

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
JUNE 6, 2023 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on June 6, 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, Heath Williamson, Lee Roberts and Chief Jaggears were also present.

The invocation was given by Heath Williamson.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on May 30, 2023, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of May 26 - June 1 were ratified by unanimous vote.

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| #224779-224879 | General | \$572,240.88 |
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RESOLUTION PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

A resolution expressing intent to financially support the Challenger Center of Northeast Alabama, with certain conditions, was presented for consideration. Councilman Wilson expressed excitement for the project but concern that mistakes would be made. He reiterated his communications with the Department of Commerce, noting the 10% required local match is unprecedented. President Back said the council must carefully consider all its financial commitments and joined with Councilman Smith in expressing support for the proposed center. Councilman Wilson moved to table the resolution indefinitely, which motion was seconded by Councilman Smith and unanimously carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

At the request of Councilman Avery, Rod Scott (City Planner) provided an update on the Land Bank and property transactions. He said a study is underway to determine the future plan of action. Mayor Ford noted the geographic information system employee had left, and work is need on mapping and the website. Mr. Scott noted the expense involved with quiet title proceedings and the sale price of properties should be carefully examined. A discussion followed and a goal of creating more new homes was identified.

President Back recognized Jordan Mills (departing member of Senator Tuberville's staff) and introduced his replacement, Mike Raita. Mr. Mills was thanked for his assistance to the city in obtaining over \$6 million in grants.

President Back reminded everyone of the public's right to attend and observe council meetings, and reiterated the rules for addressing the council, which is not intended to be an interactive discussion or question and answer format.

PUBLIC

Larry Suttles presented photos and information regarding locations with poor street conditions, drainage issues, especially 11th Street and Forrest Avenue, and overgrown grass. President Back encouraged Mr. Suttles to meet with the administration and Mayor Ford encouraged citizens to report addresses with overgrown conditions to the building department.

Joseph Cole thanked the Council for supporting the upcoming Juneteenth event and inquired about appropriations for various drainage improvements in District 3. He cited the locations and amounts and said local citizens want to know when work will begin on the projects. President Back encouraged Mr. Cole to meet with the city engineer and noted many factors affect the timing of projects.

Lishala Carter related her children's interest in recycling, which began during the pandemic, and said the city's recycling center should be open after school. She pointed out information on the website is inaccurate and asked why plastic is not accepted. Mr. Carter made suggestions to promote recycling and to make it more convenient for residents.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Mayor Ford noted recycling center hours have been extended to 5 p.m. and pointed out the items accepted depend upon having a buyer for them. He added that trailers for cardboard collection are placed throughout the city. Mayor Ford reported on endeavors underway, including a personnel study, review of the sign ordinance, and the micro enterprise program. He advised encouraged Mr. Cole to meet with Mr. Williamson. The Mayor expressed frustration with the speed of government and his desire to solve problems for all citizens, noting a shortage of available engineering firms is making it difficult to complete ARP projects. He and Councilman Smith thanked Pastor Simmons purchase of a building on Hoke Street and his work to serve the needs of the community.

Councilwoman Latham and Councilman Smith joined in thanking citizens for their interest and concern and making encouraging remarks to the Mayor and city employees.

Councilman Avery announced a District 3 clean-up event in North Gadsden on June 25 and encouraged volunteers. He made encouraging remarks to Team Jeremiah, who is battling cancer. Councilman Avery announced Carver Community Revitalization Committee's Juneteenth event on June 17. He thanked citizens for presenting their concerns for District 3 and affirmed his desire to invest in his community, both through city and citizens' efforts. Councilman Avery thanked the Mayor and his administration for their work and those who have been present in his district. He announced District 3 meetings will be changed to the third Tuesday of each month and requested representatives from the administration to attend.

Councilman Wilson pointed out today is the 79th anniversary of D Day and praised all veterans. He noted it has taken five years for the S. 11th Street improvements to be under construction. He referred to overgrown lots, stating a contract was completed only three weeks ago and work will be coming.

Councilwoman Minatra announced tonight's District 6 meeting at 6 p.m. at the Alabama City Library.

Councilman Robinson assured the public the city is working to address litter and trash problems.

President Back announced today's special called meeting at 1:30 p.m. to conduct public hearings concerning nuisance cases.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (6-6-23)

FOURTH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM - BID OPENING
JUNE 7, 2023 - 10:00 A.M.

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

Bid No. 3516 - 2023 or Current Production Year Chevrolet Tahoe 2WD LT

Donohoo Chevrolet LLC \$61,306.50

Copies of the bids will be forwarded to the Fleet Manager and the Assistant Purchasing Agent, and a recommendation will be made to the Council.
