

The City of Pelham

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION

May 14, 2026 – 6:30 p.m. – Council Chambers

PRESENT:

Mayor, James Eubanks
Council Member Bennett Adams
Council Member Fredrick Davis
Council Member Bobby Robinson
Council Member, Cody Shiver
Council Member Mistry Troutman
City Manager, Christian Drake
Investigator, Adam Lamb
Police Chief, Nealie McCormick

Enterprise-Journal, Dawn Clark
Mike Snellgrove
Lila Johnson
Teresa Snellgrove0
Tammy Williams
Mickey Williams
Lorraine Williams
Gregg Fenn
Quincy Haywood
Joan Cooper
Fran Griffin

*** Mayor Pro-Tem Rhonda Brown was absent from the meeting. ***

With a quorum present, Mayor Eubanks called the meeting to order at 6:35p.m.

Mayor Eubanks opened the work session for the City of Pelham in May, noting that a voting meeting would follow next week. He announced that the budget discussion would be a significant agenda item and proposed moving citizen comments to the beginning of the meeting. Mayor Eubanks offered to accommodate early citizen comments if participants preferred not to sit through the entire budget discussion.

Citizen's Comments

Joan Cooper presented information about a recent UDC Cemetery rededication ceremony, clarifying that it was a respectful event with a 21-gun salute using black powder rifles, a bugle rendition of taps, and the placement of flags on military graves during Confederate History Month in April. Joan Cooper noted that the ceremony was organized by the Sons of Confederate Veterans and that the cemetery, established in the 1880s, is located near a housing project from 1955. The presentation also included historical context about slavery and the African slave trade, with Joan Cooper encouraging attendees to conduct their own research using provided websites.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- April 16, 2026, Council Meeting
- April 28, 2026, Special Called Meeting
- May 14, 2026, Work Session

This will be an ACTION ITEM.

FY27 BUDGET

The City of Pelham held a work session to discuss the FY27 budget and related matters. The proposed general fund budget is \$2.62 million, representing a 1.6% increase from the previous year, with an operating deficit of \$87,000 due to rising personnel costs including a 4% employee raise and additional positions needed for police and fire departments. The city manager proposed rate increases of \$3 for water and sewer rates, plus a \$0.50 increase in consumption charges, which would result in an average monthly impact of \$6-12 per customer. The council also discussed a property maintenance ordinance amendment regarding abandoned vehicles and credit/debit card service charges, though these items were deferred to a future meeting. Several citizens expressed concerns about the proposed rate increases, questioning whether alternative revenue sources could be explored, including better utilization of the 30-acre industrial park and addressing property maintenance issues beyond just abandoned vehicles.

Next steps

- **City Manager: Send out potential dates for public hearings on the FY27 budget and post notice in the paper next week.**
 - **Council and City Manager: Meet individually with the City Manager to review the FY27 budget and ask questions before the June vote.**
 - **City Manager: Include the annual increase in trash pickup charges in the budget before finalization.**
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- **Enterprise Fund Rate Increase Proposal**
 - City Manager presented a proposal for rate increases to address a \$87,714.61 deficit in the city's enterprise fund. He explained that the city would implement a 3% annual adjustment on rates to help keep up with cost-of-living increases without making large impacts on residents all at once. City Manager noted that the city had been behind budget adjustments for about three years and had not done rate increases in many years, making this more substantial change necessary.
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- **Budget and Operational Efficiency Review**
 - City Manager discussed the need to address wasteful spending and proposed examining better operational methods to benefit citizens. He reviewed personnel costs in Enterprise, noting a 3.6% increase, and highlighted a budget margin of \$36,000. City Manager also mentioned plans to increase line items for small equipment in public works, including a needed jitter trailer, and discussed replacing police vehicles using SPLOST funds, potentially extending into the next funding cycle.
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- **Budget and Position Implementation Planning**

- City Manager discussed the need to implement a new position by early 2027, which will require additional costs for turnout gear and maintenance, already accounted for in the general fund budget. He noted that while revenue increased by 1.6%, costs increased by 6.5%, and highlighted the unique challenge of the city not collecting sales tax, unlike most other communities. The discussion also touched on the upcoming credit card and debit card changes, and the status of a fire truck purchase, which is likely nearing the end of its payment period.
- **City Bond Obligations and Budget**
- City Manager discussed the city's bond obligations, explaining that while the mental health facility portion was paid off in April 2020, the remaining bonds extend through 2032 with annual payments of approximately \$225,000. He noted that the original bond amount was around \$3 million, refinanced in 2016 at a low interest rate, and emphasized that paying off this debt would significantly improve the budget situation. City Manager announced he would send out potential dates for public budget hearings the following day, with the budget set to be voted on in June for implementation on July 1.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE ORDINANCE

City Manager presented an amendment to the property maintenance ordinance regarding abandoned vehicles, noting that the council's preferred approach to using expired registration as a definition was problematic. He explained that the city attorney recommended removing the registration-based criteria while keeping the condition-based definitions but indicated this ordinance would not be ready for a vote next week. City Manager also discussed proposed credit card service charges, suggesting a 3% fee for credit and debit transactions and a \$1.95 flat fee for e-check submissions to recover approximately \$20,000 annually in processing fees currently paid to credit card companies.

This will be an ACTION ITEM.

CARD SERVICES CHARGES

The City of Pelham currently accepts credit and debit card payments for various services, both online and in person. As the use of electronic payments has increased, so have associated processing costs charged by payment vendors. The city absorbs all transactions fees, which has resulted in an annual cost ranging between \$16,000 and \$20,000. Many local governments and private sector businesses have implemented a service charge or convenience fee to offset credit card processing and not to cash or check transactions. By implementing a service charge, it could reduce or eliminate the city's annual processing expenses. Align Pelham with common practices used by other municipalities and service providers. Customers will be charged a fee of 2.95% for all credit/debit transactions and a flat fee of \$1.95 for eCheck transactions.

This will be an ACTION ITEM.

Executive Session

Council Member Shiver made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss personnel. Second, by Council Member Davis. Mayor stated the time was 7:31 and regular session was closed.

RECONVE REGULAR SESSION

Council Member Robinson made a motion to come out of executive session and reconvene the regular session, seconded by Council Member Adams. The vote was unanimous.

ACTION TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Eubanks stated regular session was reconvened at 8:17 p.m. and no action needed to be taken at this time.

ADJOURN

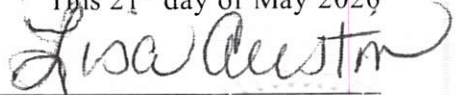
Mayor Eubanks declared the meeting closed at 8:17 p.m.



Mayor, James Eubanks

AUTHENTICATED:

This 21st day of May 2026



City Clerk, Lisa Austin

