

**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**July 6, 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 Tuesday, July 6, 2021, at the Martin Idle-Hour Park Community Center located at 3743 Moon Lake Drive, Phenix City, Alabama 36867. Upon roll call, the following members were present: 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 were City Manager Wallace Hunter, City Attorney Jimmy Graham, and City Clerk Melony Lee. Department Heads in attendance were: Building Official Gil Griffith, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, City Engineer Angel Moore, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Golf Manager Mike Barber, Library Director Michele Kilday, Parks and Recreation Superintendent of Recreation Kasey Kaschak, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, Assistant Police Chief George Staudinger and Utilities Director Charles Woody.

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

Councilmember Gordy led the invocation.

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 June 22, 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 July 7, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
2. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet July 13, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.
3. Informed Council that the Mayor's Ball Scholarship Committee will host a Golf Tournament Fundraiser on July 16, 2021 at the Lakewood Golf Course.
4. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on July 19, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
5. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on; July 20, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
6. Informed Council that the Budget Public Hearing will be held on July 22, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
7. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet July 27, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.
8. Informed Council that the Mayor's Ball Scholarship Award Night will be held on July 29, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Amphitheatre.
9. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on August 2, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
10. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on August 3, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
11. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet August 10, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.
12. Informed Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities is having a Congressional Luncheon on August 12, 2021 in Opelika at 11:00 a.m. CST for the third Congressional District.

13. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on August 16, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
14. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on; August 17, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
15. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet August 24, 2021 at 5:15 p.m.
16. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

City Clerk Melony Lee informed Mayor and Council that the Russell County Historical Commission mailed in a letter requesting funds for painting the Buchanan House, which the City placed under the Russell County Historical Commission's care. Mayor Lowe stated that there is a process that must be completed to request funds from the City. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that Chief of Police Ray Smith will reach out to the Russell County Historical Commission.

Councilmember Day stated that he received a request from a citizen to attend the Budget Public Hearing on July 22, 2021. Mayor Lowe stated that the Budget Public Hearing is open to the Public with limited seating following the guidelines set by the CDC. City Manager Wallace Hunter explained the Budget Public Hearing process. Mr. Hunter stated that it is great to have citizens who want to know the ends and outs of the City. Mr. Hunter also stated that a copy of the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Budget will be available for viewing at the City Clerk's Office. Councilmember Day stated that he remembers coming to the Council meetings before he decided to run for office. Councilmember Day also stated that it is very important for the citizens of Phenix City to be concerned about what is going on in their City.

Councilmember Johnson stated that she has received several concerns from citizens by phone and in person concerning speeding and loud noises throughout the City. Councilmember Johnson asked if cameras and speed detecting devices are being rotated throughout the City. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that people continue to break the Noise Ordinance that is in place. Mr. Hunter also stated that it's not always the people who live in Phenix City but people who are traveling to and through the City as well. Mr. Hunter further stated that speed detecting devices are rotated throughout the City and cameras are placed strategically throughout the City as well. Assistant Chief of Police George Staudinger stated that the summer months normally generate more traffic on the streets. Assistant Chief Staudinger also stated that with more people on the street it increases the amount of violations. Assistant Chief Staudinger further stated that the speed detecting devices, red light cameras and patrolling officers all work together for the safety of citizens. Assistant Chief Staudinger stated that the primary focus of citations given out by officers or captured by the green light camera are not to generate money but for law enforcement and the safety of the citizens or Phenix City.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the accessibility of the Central Activity Center to members since Municipal Court is being held there temporarily until the Public Safety Building's renovations are complete. Councilmember Johnson asked if classes at the Central Activity Center were still by appointment only. Parks and Recreation Superintendent of Recreation Kasey Kaschak stated that there are several classes that are not being offered at the Central Activity Center. Mr. Kaschak also stated that members may enter the Center by the back door. Mr. Kaschak further stated that classes are by appointment only.

Councilmember Johnson asked City Manager Wallace Hunter if he would update everyone on the grants available to the City during the pandemic, specifically the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund and the American Rescue Plan Grant. Mr. Hunter explained that the City has completed the necessary documents to apply for the additional funding. Mr. Hunter stated that the funding will be used for projects around the City. Labrita King-

Copeland, Finance Director, stated that the City recently received funds from the American Rescue Plan Grant. Ms. King-Copeland also stated that the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund was a reimbursement grant used to recover funds spent by the City because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Councilmember Johnson asked if any of the funds received could be allocated for education or to help the small businesses in Phenix City that suffered lost due to the pandemic. Mr. Hunter stated the Municipal Government and Educational funds are separate. Mr. Hunter also stated that the Chamber of Commerce helped the small business owners. Mr. Hunter further stated that a few small business owners in Phenix City participated in the Paycheck Protection Program Loan (PPP Loan). Mr. Hunter stated that funds from the Federal Government must be used for the purpose it was intended. Mr. Hunter also stated that business owners may be held accountable for the funds received.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the Lyles property located near the City's Economic Development Building. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that things are slowly getting back to normal in the nation after the pandemic. Mr. Hunter also stated that there are not a lot of investors who are willing to spend millions of dollars on investments during the current economic situations. Mr. Hunter further stated that the City, local businesses and businesses around the nation are working on skeleton crews. Mr. Hunter stated that people are choosing to retire early or not work at all. Mayor Lowe stated that investors are leery of making investments that may or may not give them a return on their money. Mayor Lowe also stated that another deciding factor may be that interest rates are predicted to increase by the end of the year. Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Manager, stated that investors are extremely hesitant but the City is continuously perusing new businesses to come to the Phenix City area. Mr. Culligan also stated that retailers that were essential are the ones that were able to survive the pandemic without any major problems.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Old Seale Road and 5<sup>th</sup> Street South project update. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the Engineering Department has met with the survey crew and the next step will be for the survey to be drawn. Ms. Moore also stated that once the survey has been drawn a meeting will be scheduled with ALDOT.

Councilmember Day inquired about the land purchased by the City for the landfill extension. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the bid opening will be held on Friday July 9, 2021. Ms. Moore also stated that within the next 30-60 days a contractor should be able to begin on the project. Ms. Moore further stated that the projected completion date should be within a year.

Councilmember Day stated that used tires are being dumped in different areas of the City. Councilmember Day asked what was the process for disposal. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the City has to pay for tire disposal. Ms. Moore also stated that the City has spent thousands of dollars on tire disposal. Councilmember Day asked if a fine is associated with dumping the tires. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that violators will be fined if they are caught dumping tires.

Councilmember Day stated that he has received several calls concerning the Arthur Sumbry Park and the Southside Park. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the maintenance and upkeep of all of the City's parks is an ongoing project. Mr. Hunter also stated that vandalism at the parks is still a problem. Mr. Hunter further stated that it is going to take the communities help to keep the parks clean and reduce the amount of vandalism.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Public Safety Building remodeling project. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that a few obstacles have been discovered underneath the surface. Mr. Hunter also stated that the project will continue to move as schedule once the issues have been removed or updated.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed agenda claims with Council.

Mayor Lowe reminded the Department Heads that they are appreciated for everything that they do for the betterment of the City.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that Alabama's unemployment rate is at its lowest since the pandemic started. Mr. Hunter stated that the number of unemployed people is still higher than before the pandemic. Mr. Hunter stated that there are jobs available not just with the City but throughout the City.

Mayor Lowe asked that God continue to bless Phenix City.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, July 19, 2021.