

**MEETING MINUTES  
STATE OF THE CITY, JANUARY 26, 2023**

The members of the City Council of the City of Phenix City, Alabama met at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Time in the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center (MIHPCC) located at 3743 Moon Lake Drive, Phenix City, Alabama for the purpose of conducting the 2023 State of the City Address. Mayor Eddie N. Lowe, Councilmember R. Griff Gordy, Councilmember Steve Bailey, Councilmember Vickey F. Carter, and Councilmember Arthur L. Day, Jr. were present. City Manager Wallace B. Hunter, City Clerk Melony Lee, and Office Manager Shannon Davis were also present. Department Heads in attendance at the MIHPCC were: Deputy Building Official Ray Rogers, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Planning Specialist Jennifer Lowman, Assistant City Engineer Mike Pattillo, Finance Director Labrita King-Copeland, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, IT Manager Mike Bauer, IT Technician 1/Web Specialist Brannon Prather, Phenix City Russell County Library Director Tammy Henry, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Entertainment Coordinator Brad Strickland, Police Chief Ray Smith, Assistant Police Chief George Staudinger, Police Captain Joseph Weierick, Utilities Director Charles Woody, and Utilities Engineer John Spraggins. Not present were City Engineer Angel Moore, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, and Planning Director Tracie Hadaway. Also present were: City Attorney James P. Graham, City Attorney James McKoon, and City Attorney Chan Gamble.

Mayor Lowe welcomed everyone to the presentation of the State of the City.

Associate Pastor Steve Pace of Summerville Baptist Church delivered the invocation.

Councilmember Gordy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Lowe introduced Council, Department Heads, and Staff.

Mayor Lowe delivered the State of the City Address. Mayor Lowe reviewed the financial statement of the City and compared it with the previous four years. Mayor Lowe reviewed the Operating Reserve and advised we have 323 operating days in the reserve. Mayor Lowe reviewed the total debt and advised it has decreased over the past four years. Mayor Lowe reviewed the Sales Tax and Taxable Property Value and advised both had increased. Mayor Lowe advised that the City of Phenix City continues to maintain its "AA-/Stable" Credit Rating from Standard and Poor's in the General Fund, and has maintained the "BBB+" Credit Rating for the Utilities Fund. Mayor Lowe discussed budgeted employee positions in 2023 compared to the average employee count for the past four years. He advised that the workforce is down due to various reasons. Mayor Lowe reviewed City Infrastructure Projects and City Utility Projects. He advised of Public Developments that have been completed and advised of future developments. Mayor Lowe spoke on the new Public Safety Building Expansion/Renovation and the new Fire Training Center. He updated everyone on Phenix City Retail Projects and Commercial Developments. He presented the proposed vision for the Downtown/Riverfront Development. He also spoke on new and expanding Industrial Developments. He advised that the City is working with DragonFly Trail and PATH Foundation on the planning, design, and engineering of the Phenix City Riverwalk Northern Extension. Mayor Lowe also advised that Phenix City and Columbus, Georgia, hosted the 2022 Freestyle Kayak World Cup and is preparing to host the 2023 Freestyle Dayak World Championship competition. Mayor Lowe discussed how the Phenix City Russell County Library serves the area and everything they have to offer.

Upon the conclusion of the presentation, Mayor Lowe asked for anyone to come up or call in with any questions or comments. Coach Howard Walker, who lives on 40<sup>th</sup> Street in District

One, came forward and asked if Phenix City could place assessments on citizens to pay for utilities/roads like other adjacent cities do. Mayor Lowe advised that those cities have an Occupational Tax in place and Phenix City does not. City Manager Wallace Hunter advised that the federal government gave out a lot of funds during COVID and that projects were delayed due to the broken supply chain. While this was happening, the city paid debt down. Now the projects are in motion and cost has tripled. City Manager Hunter asked that more citizens attend council meetings and see for their selves what the city is doing. He asked the citizens not to rely on gossip on the streets. Ms. Teresa Hayes came forward and advised that the intersection of Highway 80 and Auburn Road could use a turn signal. Mayor Lowe advised that the city has to follow certain guidelines and he called on Assistant City Engineer Mike Pattillo to address the question. Mr. Pattillo advised that the intersection is controlled by ALDOT. No one else came forward.

Mayor Lowe thanked everyone for coming tonight and for watching on TV.

Pastor Noble Williams of Greater Mount Zion Baptist Church delivered the benediction.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting concluded at 7:10 p.m.