

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
FEBRUARY 2, 2021 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on February 2, 2021 in regular session.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Council President Toles. On roll call by the City Clerk, Iva Nelson, the following council members answered present: Toles, Williams, Worthy, Back, Wilson, and Reed. Councilman Cannon was absent. The clerk stated a quorum was present and the meeting was open for business. Mayor Guyton, Heath Williamson, Lee Roberts and Captain Jackson were also present.

The invocation was given by Heath Williamson.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on January 26, 2021, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of January 22 -28, 2021, were ratified by unanimous vote.

#205508-205635	General	\$1,156,173.69
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At the request of President Toles, City Clerk Iva Nelson announced information from the Emergency Management Agency Director regarding Thursday's second dose vaccine clinic at The Venue.

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-15-21

APPOINTING AND REAPPOINTING MEMBERS TO
GADSDEN COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

(Confirming Mayor's reappointment of Scott Hindsman and Carrie Machen for terms expiring December 31, 2023 - Confirming Mayor's appointment of Bethanne Mashburn to replace Wayne Hollar and Chris Robinson to replace Christie Knowles for terms expiring on December 31, 2023)

Councilman Wilson moved to adopt the resolution as introduced, which motion was seconded by Councilman Back and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Toles, Williams, Back, Wilson, Reed

NAYS: Worthy

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-16-21

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
COOSA RIVER TEAM TRAIL

(Authorizing Agreement - Coosa River Team Trail - \$12,500.00 - To sponsor four fishing tournaments between March and October 2021, including two-day tournament at season finale, at Coosa Landing)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-17-21

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
CRAPPIE MASTERS, INC.

(Authorizing Agreement - Crappie Masters, Inc. - \$500.00 - To sponsor fishing tournaments on March 6 and May 22, 2021 at Coosa Landing)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-18-21

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
AMERICAN BASS ANGLERS, INC.

(Authorizing Agreement - American Bass Anglers, Inc. - \$1,000.00 - To sponsor Open Series fishing tournament on June 12, 2021 at Coosa Landing)

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

NEW BUSINESS

A resolution regarding Pilgrim's Pride Corporation's proposed rendering plant (determining the council is (1) not in favor of the proposed project's proximity to the municipal airport and (2) not in favor of abatement of municipal taxes for this project) was introduced in writing and read by Councilman Wilson. President Toles moved for unanimous consent to immediately consider the resolution, which motion was seconded by Councilman Reed and unanimously carried. President Toles moved for adoption of the resolution, which motion was seconded by Councilman Williams.

President Toles referred to a statement made at a council meeting that the Alabama National Guard would be impacted by this plant coming to the airport. She read a communication from the State Military Department dated January 26, 2021, indicating that after contacts with the Alabama Department of Commerce and Governor's office, a decision was made on December 8, 2020, that the Alabama National Guard would take no public position and certainly not oppose the project.

Councilman Reed moved to continue the resolution indefinitely, which motion was seconded by Councilman Williams and carried by the following vote:

AYES: Toles, Williams, Back, Reed

NAYS: Worthy, Wilson

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Council members discussed the resolution concerning the rendering plant. Councilman Back said he is listening to constituents and will adhere to their wishes and described input from the opposition group as part of democracy and helpful to his research. He described the steps involved in industrial recruitment and cautioned against interrupting the process, which is far from over, while hired professionals are doing their job. Councilman Back said setting precedent regarding this particular project could negatively affect future industrial recruitment decisions and pointed out today's resolution was non-binding. He stated the need to make improvements in workforce development.

Councilman Wilson said he was up front about the resolution's non-binding nature and recollected the non-binding resolution that was adopted in regard to the Emma Sansom monument. He stated the resolution acknowledged valid concerns on both sides of the issue and was a means to deliver a message. Councilman Wilson objected to municipal code interpretations that limit the definition of the council's powers and the idea that the council should be uninformed and inactive until a proposal is presented. He stressed that the workforce must be able to accommodate industries sought. He noted building plants in the country is detrimental for people who moved there to get away from plants that were built in town during Gadsden's early development.

Councilman Reed said industrial recruitment is a legal, confidential process and read a communication from the Industrial Development Authority referencing stolen documents. He warned against council involvement in matters of money and land and recalled seeing friends incarcerated in past situations. He said he will vote yes or no on the project at the end of the process.

President Toles stated the council doesn't have anything from Pilgrim's to vote on and referenced real reasons for opposition. She read a speaker's statement from the ADEM hearing that the diverse group of employees coming into their community to work at the plant, or their friends, would commit crimes and home invasions. She referred to recent tax abatement requests and questioned why Inteva expressed opposition to the rendering plant after receiving a tax abatement from the city.

Councilman Williams described Gertie Lowe as a giant in our community. Councilmen Worthy and Back joined with him in expressing condolences to her family. Hope was expressed that others will continue the summer enrichment program and her legacy of contributions to children.

Councilman Reed expressed concern for Councilman Cannon and his wife, who are fighting Covid.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (2-2-21)
