

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
February 6, 2023

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, February 6, 2023, 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 F. Carter, 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, Planning Director Tracie Hadaway, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, IT Manager Mike Bauer, Assistant Fire Chief Kerry Bragg, Golf Manager Mike Barber, Library Director Tammy Henry, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resource Director Stephanie Chastain, 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 Carter led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Melissa Gauntt of BEAM to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Ms. Gauntt came forward to address Council. Ms. Gauntt stated that BEAM is an acronym for **B**ringing **E**ast **A**labama **M**ore. Ms. Gauntt also stated that Beam is a local company that provides for the local community. Ms. Gauntt further stated that she is sure that Mayor and Council have all been asked why is BEAM the only provider in Phenix City. Ms. Gauntt stated that she personally has worked with other cable/internet companies in Columbus, Georgia before and in her opinion, local providers are more personable and community focused versus national providers. Ms. Gauntt also stated that BEAM may be a small company but their technology matches or surpasses several cable/internet companies in larger cities. Ms. Gauntt reflected on the vision of founder Mr. Roy Greene who passed away in 2020. Ms. Gauntt stated that Mr. Greene loved Phenix City. Ms. Gauntt also stated that BEAM has changed over the past couple of years in their infrastructure and in advancement with technology. Ms. Gauntt further stated that with new technology comes new vision. Ms. Gauntt gave an overview of BEAM's new services offered and upcoming projects. Ms. Gauntt stated that contrary to rumors, BEAM is not a Monopoly in the area when it comes to providers and citizens do have choices. Councilmember Carter asked if BEAM offered anything to help the community or their customers during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Ms. Gauntt stated that BEAM was the only provider in the state of Alabama that offered free internet services to school age students and teachers during the portion of the pandemic that required students to attend school at home. Ms. Gauntt also stated that BEAM also gave out quite a few modems to non-BEAM customers so that they could receive the internet service. Councilmember Gordy stated that Mr. Greene had a good heart and a love for the community. Councilmember Day asked if one particular provider was BEAM's main competition. Ms. Gauntt stated that one national network provider was their main competition. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated unlike BEAM, some national providers don't service all of the City. Mike Bauer, IT Manager named a few national businesses that are able to provide cable and/or internet services in this area. Mr. Hunter stated that for decades, it has been rumored that BEAM is the only internet/cable provider in the area. Mr. Hunter also stated that BEAM is a part of the local community but is not the only provider for the community.

Mayor Lowe called upon Tracie Hadaway, Economic Development Planning Director, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their January 24, 2023 meeting. Ms. Hadaway stated that the meeting was canceled due to no agenda items.

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 February 7, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
2. Informed Council that the East Alabama Leadership Class will host Government Day on February 10, 2023 from 2:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce.
3. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet February 14, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
4. Informed Council that the Closeout and Performance Assessment Public Hearing for the Community Development Block Grant project, CDBG project, will be held on February 16, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
5. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on February 20, 2023 in observance of President's Day Holiday.
6. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on February 21, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center. This meeting will be held on a Tuesday afternoon due to the President's Day Holiday.
7. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on February 22, 2023 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 President's Day Holiday.
8. Advised Council that Councilmember Day's Elected Officials Luncheon will be held on February 23, 2023 at 11:30 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
9. Informed Council that the Black History Month Observance Committee Breakfast will be held on February 27, 2023 at 7:00 a.m. at the Columbus Convention & Trade Center, Columbus, Georgia.
10. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet February 28, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
11. Informed Council that Read Across America will be held at Westview Elementary School on March 2, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.
12. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on March 6, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
13. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on March 7, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
14. Informed Council that the 2023 Alabama League of Municipalities Advocacy Day will be held on March 8, 2023 in Montgomery, Alabama.
15. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet March 14, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
16. Informed Council that Mayor's Prayer Breakfast will be held on March 16, 2023 at 7:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center, rescheduled from March 2, 2023.
17. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on March 20, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
18. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on March 21, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
19. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet March, 28, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.

Councilmember Carter stated that a Suit Up Drive will take place on March 1, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. Councilmember Carter also stated that donations will benefit female veterans at the transitional living facility located at Mother Mary Mission.

City Clerk Melony Lee informed Council that the 2023 Alabama League of Municipalities Convention will be held May 10, 2023 through May 13, 2023 in Birmingham, Alabama. Ms. Lee stated that the Alabama League of Municipalities CMO Regional Training will be held on July 27, 2023 in Montgomery, Alabama.

City Clerk Melony Lee reviewed upcoming board appointments

Councilmember Bailey inquired about an update on the Bridgewater Sewer Project. Charles Woody, Utilities Director, explained that they are waiting on permission from a property owner for lines to be re-routed.

Councilmember Bailey asked which departments in the City needed new employees the most. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the number of applications have increased and two new CDL drivers have been hired. Ms. Moore also stated that a few more are still needed. Councilmember Bailey stated that he appreciates Department Heads and City Employees for all that they do for the City.

Councilmember Gordy stated that he has had several citizens ask about the number of potholes and water leaks throughout the City. Councilmember Gordy also stated that he encouraged the Citizens to have patience in waiting for things around the City to be completed because of the lack of workforce. Angel Moore, City Engineer stated that the department is still short on drivers. Ms. Moore also stated that work orders are being prioritized, placed on a list, and pot holes are being filled as quickly as possible under the circumstances. Ms. Moore further stated that drivers are being shuffled from streets and drainage to limbs and debris.

Councilmember Day stated that there is a bulk of old furniture and household items at the storage unit near Sumbry Hills Apartments and near Evangeline Heights Apartments. Councilmember Day asked if the City charges a fee to pick those items up. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there is a difference in picking up limb and debris from residential and a business. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the City does not have the man power to send the Public Works Department to meet commercial needs but if a resident is a Phenix City Utilities customer, the City will pick up the resident's limbs and debris up to a specific amount. Mr. Hunter stated that the items could come from the apartments or the storage units. Mr. Hunter also stated that since Smith Station closed their land fields, he has noticed more items being randomly left on Phenix City streets.

Councilmember Day stated that there are a lot of abandon tires located at the apartments next to Mother Mary Mission and other areas in the City. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that abandoned tires is an issue though out the City. Ms. Moore stated that the tires are collected and disposed of at another waste facility and not the City's Landfill.

Councilmember Day stated that he also noticed that street lights were out near Mother Mary Mission. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that the City is working with an Electrician to trouble shoot the issues to see if there is a break in the line.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the Old Seale Road Bridge Project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that plans have been turned into the Construction Bureau,

once comments have been given, the plans will go to the Office of Engineering. Ms. Moore also stated that an ALDOT (Alabama Department of Transportation) project takes more time to complete than a City project because it is on ALDOT's schedule.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update of new businesses opening on Crosswinds Drive. Ray Rogers, Deputy Building Official, stated that Jacks Restaurant is coming along very well and the gas station's is in the architectural design stage. Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Manager, stated that there are at least two other businesses in the planned for that area.

Councilmember Day inquired on an update of purchasing additional property at the Edmonds Cemetery. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the property owner that was going to sell the property to the City has passed away. Mr. Hunter also stated the heirs of the property are going through the process of settling her estate. City Attorney Jimmy Graham stated that the City is waiting on information from the estates Attorney.

Councilmember Carter stated that she has received a call from a concerned Citizens about seeing a wild pig. Councilmember Carter asked if wild pigs and livestock in general are allowed in City limits. Ray Rogers, Deputy Building Official, stated that wild pigs are not allowed in the City. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated it should be reported to the Police Department and the Building Department.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

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

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 21, 2023.