

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES September 30, 2019

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, September 30, 2019, in the third floor conference room of the Municipal Building located at 601 12th Street, Phenix City, Alabama. 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 B. Hunter, City Clerk Melony Lee, and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance were: Building Official Gil Griffith, City Engineer Angel Moore, Utilities Director Stephen Smith, IT Manager Mike Bauer, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Golf Course Director Mike Barber, Library Director Michele Kilday, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks & Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, and Police Chief Ray Smith.

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

The invocation was led by Mayor Lowe.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Engineer Angel Moore to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their September 24, 2019 meeting.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Clerk Melony Lee who discussed the following with Mayor and Council:

1. Reminded Council that the 2019 Municipal Leadership Institute will be held on October 3, 2019, Councilmembers Johnson and Day will be attending.
2. Reminded Council that City Offices will be closed on October 14, 2019 in observance of Columbus Day and therefore will push the Work Session and Council Meetings over by a day.
3. Advised Council that the DRA meeting scheduled for October 17, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. may be cancelled due to lack of agenda items
4. Advised Council of Octoberfest to be held October 18-20, 2019 in Ft. Benning, Georgia.
5. Informed Council that Containers by Reaves would be having a Customer Appreciation Barbecue on Friday, October 18, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.
6. Reminded Council that Councilmember Day will be out of the office October 20 – 26, 2019.
7. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed November 11, 2019 in observance of Veterans Day.
8. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed November 28 and 29, 2019 for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about unauthorized water usage collection. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated unauthorized usage can happen when a renter takes the utility bill out of their name but still uses the services. Mr. Smith also stated that another common example of unauthorized usage is when the water has been turned off at a residence by the Utilities Department for an unpaid balance and turned back on by someone illegally breaking the lock. Mr. Smith further stated that some fees have been collected. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that water has been removed from fire hydrants without permission as well. Mr. Smith

stated that a temporary fire hydrant meter can be purchased from the utilities department to gage the water usage.

Councilmember Johnson asked what the City could do to reduce the dumping of trash and tires around the City. Councilmember Johnson stated that loitering is a big problem in the 13th Avenue area. Chief of Police, Ray Smith, stated that the City may have to invest in temporary motion detection cameras that will be placed through out the City to slow down the loitering rate. Chief Smith also stated that the cameras are similar to the ones used to monitor the traffic lights. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there is a tire dumping issue throughout the City. City Manager Hunter also stated that the Police Department must be contacted when a loitering or tire dumping situation is witnessed.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the American Legion on Seale Road. Gil Griffith, Building Official, stated that he spoke with Manny Samuel and Lewis Alexander concerning the American Legion earlier in the month and they stated that it should be up to code within a year. Mr. Griffith also stated that he was giving the gentlemen time to complete the project.

Councilmember Day asked if the City owns the food trucks located on Whitewater Avenue. Steve Smith, Director of Utilities, stated that the City does not own any food trucks and they are privately owned. Mr. Smith also stated the owners of the food trucks must have a business license and pay taxes to the City just like every other business.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the Highway 431 Shopping Center Project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the traffic signal heads are up but will not be turned on until there is enough square footage of shopping areas, according to the ALDOT standards. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that the projected opening date for Renfro's Market is March 1, 2020.

Councilmember Day inquired about an additional City Landfill. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated the Landfill off Seale Road is almost at its capacity and an additional Landfill is needed.

Councilmember Day inquired about the GED program offered by the Library. Michele Kilday, Library Director, stated GED tutoring takes place every Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. Ms. Kilday also stated that participants must register to be a part of the program. Ms. Kilday further stated that an organization called "Friends of the Library" help with the expenses of the tutoring program and testing. Ms. Kilday stated that a graduation is held for participants who complete the program and pass the GED test.

Councilmember Day inquired about the updates to Arthur Sumbry Park. Councilmember Day stated that the Pavilions are leaking when it rains. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that he would look into the repairing of the Pavilions. Councilmember Day stated that he had noticed the work done on the basketball court. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that she was informed by the contractors that the horseshoe bend paving / resurfacing should be complete by the second week of October.

Councilmember Day inquired about recruiting officers for the Police Department. Chief of Police Ray Smith stated that the hiring of officers is an ongoing process. Chief Smith also stated that the Police Department will be participating in a couple of job fairs over the next two months with hopes of finding qualified candidates. Councilmember Day asked if the salary for incoming

officers was competitive compared to the Tri-City Market. Chief Smith stated that Phenix City has a good benefit packet and salary compared to surrounding cities.

Councilmember Day inquired about the update on replacing the registers on the water meters. Stephen Smith, Director of Utilities, stated that there is an ongoing analysis and meters will be replaced as needed.

Councilmember Day stated that he has received positive feedback on the paving of 7th Street and the City's Cemetery. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the repaving project is on schedule. City Manager Hunter also stated that the maintenance of the Cemeteries is an ongoing project.

Councilmember Bailey thanked Toni Stauffer with the Citizen of East Alabama Newspaper, for keeping the citizens of Phenix City informed on what is going on in the City concerning the animals at Idle Hour Park. Councilmember Bailey stated that the City stands behind its choices on the matter. Councilmember Bailey thanked the citizens for their concerns for the animals. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that the City is not against the animals but must put the people of Phenix City first. Mr. Smith also stated that for the safety of the citizens and the animals, people should not feed the feral cats or the geese. Mr. Smith further stated that the feeding of the animals causes them to over populate and increases the danger to the public. Chief of Police, Ray Smith, stated that contrary to rumors, the city is not capturing all the cats at the park and euthanizing them; however, the city did place traps out one (1) weekend and four (4) cats were trapped. He further advised that cats are considered an invasive species and cannot be released per the Alabama Wildlife Federation. Chief Smith also stated that when people feed cats in a public park, it draws wild animals out of the woods and opens up the potential for a rabies infected animal to harm a person. Chief Smith further stated that Russell County has had three documented cases of rabies. Chief Smith stated that people should treat feral cats as wild animals and don't feed them; if they are caught feeding them they could be charged with Criminal Littering. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City does not always make a decision that will please everyone but they will always make a decision that is in the best interest of the citizens of Phenix City, Alabama.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the corner of Bridgewater and Lakewood. Councilmember Bailey stated that when you look to the right of the left hand turn lane it has limited vision of oncoming traffic. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the right of way will be cleared in that area to increase visibility.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the update on the Bridgewater sewer project. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that the survey of the area is complete and the easement has been signed. Mr. Smith also stated that the City is working with Mr. Charles Adams on completing the project by next summer.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the sewer line going out to Glenwood. Steve Smith, Utilities Director, stated that construction is close to starting. Mr. Smith also stated that they have come across an issue with other utility lines and gas lines. Mr. Smith further stated that the Utility Department is working with the Engineering Department on the issue.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he received a message from a concerned citizen about two huge pine trees in Lakewood Park close to the Girls club that appear to be dead. Todd Hughes, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that he would get with Pub Works to check out the trees because he did not have knowledge of dead trees in the area, only stumps.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

Steve Smith, Director of Utilities, stated that he researched facts concerning White Water Rafting. Mr. Smith also stated that it has been reported in 2018 that there were 4,233 hotel nights recorded in the Phenix City and Columbus area from Participates of the White Water Rafting.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 15, 2019.