

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
FEBRUARY 7, 2017 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on February 7, 2017, in regular session.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Council President Williams. On roll call by the City Clerk, Iva Nelson, the following council members answered present: Toles, Williams, Worthy, Echols, Billingsley and Reed. Councilman Cannon was absent. The clerk stated a quorum was present and the meeting was open for business. Mayor Guyton, Heath Williamson, Lee Roberts and Chief Jagears were also present.

The invocation was given by President Williams.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on January 31, 2017, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of January 27 - February 2, 2017 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#171240-171387	General	\$1,243,680.86
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(1) The following resolution, which was tabled for 30 days on January 3, was presented in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-27-17

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 1513 Fillmore Avenue - District 5 - Benjamin H. Covington; Rebecca E. Mewbourn)

Upon recommendation of the Building Official, Councilman Billingsley moved to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Councilman Worthy and unanimously adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

(1) Councilwoman Toles introduced the following resolution in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-28-17

AUTHORIZING ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL EVENT
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE LICENSE

(Northeast Alabama Kidney Association, Inc. a/k/a 20 K Giveaway - Special Event Alcoholic Beverage License - For event at Convention Hall, 344 South 1st Street, on March 3, 2017)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-29-17

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

(Authorizing Agreement - Alabama Department of Transportation - For survey and audit of existing fiber network for traffic signals along U.S. Highway 431 within Gadsden city limits - Estimated cost of \$39,334.45)

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

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Mayor Guyton introduced Ray Wetzel, new Curator of the Gadsden Museum of Art. Mr. Wetzel announced "Night of Jazz," Saturday night's fund-raising event for the museum and acknowledged the sponsors. He said new exhibits on every floor will open on March 1, in conjunction with First Friday.

Captain Wayne Keener provided an update on the Police Department's joint venture with Etowah County during the month of February, stating target areas throughout the city were based upon complaints from citizens regarding criminal activity. Councilman Worthy responded to rumors that only certain parts of town are being targeted and said misinformation should not be spread. At his request, Captain Keener explained the process to follow for anyone who wishes to make a civil rights complaint.

PUBLIC

Joseph Cole said there have been many complaints and protests concerning Gadsden's current municipal judge and he had planned to file a complaint with the Judicial Inquiry Commission, but delayed due to being advised of litigation in Federal court. He said he is prepared to proceed with a complaint if the Council does not submit names to the Mayor for designation of presiding and assistant judges at its conclusion, if the Mayor doesn't take action, or if the litigation lingers. Mr. Cole referred to receiving many calls after the county-wide task force efforts began and expressed support for Chief Jaggears and the department. He said he would file complaints if individual officers act improperly. (At the expiration of his allotted time, Mr. Cole asked to continue. President Williams advised him to make his conclusion in order to follow the rules of procedure.)

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Several Council members expressed support for the law enforcement effort, with Toles, Echols and Reed stating residents are tired of criminal activity in their neighborhoods. Councilman Reed praised the police chief for a progressive department. President Williams said the vast majority of residents support it and commended Mayor Guyton for his role. He agreed with Mr. Cole’s statements that “Black History Month” continues throughout the year. President Williams cited race as the greatest predictor of judicial outcomes and pointed out all judges in Alabama are elected. Mayor Guyton encouraged the public to report drug activity.

Councilwoman Toles reminded everyone that the Center for Cultural Arts and the Gadsden Museum of Art are two different entities.

Councilman Worthy thanked everyone for expressions of sympathy at the death of his grandmother. He expressed appreciation to citizens who helped with community surveys to place speed humps on Henry Street. At his request, City Engineer Heath Williamson gave an update on speed humps for 6th Street.

Councilman Worthy recognized Joseph Cole to conclude his remarks and received no objections. Mr. Cole advised the Mayor a member of his staff was upset by his previous request to raise the entry pay for police officers but declined to identify the person at this time.

Councilman Billingsley announced a District 5 meeting at 5 p.m. next Monday at the Gadsden Public Library. He encouraged support for the Gadsden City High School girls basketball team as they compete today.

President Williams advised Mr. Cole he always apologizes but tries to manage the rules of procedure. He added that he encourages people to address the Council, although it is an accommodation rather than a right, and stressed the importance of orderly meetings. President Williams applauded those who present their issues in a respectful manner.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (2-7-2017)
