APPROVED AS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL 04/15/25

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
March 31, 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 Monday, March 31, 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 Steve Bailey, Councilmember R. Griff Gordy and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Councilmember Vickey Carter Green was not present. Also present were City Manager Wallace Hunter, Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble, City Clerk Shannon Davis, and City Attorney Jimmy Graham. Department Heads in attendance: Building Official Ray Rogers, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Director of Engineering Angel Moore, Graduate Civil Engineer Chris Casey, Fire Chief Kristen Kennedy, Golf Manager Mike Barber, Human Resources Director Stephanie Chastain, IT Director Mike Bauer, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Assistant Police Chief Joseph Weierick and Utilities Director John Spraggins.

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

Councilmember Gordy led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe advised there were no Request to Address Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Angel Moore, Director of Engineering, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their March 25, 2025 meeting.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Clerk Shannon Davis who discussed the following with Mayor and Council:

1. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
2. Informed Council that Ft. Benning will hold their Change of Responsibility Ceremony on Friday, April 4, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
3. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
4. Informed Council that the East Alabama Chamber of Commerce will hold an After Hours on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
5. Advised Council that the Phenix City Russell County Library Board will meet on Friday, April 11, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
6. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, April 14, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
7. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
8. Informed Council that Ft. Benning will hold the Benning Family Reception on Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
9. Informed Council that Ft. Benning will hold the Designation Ceremony on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
10. Advised Council that the Downtown Redevelopment Authority will meet on Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
11. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals will meet on Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.

12. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
13. Advised Council that the Housing Abatement Board will meet on Friday, May 2, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
14. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, May 5, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
15. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
16. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
17. Informed Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities 2025 Convention will be held on May 13, 2025 through May 16, 2025 in Huntsville, Alabama.
18. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals will meet on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
19. Informed Council that the 2nd Annual Women's Health Awareness will hold their walk on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.
20. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on Monday, May 19, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building.
21. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
22. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on Monday, May 26, 2025 in observance of Memorial Day Holiday.
23. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
24. Reviewed the upcoming Board Appointments.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the status of the Moon Lake Project. Director of Parks and Recreation Todd Hughes stated that they have the final construction documents and will complete the review soon. Councilmember Bailey inquired if the costs for the final plan was what they expected. Mr. Hughes stated that it would be close and that the project has to go to the Finance Department to have the bid setup. Director of Engineering Angel Moore stated that the infrastructure issues would be addressed first as those are more critical. Councilmember Bailey stated that he has communicated that information to those that have asked him about the status once the infrastructure issues are completed, it will be structurally sound for any additional improvements.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the status of the Personal Review Board additional member. City Clerk Shannon Davis stated that they have not received a name for a potential member from Council. Mayor Lowe inquired about the timeline to have the new member on the board. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the opening is in District 3 and that it is important that a name(s) is turned in because it is a lengthy process for a new member to onboard. Councilmember Day stated that he would provide names. Ms. Davis stated that the seat has been opened since 2023.

Councilmember Bailey inquired about the status of the ongoing work to fix the water leaks throughout the City. Utilities Director John Spraggins provided the status of the number of leaks that have been completed and an overview of the remaining issues. Mr. Spraggins stated that they have given the contractor additional water leaks to repair and the most critical will continue to be addressed first.

Councilmember Gordy stated that he received a call from a contractor regarding not being notified in advanced regarding water taps that they need to address. Councilmember Gordy inquired if there is a way to ensure that the contractors are notified at the planning stages when they have to budget for additional utility work on their projects. Utilities Director John Spraggins stated that they are working on ensuring that the contractors receive communication when they start the planning stages of the project. City Manager Wallace Hunter inquired as to how the contractors receive the communication. Mr. Spraggins stated that it is on the City Utility website, signs in the lobby and direct communication with the contractors.

Councilmember Gordy stated that he spoke to a citizen and they questioned whether the City paid the employees enough in order to retain employees and that he explained that it was not the pay but the fact that people do not want to work. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the pay is not the only benefit to working for the City, as the benefit package is the best.

Councilmember Day inquired about the Water Meter Register replacements. Director of Utilities John Spraggins stated that the meter reading process is still taking place and that it will still be a while as it is all being completed manually. Councilmember Day stated that a citizen has called him on the status to fix the water leak on 25th Avenue and that he responded to the citizen that it is on the City's side and that it is on the list to be completed however, critical issues are being addressed.

Councilmember Bailey inquired if there has been any feedback on the upcoming Utilities hiring fair. Utilities Director John Spraggins stated that the event is taking place Thursday, April 3, 2025 and that they have had feedback from the website. Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan provided an overview of how the website is setup to gather the feedback and that around 700 people have clicked on the link on the site and approximately 20% have moved forward with the process. Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble provided additional statistics on the number of people accessing the information. Mr. Gamble stated that they are planning on a high number of applicants during the hiring fair based off the responses received. Mr. Culligan stated that the advertising has proven to be effective. Councilmember Bailey inquired if they will also look at other positions throughout the City during the hiring fair. Mr. Gamble stated that they do plan to review all of the open positions throughout the City and that representatives from other departments will be available onsite.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the hiring fair is one of the best events that the City has had setup but that it is hard these days to hire qualified employees that have the work ethic that the City is looking to hire. Mr. Hunter also stated that there is an abundant amount of paperwork and process that goes into hiring employees and that it is a shame when all of the effort is done for the person to not work out because they do not want to work. Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan stated that it is frustrating that new employees do not have the soft skills for the workforce and that every high school graduate can be trained but the problem is their desire to work.

Councilmember Bailey stated that the City received a letter from Alatrade and that a person from Alatrade reached out. Councilmember Bailey also stated that he communicated to the contact that the Council does not get involved in the way they may run their plant but they want to ensure it is being maintain properly. Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble provided an overview of the issues that the City has stated there are with the Alatrade Plant processing and that the plant is not adhering to the Ordinances. Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan stated that since COVID the Alatrade plant has struggled and that they upgraded their processing systems, invested in new customers and added automation in an effort to reinvest in their

customers but are struggling to accomplish it. Mr. Culligan also stated that the company has communicated to them that when they complete the current contract, they are looking to do a layoff to assist with costs. Utilities Director John Spraggins described the types of chicken waste causing the issues that have been coming from the plant. Councilmember Bailey stated that laying off employees is not going to fix the environmental issues from the waste in water. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the employees that may be laid off could go to other companies in the industry that are safer. Mr. Hunter also stated that it is not that they do not care about the jobs for those employees but rather the company does not care about their safety. Mr. Hunter further stated that it will cause millions of dollars to continue to repair the lift stations and the City cannot continue to do that. Mr. Hunter stated that the City cannot continue to compromise the systems and it is not safe to have the City's employees go into the systems to clean them when the company should have had the proper process in place to prevent the waste from getting into the City's systems. Councilmember Gordy inquired about the City's options if the company does not fix the issues. Mr. Gamble stated that six months ago, the City decided to close the business temporally in order for the company to make the changes to fix the problems and that the City is about to go live with four new clarifiers that were costly and the City cannot afford to have the company's issues mess them up. Mayor Lowe inquired as to whether Alatrade has responded to the letter sent to them and Mr. Gamble stated that they have not reached out in response. Councilmember Day inquired as to whether Alatrade was the only company in the Industrial Park that the City currently has issues with. Mr. Gamble also stated that at this time, it is the only one with the issues in regards to the sanitary and sewer. Utilities Director John Spraggins stated that the Utilities Department is not aware of any other companies with the sanitation issues. Mr. Hunter provided a timeline of issues since the Alatrade Company came into the City and why it continues to be detrimental to the City and the Citizens.

Councilmember Day stated that he has received positive feedback from Citizens on the paving progress on 27th Avenue.

Councilmember Gordy inquired about the status of the Irrigation updates to the Phenix City Golf Course. Golf Manager Mike Barber stated that there was an issue with the underground power that set them back. Mr. Barber also stated that 14 holes have been completed and that they have up to two weeks of work remaining.

Mayor Lowe went over the upcoming agenda items.

Councilmember Gordy inquired about the status of Edmond Estates Apartments. Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble stated that over the last six months the City has received many complaints against the apartments. Mr. Gamble also stated that the living conditions in the apartments is terrible for any type of living and therefore, the City submitted a letter to the owners giving them (6) six months to either fix the code issues or the tenants would have to vacate the property and they did not comply. Mr. Gamble provided an overview of the legal issues surrounding the owners of the property. Mr. Gambled stated that the last action the City wanted was to have residents displaced due to the poor conditions and code violations, however the owners are not taking responsibility and the conditions are both environmentally and physically unsafe for residents. Mr. Gamble also stated that the property managers have responded to the City that they cannot make any repairs because the owners are not providing any funds for the work. Mr. Gamble provided examples of the issues with the apartments that must be fixed but were not and that there is a major issue with the hole in the parking lot under the asphalt and it is dangerous. Mr. Gamble stated that all of the trash bins are full, they refuse to empty and clean up the area, and there are several abandon vehicles on the property. Mr. Gamble also stated that he, Director of Utilities and Director of Building had a meeting with the Regional Director of HUD

to discuss the issues and that HUD will go through their Abatement Process and work with each of the residents who receive Section 8 to try and help place them in temporary housing. Mr. Gamble further stated that they are also connecting the local Housing Authority to assist with the residents for resources. Councilmember Bailey inquired as to how the residents pay their rent and Mr. Gamble stated that they pay it to the property management group. Councilmember Gordy inquired as to how many residents are currently being affected. Building Official Ray Rogers stated that there were 80 units in the complex and 56 have violations and the full capacity is 120. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City has tried to work with the owners but that the City's priority is the residents of Phenix City.

Assistant City Manager Chan Gamble provided an overview to Council on the recent House Bill that was introduced by Representative Blackshear to appeal the decision for Russell County to pay the City the 10% Tax Bill. Mr. Gamble stated that it passed the House and is headed to the Senate. Mr. Gamble encouraged Council to contact the senator's on the City's behalf. Mr. Gamble also stated that if the Bill passes in the Senate, it would allow the County to stop paying the 10% and it would be effective on October 1, 2025. Councilmember Gordy stated that even if the Bill passes, Russell County is still liable to pay the City back on the past amounts due. Mr. Gamble confirmed.

Mayor Lowe thanked everyone for attending and encouraged everyone to kept Councilmember Vickey Green in his or her prayers.

Mayor Lowe stated that there being no further business to address, the meeting thus adjourned until April 15, 2025.