



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Pelham City Hall
City Council Chambers
October 20, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.**

Proper notice of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Pelham City Council was given in advance of such a public meeting and the notice remained posted throughout the scheduled meeting.

Date: October 20, 2025
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: Pelham City Hall – City Council Chambers
Present: President of the Council Maurice Mercer
Councilmember David Coram
Councilmember Chad Leverett
Councilmember Rick Wash
Councilmember Michael Harris, Jr.
Mayor Gary Waters

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council President Mercer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember Leverett led the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Harris.

Appointment of Acting City Clerk

Councilmember Coram made a motion to appoint Tom Seale as Acting City Clerk to record the minutes of the October 20, 2025 City Council meeting.

Said motion was seconded by Councilmember Leverett.

There being no further discussion, the motion to appoint Tom Seale as Acting City Clerk was approved by unanimous voice vote of those members of the City Council present and Council President Mercer declared the same passed.

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

The Acting City Clerk recorded the attendance of the elected officials and announced a quorum was present. City Manager Gretchen DiFante and City Attorney Josh Arnold were present.

CONSENT AGENDA

A consent agenda is presented by the presiding officer at the beginning of a council meeting. Items presented on the consent agenda are considered routine and/or non-controversial, are organized apart from the rest of the agenda, and are adopted by general consent and vote by the city council without debate. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Removed items may be considered either immediately after the consent agenda is approved or placed on the agenda at the discretion of the presiding officer and City Council.

1. Approval of the October 20, 2025 City Council Agenda
2. Approval of the October 6, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes
3. **Resolution 2025-10-06-01** for consideration to authorize the use of wall space in Pelham City Park to the Pelham B.E.A.T.

4. **Resolution 2025-10-20-01** for consideration to authorize a budget amendment related to the property purchase from Live Nation Worldwide, Inc.

5. **Resolution 2025-10-20-02** for consideration to authorize a Memorandum of Agreement with Shelby County, Alabama regarding the transfer of ownership of P25 radio units

6. **Resolution 2025-10-20-03** for consideration to authorize and allocate non-profit funding requests approved in the FY2026 Budget

7. **Resolution 2025-10-20-04** for consideration to accept the proposal from Shelby County Park and Recreation Authority for the construction of pickleball courts and a restroom/pavilion building at the Pelham Senior Center

8. **Resolution 2025-10-20-05** for consideration to accept the proposal from Shepard Electric Company, Inc. for the replacement and installation of primary and secondary surge protectors at the Ballantræ Clubhouse. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

9. **Resolution 2025-10-20-06** for consideration to accept proposals for the demolition and construction of a new circulation desk at the Pelham Public Library. This project was budgeted for FY2025 and FY2026.

10. **Resolution 2025-10-20-07** for consideration to declare certain items (vehicles) as surplus personal property no longer needed for public or municipal purposes and to authorize the disposal of the same

11. **Resolution 2025-10-20-08** for consideration to accept a proposal from Range Servant America, Inc. for the purchase and installation of a golf ball dispenser for Ballantræ Golf Club. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

12. **Resolution 2025-10-20-09** for consideration to accept the lowest responsive and responsible bid from Southeastern Sealcoating, Inc. for the Pelham Greenway Trail Phase IV. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

Council President Mercer stated the complete text of the agenda, minutes, ordinances, and resolutions are available at Pelham City Hall and online at www.pelhamalabama.gov.

Councilmember Wash made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented by Council President Mercer. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, Council President Mercer asked the Acting City Clerk for a roll call vote. The vote to adopt the Consent Agenda was recorded as follows:

Maurice Mercer, Council President	<u>Yes</u>
David Coram, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Chad Leverett, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Rick Wash, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Michael Harris, Jr., Council Member	<u>Yes</u>

The motion to adopt the Consent Agenda passed unanimously by roll call vote of those members present and the President of the Council declared the same passed and adopted.

PUBLIC HEARING(S) – None

MAYOR'S REPORT/COMMENTS – None

PROCLAMATION(S) AND RESOLUTION(S) BY THE MAYOR AND OTHERS – None

RECOGNITION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

City Manager Gretchen DiFante recognized Council President Maurice Mercer, Councilmember David Coram, Councilmember Rick Wash, and Mayor Gary Waters for their many years of dedicated service to the City of Pelham.

RECOGNITION OF MAYOR GARY W. WATERS

City Manager Gretchen DiFante recognized Mayor Gary Waters for his many years of service to the City of Pelham as Fire Chief and Mayor.

The following remarks were made by City Manager Gretchen DiFante about Retiring Pelham Mayor Gary Waters during the regularly scheduled Council Meeting on October 20, 2025.

Almost eight and a half years ago, my husband and I decided to move back to Alabama to help care for my Mom. When I told my city manager about a job interview, I had for a city manager position in Pelham, I added that it was for a city that had never had a manager. My manager commented that if the council liked me, I'd better be sure the mayor wanted me there, because 90% of the time a first manager fails in a city, it's due to the relationship with the mayor.

During my first interview with the Pelham city council and mayor, I sat in my bedroom where I had tried desperately not to make it look like I was in a bedroom and participated in my first virtual job interview. A few minutes into the interview, Mayor Waters left the room, and he did not return for some time.

When I was told I was one of three finalists for the job, I interviewed at City Hall with the mayor, city council members, and department heads in attendance. One of the questions for me was "What is the last book you have read and what did you think about it?" This was an easy question to answer, because I had just completed The Four Disciplines of Execution on the plane. So, I began my response on what I thought about 4DX, and Mayor Waters got up and walked out of the room! Any calmness I had left me, and I thought to myself, well, this is clearly over.

Several minutes later, the Mayor returned with a book and laid it down on the table in front of me – yes, it was "The Four Disciplines of Execution," and he whispered to me, "I really like this book too."

- *I am not here to talk about Mayor Waters' 3 decades as a firefighter, paramedic, and fire chief, nor am I going to talk about his 24 years of combined active and national guard duty in the Army.*
- *Many people know that Gary Waters is an organ donor who has one kidney and also is missing a lung due to an illness, but I'm not here to talk about that either.*

I want to talk about Mayor Waters' leadership, character, and heart.

In less than 60 days into my job here in Pelham, I figured out that I was not hired to take on city management responsibilities. I want to preface my next comments by saying that I believe most of the people responsible for hiring me did hire me to be a city manager, but that is not what happened. I firmly believe that I was hired to usurp the Mayor's power and Authority and to increase the divide between many different groups in the city. Mayor Waters had figured this out long before I came to Pelham, but it was a shock to me.

However, in less than 60 days, Mayor Waters and I realized that we were on the same page, and we began to trust each other.

One day, the Mayor came into my office and gave me a book, "The Art of War," by Chinese General Sun Tzu, published around the 5th century BC. Mayor Waters said, "You should read this book," and so I did.

I also read an article that suggested the title should be, "The Art of Not Going to War Unless You Really Can't Avoid It and Then Still Avoid Fighting as Much as Possible."

I realized right away that the book was about Gary Waters, and I was also sure he didn't see himself this way, because he is one of the humblest people I have ever met.

In summary, the book is about the imperative traits of generals during war, but it was written more than 2,500 years ago, and many have compared the qualities to the leadership characteristics vital to a successful organization.

Let me tell you about those characteristics:

1. Wise and Strategic – Mayor Gary Waters is a quiet leader, now I'm not saying he is quiet – those are two different things. Wise people listen to others, and that is what makes them wise. When you have a conversation with Mayor Waters, you can feel him listening, and you can be assured that everything he has heard from you and the other people with whom he will consult on the subject (because there will be others), will be reflected in his decisions and actions. Sometimes he may appear to be rash, but he is anything but. This is so rare in anyone today.

2. Trustworthy and a Man of Integrity – Many people believe that you are a person of integrity if you stick to your decision and relate weakness to someone who changes their mind. Gary Waters is not too proud to say he changed his mind, but he doesn't change his mind because a handful or even a large group of people spoke negatively about a decision he made. He changes his mind when new data is introduced, and through using his unique listening, he gains self-awareness or fresh insights. He always tells you why he changed his mind and provides the information to you in a way that makes you say, Duh, why didn't I think of that or see that? But you can't, because you can't listen and observe like Gary Waters can.

3. Benevolence or Love – In eight years, I have not met a person Gary Waters immediately judged. Despite being intuitive, everyone he meets benefits from his lack of judgment. Mayor Waters genuinely believes that at the core of everyone, there is a truly good heart. He often expresses this when others are trying to understand the reasons behind someone's actions. His message is strong. Give the person the benefit of the doubt; circumstances can change anyone in some ways, but a person's heart is good. Again, he is saying, watch, observe, AND THEN HE'S ADDED, BUT LOVE FIRST.

4. Courage or Valor – I cannot imagine there is ANYTHING Gary Waters is afraid of. Sun Tzu illustrates that a general's valor is crucial in inspiring the entire army and lifting up the spirits of those you lead. I believe you can speak to any staff member employed by the city of Pelham within the time frame spanning the last 10 years, and they will tell you that the courage of our Mayor, the courage to change, the courage to DO, the courage to support, the courage to be quiet and calm, have been the underlying reason for the success this city has experienced since Gary Waters became Mayor. By the way that success includes more visitors to Pelham, a dramatic increase in the money invested in Pelham, (including those who have never before invested in Pelham and are on second or third projects), fewer lawsuits, a workforce in which those who are qualified for jobs are chosen over because of who they know or what they have done for Pelham or for a single individual, and so much more.

5. Discipline – Tzu maintains that the ability to enforce discipline whenever it is called for can be the decisive factor between success and failure, survival or extinction. Gary Waters inherited an organization without discipline, consistency, and fairness, and he is also humble enough to admit that he was a part of the impact of being under that kind of leadership. Still, he knew it had to be changed and had the discipline in SPADES to systematically make those changes. He is also wise enough to know that he could not make those changes by himself. He enlisted people who thought differently and had different experiences. That's because he likes to listen and challenge himself.

We have all met many people in life who claim to respect others' differences and emphasize the importance of listening in communication and leadership, but most of us have encountered very few individuals who consistently demonstrate these qualities over time.

Gary Waters is one of them.

Mayor Waters, thank you for embodying the qualities that Tzu, 2,500 years ago, identified as key to successfully leading people.

Thank you for believing in me and the team we've assembled for this city.

Thank you for the quiet way you demonstrate that you love more like Christ than people who we have listened to ad nauseam share how much they love like Christ while their actions show something very different.

Thank you for not coddling me when I was low and instead for telling me to pull myself up by my bootstraps and get back to work because you knew that's what I needed.

Thank you for acting as the city's HR director for 18 months and being patient with me because the right person hadn't come along yet.

She did!

Thank you for respecting me by bringing your concerns to me instead of others and for asking questions in a way that helps me learn about myself and see a situation from multiple different perspectives even clearer than I thought I did.

Thank you for listening to all of us, asking us our opinions, and making us feel important and respected.

Thank you for providing an example of the way God meant us to love and honor our spouse.

Thank you for showing the ways in which you weren't a perfect parent, child or sibling, giving us permission to be imperfect even when we didn't know we needed it.

Thank you for being there with us all through the losses of parents, siblings, close relatives, friends and pets.

Thank you for attempting to clarify the meaning of orange.

Thank you for being the epitome of vulnerability even when you didn't like the word.

On behalf of the entire Pelham staff, we love you very much, and when we say, it was a pleasure serving with you and you will be missed very much, we are not B-Essing you, and the 14 days of Hell without you will go way beyond that amount of time.

City Manager Gretchen DiFante unveiled a portrait of Mayor Waters which will hang in the Council Chambers at Pelham City Hall.

REPORT BY THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Gretchen DiFante made the following comments:

- Recognized the birth of Thomas James Seale, newborn son of City Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale, and his wife, Joy. Thomas was born on October 17, 2025.
- Recognized Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena's Executive Director Seth Greenberg and Finance Director Loredana Cretu. Mr. Greenberg noted the success of their team in reducing the expected FY2025 loss of \$519,348.00 to a profit of \$101,824.00. Ms. Cretu stated their successes are attributed to an excellent VenuWorks team.

REPORT BY THE CITY ATTORNEY – None

REQUEST(S) TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL – None

OLD BUSINESS / RESOLUTIONS / ORDINANCES / ORDERS and OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Ordinance No. 526** adopting the City of Pelham Business License Ordinance and repealing previously adopted legislation in conflict herewith (**First Reading was on October 6, 2025**)

Councilmember Coram moved to adopt Ordinance No. 526 as presented and Councilmember Harris seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, the motion to adopt Ordinance No. 526 was given vote, and the roll call vote was as follows:

Maurice Mercer, Council President	<u>Yes</u>
David Coram, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Chad Leverett, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Rick Wash, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Michael Harris, Jr., Council Member	<u>Yes</u>

Ordinance No. 526 passed by unanimous roll call vote of the council and the council president declared the same passed.

NEW BUSINESS / RESOLUTIONS / ORDINANCES / ORDERS and OTHER BUSINESS

- Resolution 2025-10-20-10** for consideration of ABC License 020 – Restaurant Retail Liquor - for applicant BBB Pelham, LLC operating under the trade name Big Bad Breakfast, located at 3102 Canopy Trail, Pelham, Alabama 35124 was introduced by Council President Mercer. Resolution 2025-10-20-10 was removed from the October 20, 2025 city council meeting agenda by official action of the city council during the October 20, 2025 work session. Resolution 2025-10-20-10 will be added to the November 3, 2025 City Council Agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. Individuals wishing to address the City Council may, after being recognized, approach the podium, and state their name and physical address prior to making their comments in a respectful manner.

- Daniela Deluca, 110 Brookhollow Way, Pelham, Alabama 35124, thanked Mayor Waters, Council President Mercer, and Councilmember Coram. She noted her son Lucas Kalba served a summer internship with the City of Pelham. She stated she and her son wanted to expressed their gratitude for the city's mentorship of Lucas and for the mayor's and city council's endless support and commitment to the City of Pelham. Lucas thanked the mayor and city council for all they had done for Pelham.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Coram thanked Mayor Waters for his years of service. He noted the art of compromise between the mayor and city council. He said it has been an honor to service the citizens of Pelham. Councilmember Coram thanked the city staff for their dedication.

Councilmember Leverett noted the attendance of Fire Chief Mike Reid. He thanked Seth Greenberg and Gretchen DiFante. He said he counted 31 city employees in tonight's audience. Councilmember Leverett stated, "Mayor Waters, you made me a better person." He wished Mayor Waters the best in retirement.

Councilmember Wash read an excerpt from a book written by Dr. Seuss. He thanked Mayor Waters for his many years of dedicated service to the City of Pelham.

Councilmember Harris noted Mayor Waters' years of devoted service to the City of Pelham. He thanked Mayor Waters for his leadership in making Pelham a better place.

Council President Mercer stated it has been an honor and pleasure to have served with Mayor Waters. He noted his appreciation for the leadership of Mayor Waters. He said he recognized the importance of talking to one another and working together for the benefit of moving the city forward.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Fall-O-Ween will be held on Sunday, October 26, 2025 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Pelham City Park. Enjoy the best of this fall festival with all the treats and no "tricks". Bungee jump, bounce houses, trick or treating, trackless train, games, face painting, balloon artist, knockerball, craft area, costume parade and more.
- The newly elected Pelham City Council will hold their Oath of Office Ceremony and Organizational Meeting on Monday, November 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena. A reception will follow in the Banquet Hall Lobby.
- Pelham City Offices will be closed on Thursday, November 11, 2025 in observance of Veterans Day.
- Pelham City Offices will be closed on Thursday, November 27, 2025 and Friday, November 28, 2025 in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business before the city council, Councilmember Coram moved to adjourn the council meeting and Councilmember Leverett seconded the motion. By voice vote the motion passed unanimously by those members present and the meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 20th day of October 2025.



Jonathan Seale, CMC, City Clerk/Treasurer



Chad Leverett, President of the Council



