

CITY COUNCIL MEETING - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
JANUARY 12, 2021 - 11:15 A.M.

The City Council met on January 12, 2021, in regular session, via teleconference.

Due to the length of the preceding work session, the meeting was called to order at 11:15 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, and Lee Roberts were also present.

The invocation was given by Councilman Back.

The minutes of the council meeting held on January 5, 2021, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of January 1-7, 2021, were ratified by unanimous vote.

#205091-205277	General	\$1,682,325.73
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Deborah Gaither, Emergency Management Agency Director, provided an update on Covid-19 statistics and vaccinations. She thanked agencies who helped with last Thursday's vaccine event at The Venue, noting the response indicates many more people wish to be vaccinated than preliminary surveys indicated. Ms. Gaither noted manpower issues have slowed the distribution rate and provided local health department contact numbers for making appointments for vaccination.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(1) President Toles announced that no action was necessary regarding a resolution ordering abatement of nuisances on property at 909 Penny Street in District 3, which was tabled for 30 days on December 8, 2020, as the nuisance has been abated by the owner.

(2) A resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 2441 Fairview Road in District 7, which was tabled for 30 days on December 8, 2020, was presented for consideration. Councilman Reed moved to table the resolution an additional 30 days, which motion was seconded by Councilman Cannon and unanimously carried.

NEW BUSINESS

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-02-21

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
SEDGWICK CLAIMS MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC.

(Authorizing Agreement - Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Inc. - Annual fees of \$36,050.00 and \$37,500.00 - Term of 2 years, ending on 12-31-22 - To provide claims administration services for workers compensation)

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

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Mayor Guyton noted the proposed rendering plant referral came from the state and cautioned of those who want to take over and stop the process of consideration. He contrasted the initial opposition of the Honda plant with the current benefits from local supplier businesses.

Councilmen Williams and Worthy joined in expressing concern for the nation and the terrible incident last Wednesday at the Capitol and invited prayers as a new administration begins.

Councilman Worthy cited the council rules of procedure, objecting to the mayor stopping a resolution if requested by council members. A discussion followed regarding statements made by council members regarding the proposed rendering plant and timing of consideration by the council. President Toles warned the members about debate during the time for comments. Councilman Worthy said he had asked for an executive session, and President Toles advised it was not possible due to technical reasons.

Other council members commented on the rendering plant issue. Councilman Back noted the opposition wants the council to vote now but others want review by ADEM, FAA, and Airport Authority to proceed, with the City's vote regarding tax abatement coming later. Councilman Wilson expressed disappointment in the position the council has been put in by presumption and said he is confident they will come together and make the right decision. Councilman Cannon said everyone had agreed to wait until after the ADEM hearing before taking action. Councilman Reed affirmed the strength of the council when it comes together and opposed asking for a resolution in secret. President Toles noted the Coosa Riverkeepers representative expressed concerns about water quality but said nothing about Choice Fabricators' violations. She referred to a 501-c-3 and encouraged learning about the opposition's leaders and following the money. President Toles described efforts by people outside Gadsden and other cities as "trying to run our city" and joined with Councilman Cannon in affirming people's right to run for office.

Councilman Back thanked Deborah Gaither and EMA staff for their work and asked for the public's patience with the vaccination procedure. He reminded residents to not mix leaves with brush because collection involves two types of equipment.

Councilman Wilson congratulated Nick Saban and the University of Alabama football team on winning another national championship.

Councilman Cannon stressed the importance of prayer, including prayers for the council.

Councilman Reed described last week's incident in Washington D.C. as "one of the worst things" and recalled bad incidents that have occurred in other cities.

President Toles extended condolences for recent deaths to the Ragland and DeRamus families and Angie Chambers. She announced changes in next week's garbage collection schedule due to Monday's Martin Luther King holiday.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (1-12-21)
