

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
FEBRUARY 8, 2022 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on February 8, 2022, 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 Heath Williamson.

Deborah Gaither (Emergency Management Agency Director) reported Covid-19 cases are decreasing; however Etowah County is still in the high transmission rate category. She reminded the public that hospital emergency rooms are not testing and vaccination sites.

Chief Reed reported no staff members are currently out due to Covid and Persons Under Investigation are averaging one per day. President Toles complimented her former student, Payton Horton, who is a new fireman.

The minutes of the Public Works Committee, Work Session, and Council meetings held on February 1, 2022, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of January 28-February 3 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#213580-213734	General	\$1,540,457.11
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President Toles announced that no action was necessary on a resolution regarding 822 N. 34th Street in District 7, as the nuisance has been abated by the owner.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

President Toles 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 1218 Windsor Street, John F. Hashbarger a.k.a. John F. Hasbarger and Carolyn A. Hashbarger a.k.a. Carolyn A. Hasbarger, Chris Griffith, Esq., Guardian Ad Litem, subject to a mortgage in favor of ALFA Financial Corporation being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made since procedures began in March 2021, and recommended abatement. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-61-22

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 1218 Windsor Street - District 1 - John F. Hashbarger, a.k.a. John F. Hasbarger; Carolyn A. Hashbarger, a.k.a Carolyn A. Hasbarger; Chris Griffith, Esq., Guardian Ad Litem; Subject to a mortgage in favor of ALFA Financial Corporation)

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

(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 209 Nuckolls Court (county records list property address as Nuckolls Street), the State of Alabama, possible redemption rights of Clifford Barfield and the heirs of Virginia L. Barfield being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made since procedures began in April 2021, and recommended abatement. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-62-22

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 209 Nuckolls Court (county records list property address as Nuckolls Street) - District 2 - State of Alabama; Possible redemption rights of Clifford Barfield and heirs of Virginia L. Barfield, potential heirs listed as Clifford E. Barfield, husband and Bobby Dale Barfield, son)

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

(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 1523 Gadsden Avenue, Monroe Bud Cameron being the last known owner. Mr. Cameron spoke, relating his health issues and asking for more time. He said his friends will help him make repairs. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated this case, which began in January 2021, relates to a mobile home, tent, and debris. He referred to a previous case in 2013 and recommended abatement, since no improvements have been made. A discussion followed and Mr. Cameron said he is currently living on the property, although there is no power. Councilman Wilson expressed concern about the living conditions and Councilman Worthy advised he will try to obtain assistance for Mr. Cameron. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-63-22

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 1523 Gadsden Avenue - District 3 - Monroe Bud Cameron)

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

ORDINANCE - FIRST READING

The following ordinance was introduced in writing and read by President Toles:

ORDINANCE - AMENDING SECTION 6-45 OF THE CITY CODE REGARDING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Since no action was taken in this meeting, the ordinance will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting for consideration.

NEW BUSINESS

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-64-22

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH THOMAS M. MCELRATH

(Authorizing Agreement - Thomas M. McElrath - \$285,000.00 - For architectural and engineering services - To construct new Senior Wellness Center at 2829 West Meighan Boulevard in District 6)

Councilman Cannon said this will be a replacement facility for the Elliott Community Center building (formerly Elliott Elementary School), which is in poor condition. The center's plan, which is being funded by American Rescue Plan Act funds, will focus on the health and well-being of seniors. Proposed amenities include large activity/banquet room, kitchen/dining area, courtyard/outdoor dining, classroom/exam rooms, recreation rooms, Council on Aging offices, senior community garden, pickle ball courts, and outdoor walking area.

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.

PUBLIC

Robert Hunter said it's his understanding that 18-19 police officer positions are vacant and asked if a portion of budgeted funds could be reappropriated for a youth services department. He offered to volunteer his services and suggested utilizing two paid interns. Councilman Wilson asked Mr. Hunter if his organization had applied to United Way for American Rescue Plan funds appropriated by the City. Mr. Hunter said he will follow up on the question.

Joseph Cole referred to Black History Month and complimented Mayor Guyton, Councilman Williams, and President Toles, citing their personal actions and accomplishments. He asked the City to designate Juneteenth as a holiday. Mr. Cole expressed concern over vacancies in the police force and suggested offering \$5,000 "signing bonuses." He also suggested formation of a committee to discuss strategies and stated the need to address the pay scale for firemen. Mr. Cole noted he is meeting today with the Parks and Recreation Director regarding facilities. Councilman Worthy advised the Finance Committee will meet to discuss the Juneteenth holiday.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilman Williams thanked The Gadsden Times for highlighting the library’s programs planned for Black History Month and encouraged the public to participate. He commended the work of City Engineer Heath Williamson in coordinating many City projects, as well as Building Official Brian Harbison for protecting the City’s interest in the housing stock and his willingness to help citizens.

Councilman Worthy agreed with the need to increase fire department pay and referred to the loss of police officers as a safety issue.

Councilman Cannon thanked the Council for supporting the new Senior Wellness Center project, as well as the Banks Park Fire Station, which is now under construction.

Councilman Reed referred to negative newspaper articles concerning the airport and cited many improvements in recent years, including runway and taxiway repairs, lighting, Airport Road improvements, partnership with military installations and the ILS (Instrument Landing System). He also commended the former airport director and invited those who complain to work for the betterment of the airport by volunteering their services or running for office.

President Toles announced tax assistance offered by RSVP at various sites. She issued a challenge to Councilman Worthy, noting the Carver Museum is “sitting idle” and interested people are needed to make it vital and active to be shared with the public.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (2-8-22)

FOURTH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM - BID OPENING
FEBRUARY 8, 2022 - 2:00 P.M.

The City Clerk received bid proposals as advertised for the following bid:

Bid No. 3468 - Noccalula Falls Train Track Electrical Upgrades

A&S Electrical, Inc.	\$147,500.00
Littleton Electric	\$156,000.00

Copies of the bids will be forwarded to the City Engineer, and a recommendation will be made to the Council.
