

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
JUNE 15, 2021 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on June 15, 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, Cannon and Reed. 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 Brian Harbison.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on June 8, 2021 were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of June 4 - 10, 2021 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#208496-208720	General	\$384,961.95
----------------	---------	--------------

David Hooks (Industrial Development Authority Director) reported on activities during his two-year tenure. Computer hardware, logo and the website have been updated and two additional target areas have been added. Mr. Hooks reiterated the mission—to recruit and retain industry, workforce development, and develop entrepreneurship. He displayed advertising and described work with various companies, including Motus, Koch Food Mill, Norfolk Southern and OmniTrax rail sites, Brice Thomas Radiator, Project Sunshine, which did not materialize, and Pilgrim's Pride. Mr. Hooks noted water improvements are needed to develop industrial sites near the airport, as well as to service corporate hangars, and mentioned the possibility of constructing a speculative building.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Toles announced that no action was necessary on a resolution ordering abatement of nuisances on property at 2214 Sansom Avenue in District 6, which was tabled for 30 days on May 11, as the nuisance has been abated by the owner.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

President Toles 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 in opposition to or in favor of a resolution ordering abatement of nuisances on property at 1322 Cansler Avenue in District 5, Demetria Cass, subject to rights of redemption, if any, to Tyrone Fears and Leon Thomas, and the State of Alabama being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, noted an additional parcel and property owner has been discovered, and recommended tabling the resolution for an indefinite period. Councilman Wilson moved to table the resolution indefinitely, which motion was seconded by Councilman Back and unanimously carried.

(2) The floor was opened to allow anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 3101 Sansom Avenue, Lone Star 21, LLC c/o Vicki Gregerson Smith being the last known owners. David Livingston, attorney, spoke on behalf of property owner Gary Dykes. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made since procedures began in August 2020, and recommended abatement. Ashley Pham (3103 Sansom Avenue) cited ongoing issues, including needles from drug use and workers removing items from the property. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-136-21

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 3101 Sansom Avenue - District 6 - Lone Star 21, LLC, c/o Vicki Gregerson Smith)

Councilman Cannon said he has received numerous reports of drug activity, people going in and out of the house through the windows, and abandoned vehicles are present. He added people were working without a permit, as none have been issued,

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

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-137-21

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH ALABAMA B.A.S.S. NATION

(Authorizing Agreement - Alabama B.A.S.S. Nation - \$4,000.00 - To sponsor Alabama B.A.S.S. Nation High School Regional Qualifier at Coosa Landing on October 16, 2021)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-138-21

AUTHORIZING CHANGE ORDER #1
WITH ALABAMA GRADING AND EXCAVATION, LLC

(Authorizing Change Order #1 - Bid No. 3452 - Sanitary Sewer Bypass Abandonment Project at NARMCO - \$12,800.00 for additional grout - Adjusting contract with Alabama Grading & Excavation, LLC to \$144,100.00)

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

NEW BUSINESS

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-139-21

AUTHORIZING EXTENSION OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR VERIZON

(Authorizing 2nd Extension of Special Use Permit for 180 days - Verizon - To co-locate equipment at existing Wireless Telecommunication Facility located at 4610 Airport Road - Note: Original permit was granted by R-469-19 and 1st extension was granted by R-118-20)

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Lisa Rosser, Finance Director, discussed the recent financial report. She compared various types of revenue from May 2021 to 2020 and 2019 figures. Ms. Rosser noted work is underway to develop a plan to spend approximately \$24 million in Federal Rescue Plan funds. In response to Councilman Worthy's inquiry, she said there are no immediate plans to pursue refinancing of school bonds and said it is a lower priority than rescue funds. In response to Councilman Cannon's inquiry, Ms. Rosser estimated personnel costs at 70% of the general fund budget. He advocated for providing raises. A discussion followed regarding a prior personnel study, as well as the cost of providing wage increases and benefits. In response to Councilman Back's inquiry, she noted Christmas at the Falls proceeds are designated for capital improvements.

Kerry Payne, Personnel Director, noted employee shortages in most departments, stating the pandemic and unemployment have been huge factors. He complimented the work of the current mayor and council, praising them for not allowing outsiders to control city government, and criticized Senator Andrew Jones.

CITIZEN REQUEST

Robert Avery stated he is advocating for a number of non-profit agencies and organizations in regard to Federal Rescue Plan funding. He requested to be included in planning sessions and offered assistance in setting up spending guidelines.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilman Reed revisited the school bond issue and Lisa Rosser explained City and Board of Education officials had met. She said a refinancing as now proposed would not relieve the City's debt and would change from non-taxable to taxable issue. Councilman Reed complimented the recent Musical Monday event.

Councilman Cannon encouraged people to refrain from littering and to report those who do.

Councilman Wilson described today’s meeting as bizarre and stressed the need to find a way to like each other and work together. He thanked Mr. Hooks for his presentation.

Councilman Back addressed the issue of an email he sent on March 24, 2021, concerning the proposed rendering plant, describing it as a result of five months of negative information and comments, getting mad, and making an emotional choice. He reiterated his pledge to not vote for anything harmful to Gadsden, to vote with his constituents, and to do his own research. Councilman Back said work is needed to address other issues, such as gunfire in the Edenwood community, debris pickup, and drainage. He pointed out revenue losses of the City with closing of Goodyear and the Water Works & Sewer Board with Goodyear and Rainbow City leaving the system. Councilman Back encouraged working together and spoke out against criticism and negative comments that have been made regarding Dr. Toles, Council President.

Councilman Worthy stressed the need to stop personal attacks and negative remarks on social media. He advocated for taking advantage of \$1 million savings for the City and Board of Education through bond refinancing.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (6-15-2021)

FOURTH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM - BID OPENING
JUNE 15, 2021- 2:00 P.M.

The City Clerk received bid proposals as advertised for the following bid:

Bid No. 3454 - Wildhaven Circle Drainage Improvements

James E. Watts and Sons	\$76,424.00
B&B Developers	\$79,202.00
Triple J Construction	\$115,760.00

Copies of the bids will be forwarded to the City Engineer, and a recommendation will be made to the Council.
