

## **WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES September 6, 2022**

The members of the City Council of the City of Phenix City, Alabama met at 3:12 p.m. Eastern Time<sup>1</sup> for the regularly scheduled work session on Tuesday, September 6, 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 Specialist Jennifer Lowman, 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 Tammy Henry, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, Chief of Police Ray Smith, and Utilities Director Charles Woody.

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

Councilmember Johnson led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Cheryl Huckaby to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Ms. Huckaby came forward to address Council. Ms. Huckaby stated that she is requesting that her property and the remainder of 12<sup>th</sup> Street be annexed into the City for the purpose of her children to be allowed to ride the school bus. Ms. Huckaby also stated that to her knowledge, her home and her neighbor's home are the only ones on 12th Street that are not in the City limits. Ms. Huckaby further stated that her children are in the school district which allows for them to attend Phenix City schools but because her home is 10 feet out of City limits, they cannot ride the school bus. Mayor Lowe stated that at this time, there is a moratorium on annexations with the exception of business purposes. Mayor Lowe also stated that several parents and guardians have come before Council with the same or similar issue with the children not being able to ride the school bus and they all were asked to present the issue with the School Board. Councilmember Day recalled having a similar issue with his grandchildren not being able to ride the school bus. Councilmember Day stated that a hardship was granted for the children to ride the bus. Ms. Huckaby stated that the school system advised that they cannot authorize the pickup and she needs to speak to Mayor and Council about annexing the property into the City limits. Mayor Lowe stated that Council has always tried to be consistent in decision making and if they do something for one person, they will have to do the same for another. Councilmember Bailey stated that Mayor and Council has empathy for parents who are in this situation but he agrees with Mayor that Council has always been consistent in decision making, and this is a school board issue. Councilmember Bailey suggested that Ms. Huckaby speak with the school board again and ask them to consider her child riding the bus as a hardship request. Councilmember Gordy asked if there could be a legal reason that children could not be picked up if the resident is outside of the City limits. City Attorney Jimmy Graham stated that in previous years, power of attorney were given to parents in these situations so that their children could ride the school bus if it already came in their area. City Attorney Graham also stated that he is not sure what the school board's reasoning is because if the child is allowed to attend the school then they should be allowed to

---

<sup>1</sup> Work Session began 12 minutes later than regular scheduled time of 3:00 p.m. due to a Called meeting that starting at 2:00 p.m. and ended at 3:03 p.m.

ride the bus to the school. Mayor Lowe stated that Ms. Huckaby should meet with the Superintendent of the school system and explain the hardship and the fact that the bus comes to the neighborhood. Mayor Lowe suggested that maybe the legislatures of the State of Alabama should be involved to resolve this problem because Ms. Huckaby is not the only one in this predicament. City Engineer, Angel Moore, stated Ms. Huckaby's residents and her neighbor are not in the City limits but the rest of 12<sup>th</sup> Street is inside the City limits. Ms. Moore also stated that a portion of the lot is in the City limits and the portion that contains the structure /residents is not in City limits. Mayor Lowe stated that this is probably what the school board based their decision on but the school board needs to state why the decision was made and what if anything can be done to help Ms. Huckaby and the others in the same predicament. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Huckaby 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 August 23, 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 September 7, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center. This meeting will be held on a Wednesday morning due to the Labor Day Holiday.
2. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet September 13, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
3. Informed Council that the United Way Kick Off Luncheon will be held on September 13, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center.
4. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on September 19, 2022 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 September 20, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street South Youth Center.
6. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet September 27, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
7. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on October 3, 2022, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
8. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on October 4, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
9. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on October 10, 2022 in observance of Columbus Day Holiday.
10. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet October 11, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
11. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on October 17, 2022, 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 October 18, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
13. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet October 25, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
14. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on October 31, 2022, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
15. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on November 1, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
16. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

City Clerk Melony Lee reviewed with Mayor and Council, a pledge form received from the National League of Cities to become a member of the Strong Southern Communities Initiative. Ms. Lee passed out the information to Mayor and Council.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the opening of the 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue Park and Walking Trail and the official name of the park. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the name of the park is Popular Springs Park, and it is on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Councilmember Johnson stated that her constituents will be happy about that. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director stated that the walking trail has been surfaced and finishing touches will be completed soon. Mr. Hughes stated that information on opening and ribbon cutting will be announced soon.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the placing of three electric car charging stations at the City's parking garage and one at the library instead of the proposed four at the parking garage. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City applied for a grant for the charging stations. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the City is waiting on the approval of the grant.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about an update on the Bridgewater Sewer Line Project. Charles Woody, Utilities Director, stated that improvements have been made. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there has been a change of location from the original area that the line would run through but the project is continuing. Mr. Woody stated that when option number one didn't work out, the City had to go with option number two across the creek.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the Lakewood Dam project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the initial plan continues and a valve has to be installed to the other side.

Councilmember Day inquired about the new police vehicles that have been ordered. Chief of Police, Ray Smith stated that 10 additional Dodge Chargers have been ordered. Chief Smith stated that Ford Explorers that were previously ordered, are on back order.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update of the renovation of the Public Safety Building. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that there are no major problems to report. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that an estimated date of completion cannot be given at this time, life is unpredictable and any major or minor thing can happen that may slow down the process.

Councilmember Day stated that to his understanding, there are three grab-all trucks that are all down at the same time. Angel Moore, City Engineer state that there are three trucks that are inoperable at this time. Ms. Moore stated that a new truck has been purchased and another recently repaired. Ms. Moore also stated that even though three are down two are working but now the number of drivers is the issue.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Meter Replacement Project. Charles Woody, Utilities Director, stated that the work orders listed on the monthly report for Utilities does not reflect just the new replacement meters but the other repairs and replacements as well.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham stated that there were no agenda claims to review with Council.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that Charles Woody, Utilities Director, will review the residential water and sewer charges for the Citizens at the September 7, 2022 Council Meeting.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, September 19, 2022.