember Johnson brought up a good question. Chief Smith also stated that the words "mental retardation" is no longer apart of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual but is now being referred to as Intellectual or Learning Disability. Chief Smith further stated that the terminology has been updated in the DSM and Phenix City may need to bring it to the States attention. Councilmember Gordy asked if a recommendation could be sent to the State for consideration of a name change or name update. City Clerk Melony Lee stated that she would research the process of sending the recommendation to the Sate and follow up with Council at a later date.

Councilmember Johnson stated that speeding remains an issue throughout the City. Councilmember Johnson asked if the speed detecting devices are still being rotated throughout the City. Councilmember Johnson stated that she received a phone call from a constituent in her district who lost their pet due to someone speeding on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Councilmember Johnson also stated that the caller was concerned for the safety of the children as well. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that the City currently owns four of the speed detecting devices. Chief Smith also stated that the devices are placed in the City's hot spots where speeding is an issue. Chief Smith further stated that he would look into putting 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue into the rotation.

Councilmember Johnson stated that she received compliments from Citizens on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue near Faithful Missionary Baptist Church that the street sweepers did an awesome job in cleaning the streets. Councilmember Johnson also stated that it is the small things that mean a lot. Councilmember Johnson further stated that it makes it easier on sweeping the streets when the garbage receptacles are removed from the roadway after they have been emptied.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about a Crime Stoppers Program in our area to help reduce the amount of crime going on in the City. Councilmember Johnson stated that she has received several phone calls concerning gun violence throughout the City. Councilmember Johnson asked if there was a number that citizens could call to report drug or suspicious activity in their neighborhood. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that Phenix City is a member of the East Alabama Crime Stoppers Association in Montgomery, Alabama. Chief Smith also stated that the information is listed on the City's Web site and the Police Department has an Android and Apple App that could be used to submit anonymous tips. Chief Smith further stated that East Alabama Crime Stoppers may offer awards for information leading up to an arrest. Chief Smith stated that

the Phenix City Police Department will not receive information on the caller but the information on the crime in our jurisdiction.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the More Than a Game Program at the Meadow Lane Park Ball Field. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that past participation and illnesses have affected the carrying out of the program. Mr. Hunter also stated that Todd Hughes, Director of Parks and Recreation, has plans to resurrect the program as well as others soon.

Councilmember Day inquired about Taser training. Councilmember Day asked how long was the training to be certified to use a Taser. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that recertification training is a one-day course. Chief Smith also stated that an officer can not carry a Taser if they have not been certified.

Councilmember Day inquired about body cameras. Councilmember Day asked if all of the Phenix City Police wore body cameras. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that all officers do wear body cameras. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated it is mandatory that all officers wear body cameras.

Mayor Lowe called upon Chief of Police Ray Smith to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding and Intent of Community Schools United Consortium Partners. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that it is important to address short comings that we have in our society and providing opportunities to grow and change in certain areas. Chief Smith also stated that Ben Moser, President and CEO of United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley, and his team have written a very detailed interdisciplinary program that will be piloted by two area schools, one in Phenix City and the other in Columbus, Georgia. Chief Smith further stated that the school chosen in Phenix City was the Phenix City Elementary School on South Railroad Street. Chief Smith stated that the MOU list many different agencies including hospitals and government services that will provide more support to the school and create more programs that lead to academic and social success. Chief Smith also stated the program will be very beneficial for students and the entire community. Councilmember Johnson stated that the program is needed in our community. Councilmember Johnson thanked Chief Smith for working on bringing the program to Phenix City. Councilmember Day inquired about the choosing of Phenix City Elementary School over the other elementary schools in the City. Chief Smith stated that Phenix City Elementary School had similar demographics in comparison to the chosen school in Columbus, Georgia. Chief Smith also stated that this is just the beginning of the program and hopefully as the program grows other schools will be added.

Mike Bauer, IT Manager, informed Mayor Lowe that Ms. Walker was present via Zoom Video Conferencing. Mayor Lowe called for Ms. Walker to address Council at 3:44 p.m. Ms. Walker stated that she would like to be a voice for the community. Ms. Walker also stated that she would like to volunteer in the school system, help raise awareness about certain diseases by started fundraisers and sponsored walks and help with more activities for kids like a bowling alley and skating rink. Mayor Lowe stated that it takes a community to come together to make our City a safer place to live. Mayor Lowe also stated that it takes people like Ms. Walker who wants to participate in activities for the betterment of the City. Mayor Lowe also stated that as far as the bowling alley and skating rink are concerned, it takes investors and business owners to bring those type of businesses to our City. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Walker for showing the initiative to help the Citizens of Phenix City and for wanting to be a voice to the community. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Walker for coming to speak with Council.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed agenda claims with Council.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there are several paving projects going on in the City including Brickyard Road, Railroad Street and Opelika Bridge. Mr. Hunter also stated that the Opelika Bridge Project is near completion. Mr. Hunter further stated that the bridge is now open to thru traffic.

Councilmember Day inquired about old tires being dumped near the old bowling alley. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the area was private property. Mr. Hunter stated that Gil Griffith, Building Official, will contact the owner.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that it is time for the community to come together and look out for each other. Mr. Hunter also stated that the Police can not be everywhere at all times so if they see something, say something. Mr. Hunter further stated that it will take prayer and the entire community coming together to make a difference in the City.

Councilmember Day inquired about Councilmembers being notified if a crime happens in their district. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that he would notify Mayor Lowe and Mayor Lowe will reach out to the Councilmember of that particular district. Mr. Hunter also stated that once all the information has been gathered, then it will be passed on.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, March 15, 2021.