

**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
May 2, 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, May 2, 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, 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, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, Chief of Police Ray Smith, and Assistant Chief of Police George Staudinger.

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

Mayor Lowe led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Judge Zack Collins to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Judge Collins came forward to address Council. Judge Collins stated that he is the Juvenile Court Judge for Russell County and juvenile crime has increased in the City. Judge Collins also stated that he comes before Council today to request funds for an alternative to the Juvenile Detention Program. Judge Collins further stated that Russell County has donated around \$13,000.00 over the past two years. Judge Collins stated that the goal of Juvenile Court is to rehabilitate youth but there are times when they have to be detained. Judge Collins also stated that as of right now, there are only two and a half beds available for juvenile offenders in YDC (Youth Detention Center). Judge Collins further stated that it is very challenging in deciding if a juvenile gets out early to free up the bed or not detained because of lack of housing. Judge Collins stated that because of this issue, some juveniles are not taking it seriously when they come to court. Judge Collins stated that the Juvenile facility in Dothan, Alabama stated that they would allow juvenile offenders to be transported to their facility for a short term stay for \$127.00 per day for less violent offenders. Judge Collins also stated that the estimated request is about \$32,000.00 for 252 days of short term stay and transportation to the Dothan Juvenile Facility. Judge Collins asked Mayor and Council if the City would consider splitting the cost with the County and therefore increasing the amount of the City's current amount of appropriated funds by \$16,000.00. Judge Collins stated that he would rather a juvenile not be placed in detention but sometimes it is necessary. Judge Collins also stated that a juvenile's stay in YDC should be temporary allowing the opportunity for rehabilitation. Judge Collins further stated that the main goal is to keep the street of Phenix City safe. Councilmember Day asked why there were only two and a half beds available in YDC. Judge Collins stated that the City provides one full bed which is \$38,000.00 per year and the County provides the same. Judge Collins also stated that an appropriation from the State is received yearly in the amount of \$16,000.00 per year. Judge Collins further stated that when the beds are full, he has to make a decision to return the youth to their family instead of detaining them. Judge Collins stated that sometimes it's difficult to transfer the youth to Montgomery to free up the beds at YDC. Mayor Lowe asked if the Juvenile Detention Center submitted the necessary paperwork for the appropriation request prior to the deadline. Judge Collins answered yes. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the crime rate has risen throughout the State of Alabama. Mr. Hunter also stated that the State may consider increasing their appropriation.

Judge Collins stated that to his knowledge, the State's appropriation has not increased. Judge Collins also stated that the Russell County YDC has received grants from DYS (Department of Youth Services) for prevention programs to keep the youth out of Detention. Judge Collins further stated it is more of a partnership with DYS, no funds were given directly to YDC. Mr. Hunter suggested that a request be made to the State as well for an increase in their appropriation. Mr. Hunter stated that he and Chief of Police Ray Smith will support the request. Councilmember Gordy asked if it depends on the violation that warrants a youth to be transported to Dothan. Judge Collins stated that it depends on the severity of the case. Judge Collins also stated that for an example, domestic violence abusers or firearm users will need to be separated from their situations and will be escorted to Dothan if a bed is not available in Russell County. Judge Collins further stated that it gives the youth time to calm down and think about what they have done. Councilmember Day asked what age is considered a juvenile offender. Judge Collins stated that the age range that comes before him in court is generally from eight to eighteen. Councilmember Johnson thanked Judge Collins for what he does to protect the City. Councilmember Johnson asked what the difference was in Dothan's YDC and DYS. Judge Collins stated that DYS was the Department of Youth Services located outside of Montgomery, Alabama in Mt. Meigs, Alabama. Judge Collins also stated that the Dothan facility primarily house their local juvenile offenders but they will allow Russell County juvenile offenders to be housed temporarily for a fee. Councilmember Johnson asked how many days would be considered short term. Judge Collins stated that around 7 days is considered short term. Councilmember Johnson asked if the Teen University on Dillingham Street is a part of the Juvenile Detention Program. Judge Collins stated that the Teen University is not a secured facility and does not have the capability to securely detain offenders. Judge Collins also stated that Teen University partners with DYS with a prevention program. Mayor Lowe thanked Judge Collins for coming to speak with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Tracie Hadaway, Economic Development Planning Director, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their April 26, 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 May 3, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
2. 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.
3. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet May 10, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
4. Informed Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities 2022 Convention will be held May 11, 2022 through May 14, 2022 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
5. Informed Council that Daechang Seat Corp. ground breaking ceremony will be held on May 12, 2022 at 11:30 a.m.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet May 24, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
9. Reminded Council that City Offices will be closed on May 30, 2022 in observance of the Memorial Day Holiday.
10. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on June 6, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
11. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on June 7, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.

12. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet June 14, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
13. Reminded Council that City Offices will be closed on June 19, 2022 in observance of the Juneteenth / Freedom Day Holiday.
14. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on June 21, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center. This meeting will be held on a Tuesday afternoon due to the Juneteenth / Freedom Day Holiday.
15. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on June 22, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. This meeting will be held on a Wednesday due to the Juneteenth / Freedom Day Holiday. Ms. Lee stated that originally the evening meeting was scheduled to be held at the Central Activity Center which is currently unavailable. Ms. Lee asked Mayor and Council if they would like to hold the meeting at the Phenix City/Russell County Library. Mayor and Council all agreed to hold the meeting at the Library.
16. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet June 28, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.

Mayor Lowe stated that the Mayor's Ball Golf Tournament will be held June 10, 2022 at the Lakewood Golf Course.

City Clerk Melony Lee reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Johnson stated that Phenix City Elementary School will be hosting a Career Day on May 9, 2022. Councilmember Johnson also stated that she will be speaking at the event and speaking about the duties of a City Councilmember, qualifications and terms. Councilmember Johnson asked Mayor and Council if there was anything that they would like for her to inform the children on Council's behalf.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about an update on the Popular Spring Park. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that everything is complete with the exception of the basketball court. Mr. Hughes also stated that the City is on the contractors schedule and they are experiencing a longer wait time. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City is short of staff and other businesses are as well. Mr. Hunter also stated that hopefully it will be completed soon. Councilmember Johnson stated that the area looks good and she is excited for the opening of the park.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he has received several calls concerning the sewage smell in the 5th Avenue area. Councilmember Bailey asked if the aerator had been placed in the area. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the aerator has been installed and adjustments will be made to the aerator.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he has received several phone calls concerning the grass on the City's Right of Way has not been cut. Councilmember Bailey also stated that he explained to the callers that the City is experiencing a shortage in staff. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that once the grass is mowed, it will be sprayed to slow the growth which should help to reduce the number of times it will need to be cut to make it more manageable. Ms. Moore also stated that the department has about 16 employment positions that need to be filled. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that even with spraying the grass to slow down its growth, the City is operating under the States rules and regulations. Ms. Moore stated that a permit is needed to spray the grass. Mr. Hunter stated that the Parks and Recreation Department is helping the Public Works Department with limb and debris pick up.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the percentage of applicants that turn into employees. Stephanie Chastain, Human Resource Director, stated that applications are received, interviews are conducted, but it doesn't always lead to a new hire. Ms. Chastain also stated that challenges could be not passing the background check or failing the drug test. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there are several jobs available in several different departments. Councilmember Johnson stated that she read in the Citizen News paper that the Parks and Recreation Department are in need of temporary workers. Councilmember Johnson asked if it was a way to partner with the Central High School for students who needed employment during the summer. Mr. Hunter stated that there is currently an intern program already in place. Mr. Hunter further stated that Columbus, Georgia and Lagrange, Georgia are also experiencing the employee shortage.

Councilmember Day stated that there is only one property on the Building's Department Monthly Report. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the Blight Removal Project grant is in place for upcoming structures that will be demolished.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the Old Seale Road Bridge Project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the preliminary work has been submitted to ALDOT. Ms. Moore also stated that the consultants are working on the actual foundation design. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City is also doing in-house research with the guidance of City Attorneys.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Brickyard Road closure. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the portion on Brickyard Road was still closed. Ms. Moore stated that some of the needed materials are on back order.

Councilmember Day inquired about the construction project at 1805 Knowles Road. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the apartment complex on Knowles Road is expanding and building additional apartments.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update of the renovation of the Public Safety Building. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that the projected completion date is August 2022.

Councilmember Day asked if the pool at Southside Park will open this summer. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that the pool will be opened once a lifeguard has been hired.

Councilmember Day inquired about camera tag readers at City Parks. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that as of now, the readers will be installed at Austin Sumbry Park, Southside Park, and Meadowlane Park.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Fire Departments Training Facility Project. Fire Chief Kris Kennedy stated that the design plans have been approved and the bidding process will be starting soon.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed agenda claims with Council.

Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that at the Work Session on March 14, 2022, she passed out the draft copy of the Public Works Department Manual. Ms. Moore advised Mayor

and Council to look over the Manual if they haven't already and to follow up with her with any questions.

Councilmember Johnson moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Good Name and Character and Economic Development for 35 minutes, from which the meeting would adjourn. Councilmember Day seconded said motion. All were in favor.

Council went into Executive Session at 4:28 p.m.

Council came out of Executive Session at 5:03 p.m.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, May 16, 2022.