

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
AUGUST 29, 2023 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on August 29, 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 General Administration Committee, Work Session, and Council meeting held on August 22, 2023, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of August 18-24 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#226715-226817	General	\$694,607.64
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Mayor Ford presented pins to Brian Harbison (Building Official) and Kathy Jackson (Fleet Director), who are retiring after 30 years of service. The Mayor and Council joined in commending their work and thanking them for their dedication.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

ORDINANCE NO. O-56-23

AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY

(Authorizing Conveyance of Property - 6th Street Pool and Pool House, located on N. 6th Street - Greater Gadsden Housing Authority - Note: GGHA plans to convert pool into green space and remodel pool house for use as a community building for Colley Homes)

Councilman Avery noted he supports this action and wants to pursue establishing a park and other items. Mayor Ford thanked the housing authority for coming to the city and noted the city is still looking for opportunities for a splash pad and/or pool.

Councilman Avery moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously adopted.

(2) An ordinance amending Ordinance No. O-47-23 (which amended Article IV. - Dogs and Cats, creating Section 10-108-Managed Care of Dogs and Cats) was introduced for first reading at last week's meeting, was presented for consideration. Councilwoman Minatra stated her desire to "cast a wider net" and have further study by the Public Safety Committee. She moved to table the ordinance 3 weeks, which motion was seconded by Councilman Avery and unanimously carried. Councilman Wilson acknowledged the potential of the ordinance being "polarizing" and expressed no objection to today's action. He stressed the need to try something to address animal issues, even if it's imperfect. Mayor Ford stated animals are the majority of calls received and agreed on the need to address the problem. With unanimous consent of the council, John Crane (Director of Humane Society Pet Rescue Center) expressed support for the ordinance and accountability by registration of animals.

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

ORDINANCE NO. O-57-23

AMENDING CITY CODE SECTION 46-97 (b)(4)

(Amending City Code regarding Noise - Allowing loading, unloading and delivery activities after 10 p.m. or before 7 a.m., as long as sound doesn't exceed 70 decibels as read by a sound lever - Includes any point across a residential real property boundary, within a noise sensitive zone or within a residential area)

Councilman Wilson noted WalMart had requested an extension of delivery hours and sound tests conducted were well within the 70 decibel range. He moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously adopted.

PUBLIC HEARING

President Back stated this was the time and place as advertised to conduct a public hearing allowing anyone to speak in opposition to or in favor of a resolution annulling an unnamed alley between Herring Avenue (annulled) and Herzberg Avenue. No one spoke. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-481-23

AUTHORIZING ANNULMENT OF AN UN-NAMED ALLEY

(Annulling portion of 15-foot wide alley - Lying between Herring Avenue (annulled) and Herzberg Avenue - Between Lots 8-20 and Lots 21-33, Block 3, Goodyear Square Subdivision - Requested by City of Gadsden)

President Back and Mayor Ford explained this relates to construction of a new building for the State Rehabilitation Services facility. The current facility on the Gadsden State Community College campus is being displaced and the city wishes to retain it in Gadsden.

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

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-482-23

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH CDP DESIGN, LLC

(Authorizing Agreement - CDP Design, LLC - \$14,802.00 - For architectural design services to renovate Fire Station No. 2 located on Airport Road)

Mayor Ford advised a lease has been negotiated with ALEA (Alabama Law Enforcement Agency) for a State Trooper office, which is currently in Attalla.

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-483-23

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
TILLMAN CONSULTING, LLC

(Authorizing Agreement - Tillman Consulting, LLC - \$20,650.00 - To assist with right-of-way acquisition - For the 9th Street North/Lay Street drainage project)

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-484-23

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
TILLMAN CONSULTING, LLC

(Authorizing Agreement - Tillman Consulting, LLC - \$54,750.00 - To assist with right-of-way acquisition - For Adams Park Drainage Project (East Broad Street, from 15th Street North to 22nd Street)

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

NEW BUSINESS

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-485-23

AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT
FROM ALABAMA TOURISM DEPARTMENT

(Authorizing Grant Acceptance - Alabama Tourism Department - \$13,000.00 - To assist with expenses of Art on the Rocks, Trick or Treat Village, and Christmas at the Falls)

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 Councilman Robinson and unanimously adopted.

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

ORDINANCE NO. O-58-23

AMENDING FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET

(Amending FY2023 Budget - Reflecting receipt of Alabama Tourism Department Grant - \$13,000.00 - Appropriating to Special Events, including Art on the Rocks, Trick or Treat Village, and Christmas at the Falls)

Councilman Wilson moved to suspend the rules to immediately consider the ordinance as an item of new business. The motion was seconded by Councilman Robinson and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-486-23

AUTHORIZING STATE AND LOCAL
CYBERSECURITY GRANT PROGRAM (SLCGP) APPLICATION

(Authorizing Grant Application - State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program - To be used for managing and reducing systemic cyber risks and strengthening cyber defense and response capabilities)

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 Councilman Robinson and unanimously adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Derek Mummert (Emergency Management Agency Director) announced CERT classes, which begin tonight at Carver Community Center. Councilman Wilson requested him to investigate Federal grants for home water filtration systems.

Ty Jackson (Street Maintenance Superintendent) reported on contracted storm debris removal on Lookout Mountain and noted all loader trucks and personnel are working there now. He added future operations are being evaluated for a decision on when to resume regular debris collection routes. Mayor Ford commended the phenomenal work of employees and asked for the public's patience. He noted new loader trucks will be in next year's budget. Councilmen Robinson and Smith thanked Public Works, the Mayor and staff. Councilman Wilson suggested that neighbors combine small piles for more efficient pickup.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

The Mayor and Council reiterated personal remembrances and commendations to Brian Harbison and Kathy Jackson.

Councilwoman Minatra noted the informational flyer has been inserted into the first group of garbage bills (August 25) and will be completed in the next two months (September 25 and October 25). She thanked Fay Stokes and expressed hope the information will help residents to keep the city cleaner.

Councilman Wilson advised he is working with Tena King to restore streets and lighting on traffic roundabouts in the Argyle Circle area. He reported drainage and utility work is complete on S. 11th Street and hopes the project will be completed in October.

Councilman Avery reminded citizens about the CERT classes and the deadline for micro enterprise program applications. He thanked everyone who participated in last Sunday's District 3 cleanup. Councilman Avery described the impact of the 1963 March on Washington on his life and thanked local citizens Robert Frank Thomas, James F. Smith, and Robert Avery, who participated.

Councilman Smith expressed excitement about great things going on in Gadsden and reported on last week's visit to McClellan (Department of Homeland Security training center). He congratulated the GCHS Titans on their football victory and wished them well this week. Councilman Smith acknowledged his father's first birthday in heaven and thanked Councilman Avery for recognizing his participation in the March on Washington.

Councilwoman Latham congratulated Derek Jenkins and C. J. Taylor, winners of the Community Development Project 2000 golf tournament. She encouraged parents of students in kindergarten through the third grade to attend tonight's "I Believe in the Power of Reading" event at The Venue, sponsored by the city and the school board. Councilwoman Latham commended the Mayor, his staff, and city workers and reiterated that we are stronger together, working together to make the city better.

Mayor Ford: commended the courage of March on Washington participants; acknowledged the birthday of Councilman Smith's father; commended city workers; congratulated the Humane Society for attaining certification and the Titans for their win; gave an update on work on the handbook, noted the upcoming budget will focus on employees; congratulated Superintendent Reddick on his retirement, as well as Keith Blackwell and Dr. Sharon Maness on their interim positions; highlighted city financial support to schools; thanked Representative Butler for grant consideration and bringing a horse-drawn carriage business to downtown; reported some homeless individuals are being delivered back to their city.

President Back thanked the Mayor and team for great leadership and work on great things, as well as challenges, and reiterated commendations to the Humane Society. He thanked Councilwomen Latham and Minatra for spearheading tonight's reading event and encouraged adults to read to young children.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (8-29-23)
