

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
JANUARY 31, 2023 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on January 31, 2023, in regular session.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Council President Back. On roll call by the City Clerk, Iva Nelson, the following council members answered present: Latham, Smith, Avery, Back, Wilson, Minatra and Robinson. The clerk stated a quorum was present and the meeting was open for business. Mayor Ford, Heath Williamson, Lee Roberts and Chief Jaggears were also present.

The invocation was given by Brian Harbison.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on January 24, 2023, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of January 20-26 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#221626-221816	General	\$1,855,592.901
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Mayor Ford read a proclamation proclaiming February 14, 2023, as “Dr. Lucian Newman, Jr. Day” and presented it to Jane Newman and other family members present.

Mayor Ford presented commendations to Theater of Gadsden recipients of 2022 BroadwayWorld Birmingham awards, including Mike Beecham, the cast of Ring of Fire, Joy Tillery Perryman, Hillary Cunningham, Billy Jenkins, Kendelle Stovall, Joe Cannon, Wayne Cornutt, and Cassie Cunningham. Councilwoman Minatra announced upcoming performances.

Mayor Ford presented a commendation thanking Kerry Payne (Personnel Director) for his 34 years of service to the city, upon his retirement. Mr. Payne recognized various people he worked for over the years and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

President Back stated this was the time and place as advertised to conduct the following public hearings:

(1) The floor was opened to allow anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 2219 Forrest Avenue (Rear), Virginia A. Gulsby being the last known owner. Virginia Gulsby requested a three-month extension, stating she had spoken with two contractors. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated although a permit was obtained in June 2022, no improvements have been made to this garage apartment since procedures began in February 2022. He recommended abatement. In response to President Back’s inquiry, Mr. Harbison explained the typical timetable when abatement is ordered. Councilwoman Minatra advised Ms. Gulsby her permit is still in effect and she should work with Mr. Harbison before City crews proceed with demolition. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-20-23

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 2219 Forrest Avenue (Rear) - District 6 - Virginia A. Gulsby)

Councilwoman Minatra moved to adopt the resolution as introduced, which motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson and unanimously adopted.

(2) The floor was opened to allow anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution approving the issuance of an alcoholic beverage license for Enterprises Liquor Store at 310 West Meighan Boulevard, Suite C. No one spoke. The following resolution was presented for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-21-23

APPROVING THE ISSUANCE OF
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSE

(Moutalabi Boukari - Enterprises Liquor Store - 310 West Meighan Boulevard, Suite C - Lounge Retail Liquor License, Class II - Package Store)

Councilman Avery moved to adopt the resolution as introduced, which motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson and unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION:

(1) The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-22-23

AUTHORIZING ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY

(Authorizing payment of \$2,500.00 for bidder deposit - For Mayor to participate in auction by heirs of Eddie M. Bynum - Approximately 50 acres off Airport Road - Parcel No. 16-06-24-0-001-011.000)

Councilman Wilson moved to adopt the resolution as introduced, which motion was seconded by Councilman Robinson and unanimously adopted.

ORDINANCES - FIRST READING

The following ordinances were introduced in writing and read by President Back:

(1) ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY LOCATED ON STROUD AVENUE

(2) ORDINANCE - AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY LOCATED ON MCKINLEY AVENUE

Since no action was taken in this meeting, the ordinances will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting for consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Councilman Wilson introduced the following resolution in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-23-23

AUTHORIZING ONE-YEAR MORATORIUM ON CERTAIN NEW BUSINESS LICENSES WITHIN THE COOSA RIVERFRONT DISTRICT

(Authorizing moratorium on business licenses for Payday Loan, Car Title Loan, Check Cashing, Mattress, Car Wash, and Automotive Oil Change and Lubrication businesses within Coosa Riverfront District - For period of one year - To provide an opportunity for City to reassess present zoning ordinance, policies and procedures, and to develop an appropriate zoning and commercial development plan - Note: Moratorium is not intended to impact business currently operating, unless operations are ceased)

President Back received unanimous consent to immediately consider the resolution as an item of new business. Councilman Wilson moved to adopt the resolution, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Latham and unanimously adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Josh Tanner (Interim Director) reported on EMA's move back to city hall, transferring equipment to police and fire departments, and work to update various plans. He stated his goal to visit other municipalities in Etowah County and to cultivate relationships.

PUBLIC

Kevin Blackwell reported on the SPAN (Special Programming Achievement Network) program, which is currently housed in the Alabama City Center, and recognized staff members present. He noted 142 students were in the program in 2022, with 111 successfully completing it. Mr. Blackwell expressed appreciation for their building, as well as a desire for more space in order to expand the program.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Mayor Ford and President Back congratulated Kerry Payne and announced today's retirement reception. Mayor Ford reported on attending last week's District 2 meeting, grant applications, efforts on locating a Challenger Center in Gadsden; meetings in Washington, DC next week; comprehensive plan stakeholder meetings on February 13; and good appearance of Forrest Cemetery. He joined with Councilman Avery and President Back in commending Donna Thornton's service to The Gadsden Times and extending best wishes as she departs.

Councilwoman Latham reported on last Saturday's Habitat for Humanity house dedication and the city's partnership through ARP funding. She commended volunteers in Green Pastures.

Councilman Smith thanked the Mayor and staff for their attendance at the recent District 2 meeting.

Councilmen Smith and Avery joined in expressing concern at the recent incident in Memphis resulting in the death of Tyre Nichols and emphasizing the need to ensure that law enforcement officers are mentally sound and to address systemic issues.

Councilman Avery extended condolences to families who have experienced the death of loved ones. He reported on efforts to designate historic sites in District 3 and announced another community meeting on February 17 and a clean-up event on February 18. Councilman Avery commented on today's alcoholic beverage license, noting the chief's recommendation to disapprove did not relate to situations in Gadsden. He thanked the National League of Cities for his appointment to the Community and Economic Development Committee.

Councilman Wilson congratulated Chris Underwood, a Beautiful Rainbow student, who has been accepted into the Eagles Program at Auburn University. Chris was ranked the top candidate out of 90 candidates. Councilman Wilson also commended local school system staff who work with the Beautiful Rainbow program.

Councilwoman Minatra noted tomorrow is signing day at Gadsden City High School and Councilman Robinson commented on today's positive meeting.

President Back complimented the SPAN program and Dr. Lucian Newman, Jr. He noted he was reappointed to the NLC's Information Technology and Communications Committee. President Back extended condolences to the family of Tim Hudak.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was duly adjourned.

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (1-31-2023)
