

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
JANUARY 24, 2023 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on January 24, 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 joined the meeting after it was in progress. Heath Williamson, Lee Roberts and Chief Jaggears were also present.

The invocation was given by Councilman Smith.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on January 17, 2023, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of January 13-19 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#221515-221625	General	\$655,946.11
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(1) A resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 611 Polk Street in District 2, which was tabled for 30 days on December 20, 2022, was presented for consideration. Councilman Smith said he had reviewed the property and referred to an upcoming district meeting. He moved to table the resolution an additional 30 days, which motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson and unanimously carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

President Back stated this was the time and place as advertised to conduct the following public hearings:

(1) The floor was opened to allow anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 1019 Gardner Street in District 3, Janice Butler being the last known owner. Janice Butler requested additional time and said she has spoken with a contractor. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made since procedures began in February 2022, and recommended abatement. He explained the house is a non-conforming use in a business zone and if repairs are made it must have a business use. Councilman Avery moved to table the resolution for 30 days, which motion was seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried.

(Mayor Ford joined the meeting at this time.)

(2) The floor was opened to allow anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 2323 Forrest Avenue in District 6, Michael J. Head being the last known owner. Michael Head requested additional time to complete another project and start on repairs. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated although a permit was obtained in March 2022, no improvements have been made since procedures began in February 2022, and recommended abatement. Councilwoman Minatra asked Mr. Head to get the exterior cleaned up and moved to table the resolution for 30 days. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson and unanimously carried.

(3) The floor was opened to allow anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 2325 Forrest Avenue in District 6, Michael J. Head being the last known owner. Mr. Head requested additional time and said he feels the house is salvageable. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated although a permit was obtained in March 2022, no improvements have been made since procedures began in February 2022, and recommended abatement. Councilwoman Minatra noted this house is in worse condition than the previous case. She moved to table the resolution for 30 days, which motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson and unanimously carried.

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION:

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-17-23

AWARDING BID NO. 3492

(Awarding Bid No. 3492 - Approximately 1,000 All Hazards Certified NOAA Weather Radios - Midland Radio Corporation - \$26.15 each)

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-18-23

SELECTING COUNCIL MEMBER
FOR PLANNING COMMISSION

(Selecting Chris Robinson to serve as ex-officio member of Planning Commission - For term ending on 11-2-26)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-19-23

AUTHORIZING REVENUE ENHANCEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH AVENU INSIGHTS & ANALYTICS, LLC

(Authorizing Agreements - AVENU Insights & Analytics, LLC - (1) Business License Discovery/Recovery Services - 50% of revenue; (2) Lodging Taxes - 1.95% of gross revenues collected; (3) Rental Taxes - 1.95% of gross revenues collected; (4) Sales & Use Taxes - \$2.92 per account per transaction or 1.95% of gross revenues collected, whichever is lower - Term of 3 years, beginning March 1, 2023, through February 28, 2026)

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

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Mayor Ford reported on the comprehensive planning process kickoff this week; funding applications submitted by directors to the legislative delegation; close of applications for Finance Director; retirement of Deborah Gaither, EMA Director and the department's return to city hall; upcoming trip to Washington, DC to meet with senators and congressmen; contacts from potential industrial prospects; positivity about today's and future executive sessions as a sign of good things happening for Gadsden; thanked staff and department heads; work on city logo and its presentation soon.

Mayor Ford read a commendation for Chatmon and Margie Sturdivant, Calvin Hutchinson, and Zach Dupree for their volunteer efforts with Hughley Park for over 25 years. He presented a commendation to Ruth Moffatt, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, for her response to Governor Ivey's request to assist Selma with a disaster plan and setting up a Volunteer Response Center after tornado damage on January 12. President Back joined the Mayor in praising Ms. Moffatt.

Council members joined in thanking Mayor Ford and department heads for their work and expressed excitement to work with their fellow council members and to see great things happen in Gadsden. Councilman Robinson conveyed positive feelings as improvement plans are being developed for Nocalula Falls and joined with Councilwoman Latham in complimenting today's meeting.

Councilman Smith asked for continued prayers for south Alabama and thanked Ruth Moffatt for her help in getting his church set up as a disaster center, should the need arise. He announced District 2 meetings tonight at the East Gadsden Community Center and Wednesday at Thompson Community Center.

Councilman Avery recognized Greater Gadsden Housing Authority staff and the programs they provide to their residents. He reported great attendance at last week's District 3 meeting and noted plans for another meeting in February, as well as upcoming forum and clean-up events. Councilman Avery reiterated praise for the MLK Program and Carver Square renaming ceremony. He thanked Mr. Dudley for his Monday morning sports show.

Councilwoman Minatra thanked Court Barber for his work with the Ritz Theater and Theater of Gadsden. She cited state-wide awards achieved by the Theater of Gadsden. President Back agreed and commended our local talented people.

President Back thanked Dre' Kirkpatrick and Dr. Cheryl Sington for their partnership between 21 Kids Foundation and last Friday's benefit event for Gadsden State Community College's Education Opportunity Center. He commended the efforts of local citizens Dr. Teresa Rhea, Dr. Martha Lavender and Tina Gregerson and others who are seeking to locate a Challenger Center in Gadsden, which would be the first in the state. President Back thanked citizens for their patience with today's first executive session experienced by new council members.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (1-24-2023)
