

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
June 3, 2024

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, June 3, 2024, in the Council Chambers located within the Public Safety Building at 1111 Broad Street, Phenix City, Alabama 36867. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Councilmember Arthur L. Day, Jr., Councilmember Vickey F. Carter, Councilmember Steve Bailey, and Councilmember R. Griff Gordy and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Also present were City Manager Wallace Hunter, Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble, City Clerk Shannon Davis, and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance: Building Official Ray Rogers, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Assistant Director of Engineering Mike Pattillo, Graduate Civil Engineer Chris Casey, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, Fire Chief Kristen Kennedy, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, IT Director Mike Bauer, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Police Chief George Staudinger, and Utilities Director John Spraggins.

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

Councilmember Gordy led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Michael L. Jones to address Council as listed on the agenda. Mr. Jones addressed Mayor and Council regarding overgrown grass and kudzu near his residence that has not been cut. Mr. Jones provided pictures and reviewed the areas in the pictures that he had to cut. Mr. Jones stated that he was aware of the issues with under staffing and COVID that caused issues with the City being able to maintain the grass and kudzu as they have in years past. Mr. Jones made a recommendation that the City offer over-time to the City employees that are working in order to keep up with the workload. Mr. Jones stated that north Phenix City has money where the south and middle areas of Phenix City may not but that should not make a difference in the maintenance of the City properties. Mr. Jones also stated that he visits Idle Hour Park often and its grass is always cut and maintained. Mayor Lowe stated that it may be perceived that way but the leadership, Mayor and Council do not go by social economic areas when making decisions for the City because it is not right to do so. Mayor Lowe also stated that the park is where a majority of the citizens are going to so keeping it maintained may be a priority for the safety of the citizens. Councilmember Gordy stated that there have been complaints about the parks maintenance as well and Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes agreed with Mayor Lowe's and Councilmember Gordy's comments. Mr. Jones stated that his sister received a letter from Phenix City Building Code stating that she needed to cut the weeds in her yard. Mr. Jones also stated that his sister cuts her yard regularly and he cannot locate any weeds that the City is referring to. Mr. Jones further stated that the City is not maintaining the property as they should. Mayor Lowe stated that he would encourage more citizens to approach Council with their concerns as Mr. Jones has because it is the right way to do it and he commended Mr. Jones on bringing his concerns to Council.

Assistant Director of Engineering Mike Pattillo stated that the Public Works department has a schedule and that they do not spend any more time on the north side than they do the south and it depends on the amount of streets that need to be maintained. Mr. Pattillo also stated that they follow the schedule and they do not pick a certain location unless there is an urgent need. Mr. Pattillo further stated that the City only maintains what is in the City's right of way and anything

outside of the right of way is on private property and the City does not cut. Mr. Jones stated that the property he is referring to is on City property.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the property in reference is not owned by the City but it is a private owner. Mr. Hunter also stated that if the property is abandon than the process is that it goes through the State and not through the City and the State is responsible. Mr. Hunter further stated that they have reached out to the State regarding local needs but have no control over the State's decisions.

Mayor Lowe inquired as to if the property in question is City property. Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble stated that 1001 8th Avenue is private property. Mr. Jones stated that the property he is referring to is across the street from the 1001 8th Avenue location. Assistant Director of Engineering Mike Pattillo stated that the City cuts the right of ways and the property is not in the right of way. City Manager Wallace Hunter provided an overview of the continued challenges the City is facing in hiring and retaining qualified employees. Mayor Lowe stated that if it is private property, they cannot maintain it. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Jones for coming to speak to the Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Graduate Civil Engineer Chris Casey, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their May 28, 2024 meeting.

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

1. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, June 4, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
2. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.
3. Informed Council that the Golden Park Ground Breaking Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.
4. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold the Breakfast and Business Meeting on Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 7:00 a.m.
5. Informed Council that Parks and Recreation Department will hold a Fishing Rodeo on Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
6. Informed Council that Ft. Moore will hold the 249th Army Birthday Celebration on Friday, June 14, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.
7. Informed Council that Ft. Moore will hold the Infantry Ball on Friday, June 14, 2024 at 5:00p.m.
8. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, June 17, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
9. Informed Council that Ft. Moore will hold the MG Buzzard Farwell on Monday, June 17, 2024, time to be announced.
10. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Central Activity Center.
11. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on Wednesday, June 19, 2024 in observance of Juneteenth/Freedom Day Holiday.
12. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals meeting will be held on Thursday, June 20, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
13. Advised that the Mayor's Ball will be held on June 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
14. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.

15. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold an After Hours Meeting on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
16. Informed Council that Troy University will hold the Commencement Ceremony on Friday, June 28, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
17. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, July 1, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
18. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, July 2, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
19. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on Friday, July 4, 2024 in observance of 4th of July Holiday.
20. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, July 9, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.
21. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold the Breakfast and Business Meeting on Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at 7:00 a.m.
22. Informed Council that Ft. Moore will hold the Change of Command Ceremony on Friday, July 12, 2024.
23. Advised Council the Phenix City Russell County Library Board will meet on Friday, July 12, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
24. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, July 15, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
25. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, July 16, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
26. Advised Council that the Downtown Redevelopment Association will meet on Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.
27. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals will meet on Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
28. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, July 23, 2024 at 5:15 p.m.
29. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold an After Hours Meeting on Tuesday, July 30, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
30. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Carter inquired as to the status of the workforce numbers in regards to the care of premises and maintenance of the City's right of ways. Assistant Director of Engineering Mike Pattillo stated that for the care of premises the number of employee's does average around 50 for this type of work. Mr. Pattillo also stated that for the right of ways, they are still struggling to keep up with the workload with the amount of workforce that they currently have. Mr. Pattillo further stated that they have started their annual spraying program which helps with the overgrowing of weeds. Mr. Pattillo stated that they are still down in workforce numbers in the Public Works Department but they are doing the best that they can.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that Parks and Recreations Department have been assisting with crews to help keep the right of ways maintained and they will be planning for additional funds in the 2024-2025 budget to provide for additional workforce in the Parks and Recreations Department to assist with the continued support with the weeds and kudzu growth with all of the recent rain and warm temperatures.

Councilmember Carter stated that she has only received a couple of phone calls regarding overgrown grass and maintenance and that she communicates to the citizens that it is impossible for the City to do it all on a weekly basis but that it is being reported and placed on the schedule. Councilmember Carter also stated that she maintains the grass around her property that belongs

to the City. Councilmember Carter further stated that the 10th Avenue and 12th Avenue bridges are collecting a lot more trash and debris because back in the winter with the ice, salt had been laid down and it is gathering and collecting a lot more trash and asked if they could put the bridges on the list for pressure washing and trash pickup. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that they can schedule the street sweeper but that they do not have sufficient workforce to pressure wash. Mr. Hunter also stated that they are getting some movement in the courts to acquire additional help with cutting grass.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the plans for the State funds awarded to Parks and Recreation for Moon Lake. Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes stated that they have several plans for the lake area to include leveling up the banks, resurfacing the track, adding handicap fishing platforms and to build another pavilion on the other end of the park. Mr. Hughes also stated that they would like to dedicate some funds to transition the tennis courts to pickle ball courts. Mr. Hughes further stated he would like to upgrade the power inside the tracks as well. Councilmember Bailey stated that he has had several citizens to ask him and he has provided feedback on several of the items mentioned but that everything that is done will be noticeable to the citizens. Mr. Hughes stated that they would also like to add steps next to where citizens park to walk down the hill to the track safely.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the utility water leaks and whether they are able to bring in a contractor for additional help. Director of Utilities John Spraggins stated that they are continuing to work on the leak issues across the City. Mr. Spraggins also stated that they are in the process of reviewing what needs to be setup to bid out the work to contractors. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that they are also looking into available grants for additional funding support.

Councilmember Day inquired about the 189 permits that were issued in the month of May. Building Official Ray Rogers stated that the number is not based on percentages but rather the value of the jobs associated with certain permits.

Councilmember Day inquired about the new RaceTrac Gas Station development. Building Official Ray Rogers stated that they are working on the current plan. Councilmember Day inquired about how citizens will enter and leave the business. Mr. Rogers stated that there will be an entrance and exit on both ends to support traffic.

Councilmember Day inquired about the private donors for the Riverfront Downtown Project. Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan stated the project was supposed to be funded by private donor's seed funds and unfortunately the seed fund did not do what they anticipated it would do so they had to put the project on hold. Mr. Culligan reviewed the definition of seed funds and that he does anticipate that future funding opportunities may be available.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

Mayor Lowe thanked the Council, City Manager and Department Heads for their time and dedication.

Mayor Lowe stated that there being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, June 17, 2024.