

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
April 18, 2022

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, April 18, 2022, 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 Steve Bailey, Councilmember R. Griff Gordy, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Also present were City Manager Wallace Hunter, City Attorney Jimmy Graham, City Attorney Chan Gamble, and City Clerk Melony Lee. Department Heads in attendance: Deputy Building Official Ray Rogers, City Engineer Angel Moore, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Planning Director Tracie Hadaway, 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 and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Chief of Police Ray Smith, Assistant Chief of Police George Staudinger, Graduate Engineer John Spraggins, and Utilities Director Charles Woody.

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

Councilmember Day led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Tracie Hadaway, Economic Development Planning Director, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their April 12, 2022 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 April 19, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
2. Informed Council that the April 21, 2022, Downtown Redevelopment Authority meeting has been canceled due to no agenda items.
3. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet April 26, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
4. Informed Council that a Retirement Reception will be held on April 26, 2022, for Michele Kilday at 2:00 p.m. at the Library.
5. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on May 2, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
6. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on May 3, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
7. Informed Council that the Auburn University Master of Community Planning Class will be held on May 4, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
8. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet May 10, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
9. Informed Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities 2022 Convention will be held May 11, 2022 through May 14, 2022 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
10. Informed Council that Daechang Seat Corp. ground breaking ceremony will be held on May 12, 2022 at 11:30 a.m.
11. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on May 16, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
12. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on May 17, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
13. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet May 24, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.

14. Reminded Council that City Offices will be closed on May 30, 2022 in observance of the Memorial Day Holiday.
15. Reminded Council that April 30, 2022 is the deadline to file the Statement of Economic Interest.
16. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

City Clerk Melony Lee discussed the 2022 "Back-to-School" Sales Tax Holiday Ordinance. Mayor and Council agreed that the Ordinance should be placed on the May 3, 2022 Agenda for first reading.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed agenda claims with Council.

Angel Moore, City Engineer, reminded Council of the draft copy of the Public Works Department Manual that she passed out in a previous Work Session. Ms. Moore advised Mayor and Council to look over the Manual and if they have any questions to follow up with her at the next Work Session held on May 2, 2022.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that companies all over the Nation are increasing starting pay to recruit workers. Mr. Hunter also stated that the job market has become highly competitive and employers are doing what they can to hire those that want to work. Mr. Hunter further stated that with the expansion of Daechang Seat Corp., there will be up to 400 jobs in Phenix City which is a plus for the City. Mr. Hunter stated that the City has to move strategically and stay in front of the labor demand curve to maintain the finances and employees that the City has. Mr. Hunter also stated that Phenix City competes against Columbus, Georgia, Ft. Benning, Georgia, Lagrange, Georgia, Opelika, Alabama, and Auburn, Alabama in the job pool. Mr. Hunter further stated that when it comes to competitive pay, the heavy hits are against the Utilities Department, Public Works Department and Parks & Recreation Department. Mr. Hunter stated that when it is time to discuss the upcoming budget, there are some things that will need to be put in place to retain the City's field workers. Mr. Hunter also stated that Chief of Police Ray Smith and himself are working with the Russell County Sherriff department discussing the Second Chance Program for former inmates with light weight felony charges. Mr. Hunter further stated that it helps the individual regain a position in society, pay child support or just to have a job and make money. Councilmember Day asked if the Second Chance Program had to be mandated by the State or local. Mr. Hunter stated that the City is working with the Russell County Sherriff's Department to create the program. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City is doing everything that it can to help the people of Phenix City. Chief Smith stated that there are a couple of companies out there including Alatrade that has a current program where inmates can work with permission from a judge and with direct supervision. Chief Smith also stated that it allows the inmates to pay back restitution, pay child support, or just to maintain a source of income. Chief Smith further stated that the program gives people with a criminal background a second opportunity at employment. Mr. Hunter stated that employers face a lot of challenges when it comes to hiring employees. Mr. Hunter spoke on legalizing marijuana and what effect it would have on a person operating equipment. Councilmember Bailey stated that it may be more of a liability. Councilmember Bailey also stated that some people would take advantage of the situation and some will do what is right. Mr. Hunter stated that he hopes that it doesn't get to that point in Alabama. Mr. Hunter also stated once gas prices increased, it was only a matter of time that everything else would increase as well. Mr. Hunter further stated that the City has to make sure that we are prepared for the increase in order to survive.

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

Council went into Executive Session at 4:02 p.m.

Council came out of Executive Session at 4:30 p.m.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, May 2, 2022.