

DISCOVER



Meet Justin Smith

- Justin Smith has been hired as the new Assistant City Manager.
- Previously served as the Assistant to the Jefferson County Manager.
- BA in Criminology, Auburn University; Juris Doctorate, Birmingham School of Law
- Major in the Alabama Civil Air Patrol
- Assumes his new role with Pelham on August 19, 2024.

NEW LEADERSHIP

Pelham Hires Assistant City Manager

The City of Pelham is pleased to announce that Justin Smith has accepted the position of Assistant City Manager (ACM). Smith has served as the Assistant to the Jefferson County Manager since October 2011, where he has managed multiple cross-functional projects resulting in software selection, process and program efficiency improvement, increased public engagement, and significant financial savings. Smith has also worked closely with the County Attorney's Office to help ensure county departments were performing their duties consistent with state and federal law, including ethics, open meetings, public records, public finance, employment, contracts, and Alabama Bid Laws.

Before he worked with the County Manager, Smith served as a public assistance specialist with the State of Alabama Emergency Management Agency and as a law clerk for the Senior Circuit for the Bessemer Division of the 10th Judicial Circuit.

As Pelham's ACM, Smith will take on several large projects in the City Manager's Office, including software selection and implementation, citywide training and development, large grant projects, strategic planning, and city board development. In addition, after the first year of his employment, Smith will manage

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some smaller departments.

"We are thrilled to have someone with Justin's experience and talent in Pelham," said City Manager Gretchen DiFante. "I've had the opportunity to work with Justin as a member of the Alabama City/County Management Association's (ACCMA) Board of Directors. He is intelligent, thoughtful, and likes to get things done efficiently and effectively while maintaining high-quality standards."

With Smith's experience and knowledge of Alabama law, he will review contracts and answer some questions we currently send to the City Attorney. The City eliminated one-and-a-half full-time equivalent positions that were unfilled to fund the Assistant City Manager position.

"In the past five years, the City more than doubled its communication vehicles, quadrupled its average number of capital projects, added three dozen new programs in Parks & Recreation, applied for several national and state-wide grants, and received the largest Railroad Crossing Elimination grant in the country from the Federal Railway Administration," said DiFante. "In that same time, Pelham had \$80 million in new private development, and we are not slowing down," DiFante

added. "We've built an outstanding leadership team full of talented, experienced professionals with servant attitudes, and Justin will fit in perfectly."

Smith, a Pelham High School graduate, said he enjoys bringing his four-year-old son to the increasing number of park activities in Pelham and has especially enjoyed the ice rink, new playground, and splash pad.

"Pelham has come so far since I attended Pelham High School 25 years ago, and that growth is a testament to the organization and team. Everything is top-notch and something the City should be proud of," Smith said.

"I've had the opportunity to work alongside (Pelham City Manager) Gretchen DiFante through membership in the ACCMA over the last several years, and I've looked up to her as a great leader who invests personally in the success and well-being of others," said Smith. "After meeting the team in Pelham, it became clear to me that something special is going on here that I want to be part of, and I am extremely excited to have that opportunity," he added.

Smith holds a B.A. in Criminology from Auburn University and a Juris Doctorate from the Birmingham School of Law. He is the Immediate Past President of the Alabama City/County Management Association and the District 5 Representative for the Association of County Administrators of Alabama. He is also a Major in the Alabama Civil Air Patrol and is the 2024 recipient of the Sam Gaston Vocational Excellence Award from the ACCMA.

After working out his contract with Jefferson County, Smith will assume his new role in Pelham the week of August 19, 2024.



Residential Sewer Use Rates

New residential sewer use charges take effect July 1st and will be reflected on upcoming water/sewer bills. Please note: this is not a rate increase. Residential sewer use charges are calculated based on your average water consumption during a six-month period, which is designated as October, November, and December of the preceding year and January, February, and March of the current year. So, the residential sewer use charge effective July 1, 2024, is computed based on the average water consumption from October 2023-March 2024. Sewer averaging has been in place for a number of years. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Pelham Water Works at 205.620.6420.



Upcoming Road Work

The Shelby County Highway Department will resurface CR-275 (Old Montgomery Hwy) from Hwy 261 in Pelham north towards Riverchase Parkway in Hoover. The work will take place between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. July 2nd and July 3rd, and July 7th, July 8th, and July 9th. These dates are tentative and subject to change due to weather conditions. The work will include single-lane closures with traffic control around the work.

Project Updates

2024 ANNUAL STREET RESURFACING

The City's annual street resurfacing project is anticipated to begin the week of July 8th. Paving will happen in the Hidden Creek subdivision, Heather Ridge Drive and King Valley Circle, Heather Lane, Crosscreek Trail, Chandabrook Drive, Burning Tree Drive, Village Lane, Driver's Way, and the City Hall campus. If you are in one of the affected areas, please do not park vehicles on the street.

HIGHWAY 261 WIDENING

The State of Alabama is in the process of right-of-way acquisitions for the Highway 261 widening project. The timeline will depend on negotiations with property owners. The acquisition process is about 50-60 percent complete.

HIGHWAY 52 RAILROAD FLYOVER

The City is working with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on the grant process to fund this project. The City submitted all grant agreement documents last month. Once approved, the City will have 60 days to start the design process.





Public Safety Planning

Pelham Fire Chief Mike Reid and City Manager Gretchen DiFante presented a plan to the Pelham City Council that will solve some logistical issues, save money, and improve public safety.

The issue involves aging firetrucks, particularly the department's quint or quintuple combination pumper. The current quint was scheduled for replacement in 2028 and included in a vehicle replacement plan presented a few years ago. Since firetruck replacement typically takes up to 40 months for manufacture, the new truck must be ordered soon.

Reid and DiFante started researching a new plan that would involve replacing the proposed new quint with two individual trucks: a pumper and a ladder. They explained to the City Council that the quint is large and heavy and used in a dual function for both a ladder and a pumper. It is housed at Station One and responds to about 1,500 calls yearly. The number of calls put a lot of wear and tear on the quint, and the current vehicle is starting to have mechanical problems. The lifespan of a quint is about ten years, while a ladder truck is 20 years, and a pumper is 15. Pelham's existing quint is ten years old.

With an individual ladder and pumper, the trucks would not have to respond to every call, which should lengthen their lifespan. The current quint will be relegated to reserve status, and hopefully, the city can use it for several more years. DiFante and Reid estimated a savings of \$269,038 if the city purchases a ladder truck and pumper truck rather than another quint.

Another concern facing Reid is that Pelham is growing, and as it does, more buildings will be built vertically. The current quint has a 75-foot ladder, which can safely rescue people from a four-story structure. In contrast, a ladder truck has a 107-foot capability and can potentially rescue people from a six-story structure.

The City Council voted unanimously to purchase a new ladder truck and a new pumper truck instead of a quint. Once ordered, the projected delivery date is 2028.



Dispatcher Honored

Pelham Dispatcher Stephanie Morris was honored by the American Legion Department of Alabama as the state's Public Safety Telecommunicator of the Year. Morris was nominated by the American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 in Pelham and won both local and state awards.

Morris has been praised by her colleagues for her professionalism and ability to maintain composure during an accident involving Officer Elizabeth Minter last summer. She has been commended for consistently remaining calm, providing accurate information over the radio, managing stressful calls, and maintaining a positive attitude in the workplace.



Newberry Receives Appointment

Christian Newberry, Director of Skating at Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena, was recently appointed as a U.S. Figure Skating Association (USFSA) Technical Specialist. He traveled to Colorado Springs in mid-May for four days of training and testing. The process is intense, with less than half of the participants receiving a passing score.

Newberry was excited and humbled when he received his scores. "This is such a difficult position to achieve in the world of figure skating. To me, it's a recognition of my knowledge of figure skating at the highest competitive level."

A technical specialist is an official specifically trained and experienced in identifying a program's jumps, spins, and steps. The tech specialist also determines whether the execution is correct. The judges then grade these elements to provide the IJS score. As a technical specialist, Newberry will officiate at national qualifying events nationwide, judging the future champions of U.S. figure skating. Newberry is now one of only 148 technical specialists nationwide and the only one in Alabama.

According to Seth Greenberg, Executive Director of the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena, Newberry's achievement is a welcome boost to the figure skating program here in Pelham. "Christian's designation of technical specialist brings instant credibility to our figure skating program and elevates the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena to one of the premier training centers in the Southeast. It is a huge benefit to our competitive skaters to have an in-house resource available to help maximize points and enhance the quality of their individual skating programs. The change is obvious in the short time Christian has been with us. I am excited to see the continued growth and success his leadership brings."

Newberry aims to create a competitive figure skating program at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena. "Having this credential means we can analyze our skaters in-house. We can hopefully attract more skaters to train here as well."

Newberry is a former British Men's Champion who has competed in the European Championships and World Championships. He assumed the role of Director of Skating at the Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena on January 1st. His son Graham is a skating coach at the PCC. He is a four-time British Men's Champion.

A feature article on the Newberrys appeared in the March 2024 issue of The Pelham Pathway Magazine. [You can read the full article here.](#)

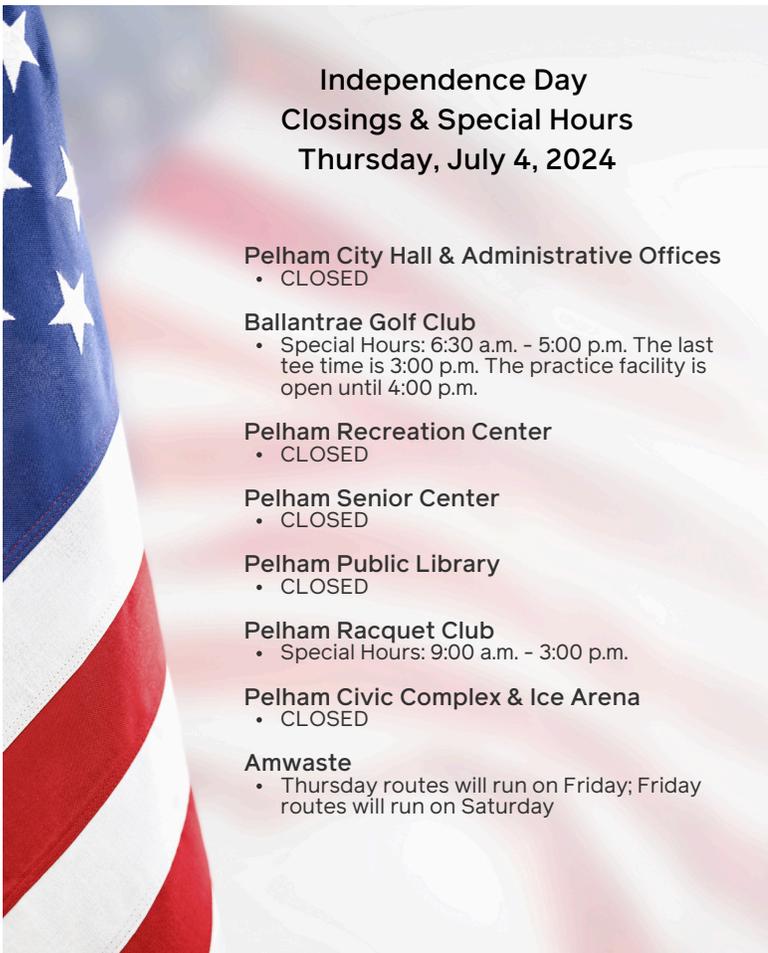




Wildflowers at Ballantrae

Since Pelham was designated a Bee City USA affiliate this past spring, we will see many efforts to incorporate wildflower meadows into the city's landscape in the coming months. Wildflowers attract pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, which ultimately support the human food chain.

Installation of the first wildflower meadows is ongoing at Ballantrae Golf Course. General Manager Hal Brown said Golf Course Supervisor Rodney Bryant is prepping a section of the course for the meadow. The soil tilling is complete, and the seed planting will begin soon. We can't wait to see this welcome addition to the breathtaking landscape at Ballantrae.



**Independence Day
Closings & Special Hours
Thursday, July 4, 2024**

- Pelham City Hall & Administrative Offices**
 - CLOSED
- Ballantrae Golf Club**
 - Special Hours: 6:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The last tee time is 3:00 p.m. The practice facility is open until 4:00 p.m.
- Pelham Recreation Center**
 - CLOSED
- Pelham Senior Center**
 - CLOSED
- Pelham Public Library**
 - CLOSED
- Pelham Racquet Club**
 - Special Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Pelham Civic Complex & Ice Arena**
 - CLOSED
- Amwaste**
 - Thursday routes will run on Friday; Friday routes will run on Saturday

Your City At Work

Here are some of the recent items approved by the Pelham City Council. Please visit the City of Pelham website for the complete text of the agendas, minutes, ordinances, and resolutions.

- Approved a tax abatement agreement between the City of Pelham, PrintsWell, Inc., and Amazing Grace Properties, LLC.
- Approved job descriptions and associated pay for the positions of IT Systems Analyst, IT Systems Analyst-Public Safety, and GIS Administrator within the IT Department.
- Accepted responsibility for the electrical bill for eleven new streetlights in the Simms Landing Subdivision.
- Authorized the release of street bond money and accepted the dedication of certain public streets, sidewalks, and rights-of-way located in the Grey Oaks Subdivision.
- Authorized the release of street bond money and accepted the dedication of certain public streets, sidewalks, and rights-of-way located in the Ballantrae Subdivision, Strathaven at Ballantrae.
- Approved a request for a right-of-way condemnation pursuant to Section 18-3-1, Code of Alabama (1975) as amended, for applicant Allison Mitchell.

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- Adopted revised Pelham Park & Recreation Rules to have authority over city parks and other city-owned recreational lands.
- Repealed Ordinance No. 429 in its entirety regarding occupancy requirements for residential structures.
- Approved an ABC license application for a 140-Special Events Retail License for the Margarita Grill Parking Lot Party on Saturday, June 15, 2024.
- Amended the pay ranges for the position of Assistant City Manager.
- Approved a contract to purchase two fire apparatus for the Pelham Fire Department from Emergency Equipment Professionals, Inc. through the Houston-Galveston Area Council Cooperative Purchasing Program.
- Transferred unassigned fund balances to the city's Committed Reserve Funds to purchase two fire apparatus for the Pelham Fire Department.
- Approved an emergency purchase to replace the backup generator at Pelham Fire Station No. 5.
- Approved the purchase of two pre-owned mowers for Ballantrae Golf Club.
- Declared certain personal property of the City of Pelham as surplus. Public Works Department vehicles, metal chairs, and a digital information sign are included.
- Approved to renew a master contract with Alabama Power Company for public safety services.
- Approved an ABC license application for a 040 Retail Beer and a 060 Retail Table Wine license for Valhalla Board Game Café.
- Amended the zone district boundaries of the City of Pelham, changing the present O-1 (Office & Institutional District) zoning to E-1 (Estate Residential District) for property located along the east side of Bearden Road, across from Pelham High School. Owner: Joey White and Shannon White. The public hearing and first reading were on June 3, 2024.
- Approved revisions to the Code of Ordinances, City of Pelham, Appendix A, Article XV, Section 14, and Section 16 regarding additional regulations for vape shops and CBD stores in B-2 (General Business District) zones. The public hearing and first reading were on June 3, 2024.