

**City of Pelham
City Council Work Session**

October 5, 2009

MINUTES

Members of the Pelham City Council met on October 5, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. with Council President Mike Dickens presiding. The meeting was held in the conference room of Pelham City Hall and open to the public.

The following elected officials were present:

Don Murphy, Murphy
Mike Dickens, Council President
Bill Meadows, Councilmember
Teresa Nichols, Councilmember
Steve Powell, Councilmember
Karyl Rice, Councilmember

Media Present: Marianne Thomas-Ogle, Birmingham News

Others present: Tom Seale, Chief Danny Ray, Gary Waters, Butch Byrd, Jerry Nolen, Jesse Jowers, Roy Lambert, Danny Endress, Jim Burks, Eddy Jowers, Billy Shepherd, and Stuckey Godfrey, and other employees and members of the public.

The council work session was called to order by Council President Dickens at 5:32 pm. All elected officials were present.

A motion was made by Councilmember Steve Powell to approve the September 21, 2009 work session minutes as modified and accepted. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Teresa Nichols, and the motion passed unanimously.

President Dickens asked the council members to move speedily as they discussed the items on the agenda in order to allow ample time to gather information and understanding of the proposed sewer rate increase in order to prepare a presentation for the public for the upcoming town hall meetings.

The council discussed items on the agenda and other general business concerning the city.

Mayor's Comments:

Resolution 2009-10-05-01 ALDOT Project Sidewalks Along Ballpark Road from Bearden Road to US 31. Mayor Murphy stated that the city was denied stimulus money at first, but after meeting with ALDOT in Montgomery, along with Rep. Mike Hill, the city was able to show they were in compliance with all the application requirements and met all deadlines. The mayor was able to get stimulus money for the city which will fund this project at 100%.

In other comments, Mayor Murphy announced the Focus Meeting on October 13, the Senior Center Yard Sale October 10 and the Town Hall Meetings October 12.

Resolution 2009-10-05-02 and Resolution 2009-10-05-03 Awarding Bid for purchase and installation of eight (8) Warning Sirens. Councilmember Bill Meadows asked Jesse Jowers if there were any in-kind/administrative services associated with this Hazard Mitigation Grant Program grant where the city might get back a portion of the 25% city paid amount for this grant. Mr. Meadows and Mr. Jowers will follow up on this possibility.

Resolution 2009-10-05-04 Proposal for Comprehensive Salary Study. Councilmember Bill Meadows moved to table the discussion on this resolution until the council meeting.

President Dickens recognized Mr. Jim Burks, a member of the Pelham Personnel Board, who asked to address the council on the salary study. His comments are inserted below:

Ladies and Gentlemen of the City Council:

I am Jim Burks, a resident of the City of Pelham since 1982, and a member of the family owning Lighting and Lamp Corp., in the City of Pelham since the late 70's. I have been a member of the Personnel Board for the City of Pelham since my appointment in 1989, along with the Hon. Ron Jackson, and Spruce McRee, for the purpose of writing job descriptions for every department head and employee position in the City. Along with Donna Treslar, we accomplished the base documents in 1990, and submitted them for approval. Needless to say, they have been revised and updated many times since.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of addressing the Council concerning Council Resolution 2009-09-14-07, calling for spending \$85,000.00, to have an outside company evaluate our job descriptions and pay schedules for our city, IF, the council accepts the proposal from the outsource company, Scott Cook with Mercer. I have no personal interest in Scott Cook or Mercer or any other outside source for this study.

I respectfully object to spending this large amount of money for this purpose in light of our projected budget shortfalls and sewer rate increases, even though it is already included in our 2010 budget. Being a business owner during these tough economic times I know first hand of the tough decisions that have to be made concerning budgets and expenditures. I do not necessarily disagree with your reasons for the study of our job descriptions and pay schedules.

I would like to request that the council please consider beginning this study in-house by creating a committee made up of our Dept. Heads, including our Human Resources Dir. and any others you would like to have on the committee. Direct them to compile information to which we already have access and information readily available from the U.S. Dept. of Labor, agencies from the State of Alabama, and other local governments of similar population size, approximate budget size, and any other criteria determined by the council, including a definite time line for the study to be completed and a definite date for reporting their findings and answering inquiries from the Council.

Why would I make such a request or even suggest to the council that we make an in-house study? MY answer.. any outside source is going to occupy the valuable time of OUR department heads asking questions, asking OUR employees to review the job descriptions we already have, and make any recommendations for change. The same holds true for the analysis of OUR Salary and Pay schedules. We will be FURNISHING them information and GIVING countless hours of OUR time at NO cost to them. The outside source will compile

OUR information, from OUR people, using the taxpayers' dollars to pay for OUR employees' time, and then they will charge us, the City of Pelham taxpayers, \$85,000.00 to report OUR findings to you, OUR City Council. The comparison of our job descriptions and pay schedules to cities of comparable size and budgets all over the country is available already on software that can be purchased for less than \$200.00. That is an obvious savings of \$84,800.00.

I respectfully request, on behalf of the taxpayers of the City of Pelham, that the council not accept the proposal from Scott Cook with Mercer, or any outside source for the purpose of studying our job descriptions and/or our salary and pay schedules as called for in Resolution 2009-09-14-07. Again, I respectfully request that the Council create an in-house committee for a study of job descriptions and salary and pay schedules and NOT spend \$85,000.000, of our tax money for this purpose. Thank you. (End of inserted comments)

Councilmember Steve Powell pointed out (1) the budget is in place which includes this expense so this would not impact the budget, (2) we have experienced personnel capable of working on this, and (3) we only have this one proposal. He recommended we conduct the study in-house first before we outsource. If the results are not satisfactory, then outsource but get more proposals – bid out like we do other purchases.

Councilmember Bill Meadows stated he contacted Mercer after receiving several positive referrals, including Shelby County and the City of Hoover. Mr. Meadows shared his opinions: (1) The city should use experts in this field to design a salary structure that would stand up in court if challenged, and (2) the human element in-house cannot be objective; personalities come into play, and a third party would be non-biased.

The remainder of the work session was lead by President Dickens in discussion and planning for the town hall meetings. Mr. Eddy Jowers provided the requirements, timelines and costs needed for the city to meet ADEM compliance and contracted obligations with Shelby County and the City of Alabaster.

Steve Powell moved to adjourn, and Teresa Nichols seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.


Marsha Yates, CMC
Deputy City Clerk



7

7

