APPROVED AS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL 03/04/25

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
February 18, 2025

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 Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 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, Office Manager Tonya Williams and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance: Building Official Ray Rogers, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Assistant Director of Engineering Michael Pattillo, Graduate Civil Engineer Chris Casey, Finance Director Labrita King-Copeland, Fire Chief Kristen Kennedy, Golf Manager Mike Barber, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, Library Director Tammy Henry, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Police Chief George Staudinger, Assistant Police Chief Joseph Weierick, and Utilities Director John Spraggins.

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

Councilmember Carter led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe called upon Veronica Walker with the Kidney Disease Awareness Walk, to address Council as listed on the agenda. Ms. Walker came forth to address Council. Ms. Walker stated that she and her child have a kidney disease and that she would like to have an awareness walk in the City of Phenix City and surrounding areas. Ms. Walker also stated that currently there is a major lack of awareness as to the many types of kidney disease and she would like to help to change the public knowledge. Mayor Lowe stated that her first contact in the process is to meet with the Chief of Police George Staudinger to ensure the request is filtered through the correct process. Mayor Lowe also stated that once approved, that they would do what they can to support her cause. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Walker for bringing this information before Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon William Mason Mims to address Council as listed on the agenda. Mr. Mims was not in attendance.

Mayor Lowe called upon Graduate Civil Engineer Chris Casey, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their February 11, 2025 meeting.

Mayor Lowe called upon Office Manager Tonya Williams who discussed the following with Mayor and Council:

1. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building. This meeting will be held on Wednesday morning due to the President's Day Holiday.
2. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals will meet on Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
3. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
4. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, March 3, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.

5. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
6. Informed Council that CVCC will hold their Hall of Fame Event on Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
7. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
8. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, March 17, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
9. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Community Center.
10. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals will meet on Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
11. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
12. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, March 31, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
13. Informed Council that there were no upcoming Board Appointments.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the Washington Post has published an article regarding the revocation of business license for the Phenix Lumber Mill. Mr. Hunter also stated that the mill has had numerous accidents over the years that have lead to death's, severe injuries and amputations, not only with the employee's but also with first responders trying to save lives. Mr. Hunter further stated that the goal of the City is for the business to be safe for the employees and first responders and not to put citizens out of work.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that there is so much gossip and lies being communicated on social media right now around the businesses that have been shut down in the City. Mr. Hunter also stated that the business in question, Kramer's Sports Bar, have had shootings and maximum capacity issues and that the City cannot ignore these types of issues that put the citizens at risk and once these issues become public notice, the City becomes liable. Mr. Hunter further stated that social media comments regarding other restaurant and nightclub type of businesses like the Varsity Sports Bar and Grill formerly T-Bones Steakhouse are not being targeted stating that they are being overlooked by the City but the fact is that there have been no reports of shootings or fights that have happened at the business and it is not in the Police jurisdiction of the City. Mr. Hunter stated that there are too many untruths on Social Media and they need to be addressed so that citizens are receiving the correct information. Mr. Hunter also stated that there are several bar nightclub type of businesses that have never had any issues and it is due to the owners ensuring that measures are taking to keep the customers safe. Mr. Hunter further stated that Citizens need to attend the Council Meetings and ask the Council members questions to get the correct information.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that recently with the national news acknowledgement of the Central High School Girls Flag Football team's State Championship and National Championship status, it brings out the negative comments as well. Mr. Hunter also stated that back in the ninety's the City had the boys baseball team bring home a State title and the City experienced negative comments and articles during that time frame as well.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that in 1954 it was projected that over one hundred million dollars was coming into the City from gambling at the nightclubs, strip clubs and other alike

establishments and the people that owned the businesses were considered prominent citizens as they were supporting the churches and when that was taken away it took the City decades to build up a tax base. Mr. Hunter also stated that when the tax base was lowered, that it allowed for other avenues for funds to come in that will compromise the integrity and that is not how the City has built the strong financial reputation that it has today. Mr. Hunter further stated that the City is not poor and does not depend on the revenue from the business license and taxes but that it is good when it comes in for the City. Mr. Hunter stated that when he leaves his position, he will be able to state that he has done his job as the City Manager and that he appreciates God for allowing him to stay 40 years with the City and that he has never comprised his integrity and allowed corruption. Mr. Hunter also stated that he appreciates the Council for allowing him to serve and for allowing the Department Heads the flexibility to do their jobs.

Mayor Lowe stated that his father instilled in him that you could always find another job but that you cannot allow anyone to take your dignity and good character. Mayor Lowe thanked everyone for attending.

Mayor Lowe stated that there being no further business to address, the meeting thus adjourned until March 3, 2025.