

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA  
FEBRUARY 23, 2021 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on February 23, 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.

On behalf of the Emergency Management Agency, City Clerk Iva Nelson presented information regarding Severe Weather Awareness Week on February 21-26, and items included in the annual Severe Weather Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday on February 26-28. She also announced local sites administering Covid-19 vaccines.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on February 16, 2021, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of February 12-18, 2021, were ratified by unanimous vote.

#205958-206072	General	\$675,048.62
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PUBLIC HEARINGS

President Toles stated this was the time and place as advertised to conduct a public hearing allowing anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 1901 Nocalula Road, Dennis Wayne Bailey, Gary Hawkins, and Gayla Baker being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made in this case involving trash and debris since procedures began in September 2020, and recommended abatement. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-22-21

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 1901 Nocalula Road - District 7 - Dennis Wayne Bailey; Gary Hawkins; Gayla Baker)

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

NEW BUSINESS

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-23-21

AUTHORIZING TWO-YEAR AGREEMENT  
WITH ACADEMY SPORTS & OUTDOORS

(Authorizing Agreement - Academy Sports & Outdoors - For sponsorship of Parks and Recreation Department, including \$1,200.00 cash per year, gift cards, and coaches packets in return for advertising - Term of 2 years, from 3-21-21 to 3-20-23, with option to extend for additional year)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-24-21

AUTHORIZING APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE  
FOR RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GRANT THROUGH  
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

(Authorizing Grant Application and Acceptance - Recreational Trails Program, through ADECA - \$483,391.00 project, including timber steps from Black Creek Trail to gorge, timber bridge across Cascade Creek, and trail markers, directional arrows, trailhead maps, etc. - Federal 80% share of \$386,712.00 - City 20% share of \$96,679.00)

President Toles 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 Worthy and unanimously adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Jennifer Weathington, Parks & Recreation Department Director, spoke regarding this weekend's youth basketball tournament, the city's teams, and baseball registration. She announced that Moragne Park and mini golf at Nocalula Falls will reopen on March 1 and cemeteries were reopened for grave side and commitment services last week. Ms. Weathington announced upcoming April events, including a fishing tournament, Smoke on the Falls and Art on the Rocks.

PUBLIC

Kirsten Bryant (Deputy Director of GASP, a non-profit group based in Birmingham) said her organization advocates for ensuring air permits are protective of public health and the environment and consistent with legal requirements implemented by ADEM. She contrasted verbal statements made by Pilgrim's Pride with the written application regarding processes to destroy odors and vapors, transport materials, and treat wastewater at the proposed rendering plant. Ms. Bryant pointed out European Union regulations are more stringent than U.S. regulations and expressed concern about the lack of requirements to provide emission data. In response to President Toles' inquiry, Ms. Bryant cited participation in several cities, as well as its relationship with Coosa Riverkeeper; however, limited resources prevent its involvement in projects throughout the state.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilmen joined with Mayor Guyton in criticizing Senator Andrew Jones for proposing a bill to repeal occupational license fees in Gadsden and other local cities without communicating with them. They pointed out that cities are dependent upon this revenue and would be forced to compensate by increasing other tax or fee revenue. It was noted that OLF comprises 23% of Gadsden's budget and comparisons with other cities should include the entire tax structure. Councilman Wilson pointed out other bills proposed by Senator Jones that would have negatively affected Gadsden. Councilman Williams expressed concern about the lack of respect for Gadsden's officials.

Councilman Worthy announced a job fair to be held at The Venue on March 11. He expressed appreciation to Mr. Thrasher for providing equipment and labor to unload a trailer filled with food last Saturday.

Councilman Wilson encouraged everyone to support Boy Scouts, noting donations are spent locally.

Several Council members commented on the proposed rendering plant. Councilman Back thanked Ms. Bryant for the information she presented. Councilman Worthy expressed opposition to the proposed location and encouraged joining forces to help the county with its megasite. He also stated the national guard originally intended to express opposition. Councilman Williams agreed with collaborating for an alternate location.

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

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Iva Nelson, City Clerk (2-23-21)

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