



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Pelham City Hall Council Conference Room February 16, 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 Monday, February 16, 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
Mayor Rick Wash

Not Present: Councilmember Michael Harris

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 Townes to approve the February 2, 2026 Regular 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.

Old Business

1. Discussion – Pelham Board of Education Appointment Process

City Manager Gretchen DiFante and Pelham City Schools Superintendent Dr. Keri Johnson addressed the Council regarding the upcoming school board appointment.

Council President Chad Leverett thanked Dr. Johnson for her attendance tonight to help the city council gain valuable insight for the school board appointment from the perspective of the superintendent. He said any information she could share is greatly appreciated.

Dr. Johnson stated Pelham City Schools has a strong, effective board that understands its roles and responsibilities and works well together as a team. She emphasized the importance of a team mentality and noted the value of maintaining a diverse board with varied perspectives. While having an educator on the board can be beneficial, she stated there are no specific skill sets currently needed and cautioned against having too many members with the same background or viewpoint. She also noted the board annually elects its president and vice president from among its members.

City Manager DiFante advised the board acts collectively and no single member can make unilateral changes. She reviewed appointment practices used by other municipalities, noting Pelham's past process is consistent with other neighboring cities. She said future considerations for the appointment process could include incumbency, voting methods (secret ballot or open vote), and term limits.

Councilmembers Power, Townes, and Snowden asked questions regarding the selection process and desired qualifications. Mayor Wash thanked Dr. Johnson for attending and emphasized that school board appointments are among the Council's most important responsibilities, as the board operates independently and reflects the values of the Council and community.

School Board President Robert Plummer, Vice President Shannon White, and board member Bob O'Neal were in attendance at tonight's meeting.

New Business

1. Discussion – Related Party Transactions

Director of Human Resources Tracy Hill addressed the city council. Mrs. Hill stated the city council adopted a Resolution in 2008 which required employees to complete a related party transaction form on an annual basis which was intended to address potential conflicts of interest between their job with the City and any outside employment. She stated based on the City's hiring practices and the improved efficiency of the Human Resources Department, this form has become duplicative. It is the request of the City staff to repeal this Resolution at a future city council meeting. She noted conferring with City Attorney Josh Arnold and City Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale who both agreed the form was no longer necessary.

It was the consensus of those members of the city council present to move forward with consideration at the next city council meeting to repeal the Resolution which implemented the annual related party transaction form requirement.

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

Assistant City Manager Justin Smith and Finance Director Jamie Wagner addressed the city council. Mr. Smith noted the effort made by City staff over the past couple of years to review existing ordinances to see what could be improved or updated. He said the sales tax collection process was updated in 2014 and included additional steps to collect from delinquent taxpayers. He said they would like to propose an amendment that mirrors Alabama State law.

Mrs. Wagner stated the current collection procedures severely limit the City to collect back taxes in a timely manner. Mr. Smith stated the City goes above and beyond what is required to ensure proper notification to the delinquent business owner and ample time to make payments for outstanding balances.

It was the consensus of those members of the city council present to move forward with consideration of the proposed amendment at the next city council meeting.

Review of February 16, 2026 City Council Agenda

Council President Leverett and City Manager Gretchen DiFante reviewed the February 16, 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 February 16, 2026 City Council Agenda
2. Approval of the February 2, 2026 Regular Council Meeting Minutes
3. **Resolution 2026-02-16-01** for consideration to accept a proposal from and enter into an agreement with EV Contracting LLC for renovations to the Starter's Building at Ballantrae Golf Club. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

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

4. **Resolution 2026-02-16-02** for consideration to authorize a Lighting Services Agreement with Alabama Power Company for the upgrade and maintenance of streetlights in the Chase Creek Subdivision

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

5. **Resolution 2026-02-16-03** for consideration to authorize a Traffic Signal/Lighting Maintenance Agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation. There is no expense to the City of Pelham for this project.

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

6. **Resolution 2026-02-16-04** for consideration to accept a proposal from Lower Bros. Tennis Courts for repairs at the Pelham Tennis Center. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

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

7. **Resolution 2026-02-16-05** for consideration to accept the proposal from Emergency Equipment Professionals, Inc. for the new fleet purchase of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) for the Pelham Fire Department. This expense was budgeted for FY2026.

Fire Chief Mike Reid addressed the city council and stated the City purchased a new fleet of SCBAs in 2014 and are now three standards old. He said the new units will have a 10-year “bumper to bumper” warranty. He noted they will be much lighter and reduce firefighter fatigue. He said the purchase came in under budget by about \$40,000.00.

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. Department Report – Information Technology (IT)

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. 526-01** amending the City of Pelham Business License Code of Ordinances to add language for consumable hemp and vape products, consistent with recently enacted legislation by the State of Alabama (**First Reading was on February 2, 2026**)

City Manager Gretchen DiFante stated this Ordinance was discussed at length during the previous city council work session and meeting. She said it comes down to the State of Alabama is now regulating these products and the cities are having to comply with the enforcement of the new regulations.

2. **Ordinance No. 399-07** amending the City of Pelham Code of Ordinances regarding the meeting schedule of the Pelham City Council (**First Reading was on February 2, 2026**)

City Manager Gretchen DiFante stated City staff had proposed to the two previous city councils to separate the work session and council meeting to a different night. She said she feels separating the meetings will provide for better transparency and the staff is excited to move forward.

Council President Leverett said he feels strongly about removing power from the Council President. He said under the current Ordinance, the Council President sets the meeting agendas. He agreed with City

Manager DiFante this amendment would increase transparency and alleviate councilmembers not knowing about upcoming agenda items.

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

1. **Resolution 2026-02-16-06** for consideration to accept a proposal from and enter into an agreement with Bagby Elevator Company, Inc. for the upgrade and modernization of the elevator at the Pelham Racquet Club. This project was budgeted for FY2026 but requires a budget amendment.

City Manager Gretchen DiFante stated the elevator at the Pelham Racquet Club is no longer serviceable and parts can no longer be sourced. She said a new elevator is required. While this is a budgeted expense, the project came in over budget by approximately \$10,000.00.

2. **Resolution 2026-02-16-07** for consideration to authorize a Construction Change Order for the U.S Highway 31 Roadway Lighting Project, extending the project limits from Amphitheater Road to Highway 119. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

Director of Development Services & Public Works André Bittas stated the bid for the project was favorable to the City. He noted having an addendum included in the bid package to extend the project limits if funds were available. He said he is pleased to report the project is going well and funding was available in the budget to extend the project limits from Amphitheater Road to Highway 119. He said the estimated completion date of the entire project is August 2026.

3. **Resolution 2026-02-16-08** for consideration to appoint citizens to the Pelham Public Library Board

City Manager Gretchen DiFante noted the previous city council approved certain municipal boards to conduct interviews and evaluate applicants to then make a recommendation to the city council. She noted this process was slightly amended by the current city council for the Pelham Public Library Board. She said the department head is generally involved in the process but because the Library Director also reports to the Board, it was deemed a conflict of interest. She added Director of Human Resources Tracy Hill made a presentation at the previous city council work session regarding the process. Council President Leverett stated the two applicants that were recommended by the interview panel are Tomeka Wilson and Allyson Gilliam.

4. **Resolution 2026-02-16-09** for consideration to authorize an agreement to employ a City Manager in Pelham, Alabama

There was additional discussion among those members of the city council present regarding the city manager compensation study. It was the consensus of those members present to move forward with consideration of approving the employment agreement with Gretchen DiFante at tonight's city council meeting.

(End of the February 16, 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 and to discuss the consideration the governmental body is willing to offer or accept when considering the purchase, sale, exchange, lease, or market value of real property under Sections 36-25A-7(a)(3)(6), Code of Alabama (1975), as amended.

City Attorney Josh Arnold stated the purpose of tonight's Executive Session is appropriate under Sections 36-25A-7(a)(3)(6), Code of Alabama (1975), as amended.

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

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>Not Present</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 André Bittas, Finance Director Jamie Wagner, City Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale, and City Attorney Josh Arnold 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 6:17 p.m.

Councilmember Power moved to adjourn the Executive Session. Said motion was seconded by Councilmember Snowden. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote of those members present, and the Executive Session was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Council President Leverett called the February 16, 2026 city council work session back to order at 7:01 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the work session was made by Councilmember Townes and seconded by Councilmember Snowden. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote of those members present, and the work session was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 16th day of February 2026.



Jonathan Seale, CMC, City Clerk/Treasurer



Chad Leverett, President of the Council

