APPROVED AS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL 05/06/25

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
April 14, 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, April 14, 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 Carter Green, 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 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, Graduate Civil Engineer Andrew Patterson, Finance Director Labrita King-Copeland, Finance Staff Accountant Pam Smith, Fire Chief Kristin Kennedy, Assistant Fire Chief Kerry Bragg, IT Director Mike Bauer, Library Director Tammy Henry, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Chief of Police George Staudinger, Assistant Police Chief Joseph Weierick and Utilities Director John Spraggins.

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

Mayor Lowe clarified for all of the attendees, the timeframes for Work Session and Council Meeting. Mayor Lowe stated that the standard days for the Work Sessions are on Mondays at 3:00 p.m. and Council Meetings on Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. and the quarterly Council Meetings that are held in the evenings at 6:00 p.m. in each of the three districts.

Councilmember Bailey led the invocation as listed on the agenda.

Mayor Lowe called upon Mr. Richard Stephens to address Council as listed on the agenda. Mr. Stephens came forth to address Council. Mr. Stephens provided his condolence to Councilmember Green on the passing of her sister. Mr. Stephens stated that he was addressing Council to request that 12th Street to be renamed in honor of his mother Mrs. Carrie Louise Stephens who will be turning 100 years old this year, which is an incredible milestone. Mr. Stephens provided an overview of the legacy of his mother living on the street all of her life. Mr. Stephens stated that he hoped that Council would take his concerns in consideration and thanked Council. Mayor Lowe stated that the City does not rename streets due to the 911 systems and the cumbersome process but that they do rename parkways. Councilmember Green stated that Mr. Stephens was blessed to have his mother at 100 years of age. Councilmember Green also thanked Mr. Stephens for acknowledging her sister and the kind words that he expressed.

Mayor Lowe called upon Chris Rogers, with BSI to address Council as listed on the agenda. Mr. Rogers came forth to address Council. Mr. Rogers stated that he is requesting permission for annexation of 0.03-acre parcel #57-05-03-05-4-003-023.000, which is west of the Gatewood Subdivision off Opelika Road to build a duplex development. Mayor Lowe requested that Mr. Rogers follow the procedures for the annexation request. Mr. Rogers thanked Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Dr. Jaylin Alexander to address Council as listed on the agenda. Dr. Alexander came forth to address Council in regards to the Crowell Park Flooding issues. Dr. Alexander stated that he sent a letter to Mayor and Council via the City Clerk's Office the City

and he read the letter to Council (see-attached letter). Dr. Alexander also stated that he hoped that Council would take the time to address the issues. Dr. Alexander further stated that something has to been done. Mayor Lowe thanked Dr. Alexander for his comments. Mayor Lowe stated that Council did read his letter and stated that in the first line of the letter it stated that there was loss of life and that the statement was not true as there were no lives lost from the flooding in Crowell Park. Mayor Lowe also stated that in the letter, Dr. Alexander mentioned the Seale Road bridgework was paid for solely by the City, which is not true. Mayor Lowe further stated that the work was funded through grant money and it was mandated by the State of Alabama and not the City of Phenix City. Mayor Lowe stated that approved grant money has to be used for the purpose for which it was intended. Mayor Lowe also stated that the bridge was 70 years old and it was not safe for a vehicle to go across it. Mayor Lowe further stated that the letter was incorrect when it stated that the bridgework cost 3.5 million of the City's funds. Mayor Lowe stated that attracting new businesses in the City is critical to the financial stability of the City's revenue and that without that additional revenue the City would not have been able to match the funding to have the unsafe bridge repaired. Mayor Lowe also stated that it is was disappointing that as a man of the cloth, he should know that God ordains everything and that he and the Council will be there as long as God has planned. Mayor Lowe further stated that some of the things mentioned in the letter were embellished or not the truth and that he believes it is the upcoming Municipal Election that is driving the negativity. Mayor Lowe stated that it is a shame that they want to make someone else look bad just so that they can run against them in the election and that if it is their intent; they are not the right person to be on the Council. Mayor Lowe also stated that after everyone has addressed Council, the City would present all of the facts that they have in regards to the flooding in Crowell Park and that they should have come to the City to meet and receive the facts before spreading false information on social media platforms and in emails.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that they all will be given the opportunity to state their issues to Council. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City would provide a presentation on the facts and that the City has planned to present additional education and a complete timeline starting when the Crowell Park Subdivision began in the 1970's to included the financials. Mr. Hunter further stated that the lower portion of the area should not have been used for construction of homes and should have never had homes built there. Mr. Hunter stated that he has been with the City 40 years and that there is no way that God would place him in his position where he would watch people suffer for no reason. Mr. Hunter also stated that at the end of the discussion, it might not be the answer that they want but it will be the facts and that the City wants them to understand where they are coming from in regards to what the City can do.

Councilmember Day stated that he represents District Three where Crowell Park is located and that he wanted to address a statement made by Dr. Alexander that people do not care. Councilmember Day also stated that the statement was not true and that anytime he is contacted or is aware that something is going on, he is there and he shows up and that he does care. Councilmember Day further stated that he spoke to approximately 25 people in that area when the flooding occurred and provided feedback to them on the history of the area as it was given to him 13 years ago. Councilmember Day stated that years ago FEMA attempted to buy the homeowners out because it was a flood zone. Councilmember Day also stated that when it rains that much, it does not matter if a wall is built, the water is going to flood. Councilmember Day further stated that he does care and that he communicates with the citizens that he represents. Councilmember Day stated that every third Saturday for two years he went to the Police Precinct in District Three and answered any questions or concerns from the Citizens and

the entire time he made himself available there were only two people that ever showed up. Councilmember Day encouraged all Citizens regardless of the district they live in to come down to the City and get facts before jumping to conclusions or hearsay.

Mayor Lowe stated that the City does not address issues just in North Phenix City but in all areas of Phenix City.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that he wished that they had citizens attend Work Session Meetings more often so that they could hear the facts of the issues and the work that the City is accomplishing for all of the citizens.

Mayor Lowe called upon Dalton Garrett Urda to address Council as listed on the agenda. Mr. Urda came forth to address Council. Mr. Urda stated that he has lived in Crowell Park since 2021. Mr. Urda also stated that the Crowell Park area has neighbors and a community that would do anything they could for one another. Mr. Urda further stated that when he purchased his home, he was encouraged to purchase flood insurance and that he was informed it was due to a dam that broke in the 1960's. Mr. Urda stated that five months after he moved in, the area experienced a flooding and since FEMA does not cover a temporary place to stay; he had to stay in a hotel while repairs were being made at his home. Mr. Urda read a letter to Council regarding the issues that took place due to the flooding. Mr. Urda inquired as to why the City did not let people know about the flood zone when they purchased the property. Mr. Urda stated the he has health issues that prevent him from living in his home while the work is being done and is paying out of pocket for rental property. Mr. Urda also stated that many of the residents in Crowell Park are older and cannot afford to move or rent property especially with the high rental cost. Mr. Urda further stated that he wished that there were more that he could do to help his neighbors. Mr. Urda stated that because his home floods every time it rains, he no longer wants to leave in the area or in the City, which he hates because his neighbors are the best people. Mr. Urda also stated that he hoped that they could come to a resolution to help the residents of the neighborhood with retroactive flood insurance or coordinating with FEMA to get help for the residents and educate new residents on the options for flood insurance. Mr. Urda thanked Council for allowing him to speak. Mayor Lowe thanked Mr. Urda for addressing Council. Mayor Lowe stated that he did not want anyone to think that they did not care.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City has no control over the Board of Realtors and that Mr. Urda was lied to when he purchased his home. Mr. Hunter also stated that he wanted to be clear that the City could not monitor the Board of Realtors to check to see if they are being honest with the homebuyers. Mr. Hunter further stated that anyone that has purchased a home in Crowell Park in the past couple of decades should have been told the truth by the person or agency that sold them the home. Mr. Hunter stated that when there is a rainstorm with an F1 tornado like the most recent where they received an enormous amount of rain in a matter of minutes, the drainage system couldn't withstand it. Mr. Hunter also stated that it causes issues with the sanitary sewer system and everything backs up trying to flush out to the Chattahoochee River.

Councilmember Bailey clarified that Mr. Urda was able to purchase FEMA Flood Insurance when he purchased his home and was notified that he needed it. Mr. Urda stated that when they were working with the mortgage company, they informed them that flood insurance was strongly recommended. Councilmember Bailey stated that he wanted to make sure they

understood that the City does not have authority with the mortgage company or the selling of homes. Councilmember Bailey also stated that there is no doubt that they were misled however; it was not by the City of Phenix City. Councilmember Bailey further stated that this goes back to the 1970's when his father was on the Council and that over the years there has been multiple members on the Council and in the neighborhood that had no idea of the flood zone in Crowell Park. Councilmember Bailey stated that some of the request they have for Council are legitimate but that other things are out of Council's control.

Mayor Lowe called upon Ayshiea Conerly to address Council as listed on the agenda. Ms. Conerly came forth to address Council. Ms. Conerly stated that she is the President of the local NAACP and that her goal is not to come in anger but to be involved in the conversation for solutions to the issues. Ms. Conerly also stated that it was her goal to not leave the meeting today without understanding all of the facts and to come to together to find solutions for what can be done for the residents of Crowell Park. Ms. Conerly further stated that it is someone's mother, brother or uncle being affected and their lives are at stake. Ms. Conerly stated that there has to be better solutions and she would like to be part of the conversation, and that she comes to the Council, not as a politician but rather a voice for the residents of Crowell Park. Ms. Conerly also stated that hope is slipping and they do not want to be part of a community with no hope. Ms. Conerly asked that God continue to be with them and thanked Council for their time. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Conerly for her comments.

City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that Jackson Drive in the lower part of Crowell Park has to be restored to its natural form to rectify the issues and if anyone states that it can be any other way, they are lying to them. Mr. Hunter also stated that it is part of the acceptance that needs to happen among the residents and the agencies that are going to speak will provide steps for receiving possible support. Mr. Hunter further stated that the major storms are an act of God. Mr. Hunter stated that there is nothing that can be done to prevent the lower part of Crowell Park from flooding without returning it to its natural form.

Mayor Lowe called upon Doris Gloster to address Council as listed on the agenda. Ms. Gloster came forth to address Council. Ms. Gloster stated that she is renting her home and no one told her that it was in a flood zone. Ms. Gloster provided details of the affects the damage has taken on her and her home during the floods. Ms. Gloster stated that she is afraid of future storms for her safety. Mayor Lowe inquired if anyone had told Ms. Gloster about flood insurance and she stated that they did not.

Ms. Betty Richardson came forth to address Council. Ms. Richardson stated that she resides in Crowell Park and explained the events that occurred on April 6, 2025. Ms. Richardson also stated that when she purchased her home, she contacted FEMA to purchase flood insurance and that their response was that they could not help her. Ms. Richardson further stated that she was able to purchase the insurance through State Farm. Ms. Richardson stated that State Farm came out and evaluated the flood damage. Ms. Richardson explained the emotional and physical effects that she is suffering due to the ongoing flood issues. Ms. Richardson stated that this was the third flooding for her and it was the worst. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Richardson for her comments.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Manager Wallace Hunter, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan and Director of Engineering Angel Moore to speak to the Citizens and share a

presentation, which provides a complete timeline of Crowell Park. Ms. Moore presented the slide show for all of the attendees to view as they spoke about the facts. Ms. Moore reviewed the timeline and stated that five residents took FEMA's buyout in 1997. Ms. Moore continued to review the entire timeline of events that included the City's study and what was completed by FEMA. Mr. Hunter stated that with the heavy rains, the major dams released in Atlanta and at the same time, the water is trying to get back to the Chattahoochee River from the City and the river swells and it backs up with nowhere to go and this causes the flooding. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City's Amphitheater has been under water many times.

City Manager Wallace Hunter called upon the Director of Emergency Management David Martin to speak to the Council and attendees. Mr. Martin provided the overview of the work that was completed by Emergency Management during the major storm that occurred on April 6, 2025 for the Crowell Park residents. Mr. Martin stated that they evaluated the damage and use that data to submit for grant funding purposes. Mr. Martin also stated that there is a FEMA Program in place for Alabama residents to received assistance in known flood zone areas. Mr. Martin provided details on available programs and grants.

City Manager Wallace Hunter called upon Director for the Lee-Russell County Council of Government Lisa Sandt to speak to the Council and attendees. Ms. Sandt provided an overview of the grant support that they offered for local communities. Ms. Sandt also provided the many resources available to residents that have been impacted by the flooding. Ms. Sandt further provided contact information and stated that people could reach out by emailing her at lsandt@lrcog.com. Mayor Lowe thanked Ms. Sandt for addressing Council. Mr. Hunter stated that it is his hope that all of the information provided will help the residents. Mr. Hunter also stated that there are many opportunities and encouraged residents to reach out for more information. Ms. Sandt answered additional questions from attendees in regards to the resources information that she provided. Several members of City of Phenix City voiced their opinions and stated that something has to be done about the flooding. One resident stated that many of them do not want to leave their homes that they have worked so hard to have.

Councilmember Bailey stated that he does not mean any disrespect but that the conversation continues to go back to the City fixing the flood zone in order for residents to remain there. Councilmember Bailey also stated that to reiterate, the flooding in that area cannot be fixed as it is a natural flood zone. Councilmember Bailey further stated that the water could not be forced into the river when it swells up and that it is no one's fault. Councilmember Bailey stated that the homes were built in a flood zone and they should not have been built. Councilmember Bailey also stated that they are not able to go back and change history; all that they can do is move forward and correct what is in their control. Councilmember Bailey further stated that there are not any answers to some of the questions around what can be done for that area. Councilmember Bailey stated that even though one person represents their district, the entire Council is there to support all of the citizens.

City Manager Wallace Hunter recommended the Crowell Park residents designate one person to be the contact person for them and this contact person will be updated on what can be and what will be done as far as cleaning out ditches and the contact person should reach out to the residents of Crowell Park. The contact may attend Council Meetings at certain times in order to be knowledgeable.

Mayor Lowe called upon Angel Moore, Director of Engineering, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their April 8, 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 15, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Public Safety Building.
2. Informed Council that Ft. Benning will hold the Benning Family Reception on Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
3. Informed Council that Ft. Benning will hold the Designation Ceremony on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
4. Advised Council that the Downtown Redevelopment Authority will meet on Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
5. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals will meet on Thursday, April 17, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
6. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, April 22, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
7. Advised Council that the Housing Abatement Board will meet on Friday, May 2, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Informed Council that Chattahoochee Valley Community College will hold their Commencement Ceremony on Friday, May 9, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
11. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
12. Informed Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities 2025 Convention will be held on May 13, 2025 through May 16, 2025 in Huntsville, Alabama.
13. Advised Council that the Board of Zoning Adjustments and Appeals will meet on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.
14. Informed Council that the 2nd Annual Women's Health Awareness will hold their walk on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. Informed Council that City Offices will be closed on Monday, May 26, 2025 in observance of Memorial Day Holiday.
18. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 5:15 p.m.
19. Reviewed the upcoming Board Appointments.

Mayor Lowe went over the upcoming agenda items.

Mayor Lowe thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Mayor Lowe stated that there being no further business to address, the meeting thus adjourned until May 5, 2025.

ALEXANDER ENTERPRISE
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

April 7th, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

The most recent weather incident brought about the loss of life, significant debris, damage to property, and awareness to the decades long flooding gone unaddressed in the Crowell Park Neighborhood of south Phenix City. As one who has grown up and lived the majority of my life in the neighborhood, I and others are first hand witnesses to this reality. It is unfortunate and an outright disgrace that the dire needs of tax paying individuals have gone overlooked. We were previously told that the issue had been addressed but come to find out were only lied to; the only thing that was done was the cleaning of the sewage system and nothing has been done since and that was years ago. The flooding has resulted in significant water damage to homes, residents were placed in grave danger to the heights of the water almost at waist height in some parts of the neighborhood, and even individuals had to be evacuated from their homes by emergency service personnel because they were trapped due to the flooding.

It is obvious that the government officials of Phenix City prioritize investments in commercial developments over the lives of the people they're charged to serve. A Chick-Fil-A, Outback Steakhouse, Starbucks, Taco Bell, Raceway Gas Station, along with other projects including a bridge not more than probably 20 feet was redeveloped costing upwards of $3 to $5 Million, yet grandmothers and grandfathers ages 70+ have to worry rather or not the City will perform their legal obligation to come to their aide in this time of crisis, whether or not their neighborhood with public sewage and roadway infrastructure will be developed to accommodate the excessive buildup of rain water and prevent future flooding. The residents of Crowell Park are tired of giving chance after chance and yet nothing is done. It is time for a change!

My grandad was one of the first residents of Crowell Park, having owned his home since his early 20s and thereafter passing it down to his children and grandchildren posthumously with honor. His house remains the family house for me and mine and we will do whatever it takes to protect it and the houses of our neighborhoods who have also become family and served as a village to me in my upbringing. Again, something needs to be done.

Office of the Chief Executive Officer
Dr. Jaylin Alexander, Chief Executive Officer
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As elected officials, you have a responsibility to cater to the needs of those who elected you. I believe that your lack of attention to this enduring issue is an indicator of your lack of care for your people and your comfort in your positions because you feel as though nothing will happen. On behalf of those affected by the flood this past Sunday 4/6/25, I am obligating that City Officials present a plan to fund and address this issue no later than 10/6/25 to the residents of Crowell Park and other neighborhoods that have severe flooding. If a plan of action is not presented and the pleas of the residents continue to go unaddressed, we will be forced to make changes in the levels of Phenix City government. YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE AND VOTED OUT.

Please see attached pictures of the mere injustice and lack of concern, accountability, and handling of the infrastructure of Crowell Park and the lives of the people that have established their homes.

Sincerely,

Jaylin Alexander

Dr. Jaylin Alexander
Chief Executive Officer