

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA  
JULY 5, 2023 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on July 5, 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. Heath Williamson, Lee Roberts and Chief Jaggears were also present.

The invocation was given by Councilman Smith.

The minutes of the Education/Recreation Committee, Work Session, and Council meeting held on June 27, 2023, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of June 23-29 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#225243-225445	General	\$638,887.28
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following ordinance, which was introduced for first reading at last week's meeting, was presented for consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. O-41-23

AMENDING CITY CODE SECTION 90-92

(Amending City Code - Revising provisions relating to panhandling, begging and solicitations - Giving definitions, including intent, after dark, aggressive panhandling, etc. - Defining prohibited areas for panhandling, soliciting and begging - Prohibiting aggressive panhandling in certain areas)

Councilman Wilson moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Minatra and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Latham, Smith, Back, Wilson, Minatra, Robinson

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Avery

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-399-23

AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. R-244-21 AUTHORIZING  
LEASE AGREEMENT WITH JERRY PATE TURF & IRRIGATION

(Amending R-244-21 that authorized Lease Agreement with Jerry Pate Turf & Irrigation - Providing for Lease, with option to purchase, with Huntington National Bank - For equipment to be used at Gadsden Sports Park on Gadsden State Community College campus - Note: It was determined that some equipment included in the original lease was not needed - Jerry Pate Turf & Irrigation is the vendor pursuant to State of Alabama Omnia Partners Public Sector, a national purchasing cooperative)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-400-23

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH CDG, INC.

(Authorizing Agreement - CDG, Inc. - \$23,990.00 - To provide subsurface exploration and materials report - For rehabilitation of Carolyn Lane, from Rosewood Lane to Springdale Road)

Councilman Smith 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-401-23

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH CDG, INC.

(Authorizing Agreement - CDG, Inc. - \$10,925.00 - To provide subsurface exploration and materials report - For construction of new Fire Station 6 on Goldenrod Avenue)

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

ORDINANCE - FIRST READING

The following ordinance was introduced in writing and read by President Back:

ORDINANCE - SECOND AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE CREATING ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT (Expanding boundaries)

Since no action was taken in this meeting, the ordinance 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-402-23

AUTHORIZING APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT

(Authorizing Application and Acceptance of Grant - From Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs - FY23 Emergency Solutions Grant Program - \$200,000.00 with local match of \$200,000.00 - The Salvation Army & The Family Success Center - To address needs of homeless population through all eligible activities under McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)

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.

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-403-23

APPOINTING DEREK MUMMERT AS  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR

(Approving Mayor's appointment of Derek Mummert as Emergency Management Director - Replacing Deborah L. Gaither, who retired - Note: Gadsden-Etowah County Emergency Management Agency Executive Committee interviewed four applicants - Approval of Etowah County Commission is also required)

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 Minatra and unanimously adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Jen Weathington noted that July is Parks and Recreation month and announced upcoming activities, including a celebration on July 15 at the splash pad at Riverwalk Park.

Derek Mummert (newly appointed EMA Director) expressed appreciation for the confidence placed in him. He reported multiple properties sustained damage from storms in Hokes Bluff on Saturday and Gadsden on Sunday and advised citizens to submit reports via email. Mr. Mummert thanked all who assisted in storm response and recognized Craig Scott (VOAD Coordinator). The council joined in congratulating Mr. Mummert and complimenting his abilities.

PUBLIC

Larry Suttles presented pictures and expressed concern about conditions he feels are unsafe and equipment that needs upgrading in some of the playgrounds throughout the city. He requested funding and attention to addressing the issues.

Fred Zackery expressed concern that the one remaining public swimming pool on N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street is not open and requested the city to provide at least two pools for the children of Gadsden. He cited other smaller cities that have swimming pools and pointed out 27% of our population is under the age of 17.

Joseph Cole expressed appreciation for the council’s support for the recent fund-raising event for Boys and Girls Club. He reiterated his former request for the council to advise citizens to use water filters and stressed the need for public awareness of pollutants in the water supply. Mr. Cole said some of the settlement funds from the Water Works & Sewer Board’s lawsuit against companies polluting the Coosa River should be used to purchase filters for citizens who cannot afford them.

COUNCIL REMARKS

The council joined in thanking everyone who provided response to Sunday’s thunderstorms and damage and thanked the Mayor for his plan to be proactive in future incidents.

Councilwoman Latham and Councilman Smith thanked the citizens who presented their concerns. Councilman Smith noted plans are underway for playground improvements in his district. He recalled his conversation regarding purchase of the YMCA had stipulated building a pool, preferably in a central location. He added no citizens have brought up the need for filters. Councilman Avery noted the park behind Carver Community Center needs attention and a meeting will be announced in the community regarding the pool. He acknowledged the water supply was discussed in District 3 meetings, with mention of possible assistance through EMA for filters. Councilman Wilson advised he had suggested that EMA investigate Federal grants to distribute water filters. He displayed the recent annual water report, pointing out a partnership between the WWSB and Insight Engineering to construct a reverse osmosis facility and community involvement is allowed for WWSB meetings. Councilman Wilson agreed that better playgrounds are needed. President Back acknowledged he has served on the Water Works & Sewer Board for two months and thanked Councilman Wilson for sharing the information on the annual report.

Councilman Avery announced the District 3 meeting has been rescheduled for July 25 and announced the next clean-up event on July 23.

Councilman Wilson congratulated Greg Bailey on the birth of his grandson. He clarified today’s action on the ordinance regarding aggressive soliciting and begging, which doesn’t infringe upon the Constitutional right to do so.

Councilmen Robinson, Wilson, and Back joined in complimenting the fireworks display and thanking the Patriots Association.

President Back pointed out the city is pursuing a \$200,000 grant for a holistic, compassionate approach in addressing homelessness. He noted Mayor Ford’s absence was due to participating in an interview.

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

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Iva Nelson, City Clerk (7-5-23)

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