

Town of Camp Hill

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January 2, 2023

To the Camp Hill Community and Family,

We have begun another year that God has given us. 2023 had been particularly traumatic for a lot of us, however, we still stand humbled and grateful for the opportunity of another year.

In this letter to you all, I would like to accomplish three things: (1) recap the year, (2) acknowledge deficiencies within the Town, and (3) give you all reasons to be optimistic for the future.

RECAP OF THE YEAR

HAILSTORMS

I am truly not being facetious when I tell you all it seems as though the year did not begin until March 26th – the night of the hailstorms. I will never forget being in my home and praying like I had never prayed before because I thought we were in the middle of a tornado. Thankfully no one was killed or injured during the storms, but much property was damaged or destroyed. There are many homes that are still in danger of being health hazards and there are still cars in need of repair. I promise that I am attempting to solicit as much help as I can for our citizens, and we will not rest until we alleviate as much as we can.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Warren Tidwell (Executive Director of Alabama Center for Rural Organizing and System Solutions), the Oak Street Community Center, Jason Moran (Director, Tallapoosa County Emergency Management Agency), Brandi Hardy (Administrative Assistant, Tallapoosa County Emergency Management Agency), Courtney Layfield (Executive Director, Lake Martin Area United Way), and the plethora of others volunteers including citizens, church groups, non-profits, and service organizations.

This was a learning experience for all and I cannot stress enough how great of a job everyone did with the situation placed upon us. I thank you all for your service to the Town of Camp Hill.

APRIL 15, 2023 SHOOTINGS

I am refraining from calling it the “Dadeville shootings” because we all know the shootings are unbecoming of the Dadeville community and not a reflection of the community in any way, form, or fashion. On this day, many teenagers lost their peace of mind. They will continue to go through life with those images etched into their psyche.

Continue to love and embrace these teenagers dearly.

Please don't let anniversaries of the event be the first time we show these children that we care. I will forever be heartbroken about this tragedy.

To all the parents of victims and victims themselves, you all are in great hands with District Attorney Mike Segrest. I truly believe in his commitment to justice and integrity.

I would also like to commend the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, Honorable Sheriff Jimmy Abbett, Tallapoosa County Sheriff's Office, Honorable Mayor Jimmy Frank Goodman, the Dadeville Police Department, the various Ambulatory Services, Fire Departments, and Hospitals for the bravery shown on that night and in the following days.

As for the memories of Mr. Marsiah Collins, Mr. Phil Dowdell, Mr. Corbin Holston, and Ms. Shaunkivia Smith – I pray that they are remembered for all the good done in their respective lives. May God have mercy on all our souls.

OTHER BRIEF NEWS

During the year, we also did the following: (1) hired Mr. Corey Shaw as permanent police chief, (2) received FEMA funds to fix storm damage on Holley Avenue, the Municipal Complex, Police Department, and the Camp Hill Park, (3) we hired a new Senior Citizen and Disabled Adult Center Coordinator Miss Alexis Meniefield, (4) formed an Advisory Task Force for the Water and Sewer Department, (5) and expanded the Food Pantry with the aid of other entities.

TOWN DEFICIENCIES

UTILITIES

We are currently in the process of forming a Water & Sewer Board. The purpose of this is to create a sustainable and knowledgeable administration for the water and sewer services. There are a few things that need to occur for the Town of Camp Hill to be a great water and sewer system – these are a few goals that need to be addressed in the short term (1-3 years) and long term (5-15 years):

Short Term	Long Term
1. GIS System for Utilities	1. Replace Lagoon System
2. Lagoon Dredging	2. SOPs for Water Leak Checks
3. Digital Water Meters	3. Adding/Funding Reserve Accounts for System

ROADS

Our roads continue to be as bad as they always have been. Currently, we are in the middle of major utilities reconstruction and improvements – this makes improving or repaving roads impossible for the time being because we would have to demolish roads to do the construction. It would be as if we started digging a hole and put the dirt back down in the exact spot we had just stuck the shovel.

Roads will continue to be an issue until the following problems are solved:

1. Improving Roadside Drainage
2. Replacing All Deficient Water & Sewer Lines
3. Leveling Road to Properly Drain

TRASH

We are currently still in the process of getting our trucks repaired after the hailstorms. We will continue to try to get on top of this issue. We have been blessed with much support from Commissioner Emma Jean Thweatt in this regard.

OPTIMISTIC NOTE

PLANS FOR 2024

The following is brief snapshots of what you can expect in 2024:

- Philstavious Dowdell Day – **January 29**
- Camp Hill's 129th Birthday – **February 18**
- Town Black History Program – **February 29 @ 6 p.m.** at the Municipal Complex
- Prayer Vigil on One Year Anniversary of Hailstorms – **March 26 @ 5:30 p.m.** at the Municipal Complex
- Day of Remembrance – **April 15**
- Camp Hill Day – **May 4**
- Alumni Day Weekend – **May 24th – 26th**
- Trunk or Treat – **October 31**
- Christmas Parade – **December 7**

We also plan to bring in many events that will engage citizens of the Town including:

- Reopening the Senior Citizen Center for Events
- Summer Athletics for Youth
- Quarterly Events for Senior Citizens

CONCLUSION

Camp Hillians, 2023 has been one of the toughest years of my life and I am thankful to have made it to the end. I've suffered the loss of friends, friendships, family, property, time – I even lost a child this year. However, I remain hopeful for the future because the Bible reads in Job 11:17-19 that *"A life span will rise brighter than noon; darkness will be like morning. You will be secure, for there is hope; you will look around and rest safely. You will lie down without anyone to scare you; many will beg for your favor."* I'm not attempting to convert anyone to my religion, but I firmly believe that as long as there is breath in our body – we have a chance and making today and tomorrow better than yesterday.

To all of the staff of the Town of the Camp Hill – whether you're an officer, clerk, utilities worker, council member, inmate, etc – I'd like to say thank you for your hard work as well. It is much appreciated!

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for all the support they have given me and the Town. In particular, Commissioner Emma Jean Thweatt and Sheriff Jimmy Abbett have been **beyond** a blessing in terms of the amount of support they give this town.

As always, it is a blessing to serve you all. I am thankful for all the prayers, criticisms, challenges, and compliments that you all send my way.

Best regards,



Messiah Williams-Cole

Mayor, Town of Camp Hill

