

**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
October 17, 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, October 17, 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 Office Manager Shannon Davis. City Clerk Melony Lee was not present. Department Heads in attendance: Deputy Building Official Ray Rogers, City Engineer Angel Moore, Economic Development Planning Director Tracie Hadaway, 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, 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 Gordy led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Payton Linder to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Mr. Linder came forward to address Council. Mr. Linder stated that he would like for his property to be annexed into the City for the purpose of having his children to be allowed to attend the Phenix City School System. Mr. Linder stated that his property is serviced by Phenix City Utilities and about a mile from Central High School and 4 miles from Phenix City Elementary and Phenix City Intermediate Schools. Mr. Linder also stated that there are only about three houses on his street that are not in City limits. Mayor Lowe stated that he is not the only who has come before Council requesting to be annexed in the City for school purposes. Mayor Lowe also stated that the city has a moratorium on annexation unless there is an ROI (Return on Investment) for the City. Mayor Lowe further stated that Council has always tried to be consistent in decision making and if they do something for one person, they will do the same for another. Mayor Lowe stated that Mr. Linder's property is not adjacent to a property that is already in City limits. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that City limits are in the vicinity but no city limits are continuous to Mr. Linder's property. Ms. Moore presented a map that showed City limits in regards to Mr. Linder's property. Councilmember Bailey suggested that Mr. Linder speak with the school system superintendent and ask them to consider his children being allowed to attend a Phenix City Schools as a hardship request. Councilmember Bailey asked if Mr. Linder had already spoken to the school board concerning this matter. Mr. Linder stated that he came to Mayor and Council first. Mayor Lowe stated that the decision will up to the school system. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Linder for coming to speak with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Frankie Bell to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Mr. Bell came forward to address Council. Mr. Bell stated that in his opinion, Moon Lake is a gem to the City that not only attracts the citizens of Phenix City but neighboring Cities as well. Mr. Bell also stated that the condition of Moon Lake Park and the walking trail, lately have not been appealing to the eyes. Mr. Bell further stated that he understands that the City is short staff but the park and lake areas need to be more presentable. Mr. Bell asked if the City communicates with the Citizens to let them know of the lack of employees being the reason why things are done at a slower rate. Mr. Bell stated that it took over four weeks for someone to cut the grass in the area. Mr. Bell also stated that his second concern was the lighting at the Garrett Harrison Stadium's press box. Mr.

Bell further stated that he spoke to Parks and Recreation Director, Todd Hughes, who informed him that Alabama Power maintains the lighting. Mayor Lowe stated that at several Council meetings since the pandemic he, councilmembers and City Manager Wallace Hunter have all at some point asked the citizens to be patient if things around the City are not completed immediately because of staffing shortages. Mayor Lowe also stated that it's been challenging trying to hire, recruit and retain employees. Mayor Lowe further stated that the work staff is still down 48%. Mr. Hunter stated that the grass cutting of the park has been contracted out and even the contractors are short staffed. Mr. Hunter stated that for months, it has been broadcasted that the City is short on staff and man power. Councilmember Gordy stated that he agrees with the City Manager and for the past few months at every council meeting, the shortage in workforce has been discussed. Councilmember Gordy also stated that he is not sure if people aren't watching the council meetings or not sharing the information. Mr. Hunter stated that available jobs have been posted on all of the City's social media pages, the City's web page and the City's Marquees. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City uses all platforms to communicate to the citizens. Mr. Hunter stated that the work force is picking back up. Mayor Lowe encouraged citizens to come to the council meetings and stay informed on what is going on in the City. Councilmember Bailey stated that it is more beneficial to find out about what is going on in the City from City Officials. Councilmember Bailey also stated that he welcomes questions concerning District One and the City and the other Councilmembers feel the same way. Councilmember Bailey stated that they may not have all of the answers but they know where to call to find the answer or at least find out more information. Mr. Hunter stated that he wanted to address Mr. Bell's second concern and that was the Garrett Harrison Stadium. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City has invested a lot of money in the heavily used stadium. Mr. Hunter further stated that the City spoke with the now former superintendent concerning the school system absorbing some of the cost of the upkeep of the stadium. Mr. Hunter stated that the City has yet to discuss those plans with the Interim Superintendent. Mr. Hunter also stated that most schools handle their own stadium but Phenix City has a unique situation. Mr. Bell stated that he was confused about the maintenance of the stadium until he spoke with Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director. Mr. Hunter stated that communication is very important and Mr. Hughes would be a great place to start when it comes to Parks & Recreation. Mr. Bell thanked Mayor and Council for allowing him to come and speak. Mr. Bell also thanked Mr. Hughes for the information given prior to the Council meeting. Mr. Hughes stated that he and or his staff visit the park on a daily basis. Mr. Hughes also stated that he is also short on staff with 17 maintenance positions available and only 8 filled. Mr. Hughes further stated that work is prioritized. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Bell for coming to speak with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Wes Thrash to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Mr. Thrash came forward to address Council. Mr. Thrash stated that he is representing the Forsyth Group, a civil engineering company, requesting that property at 3743 Highway 280 / 431 North be annexed into the City for business purposes. Angel Moore, City Engineer handed out the preliminary site layout map. Mr. Thrash stated that the property is adjacent to and surrounded by properties that are in City limits. Mr. Thrash also stated that his company is currently working with two different developers and today's request is for the western most parcel of the three available parcels whose developer is ready to move forward with their project. Mr. Thrash further stated that the other developer is still working through contracts. Mr. Thrash revealed the proposed uses for the property to include a gas station, commercial usage and restaurant usage. Mr. Thrash stated that the site is approximately 3.5 acres of land. Mr. Thrash also stated that in the future the plan is to have the remaining parcels annexed into the City but today's request is for the one parcel. Ms. Moore, stated that the property is continuous to City limits. Councilmember Gordy asked if the property was right next to the IHOP Restaurant. Mr. Thrash stated that the property is located next to IHOP. Ms. Moore stated that there is a moratorium on annexation and that is the reason why Mr. Thrash come before Mayor and Council. Ms. Moore also stated that if Mayor

and Council agrees that it will be economically feasible for the City, Mr. Thrash will need to meet with the planning committee before it formally comes before Council. Mayor Lowe stated that the annexation will be considered because it is beneficial financially for the City. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Thrash 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 October 11, 2022 meeting.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Clerk Office Manager Shannon Davis who discussed the following with Mayor and Council:

1. 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.
2. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a Legislative Luncheon on October 18, 2022 at 11:30 a.m.
3. Informed Council that Ft. Benning's Oktoberfest will be held October 21- 23, 2022 at the Uchee Creek Camp Ground Activity Center.
4. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet October 25, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet November 8, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
8. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on November 11, 2022 in observance of Veteran's Day Holiday.
9. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on November 14, 2022 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 November 15, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
11. Informed Council that the National League of Cities, City Summit will be held November 17- 19, 2022 in Kansas City, MO.
12. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet November 22, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
13. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on November 24, 2022 and November 25, 2022 in observance of Thanksgiving Holiday.
14. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the heavy equipment located on the River-Walk. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that she believes that Columbus, Georgia is having work performed in the river on some of the rapids.

Councilmember Bailey spoke on the ICF (International Canoe Federation) Canoe Freestyle World Cup events that occurred in Phenix City, Alabama and Columbus, Georgia over this past weekend. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there were people visiting our area from all over the world and it was a beautiful sight. Tracie Hadaway, Planning Director, stated that she has received a lot of positive reviews from participating athletes. Ms. Hadaway stated that the World Cup Event is scheduled for next year which will be about three times bigger than this year. Mr. Hunter stated that the event had a big economic impact throughout the City. Mr.

Hunter also stated that Phenix City has its own champions in the Hargrove family that represented the City well.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed agenda claims with Council.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, October 31, 2022.