

Anniston, Alabama

February 6, 2024

The City Council of the City of Anniston, Alabama, met in Regular Session in Room B at the Anniston City Meeting Center in the City of Anniston, Alabama, on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at approximately 5:30 o'clock p.m.

Jay Jenkins, Council Member, prayed the Invocation.

Jay Jenkins, Council Member, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Draper called the meeting to order. On call of the roll, the following Council Members were found to be present: Council Members Jenkins, Roberts, Smith, and Draper; absent: Council Member Harris. A quorum was present and the meeting opened for the transaction of business.

Steven Folks, City Manager, was present.

Bruce Downey, City Attorney, was present.

Council Member Smith made a motion to waive the reading of and approve the minutes of the January 16, 2024 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roberts and on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith, and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried and the January 16, 2024 regular meeting minutes were approved.

Mayor Draper made a motion to adopt the agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Smith and on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried and the agenda was adopted.

Mayor Draper recognized John Valieant for his service as the Anniston Historic Preservation Commission Chair.

Mayor Draper opened a public hearing to receive public comments regarding the City Manager's Proposed Division of the City.

Mike Brewster, East Alabama Regional Planning Commission, addressed the council that this process occurs every ten years due to the census. He stated that the population in each city changes and shifts so this process is designed to make sure there is equal weighting of each voter in each ward. He stated that they try to keep communities of interest together. He stated that they want to stay away from packing minorities or diluting minority voters. He stated that the target population for each ward is the total city population divided by 4, since there are 4 wards within the city. The target is 5,391 for each ward, and that was what they were trying to reach. He stated that typically the percent of deviation from trying to reach the target is + or – 5%. He stated that they did a good job at getting well below that. On the proposed map, Ward 1 is at .09% deviation; Ward 2 is at -1.8; Ward 3 is at 0.87; Ward 4 is at 2.8%. Each ward was below that 3% deviation. He stated that at the start of the process, they took the 2012 boundaries and marry them to the latest census numbers. Wards 2 and 3 had to expand, since they were low on population. Wards 1 and 4 had to give up territory in order to reach the target. He stated that compared to some cities there were not a lot of changes made. He stated that the city is bounded by the census block. In each block, there is a headcount. He stated the total population is

broken down by racial demographics. So they are basically assigned a census block to a ward trying to reach the target.

Shirley Carter, stated that she is confused and in need of clarity, in language that she can understand. She asked what did Mr. Folks' consider besides the population numbers to come up with the proposed map?

Steven Folks, City Manager, stated that the only thing they used was the numbers that they were given from the census.

Mrs. Carter asked if they looked at the voter registration or anything like that?

Steven Folks, City Manager, stated that the only thing that can look at is the hard numbers given from the census, not race or voter registration.

Shirley Carter stated that she does not know if the council considers deviation and reduction the same but based off the numbers from the existing map, black voters were at 48%. The proposed map had black voters at 45%, so that is a reduction. She asked if this reduction is not a violation of the Voter's Rights Act? She asked if they only considered the population, how did they come up with the number of whites and blacks.

Steven Folks, City Manager, stated that they looked at the population first, then at race to ensure that everything equates out.

Ralph Bradford stated that they oppose the map. He stated that Ward 1 on the existing map has 2,515 people for 43% (whites); 2,815 (blacks) for 48.13%. In the proposed map (whites) 2,446 for 45.41%; (blacks) 2,449 for 45.47%. He asked where did all these white people in Ward 1 come from? He stated that blacks are the majority. He stated that they are taking around 366 blacks out of Ward 1 and putting them into Ward 2. He stated that Ward 2 is already 73% black. He stated that this is considering diluting the black vote. He stated that Ward 1 is and will be a majority of African American now, Ward 2 is a majority of African American now, and Ward 3 is a majority of African American now; that gives them a 3-2 majority.

Dr. Angela Fears stated that as a black candidate running for Ward 1, obtaining votes was difficult because this ward was predestined by several constituents to be represented by a white male incumbent, at the time purposely ignoring all sorts of ethical issues. She stated that the percentage of blacks in Ward 1 was 48.13% and the percentage of whites was 43%. She stated that voter suppression was at an all-time high during the 2020 election, from polls not opening as scheduled, to abrupt historical poll site changes, and voting machine issues the day of the election. She stated that this act of redirecting warrants an investigation as to be unlawful based on Section 2 of the Voter Rights Act.

Glen Ray, 3514 Dale Hollow, stated that by tearing down Cooper Homes and moving all the people out of the city it diluted the black population. He also stated that putting felonies on young blacks, based on made up charges, hinders them from voting. He stated that when you are dealing with population and redistricting the people need to have a voice more than 3 minutes.

Frazier Burton, 1326 Johnston Drive, stated that they have been through the same procedure over 20 years ago and they are still beating the same horse. He stated that we still cannot get along; and that he thought Anniston was the model city but it looks like its going down the toilet stool.

John Squires, 201 Druid Hills Road, asked what happens when the state of Alabama has to come back to address the maps, will it affect Anniston?

Bruce Downey, City Attorney, stated that the state map is unrelated.

Mr. Squires stated that he heard a lot of people talk about the lack of representation but people are not coming out to vote. He stated that he has seen the population votes on each candidate, and there is less than 50% of people voting. He stated there are issues, but citizens have to come out and vote to get anywhere.

Richard Jackson, 2317 Noble St, addressed the council that they will have to consider race at some point. He stated that if you are on the side of a majority it is easy for you to dismiss it. He stated if the racial percentage of voters in each district is not considered there is a high chance of things being off center.

Mayor Draper closed the public hearing to receive public comments regarding the City Manager's Proposed Division of the City.

Council Member Jenkins made a motion to approve the consent agenda:

- (a) Resolution declaring equipment as surplus and authorizing their sale (24-R-4)
- (b) Resolution declaring equipment as surplus and authorizing the donation of said property (24-R-5)
- (c) Resolution appointing a member to the McClellan Development Authority (24-R-6)
- (d) Resolution designating EMS Medical Director (24-R-7)
- (e) Motion to approve the bid for work jeans, tee shirts, and hoodies for Public Works and PARD employees to Tangibles for work jeans in the amount of \$36.50 each and to BSN Sports for tee shirts in the amount of \$9.35-\$12.75 each and hoodies in the amount of \$41.25-\$46.50 each.

The motion was seconded by Council Member Smith and on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried and the consent agenda was approved.

Mayor Draper introduced the resolution approving the City Manager's Proposed Division of the City:

#### RESOLUTION NO. 24-O-8

##### A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE CITY MANAGER'S PROPOSED DIVISION OF THE CITY

WHEREAS, in accordance with the City Manager's duties pursuant to Section 1.13 of the Code of the City of Anniston, Alabama, 1981 and Ala. Code § 45-8A-23, et seq., the City Manager proposes to divide the City into the four wards set forth in Section 1 of this Resolution;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Anniston, Alabama as follows:

Section 1. The City Manager proposes to divide the City into four wards described as follows:

(1) Ward 1. Ward 1 shall be described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of Hillcrest Drive and the present Anniston city limit line, said point also being on the eastern right-of-way line of the former Norfolk Southern Corporation Railroad; thence

northerly, easterly, and southerly along the present Anniston city limit line to its intersection with the east right-of-way line of Woodvalley Road; thence southerly along said right-of-way to the centerline of Choccolocco Road; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of newly named U.S. Highway 431; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of the newly configured Henry Road; thence westerly and northwesterly along said centerline to the centerline of E 9th Street, thence southwesterly and westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Coleman Drive; thence southerly along said centerline 180ft to the centerline of an alley; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Maplewood Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline 55ft to the centerline of an alley; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Lockwood Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 9th Street; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Kirkwood Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline 270ft to the centerline of an alley; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Jefferson Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of Oak Street; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Highland Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of Marguerite Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline 332ft to the centerline of an alley; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 15th Street, thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Woodstock Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of Rocky Hollow Road; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 16th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Quintard Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 21st Street; thence east along said centerline to the centerline of Blue Ridge Drive; thence easterly and northeasterly along said centerline of Blue Ridge Drive to the centerline of Woodland Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline of Woodland Avenue to the centerline of the extension of East 20th Street; thence easterly along said extension of said centerline to the centerline of Thomas Avenue; thence northeasterly along said centerline to the easternmost end of said Thomas Avenue; thence in a northeasterly direction along an extension of the centerline of Thomas Avenue to the circumference line of the original circular City Limit line of the City of Anniston; thence in a northwesterly direction along the circumference line of the original circular city limit line of the City of Anniston to its intersection with McClellan Boulevard; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of Hillcrest Drive; thence northwesterly along said centerline to the point of beginning; less and except any property or portion thereof not within the corporate boundary of the City of Anniston.

(2) Ward 2. Ward 2 shall be described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of Hillcrest Drive and the present Anniston city limit line, said point also being on the eastern right-of-way line of the former Norfolk Southern Corporation Railroad; thence southerly, westerly, northerly, southerly, and easterly along the present Anniston city limit line to its intersection with the centerline of the L & N Railroad; thence northeasterly along said centerline to the centerline of West 16th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Cobb Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of West 12th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Pine Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of West 16th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Norfolk Southern Corporation Railroad; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of West 18th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Quintard Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 21st Street; thence east along said centerline to the centerline of Blue Ridge Drive; thence easterly and northeasterly along said centerline of Blue Ridge Drive to the

centerline of Woodland Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline of Woodland Avenue to the centerline of the extension of East 20th Street; thence easterly along said extension of said centerline to the centerline of Thomas Avenue; thence northeasterly along said centerline to the easternmost end of said Thomas Avenue; thence in a northeasterly direction along an extension of the centerline of Thomas Avenue to the circumference line of the original circular City Limit line of the City of Anniston; thence in a northwesterly direction along the circumference line of the original circular city limit line of the City of Anniston to its intersection with McClellan Boulevard; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of Hillcrest Drive; thence northwesterly along said centerline to the point of beginning; less and except any property or portion thereof not within the corporate boundary of the City of Anniston.

(3) Ward 3. Ward 3 shall be described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the present Anniston city limit line with the centerline of the L&N Railroad, said point being southwest of 13th Street: thence northeasterly along said centerline to the centerline of West 16th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Cobb Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of West 12th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Pine Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of West 16th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Norfolk Southern Corporation Railroad; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of West 18th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Quintard Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 16th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Rocky Hollow Road; thence northeasterly along said centerline to the centerline of Woodstock Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 15th Street; thence easterly along said centerline 1,137ft to the centerline of an alley; thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of Marguerite Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of Highland Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 5th Street; thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Keith Avenue; thence south along the centerline of Keith Avenue to the intersection of the centerline of the first alley north of "A" Street, if extended, thence west along said centerline to a point adjacent with the rear property line of the lots along the east side of Grant Avenue, if extended; thence south along said centerline to the centerline of Sunset Drive; thence east along said centerline to the centerline of Fairway Heights: thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of Sleeping Giant Road; thence southeasterly along said centerline to the centerline of Greenbrier-Dear Road; thence southeasterly along said centerline to the centerline of Hillyer Robinson Industrial Parkway; thence southerly along said centerline to its intersection with the present Anniston city limit line; thence in a generally westerly and northwesterly direction along said city limit line to the point of beginning less and except any property or portion thereof not within the corporate boundary of the City of Anniston.

(4) Ward 4. Ward 4 shall be described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the centerline of Hillyer Robinson Industrial Parkway and the present Anniston city limit line. thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of Greenbrier-Dear Road, thence westerly along said centerline to the centerline of Sleeping Giant Road; thence northeasterly along said centerline to the centerline of Fairway Heights; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of Sunset Drive; thence westerly along the centerline of Sunset Drive to a point adjacent with the rear lot line of the lots along the east side of Grant Avenue; thence northerly along said rear lot line

to the centerline of the first alley north of "A" Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Keith Avenue, if extended; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 5th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Highland Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of Oak Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Jefferson Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline 36ft to the centerline of an alley street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Kirkwood Avenue; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 9th Street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Lockwood Avenue; thence southerly along said centerline 262ft to the centerline of an alley street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Maplewood Avenue; thence northerly 61ft to the centerline of an alley street; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of Coleman Drive; thence northerly along said centerline to the centerline of East 9th Street; thence northeasterly along said centerline to the centerline of Henry Road; thence easterly along said centerline to the centerline of the newly named US Highway 431; thence southerly along said centerline to the centerline of Choccolocco Road; thence easterly along said centerline to its intersection with the present Anniston city limit line: thence in a southerly and westerly direction along said city limit line to the point of beginning; less and except any property or portion thereof not within the corporate boundary of the City of Anniston.

Section 2. The City Clerk shall enter the City Manager's proposed division, as presented and described in Section 1 of this Resolution, into the minutes of the City. The City Clerk shall make available for public inspection the map showing the City Manager's proposed division.

Section 3. Within thirty (30) days of the date of this Resolution presenting the City Manager's proposed division, the Council shall either approve the proposed division by ordinance or resolution, or the Council shall adopt an ordinance or resolution of disapproval setting forth the Council's proposed wards with clarity and certainty and further prescribing a date for the holding of an election by the voters not less than thirty (30) nor more than ninety (90) days after the adoption of said ordinance or resolution of disapproval.

Section 4. If the Council shall neither approve the City Manager's proposed division nor adopt a valid ordinance or resolution of disapproval within thirty (30) days of the date of this Resolution, then the division as proposed by the City Manager shall be deemed adopted, and the wards of the City shall be as described in Section 1 of this Resolution shall for the purpose of each subsequent.

Section 5. This Resolution shall take immediate effect.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on this the 6th day of February, 2024.

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ANNISTON, ALABAMA

Jack Draper, Mayor  
Jay Jenkins, Council Member  
Demetric Roberts, Council Member  
Ciara Smith, Council Member

ATTEST:

Skyler Bass, City Clerk

Council Member Jenkins made a motion for passage and adoption of the Resolution Approving the City Manager's Proposed Division of the City. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roberts.

Council Member Smith stated one of the main points being missed is that the 2010 census created the 2012 ward map. The 2012 ward map showed that there was a 50.52% white percentage in Ward 1 and a 44.16% of black population in Ward 1. Over the span of ten years from 2010-2020, that white population has decreased. Population has also decreased in Ward 2, so they have to take a certain percentage of population from Ward 1, Ward 3, or Ward 4 to make sure they have equal population in each ward. She stated that comparing the 2012 map to the proposed map, we are moving from a white majority populated ward into an equal opportunity ward.

Council Member Roberts stated that everyone is focused on black and white but they are missing the fact that Anniston had a population 21,564. He stated that they tried to spilt the population up to make every ward equal. He stated that blacks are the majority in Anniston and they have two wards that have to be represented by blacks. He stated that the Housing Authority did the city an injustice, because people have been moved out of wards 2 and 3; and there is nothing being done to intentionally deprive black people from having representation. He stated that what is being deprived, is black people are not getting out and voting like they should.

And on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried and the resolution was passed and adopted. *(24-R-8)*

Mayor Draper introduced the ordinance Amending Section 33.10 (c) Prohibiting the carry of concealed pistols without a license *(1<sup>st</sup> Reading)*.

Council Member Jenkins made a motion to read the ordinance by title only. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roberts.

Mayor Draper opened a public hearing to receive public comments on reading the ordinance by title only. No one spoke. Mayor Draper closed the public hearing to receive public comments on reading the ordinance by title only.

And on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried.

Mayor Draper read the ordinance by title only.

Council Member Jenkins made a motion for unanimous consent for immediate consideration. The motion was seconded by Council Smith and on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried.

Council Member Smith made a motion for passage and adoption of the ordinance Amending Section 33.10 (c) Prohibiting the carry of concealed pistols without a license. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roberts and on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried and the ordinance was passed and adopted. *(24-O-1)*

Mayor Draper introduced the ordinance Amending Section 1.12(b) Describing the Wards of the City *(1<sup>st</sup> Reading)*

Council Member Smith made a motion to read the ordinance by title only. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jenkins.

Mayor Draper opened a public hearing to receive public comments are reading the ordinance by title only. No one spoke. Mayor Draper closed the public hearing to receive public comments are reading the ordinance by title only.

And on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried.

Mayor Draper read the ordinance by title only.

Council Member Jenkins made a motion for unanimous consent for immediate consideration. The motion was seconded by Council Roberts and on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried.

Council Member Jenkins made a motion for passage and adoption of the ordinance Amending Section 1.12(b) Describing the Wards of the City. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roberts and on call of the roll the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Member Jenkins, Roberts, Smith and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried and the ordinance was passed and adopted. (24-O-2)

Ralph Bradford addressed the council that he has been coming to the council for years and has never gotten anything that he has asked for. He stated that it was his work that made it possible for the African American members to be on the council. He stated that he is tired of the young folks trying to talk about something they really don't know anything about, redistricting. He stated that citizens need to get out and vote.

Joanna Huddleston, 2296 County Road 447, Woodland Alabama, addressed the council on behalf of the Association of Combat Veterans, who ride motorcycles as a hobby. She stated that their focus is to provide assistance and to help individual veterans. She asked if the rental fee could be waived for the use of the Anniston Meeting Center. She stated that they have booked the facility for April 26-28, 2024.

Council Member Jenkins thanked staff and East Alabama for their hard work at putting the map together. He stated that he understands what it took for Anniston to get to where it is and he appreciates the effort.

Council Member Roberts stated that respect is a thing that is given but also earned. He stated that it gets old when people get up at council meetings and want to use bullying techniques. He stated that when there are issues in the Black community not one person picks up the phone, but they will come to a council meeting and grandstand. He stated that there is a comprehension level that everyone is not adhering to. He stated that they should at least be able to sit and have a conversation to resolve any issues in Anniston.

Council Member Smith stated that we are our own worst enemy. She stated that they are constantly going in circles within the black community. She stated that instead of the people supporting her, as a young black woman, they wrote her off and claimed that she is didn't know anything due to her age and inexperience on the council. She stated that instead of unifying the voice of the black community, we sit and argue every time. She stated that it does not matter how many times she explains something; people do not listen to comprehend but instead to rebuttal.



Mayor Draper thanked Mr. Folks for his work with Bruce and Mike on creating this map. He stated, looking at the raw numbers and deviations, this map is as fair as it can possibly be.

There being no further business to come before the council at that time Mayor Draper made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Council Member Smith; and on call of the roll, the following vote was recorded: ayes: Council Members Jenkins, Roberts, Smith, and Draper; nays: none. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:24 o'clock p.m.