



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Pelham City Hall Council Chambers April 20, 2026 – 5:30 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, April 20, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. The regular work session was held in the Council Chambers 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 5:30 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 April 6, 2026 Regular Work Session Minutes.

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

Introduction of New City Employee

City Manager Gretchen DiFante introduced new Administrative Assistant Lara Wheeler. Mrs. Wheeler addressed the city council and noted how excited she is to be working for the City of Pelham.

Request(s) to Address the City Council

1. Pelham B.E.A.T. – America 250 Mural Project

Trey Woodrow, representing Pelham B.E.A.T. addressed the city council and distributed a proposed rendering of the mural to be painted on the east exterior wall at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena.

It was the consensus of those members of the city council present to move forward with consideration of the mural project with Pelham B.E.A.T. during the April 23, 2026 city council meeting.

Old Business (Work Session)

1. Discussion – Pelham Senior Center

Director of Parks & Recreation Brian Cooper reported on recent changes to the Pelham Senior Center trip registration process. He noted when membership was approximately 400 individuals, a simple sign-up sheet was sufficient. However, with current membership exceeding 1,400, that method is no longer practical.

Mr. Cooper explained the Pelham Senior Center transitioned to a lottery system, which initially worked well. Over time, participants began arriving excessively early in anticipation of registration, creating safety concerns. As a result, the process has been modified. Under the revised system, Shelby County and Pelham residents may register on the first day, at which time names are entered into a random lottery drawing. On the second day, non-county residents may be included in the drawing if spaces remain available for a particular trip. He stated concerns have been raised by some members who feel the lottery system should be for Pelham residents only.

Council President Leverett opened the floor for comments from the public speaking on both sides of the issue presented by Mr. Cooper.

1. Carl Lytle spoke in favor of a Pelham resident-only format.
2. William Daniel spoke in favor of a Pelham resident-only format.
3. Renee Cotton spoke in favor of a blended resident format.
4. Debra Acton spoke in favor of a blended resident format.

Further discussion and questions followed by the city council and Mr. Cooper. It was the consensus of those members of the city council present to add this item to a future work session agenda.

2. Discussion – Pelham City Park Renovations, Phase II

City Manager Gretchen DiFante discussed the current city council's desire to fund projects for construction if they had been previously approved and funded for design. She noted this approach is consistent with the prior council's direction and reflects a continued priority of the current city council.

Mrs. DiFante reviewed the status of ongoing capital projects, distinguishing between committed and uncommitted designations, while emphasizing adjustments may still occur as projects progress. She also referenced the Grey Oaks and Highway 11 intersection traffic signal project, explaining changes in Shelby County highway standards have resulted in a significant increase in estimated costs.

Additionally, Mrs. DiFante provided an overview of current fund balances and costs for previously approved capital projects. Following discussion, it was the consensus of those members of the city council present to move forward with a resolution to fund Phase II of the City Park Renovations Project as well as for the CR-52 Railroad Crossing Elimination Project.

End Old Business (Work Session)

New Business (Work Session)

1. Update – Pelham Employee Benefits Committee

Director of Human Resources Tracy Hill provided an overview of the Pelham Employee Benefits Committee. She explained that the committee was established in 2019 to gather employee feedback and assist in evaluating and improving benefits for eligible active and retired employees. Mrs. Hill highlighted several changes that have been implemented over the past few years as a result of the committee's work.

She further noted that the committee, which consists of 22 members representing various departments across the City, is currently evaluating additional benefit options. The committee will present recommendations to the Council during the upcoming budget planning session, with particular focus on retiree health insurance. Mrs. Hill emphasized the committee's goal of identifying solutions that best serve the diverse needs of the City's workforce.

2. Discussion – Fuel surcharge adjustment agreement with Amwaste

City Manager Gretchen DiFante asked for this item to be moved to a future work session to allow the staff more time to gather information.

3. Review – Interview process for the Pelham Board of Education, Place No. 3

Councilmember Townes, Councilmember Harris, and City Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale provided an overview of the recommended appointment process for the Pelham Board of Education, noting that the approach generally follows past practices with several enhancements. The subcommittee will select a combination of verbal and written interview questions from those previously provided to the city council, and all nine candidates will participate in open, public interviews of approximately 12 minutes each during a special called work session.

Candidate materials, including applications and resumes, will be distributed to the city council in advance. Each candidate will be assigned a letter designation for purposes of public discussion to help maintain anonymity. Written response questions will be issued to candidates with a specified deadline for submission, and those responses will be shared with the city council prior to interviews. Verbal questions will be asked during the in-person interviews, with limited opportunity for follow-up questions due to time constraints.

During city council deliberations, each member will identify their top candidates based on the full evaluation process, including interview performance and written responses, and may provide a brief explanation of their selections. The voting process will follow standard procedures, requiring a motion, second, and majority vote for appointment. If no candidate receives a majority, the process will continue until a selection is made.

A general timeline was also presented outlining key dates for finalizing the process, distributing materials, conducting interviews, and making the final appointment. Following the appointment, the subcommittee will reconvene to evaluate the process and recommend any future adjustments for city council consideration.

4. Discussion – Set date and time for a Special Called Work Session for the Pelham Board of Education, Place No. 3, Interviews

It was the consensus of those members of the city council present to schedule the special called work session for May 14, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

End New Business (Work Session)

Review City Council Consent Agenda Items Recommended for April 23, 2026

1. For consideration to approve a final change order for the Greenway Trails Phase IV Surfacing Project. This project was completed under budget.

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

2. For consideration to authorize an agreement with Gresham Smith to provide on-call traffic engineering and signal operation services including signal maintenance, repairs, upgrades, optimization, and timing improvements. This project was budgeted for FY2026.

City Engineer Mike Eddington stated Gresham Smith currently services traffic signals along the main corridors in Pelham under the Alabama Department of Transportation. He said this agreement is similar but for City maintained signals. He provided further details of the diagnostic and repair work that would be provided under the agreement.

3. For consideration to repeal and replace Resolution 2021-02-15-05, which established the City of Pelham Water Bill Adjustment Policy

Director of Development Services & Public Works André Bittas stated City staff reviewed proposed updates to the City's water leak adjustment policy, specifically addressing changes to the calculation of the sewer bill if a water leak was adjusted.

4. For consideration to declare an empty panel space on City-owned signage located at the corner of U.S. Highway 31 and Amphitheater Road as surplus real property (First Reading of Ordinance No. 529 was on April 9, 2026)

Assistant City Manager Justin Smith stated there is an empty panel space on the City-owned sign at the corner of U.S. Highway 31 and Amphitheater Road. He said if approved, the City would lease the empty panel space to The Canopy.

End Review City Council Consent Agenda Items Recommended for April 23, 2026

Councilmember Power made a motion to move Items 1-4 forward to the April 23, 2026 city council meeting consent agenda. Councilmember Harris seconded the motion.

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

Review New Business Agenda Items Recommended for April 23, 2026

1. For consideration to authorize a professional services agreement with Raymond James & Associates, Inc. for municipal advisor services

City Manager Gretchen DiFante asked for this item to be moved to a future work session.

End Review New Business Agenda Items Recommended for April 23, 2026

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, Council Member	<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, Assistant City Manager Justin Smith, Director of Development Services & Public Works André Bittas, Finance Director Jamie Wagner, Clerk/Treasurer Jonathan Seale, and City Attorney Josh Arnold to attend the Executive

Session. Council President Leverett stated he expected the city council to return from the Executive Session in approximately 20 minutes. The city council went into an Executive Session at 7:45 p.m.

Councilmember Townes moved to adjourn 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 adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Council President Leverett called the April 20, 2026 city council work session back to order at 8:39 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the work session was made by Councilmember Snowden and seconded by Councilmember Harris. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote of those members present, and the work session was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted this 20th day of April 2026.



Jonathan Seale, CMC, City Clerk/Treasurer



Chad Leverett, President of the Council

