

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
APRIL 12, 2022 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on April 12, 2022, in regular session.

Due to the length of the work session, the meeting was called to order at approximately 11:20 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. Heath Williamson, Lee Roberts and Chief Jaggars were also present.

The invocation was given by Brian Harbison.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on April 5, 2022, were approved by unanimous vote.

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

#214892-215099	General	\$883,662.17
#215100-215278	OLF Refunds	\$274,641.37

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(1) The following ordinance, which was introduced for first reading at last week's meeting, was presented for consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. O-04-22

ADOPTING THE 2022 FISCAL YEAR COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

(Adopting FY2022 CDBG Budget and Annual Action Plan - Estimated amount of \$1,067,570.00 - For program year beginning June 1, 2022, and ending May 31, 2023)

Councilman Worthy moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilman Cannon and unanimously adopted.

(2) The following ordinance, which was introduced for first reading at last week's meeting, was presented for consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. O-05-22

AMENDING FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET

(Amending FY2022 Budget - Reflecting receipt of \$48,960.00 from Alabama State Library - For reimbursement to Gadsden Public Library to purchase 32 desktop computers)

Councilman Cannon moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilman Back and unanimously adopted.

(3) The following ordinance, which was introduced for first reading at last week's meeting, was presented for consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. O-06-22

AUTHORIZING TIF FUNDS FOR EXPENDITURES
RELATED TO THE EXPANSION OF THE VENUE

(Authorizing expenditure of Tax Increment Financing Funds - \$4,000.00 - Funding agreement with EE Group, Inc. - For electrical engineering services relating to electrical service for two unoccupied spaces at The Venue - Note: R-113-22 authorized agreement with EE Group, Inc.)

Councilman Reed moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilman Cannon and unanimously adopted.

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 711 Abercrombie Street (county records list as 715 Abercrombie Street), Hattie Griffin and Bobbie J. Davis, Hattie Griffin (DEC) and B J Davis c/o Bobbie J. Davis being the last known owners. Bobbie Davis said Mr. Harbison had advised it would take some time for the City to demolish the structure, and she plans to demolish it. Councilman Worthy advised the City could order the abatement and demolish the structure and they would be allowed to make payments. Ms. Davis's niece, Nikita Hudson, was present and said she wants her aunt to know all her options before making a decision. Councilman Worthy advised Ms. Hudson they could speak after the meeting. Councilman Wilson explained the process and advised the City would not know the cost up front, Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated the case began in June 2021, and a demolition permit was obtained in October 2021. He recommended abatement. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-117-22

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance -711 Abercrombie Street (county records list address as 715 Abercrombie Street) - District 3 - Hattie Griffin and Bobbie J. Davis; Hattie Griffin (DEC) and B J Davis, c/o Bobbie J. Davis)

Councilman Worthy moved to adopt the resolution as introduced, which motion was seconded by Councilman Cannon 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 1317 Cansler Avenue, Cindy Driscoll, redemption rights of William Nelson, and 2019 Castle, LLC being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made since procedures began in May 2021, and recommended abatement. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-118-22

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 1317 Cansler Avenue - District 3 - Cindy Driscoll, redemption rights of William Nelson, 2019 Castle, LLC)

Councilman Worthy apologized to the community for the delay in abating this nuisance. He then moved to adopt the resolution as introduced, which motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson 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 1122 Wells Avenue in District 3, Betty Britton (Deceased), the Estate of Betty Britton, Jeffery Britton being the last known owners. Betty Britton appeared, stating she is not deceased and wishes to complete the minor repairs needed. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated this case began in June 2021, pursuant to the rental inspection process and a complaint from a neighbor. He expressed willingness to work with the owner on interior work after the exterior is finished. Councilman Worthy moved to table the resolution for 30 days, which motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson and unanimously carried.

(4) The floor was opened to allow anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 918 Newton Street, Gina Lubin being the last known owner. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made since procedures began in June 2021, and recommended abatement. He said the case began pursuant to a rental inspection and the house is a good candidate for rehabilitation. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-119-22

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 918 Newton Street - District 5 - Gina Lubin)

Councilman Wilson encouraged rehabilitation and moved to adopt the resolution as introduced. The motion was seconded by Councilman Back and unanimously adopted.

(5) The floor was opened to allow anyone to speak for or in opposition to a resolution ordering the abatement of nuisances on property at 2808 Railroad Avenue, Nichole Jackson Clark and Genell Williams, c/o Nichole Jackson Clark, being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made to this burned house since procedures began in October 2021, and recommended abatement. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-120-22

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 2808 Railroad Avenue - District 6 - Nichole Jackson Clark; Genell Williams, c/o Nichole Jackson Clark)

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

RESOLUTION PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-121-22

AUTHORIZING EXPENDITURE OF CORONAVIRUS
STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS

(Authorizing Expenditure of American Rescue Plan funds - \$50,000.00 - The Salvation Army - For meal assistance or other services in response to negative economic impacts of Covid-19)

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

PUBLIC

Joseph Cole presented several criticisms, including: (1) only one councilmember attended a recent meeting regarding crime and violence; (2) delays in repairing the 6th Street pool; (3) a leak recently discovered at the newly opened East Gadsden Community Center; (4) lack of response from mayor's office; (5) failure to declare Juneteenth a city holiday; (6) failure to give firemen more pay. Mr. Cole said one councilman could make a motion for the Juneteenth holiday, and it appears the council doesn't care about the Black population (approximately 40%).

COUNCIL REMARKS

All councilmen responded to Mr. Cole, expressing support for the Juneteenth holiday. Councilman Wilson said he had deferred action to the committee discussing the matter, and Councilman Worthy explained according to council rules, councilmembers request the legal department to draft resolutions, rather than introducing them from the floor. Councilman Back pointed out the council's responsibility to study the cost. Councilman Williams explained the finance committee's upcoming meeting to discuss the timing of implementation.

Councilman Cannon stated all employees need more pay and suggested an additional \$2 per hour. Councilman Williams explained work is underway and compiling analysis data takes time.

Councilmen Back and Wilson explained meetings to discuss neighborhood issues are sometimes attended by the single member and they were not specifically asked to attend the meeting in question. Councilman Worthy noted the meeting was organized by Mr. Cole. He urged intentional efforts to mentor youth and adults.

Councilman Worthy agreed the 6th Street Pool should have been repaired earlier. Low cost repairs were initially tried and the city engineer is currently working on repairs.

Councilman Back took exception to Mr. Cole's comments regarding race and expressed confidence that the leak at East Gadsden Community Center is being addressed.

President Toles announced changes in the garbage route due to the upcoming Good Friday holiday. She announced New Destiny Church is sponsoring a gasoline giveaway on Saturday and Gadsden Memorial Funeral Home is hosting an egg hunt. President Toles recognized a Job Corps student who was present. She said Mr. Cole comes all the way from Atlanta to tell Gadsden officials what to do, when they are aware of the process involving the East Gadsden Community Center and 6th Street pool. President Toles pointed out violent crime affects all cities and is always present, and councilmembers work for the betterment of black and white citizens.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (4-12-22)
