

**WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES  
November 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, November 6, 2023, 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, Councilmember R. Griff Gordy, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Also present were City Manager Wallace Hunter, Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble, City Clerk Melony Lee, and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance: Building Official Ray Rogers, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, City Engineer Angel Moore, Fire Chief Kristen Kennedy, Human Resource Director Stephanie Chastain, Library Director Tammy Henry, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Police Chief George Staudinger, Public Safety Director Ray Smith, Utilities Director Charles Woody and Graduate Engineer John Spraggins.

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

Councilmember Bailey led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Angel Moore, Director of Engineering, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their October 24, 2023 meeting.

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 Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
2. Informed Council that the City Offices will be closed on Friday, November 10, 2023 in observance of Veteran's Day Holiday.
3. Advised Council that the Veteran's Day Parade will be held on Saturday, November 11, 2023.
4. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
5. Advised Council of the National League Cities Summit to be held on November 15 - 18, 2023.
6. Advised Council of the CPC Board of Zoning Adjustment and Appeals Meeting to be held on November 16, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
7. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, November 20, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
8. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
9. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on November 23, 2023 and November 24, 2023 in observance of Thanksgiving Holiday.
10. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
11. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, December 4, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
12. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.

13. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
14. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, December 18, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
15. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
16. Informed Council that City Offices will close on Friday, December 22, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. in observance of Christmas Holiday.
17. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on Monday, December 25, 2023 in observance of Christmas Holiday.
18. Informed Council that City Offices will open on Tuesday, December 26, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. in observance of Christmas Holiday.
19. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will not meet on Tuesday, December 26, 2023 at 5:15 p.m.
20. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

Councilmember Carter inquired about the Striping Project that is currently going on in the District Two. Councilmember Carter stated that it is looking good and that it is very well needed. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that they had an issue with one of the contractors but that it has been resolved. Ms. Moore also stated that the contractors are coming in next week to finish up the intersections. Ms. Moore further stated that they will be evaluating the remaining intersections and go from there.

Councilmember Carter inquired about the status of having the City's street sweepers to clean up the pine straw that has fallen on the sides of the road. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that they are aware of the issue and that once they are able to get more CDL drivers, they will take care of the streets.

Councilmember Carter thanked City Clerk Melony Lee on behalf of the Council for taking the time to submit Citizen concerns regarding the revitalization and the new Public Safety Building to the Montgomery State Office. Councilmember Carter also thanked Ms. Lee for the article and pictures that have been published in the Alabama League of Municipalities Book. City Clerk Melony Lee stated that her office could not have achieved it without City Manager Wallace Hunter and the Department Heads assistance and she thanked them.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he spoke to City Manager Wallace Hunter and City Engineer Angel Moore regarding revising the direction of traffic on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue going into 13<sup>th</sup> Street and 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Councilmember Bailey also stated that he has spoken with several of the property owners and that they are in agreement that it is a much needed improvement with the flow of traffic coming on to 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he has noticed on the north end of town that the City workers are cleaning up trash and maintaining the roads and that they are doing a good job. Councilmember Bailey stated that he has noticed the crews working on Broad Street and that it does look very nice and clean. Councilmember Bailey thanked them for their hard work and dedication.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he was approached by a Citizen inquiring about a Sports Event Board that would display all of the upcoming sports events. Councilmember Bailey stated that since he has been a Councilmember, this board has not been in existence. Parks and

Recreation Director Todd Hughes stated that the board was setup by Mr. Wilks and that it has been dissolved.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the status of revising the traffic on 14<sup>th</sup> Street and possibly adding a one way lane. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that they are working with the City Engineers and discussing the project with City Manager Wallace Hunter and have determined that they are able to move forward.

Councilmember Gordy stated that a Citizen had inquired about a water leak under the road on Pierce Road across from Bethany Church. Utilities Director Charles Woody stated that the Utilities Department received an Action Center Request regarding this issue and that they were working on the solution.

Councilmember Day inquired about the lights at the Meadow Lane Park. Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes stated that at the beginning of May 2023, all of the copper and wires were stolen from the lights at the football and softball fields at Meadow Lane Park. Mr. Hughes also stated that the lights at the football field have been replaced. Mr. Hughes further stated that the softball fields are not open to the public until July of each year. Mr. Hughes stated that due to funding purposes, those lights have not been replaced; but they will be. Mr. Hughes also stated that if Citizens want to use the fields that they must request to reserve them through the Parks and Recreation Department. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there was an incident at the Meadow Lane Park where the field and the Meadow Lane School grounds were left trashed from the results of a recent football game. Mr. Hunter also stated that if someone comes into your home and breaks \$10,000 worth of stuff every other week, which soon adds up to \$100,000 and the City cannot keep replacing the stolen and damaged property. Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes stated that the football field is used by the Phenix City Titans Youth Football Team and they play through the Columbus League Football Organization, which it use to be affiliated with the Housing Authority. Mr. Hughes also stated that on Saturday, November 4, 2023 the team played at the field in playoff games getting ready for the Championship games. Mr. Hughes further stated that they were playing a team from South Columbus and that there were several incidents that occurred with the young age players being disruptive and trashing the grounds throughout the night. Mr. Hughes stated that his department comes in on Monday to clean up the grounds but someone from the Meadow Lane School noticed the grounds and called it in before the workers could get there to clean it up. Mr. Hunter stated that the teams playing at the field should be cleaning up after themselves. Mr. Hughes stated that it is in the agreement with the teams that they should be removing litter and trash and have it bagged and set aside to be picked up by the City. Mr. Hughes also stated that it was not done on Saturday and that the contact person responsible for ensuring it is completed, was not at the game. Mr. Hughes further stated that he has made contact with the responsible party to ensure that this does not happen again. Mr. Hunter stated that the City has to buckle down and make sure that they are adhering to the agreement for using the fields for games and for practices. Councilmember Day confirmed that Citizens have to go through the correct process to reserve the fields.

Councilmember Carter stated that parents at Meadow Lane Park have asked her if the City would place benches at the fields for the players to use during the games. Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes stated that in the past there were benches but that they were stolen. Mr. Hughes also stated that the organization over the teams did not want the players to be seated during the games so the benches were not replaced. Mr. Hughes further stated that he is receiving conflicting stories where the parents do want the benches but the coaches do not.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the coaches are the ones that make the decision for the players.

Councilmember Day stated that he was contacted by Citizens regarding why their streets have not been paved while the sidewalks are being installed or repaved on Summerville Road. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the sidewalks on Summerville Road run through District One and District Two. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City has to adhere to the Federal Americans with Disability Act (ADA) regarding the sidewalks and that the City is graded on the maintenance. Mr. Hunter further stated that the City has projects in process through-out all three Districts of the City. Mr. Hunter stated that we can all see that there are ongoing developments that spread throughout the City and that the systems they follow are fair.

Councilmember Day stated that a Citizen inquired about any future plans to pave Knowles Road. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that Federal funding is allocated based on certain projects and that the City is not allowed to put those funds into other projects for local roads and that she has requirements the City must meet. Ms. Moore also stated that City Manager Wallace Hunter has trained them to concentrate on every issue, however the safety issues must be taken care of first. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the particular street in question is older but much more solid than the new street's constructions and will last longer.

Councilmember Day inquired about a light at the intersection of Highway 431 South and 5<sup>th</sup> Street South. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that the Russell County Engineer's Office contacted her and stated that they are requesting that ALDOT performed a study to determine the need for the light. Ms. Moore also stated that she does not have any further information on the status of the request.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Old Seale Road Bridge Project. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that this project is a million dollar project and that they are also adding sidewalks. Ms. Moore also stated that there was an issue with a pipe and they partnered with the Utilities Department and it was fixed. Ms. Moore provided additional overview of the work that has been performed and that the work is going very well.

City Manager Wallace Hunter confirmed that Seale Road and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue are slated to be resurfaced in 2025. Mr. Hunter stated that there are as many as 300 leaks throughout the City that have to be fixed. Mr. Hunter also stated that due to the staff shortages, they are investigating the possibility of using a contractor to fix the leaks which will be costly but has to be done. Mr. Hunter further stated that no one can deny that the City is in the process of renovating and rebuilding at a time where prices are three to four times higher than normal but the City is making sure it is done as needed. Mr. Hunter stated that with each season there are different challenges with the maintenance of the City due to specific weather conditions and it is tough on City workers right now to keep everything maintained but they are doing the best that they can with all things considered.

Councilmember Day stated that at the Lee Russell Council of Government's Meeting there were discussions regarding the new Wendy's Restaurant that opened up in Phenix City. Councilmember Day also stated that he attended the Grand Opening of the new Wendy's Restaurant and that he was proud of how it looks and he received positive feedback from Citizens. Councilmember Day thanked City Manager Wallace Hunter and his staff on a great job.

Councilmember Carter stated that there were already sidewalks on Summerville Road that were strategically placed in front of particular homes on the road. Councilmember Carter also stated that she believes the City is reclaiming those sidewalks and adding on to the path on Summerville Road as it will be beneficial to residents and visitors that may want to walk to the Riverwalk. Councilmember Carter further stated that by adding sidewalks and reclaiming other sidewalks, the city is revitalizing that area and we are on the move as a City.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there was news report on issues in Columbus, Georgia with businesses within their City that did not have business licenses. Mr. Hunter also stated that due to the City's staff shortages in their Finance Department, they were having issues with following up to have the businesses acquire the licenses. Mr. Hunter further stated that these are the kind of issues all areas are facing at the City and State levels. Mr. Hunter stated that even as staff are being hired, they are coming in not knowing the job and it takes time to train them to be efficient in the positions. Mr. Hunter also stated that staffing issues are in Columbus, Georgia, Phenix City, Alabama, and the nation as a whole.

Councilmember Bailey stated that City Manager Wallace Hunter made an excellent point that the City can use funds for staff that they currently do not have, to acquire outside contractors in order to ensure the work is completed. Councilmember Bailey also stated that he hopes that others will see that the jobs are open and that the shortages are not just the City's problem but everyone's problems.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney Jimmy Graham reviewed the claims with Council.

Mayor Lowe read the media release for the City's Compassion and Love Prayer Service for the Citizens of Smiths Station and Phenix City and for First Baptist Church to be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Phenix City Amphitheater. Mayor Lowe stated that the service is intended to pray for and help those that are hurting and to show that our region cares. Mayor Lowe also stated that the City has invited local pastors and the City of Columbus to attend.

Mayor Lowe moved to go into Executive Session to discuss Potential Litigation for about twenty minutes, from which the meeting would adjourn after the scheduled Board Interview. Councilmember Day moved to go into Executive Session, which motion was seconded by Councilmember Gordy. All were in favor.

Council went into Executive Session at 4:13 p.m.

Council came out of Executive Session at 4:33 p.m.

Mayor and Council conducted the Planning Commission Board Interview.

Mayor Lowe stated that there being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, November 20, 2023.