

**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**March 20, 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, March 20, 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, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Councilmember Steve Bailey and Councilmember R. Griff Gordy were not present. 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, 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, 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.

Mayor Lowe led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Andrea Haamid to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Ms. Haamid came forward to address Council. Ms. Haamid stated that she resides in the Reserve at Staffordshire Subdivision and they are in need of street lights for safety issues. Ms. Haamid also stated that the subdivision is having problems with people breaking into houses, pets getting ran over in the streets and she is concerned for the safety of the children that play in the streets. Mayor Lowe stated that street lights are required in subdivisions, however, when this particular subdivision was built, street lights were not a requirement. Mayor Lowe also stated that the City is not allowed to add street lights to the subdivision but the Homeowner's Association Organization can have the lights installed. Mayor Lowe further stated that after the street lights have been installed at the homeowners or homeowner's association expense, then the City can take over the monthly financial obligations. City Manager Wallace Hunter called upon City Engineer Angel Moore to explain the regulations. Ms. Moore stated that prior to 2015, developers were not required to place street lights into new developing subdivisions. Ms. Moore also stated that once the street light is built and it meets City requirements, the City can take over the monthly power payments of the street lights. Ms. Moore suggested that the Homeowners Association contact Alabama Power for information and cost of installing the street lights. Councilmember Carter asked if an individual homeowner could have a street light installed on an already existing pole. Ms. Moore stated that currently one homeowner in the subdivision purchased their own street light. Councilmember Day inquired about the number of street lights that could be installed in the subdivision. Ms. Moore stated that the City Ordinance states that street lights must be at least 300 feet apart. Ms. Moore also stated that Alabama Power would be the ones who could determine how many street lights could be installed in the subdivision and they will send the information to the City. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Haamid for speaking with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Valory B. Jenkins to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Ms. Jenkins came forward to address Council. Ms. Jenkins stated that she lives in the Hickory Heights Subdivision and moved to Phenix City after retiring from the military. Ms. Jenkins also stated that there is no transparency between the local government and the community. Mayor Lowe stated that this Council has been totally transparent and consistent in decision making. Ms. Jenkins stated that she would like to discuss the structure and cycle of the Utility bill. Ms. Jenkins also stated that the billing cycle is only 21 days, the bill doesn't show the per gallon usage price

and the rates increased without proper warning to the customers. Ms. Jenkins compared her January bill to her February bill which had an increase of \$2.97 in water and \$2.97 in sewer compared to January but the usage of water did not increase. Ms. Jenkins stated that the billing dates, due dates and cutoff date are unclear and hard to understand. Ms. Jenkins also stated that the statement should be easier to read and understand. City Manager Wallace Hunter called upon Utilities Director Charles Woody to explain the billing cycle. Mr. Woody stated that all customers are billed the same just within a different billing cycle. Mr. Woody also stated that on the 21<sup>st</sup> day the account falls into a delinquent status and 5 days after that, it falls into cutoff status. Mr. Woody further stated that the Utilities Department and the IT Department are working to change the format of the statement but the rates and cycle dates will remain the same. Mr. Woody stated that a cost analysis was discussed at a public hearing in 2022 that was open to the public. Mr. Woody also stated that it was a three year plan and a letter discussing the first year was sent out to all of Phenix City Utility customers with their utility bill in February 2022. Mr. Woody explained the customer service charges. Ms. Jenkins stated that she does not recall receiving the notifications. Mr. Woody used Ms. Jenkins February statement as a visual to explain charges and water usage. Mr. Woody stated that Ms. Jenkins used less water in January compared to February and that is why there was an increase. Mr. Woody also stated that Phenix City's water and sewer rates are lower than other utilities department in the surrounding area. Ms. Jenkins stated that Russell County will be receiving a grant from the American Rescue Grant. Ms. Jenkins asked if the grant will be used to help the citizens of Phenix City. Mr. Woody stated that Russell County is a separate entity or government from Phenix City. Mr. Hunter stated that Phenix City is in Russell County but governed by this municipality. Mr. Hunter also stated that grants are not automatic and they must be applied for and approved. Ms. Jenkins asked a question about zoning and construction in certain areas in the City and whether or not they were residential or commercial. Angel Moore, City Engineer, explained the zoning and construction near Ms. Jenkins's subdivision. Ms. Moore stated that the area in question is outside of City limits. Ms. Moore also stated that Ms. Jenkins would need to contact the Russell County Commissioners. Councilmember Carter stated that there are areas in Russell County that are inside City limits and there are some that are out of City limits that the City does not control. Ms. Jenkins thanked Mayor and Council for their time. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Jenkins for speaking with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Colonel Colin Mahle of Ft. Benning Garrison Commander to address Council, as listed on the agenda. Colonel Mahle came forward to address Council. Colonel Mahle presented a video presentation on the renaming of Ft. Benning, Georgia to Ft. Moore, Georgia in honor of Lieutenant General Harold and Julia Moore. Colonel Mahle stated that Ft. Moore will be one of the nine military post that will be renamed under the Naming Commission established by Congress in the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. Colonel Mahle also stated that Ft. Moore will be the only military posts of the nine that will be renamed after a husband and wife team. Colonel Mahle further stated that the remaining ceremony will take place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Colonel Mahle explained a brief summary of the life and contributions of Hal and Julia Moore to include the book "We Were Soldiers Once... And Young" co-authored by Hal Moore and the movie "We Were Soldiers". Colonel Mahle encouraged everyone to watch or re-watch the movie that will reiterate how special it will be to rename the base after the Moores. Colonel Mahle stated that he is truly honored to be the last Ft. Benning Garrison Commander and the first Ft. Moore Garrison Commander. Colonel Mahle also stated that Ft. Benning wanted to personally explain the process of the transition to the Tri-City Community. Colonel Mahle thanked Mayor and Council for their continued support. Councilmember Day asked if all the signage leading up to and on Ft. Benning will be changed to Ft. Moore. Colonel Mahle stated that there are a number of things that will change the day of the renaming ceremony on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May and others will be changed shortly after. Colonel Mahle stated that some historic markers will remain listed as Ft. Benning. Councilmember Carter stated

that Ft. Benning is very unique with its location between two states. Councilmember Carter also stated that when she heard the story of Mr. and Mrs. Moore, she was very excited. Councilmember Carter asked if there has been more positive responses or negative responses from the soldiers and their families that are currently stationed at Ft. Benning concerning the name change. Colonel Mahle stated that the feedback has been very positive. Colonel Mahle also stated that educational material has been made available and information on Lieutenant General Harold and Julia Moore will be displayed at the National Infantry Museum for about a year. Mayor Lowe thanked Colonel Mahle for his service to our Country and for speaking with Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Tracie Hadaway, Economic Development Planning Director, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their March 14, 2023 meeting.

Tracie Hadaway, Economic Development Planning Director, stated the Phenix City Comprehensive Visioning Community Workshop will be held on April 4, 2023 at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street South Youth Center. Ms. Hadaway stated that the meeting will be interactive with a hands-on mapping exercise, discussion on housing, transportation and land uses. Councilmember Carter asked if the meeting will be held in District Two. Ms. Hadaway stated that the third workshop will be held in District Two. Ms. Hadaway also stated that the plan was to rotate the meetings between the three districts throughout the community.

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 March 21, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
2. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet March, 28, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
3. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on April 3, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
4. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on April 4, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
5. Informed Council that the Phenix City Comprehensive Visioning Community Workshop will be held on April 4, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the 5<sup>th</sup> Street South Youth Center.
6. Informed Council that the Utilities Department will be open on Saturday, April 8, 2023 and Sunday, April 9, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. for payments and will be closed on Monday, April 10, 2023 and Tuesday, April 11, 2023 for updates.
7. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet April 11, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
8. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on April 17, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
9. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on April 18, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
10. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet April 25, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
11. 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 a voting delegate and 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate will need to be selected out of the Councilmembers that will attend the convention.
12. Advised Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities CMO Regional Training will be held on July 27, 2023 in Montgomery, Alabama.
13. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

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, April 3, 2023.