



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Pelham City Hall Council Conference Room January 20, 2026 – 5:00 p.m.

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

Members of the Pelham City Council met on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. The regular work session was held in the Council Conference Room at Pelham City Hall and was open to the public.

Call to Order

The work session was called to order by Council President Leverett at 5:00 p.m.

Record of Attendance

The following elected officials were present:

Council President Chad Leverett
Councilmember Michelle Power
Councilmember Christine Townes
Councilmember Markus Hal Snowden
Councilmember Michael Harris
Mayor Rick Wash

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

Media Present: Shelby County Reporter

Others Present: City department heads, city employees, and members of the public

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Councilmember Harris to approve the January 5, 2026 Regular Work Session Minutes and the January 9, 2026 Special Work Session Minutes.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Power. There being no further discussion, the President of the Council announced the motion passed by a unanimous voice vote of those members present.

Request to Address the City Council – None

Old Business – None

New Business

1. Discussion – Amendment to the Business License Fee Schedule to include a provision for consumable hemp and vape products, consistent with recently enacted legislation by the State of Alabama

City Attorney Josh Arnold explained the recent legislation enacted by the State of Alabama regarding consumable hemp and vape products went into effect at the end of 2025. City Manager Gretchen DiFante stated these products are now regulated, but the State has provided little to no guidance to the City on how to license these types of businesses. She said the City currently has many businesses who sell these products.

City Manager DiFante and City Attorney Arnold recommended amending the City's business license ordinance to account for those existing businesses. Mr. Arnold stated since there is a moratorium on new businesses selling these products, only those currently operating would qualify for a City business license. He said the State of Alabama ABC Board will eventually be the governing authority. Any application for the sale of the regulated products would be handled just like the City does with liquor, beer, and wine.

It was the consensus of those members of the city council present to move forward with amending the business license ordinance and to consider suspending the meeting rules to allow immediate consideration of the ordinance since there is a tight timeline to license the businesses selling the regulated products.

2. Discussion – Amendment to the collection procedures detailed in the City of Pelham Sales Tax Ordinance

Councilmember Snowden made a motion to remove this item from the January 20, 2026 work session agenda and to postpone discussion to a future work session. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion.

There being no further discussion, the President of the Council announced the motion passed by a unanimous voice vote of those members present.

3. Discussion – Establishing new dates and times for regularly scheduled work sessions and council meetings

City Manager Gretchen DiFante stated during the Special Council Work Session held on January 9, 2026, the topic of adjusting the City's meeting schedule arose from prior conversations regarding meeting efficiency, workload management, and best practices in municipal governance. Under Alabama law and longstanding municipal practice, each city council has the authority to establish its own meeting dates and times.

City Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale stated after polling the elected officials separately, the results showed the majority were in favor of moving to a new format. The work session would be held on the first and third Monday of the month, same as it currently is now, but the council meeting would be moved to Thursday of the same week.

Mr. Seale read an excerpt from the memorandum he had prepared for the city council's review: *"Independent of the polling results, it has been a consistent staff recommendation to move away from holding the work session and regular council meeting on the same night. This recommendation is grounded in recognized municipal best practices and operational considerations, including:*

- *Providing council members with sufficient time to hear, consider, and research agenda items before formal action is required.*
- *Allowing staff adequate time to respond to questions or requests for additional information that may arise during work sessions.*
- *Reducing the length and intensity of meeting nights for council members, staff, and the public.*
- *Enhancing transparency and deliberation by clearly separating discussion-focused meetings from action-focused meetings.*

While no meeting schedule will fully eliminate challenges or public concern, separating these meetings allows for more thoughtful decision-making and better serves the long-term interests of the City and its residents.

Changes to established meeting schedules often generate concern related to accessibility, convenience, and tradition. For this reason, it is important that any decision be accompanied by a clear explanation of the rationale, the process undertaken, and the City's commitment to open and effective governance."

It was the consensus of those members of the city council present to move forward with the Monday-Thursday format with both meetings beginning at 5:30 p.m.

City Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale stated he would prepare an ordinance for consideration at the February 2, 2026 city council meeting to amend the current meeting schedule, effective the first meeting in March.

4. Discussion – Pelham Board of Education Appointment Process

City Manager Gretchen DiFante stated she received direction from the city council president to research how other cities appoint citizens to their respective school boards. She said she had a successful meeting with Pelham City Schools Superintendent Dr. Keri Johnson who said she would gladly help the city council find the best practices for their appointment process. City Manager DiFante stated they should have the information ready for the next work session on February 2, 2026.

Review of January 20, 2026 City Council Agenda

Council President Leverett and City Manager Gretchen DiFante reviewed the January 20, 2026 city council agenda.

E. 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 and 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 taken up either immediately after the consent agenda is approved or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the presiding officer and City Council.

1. Approval of the January 20, 2026 City Council Agenda
2. Approval of the January 5, 2026 Regular Council Meeting Minutes
3. **Resolution 2026-01-20-01** for consideration to approve a final summary change order for the Lift Station B Dry Prime Pump Addition Project. This project has been completed under budget.

City Manager Gretchen DiFante noted this item was listed under the Consent Agenda since it was a budget item and the project came in under budget.

4. **Resolution 2026-01-20-02** for consideration to approve a final summary change order for the Wastewater Treatment Plant RAS Pumps Replacement Project. This project has been completed under budget.

City Manager Gretchen DiFante noted this item was listed under the Consent Agenda since it was a budget item and the project came in under budget.

5. **Resolution 2026-01-20-03** for consideration to declare certain items (vehicles and equipment) as surplus personal property and to authorize the disposal of the same

There were no comments or questions from any member of the city council.

6. **Resolution 2026-01-20-04** for consideration to establish an AMERICA250 Committee to commemorate the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence

Mayor Wash noted this resolution is the formal step to authorizing and establishing an AMERICA250 Committee here in Pelham. He said the preliminary meeting had 22 people representing several organizations. He said they are all excited and ready to hit the ground running.

- F. Public Hearing(s) – None
- G. Mayor's Report/Comments
- H. Proclamation(s) and Resolution(s) by the Mayor and Others – None
- I. Report by the City Manager
 1. Introduction of New City of Pelham Employees
- J. Report by the City Attorney
- K. Request(s) to Address the Council – None
- L. Old Business / Resolutions / Ordinances / Orders and Other Business

1. **Ordinance No. 070-07** to adopt revised language regarding the City of Pelham's Floodplain Development Ordinance consistent with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements (**First Reading was on January 5, 2026**)

City Manager Gretchen DiFante explained the revisions are administrative in nature and part of routine regulatory updates required to maintain compliance with federal and state standards. FEMA, in coordination with the State of Alabama, issued updated requirements for floodplain management, and the ordinance revisions incorporate those changes. She emphasized that no new Flood Insurance Rate Maps are included as part of this update.

2. **Ordinance No. 528** to amend Chapter 2, Article 1, Section 2-4 of the Code of Ordinance of the City of Pelham to employ the Mayor as Utility Superintendent (**First Reading was on January 5, 2026**)

There were no comments or questions by any member of the city council.

M. New Business / Resolutions / Ordinances / Orders and Other Business

1. **Resolution 2026-01-20-05** for consideration to accept a proposal from and enter into a contract agreement with Gresham Smith for a traffic data collection study along Valleyview Drive. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

City Manager Gretchen DiFante stated this initiative is part of the City's traffic calming request process, which was implemented two years ago in response to frequent neighborhood requests for traffic calming measures. The process allows residents to submit formal applications, which are then evaluated through an unbiased engineering study. No applications were received during the first year of the program. This request represents the first submission, with a group of residents along Valleyview Drive completing the application requirements, including a petition signed by at least two-thirds of affected residents.

(End of the January 20, 2026 Agenda Review)

Executive Session

Council President Leverett stated for the record the purpose of the Executive Session is to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal options for pending litigation, controversies not yet being litigated, but imminently likely to be litigated if the governmental body pursues a proposed course of action under Section 36-25A-7(a)(3), Code of Alabama (1975), as amended.

City Attorney Josh Arnold stated the purpose of tonight's Executive Session is appropriate under Section 36-25A-7(a)(3), Code of Alabama (1975), as amended.

A motion was made by Councilmember Harris to enter into an Executive Session of the city council for the stated purpose. Said motion was seconded by Councilmember Power.

Council President Leverett asked the City Clerk/Treasurer for a roll call vote. The vote to adopt said motion was recorded as follows:

Chad Leverett, Council President	<u>Yes</u>
Michelle Power, Councilmember	<u>Yes</u>
Christine Townes, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Markus Hal Snowden, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>
Michael Harris, Council Member	<u>Yes</u>

Council President Leverett noted the Executive Session would take place in the Council Conference Room and asked the members of the City Council, Mayor Wash, City Manager Gretchen DiFante, Director of Development Services & Public Works Andr  Bittas, City Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale, City Attorney Josh Arnold, and City Attorney Intern Victoria Perry to attend the Executive Session. Council President Leverett stated, per City Manager Gretchen DiFante, he expected the city council to return from the Executive Session in approximately 45 minutes. The city council went into an Executive Session at 6:15 p.m.

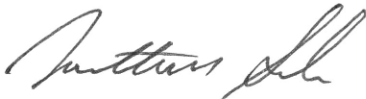
Councilmember Snowden moved to recess the Executive Session. Said motion was seconded by Councilmember Harris. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote of those members present, and the Executive Session was recessed at 7:06 p.m.

Council President Leverett called the January 20, 2026 city council work session back to order at 7:06 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the work session was made by Councilmember Power and seconded by Councilmember Snowden. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote of those members present, and the work session was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 20th day of January 2026.



Jonathan Seale, CMC, City Clerk/Treasurer



Chad Leverett, President of the Council

