CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
300 Martin Luther King Blvd.
March 4, 2025
TIME: 6:00 PM

1. A CALL TO ORDER

   President Smith called the council meeting to order at 06:17 pm and asked Mr. Jones to call the roll.

2. ROLL CALL

   The Mayor and all City Council members were present.

   1. George Allen, Erica Norris, Tim Aja, Todd Rauch, Eddie Smith

3. INVOCATION

   Dr. Dunlap provided the invocation.

   1. Dr. Nathaniel Dunlap, Jr. from PRF Institute.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

   Kole and Karson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

   1. Kole Carswell and Karson Carswell from Fox Run School.

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

   1. Minutes from the 02-18-25 council meeting.

      President Smith stated that a copy of the minutes had been previously received by the council and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Rauch made a motion to approve. Mr. Aja seconded the motion. President Smith then asked if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes. President Smith stated having no corrections, the minutes stand approved.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7. MAYOR COMMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS

   1. Recognize Brady Campbell as State Wrestling Champion.

Mayor Fuller invited Opelika High School Principal Kelli Fischer, Opelika High School Wrestling Coach Lee Simpson, and Brady Campbell up front to be recognized. Mayor Fuller, Mrs. Fischer and Coach Simpson all recognized what a great student athlete Brady was, a 3-time State Wrestling Champion in 3 different weight classes, and congratulated him on his achievements.

2. Recognize Jared Van Horn as a National Merit Finalist.

Mayor Fuller then invited Mrs. Fischer, Jared Van Horn, and his parents up front to be recognized. Mayor Fuller and Mrs. Fischer both recognized what an outstanding student Jared was and congratulated him on his achievements.

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Limit comments to 3 minutes or less)

9. AGENDA-RELATED PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limit comments to 3 minutes or less)

None.

10. GENERAL BUSINESS

President Smith asked Mr. Jones to present the general business.

1. Request Temporary Street Closure - Foundry UMC Easter Egg Hunt on 04-13-25.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

2. Request Downtown Street Closure - Relay for Life Event on 05-02-25.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

3. Request Downtown Street Closure - Vintage Market on 05-17-25.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch

NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

4. Request Downtown Street Closure - Burger Wars on 05-31-25.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

5. Request Downtown Street Closure - Heritage House Event on 05-31-25.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 3 Tim Aja
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

6. Request Downtown Street Closure - Touch-A-Truck Event on 05-31-25.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

7. Request Downtown Street Closure - Bourbon Festival on 09-20-25.

During discussion, Mr. Aja stated that he appreciated them turning in their application way in advance.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 3 Tim Aja
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

11. AWARDING OF BIDS

12. RESOLUTIONS

President Smith asked Mr. Gunter to present the resolutions.

1. Purchase - One (1) 2025 Ford F150 SuperCrew 4x4 Pickup - Street Dept - PW.

RESOLUTION NO. 049-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 3 Tim Aja
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

2. Purchase - One (1) 2025 Ford F150 SuperCrew 4x4 Pickup - Building Maintenance Dept - PW.

RESOLUTION NO. 050-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 3 Tim Aja
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

3. Purchase - One (1) 2025 Ford F250 Super Crew 4X4 Pickup - PW.

RESOLUTION NO. 051-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 3 Tim Aja
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

4. Purchase - Two (2) 2025 Ford F150 SuperCrew 4x4 Pickups - PW.

During discussion, Ms. Norris asked why this purchase was separated from the previous purchase of a similar vehicle. Case O'Dell, Assistant Project Manager/Director of Public Works, answered that there were some differences in specifications when they were submitted, so they were not all exactly alike, and came back at different prices.

RESOLUTION NO. 052-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 3 Tim Aja

AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

5. Purchase - Eleven (11) APX N70 Two-Way Radios - OPD.

RESOLUTION NO. 053-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 3 Tim Aja
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

6. Approve Certain Tax Abatements and Exemptions for Pharmavite, LLC - ED.

President Smith asked if there was a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Rauch made a motion to approve. Ms. Norris seconded the motion. President Smith asked if there was any discussion.

During discussion, Mr. Rauch stated that in the past, the administration would periodically meet with council members to discuss economic development investments in Opelika. Mr. Rauch requested more of these opportunities to meet, on behalf of his constituents, and ask additional questions about these types of investments in Ward 5, which would then allow him to make a more informed decision about them. Mr. Rauch then made a motion to table the agenda item. Mr. Allen seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the following vote was recorded:

MOTION TO TABLE AGENDA ITEM: 4 TO 1

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith
ABSTAIN:	None

7. Amend the Organizational Chart of the Opelika Engineering Department - HR.

RESOLUTION NO. 054-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

8. Approve Compensation and Job Description for City Attorney - HR.

RESOLUTION NO. 055-24

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

9. Approve Creating the Temporary Position of Deputy City Attorney - HR.

RESOLUTION NO. 056-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

10. Approve Grant Application to ADEM for Pepperell Branch Project - ENG.

RESOLUTION NO. 057-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 3 Tim Aja
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

11. Designate Mayor Gary Fuller as the City's Voting Delegate at the 2025 ALM Annual Convention.

RESOLUTION NO. 058-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
SECONDER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

12. Rename The Southside Center for the Arts in Honor of Barbara H. Patton.

During discussion, Mr. Rauch stated Mrs. Patton was the perfect namesake for this building, due to the work she has and continues to put into it, and that she is very deserving of the honor. Ms. Norris stated that it was also very appropriate to be done during Women's History Month. President Smith also thanked Mayor Fuller for recommending this to the council.

RESOLUTION NO. 059-25

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

13. ORDINANCES

President Smith asked Mr. Gunter to present the ordinances.

1. Amend Chapter 2 Division 3 of the City Code of Ordinances: Relating to the Position of City Attorney - 1st Reading.

   FIRST READING: INTRODUCED

   President Smith asked for a member of the council to introduce the ordinance. Ms. Norris introduced the ordinance.

2. Establish the Use of Electronic Vote Counting Devices for the Municipal Election of Officers - 1st Reading.

   FIRST READING: INTRODUCED

   President Smith asked for a member of the council to introduce the ordinance. Mr. Allen introduced the ordinance.

Mr. Gunter then asked for the council's guidance on a matter relating to the Springwood Hotel. Mr. Gunter first reminded the council of the 6-month suspension of the business license that would expire on April 1, 2025. Mr. Gunter then stated that two of the five buildings, equaling 40 total rooms, had been renovated and passed city inspections, and the owner was requesting to have their business license reinstated for those rooms that passed inspections. The council members unanimously expressed concerns about the rest of the property, and then requested to see updated photos and reports from city inspections and the fire chief by the next council meeting before making a decision.

14. APPOINTMENTS

President Smith presented the appointments.

1. Reappoint Auzzie Comer to the Property Maintenance Board of Appeals. New Term expires 03-16-2028.

   MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch

AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

2. Reappoint David Hudmon to the Property Maintenance Board of Appeals. New Term expires 03-16-2028.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 1 Willie Allen
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

3. Reappoint Michael Carter to the Property Maintenance Board of Appeals. New Term expires 03-16-2028.

MOTION TO APPROVE: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

15. SECOND ROSTER OF PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limit comments to 3 minutes or less)

Jonathan Reichel of 1709 Southlake Drive spoke first. Mr. Reichel stated that the neighborhoods of Southlake Drive and Creekstone Drive, off South Uniroyal Road, were being disturbed by what seems to be a quarry operation. Mr. Reichel explained that this area was originally supposed to be a housing development, but it has, for the past few years, been used for what seems like a quarry operation with all the jack-hammering, blasting, and bulldozing. Mr. Reichel continued that this is causing harm to the residents' well-being with all the noise, smoke, dust, and runoff into the neighborhood's lake. Mr. Reichel closed by asking the city to do a more effective job making sure that this is a legal operation and not violating any local and/or state laws, because it is affecting its citizens in the area. President Smith asked City Engineer Scott Parker to update the council on his knowledge of this. Mr. Parker stated Mr. Reichel was correct in his description of what was taking place there, that this issue had been in city court with no action taken there, and that ADEM had been notified as well, but no action had been taken by them either. President Smith asked if they knew who the new owner was. Mr. Parker and Mr. Reichel both answered they did not know. President Smith stated he would find out.

Dianne Greene of 601 Morris Avenue spoke next. Mrs. Greene stated she had been having multiple issues with Opelika Water since changing her account over to her name after the passing of her husband. Mrs. Greene explained that after being told there would be no issues with the name change, she was sent a cut-off letter, as if she had not paid her bill, and was told to have her bill paid by the next day. Mrs. Greene then stated that she went up to Opelika Water to resolve this and was told they had a glitch in their computer system. Mrs. Greene stated that she wanted to pay with her debit card, they told her they don't take debit cards in person, and they charge a $3 fee for her to use her debit card to pay her bill over the phone. Mrs. Greene stated that she had to go back to her bank to get cash to pay her bill, and that something should be done to make them take debit cards in person without a fee. Mrs. Greene closed by also asking the city to look into an inoperable vehicle at her neighbor's house. President Smith asked her to speak to him personally after the meeting.

Joy Melton of 2613 Columbus Parkway spoke last. Ms. Melton invited the community to a youth walk on April 5, 2025, that is meant to bring youth members of the community together, encourage them to stay on the right path, and show them the support they deserve from the community. Ms. Melton closed by asking the city for help with obtaining sponsorships and resources to make this event a success. President Smith asked if they were going to have sponsors. Ms. Melton answered that they were trying to get some. Mr. Jones asked her to email him a sponsorship packet that he could forward to the council.

16. ADJOURN

The City Council meeting minutes of March 4, 2025, are hereby adopted and approved this the 18th day of March, 2025.

/s/ Eddie Smith

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President of City Council
City of Opelika, Alabama

ATTEST:
/s/ Russell A. Jones, MMC

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City Clerk

1. Character Trait of the Month - Honesty, fairness and straightforwardness of conduct.

President Smith asked if there was any other business to come before the council. Mr. Rauch asked if the speaker system at Courthouse Square had been fixed and if it would be used during the Relay For Life event that was approved earlier in the meeting. Mr. Motley answered that the City's speaker system at Courthouse Square was working, but it was not designed to be used in the way the event would need it for. Mr. Jones stated that he had spoken with the organizer and notified them that they would need to coordinate the use of the speaker system with the city's Community Relations department, but was under the assumption that, from their conversation, they would be using their own speaker system. Mr. Rauch asked again if it was fixed. Mr. Motley again stated that it works when the city has used it, but couldn't speak to why it hasn't in the past. Mr. Rauch closed by stating that this event is such a special event that it would be unfortunate, like it was during this event in the past, if it didn't work properly again, and it should be able to be used for events like this as a service to the citizens.

President Smith then asked if there was any other business. Hearing none, President Smith asked if there was a motion to adjourn.

2. Motion to Adjourn.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: UNANIMOUS

RESULT:	**Passed**
MOVER:	Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Erica Norris
SECONDER:	Councilman Ward 5 Todd Rauch
AYES:	Councilman Ward 1 Allen, Councilwoman Ward 2 - President Pro-Tem Norris, Councilman Ward 3 Aja, Councilman Ward 4 - President Smith, Councilman Ward 5 Rauch
NAYS:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

The council meeting ended at 07:02 pm.