

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
JUNE 27, 2023 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on June 27, 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, Avery, Back, Wilson, Minatra and Robinson. Councilman Smith was absent. 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 June 20, 2023, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of June 16-22 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#225178-225241	General	\$823,499.61
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Mayor Ford congratulated Craig Scott, Library Director, who was recently elected President of the Alabama Library Association.

The Mayor presented commendations to Officer Tim Humphries (Gadsden Police Department) and Sgt. Richard Roberts (Rainbow City Police Department), who took action to prevent an intruder from entering Walnut Park Elementary School on June 9, 2022, where two summer camps were being held. Mayor Ford joined with Jody Willoughby (District Attorney), President Back, and Councilman Wilson in commending these and all law enforcement officers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(1) The following ordinance, which was introduced for first reading at last week's meeting, was presented for consideration. Councilwoman Latham moved to amend the ordinance to change "ESTB" to "EST." in the description of the border. The motion was seconded by Councilman Wilson and unanimously carried.

ORDINANCE NO. O-37-23

AMENDING CITY CODE SECTION 2-2

(Amending City Code - Describing new City Seal, including replicas of Coosa River Memorial Bridge, Coosa River flowing through Gadsden, Nocalula Falls flowing from the mountain, and downtown building skyline along Broad Street - Providing for official logo for use as identifiable brand, with minor refreshes or updates to be executed by the Mayor and substantive changes to be approved by the City Council - Providing for official City flag, consisting of white bar in the center with City Seal and a border on either side in red)

Councilman Wilson referred to comments about the seal looking “flat” and clarified its use is for embossing or stamping on documents. He moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilman Robinson and unanimously adopted.

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-393-23

AWARDING BID NO. 3516

(Awarding Bid No. 3516 - 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe LT for Municipal Court - Donohoo Chevrolet, LLC - \$61,306.50)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-394-23

AUTHORIZING PURCHASE OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT
FOR THE GADSDEN SPORTS PARK

(Authorizing Purchase - Playground equipment for Gadsden Sports Park - Pursuant to National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance Contract, State of Alabama Omnia Partners Public Sector - GameTime, c/o Struthers Recreation, LLC - \$299,501.74)

Councilman Wilson noted the playground will accommodate children who are physically challenged. He moved to adopt the resolution as introduced, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Latham and unanimously adopted.

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-395-23

APPOINTING AND REAPPOINTING MEMBERS
TO GADSDEN AIRPORT AUTHORITY

(Reappointing Billy Billingsley for term expiring 7-31-29 - Appointing Steve Reagan to replace Robert Turk for term expiring 7-31-29)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-396-23

APPOINTING AND REAPPOINTING MEMBERS TO
HARALSON AVENUE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

(Appointing Michelle Adams to replace Tim Lett for term expiring 9-15-25 - Reappointing Kathy Milam and Kristen Phillips for terms expiring 9-15-25)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-397-23

AUTHORIZING AMENDMENT TO AGREEMENT
WITH EEFS COMPANY, P.C.

(Amending Agreement - EEFS Company, P.C. - \$39,500.00 - To update current bridge plans to conform to ALDOT standards, including ADA sidewalk improvements and LED lighting - Relating to improvements for Coosa River Memorial Bridge - Note: Original agreement authorized by Resolution No. R-370-19)

Councilwoman Latham 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 Back:

ORDINANCE - AMENDING CITY CODE SECTION 90-92 - BEGGING OR SOLICITING ALMS

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 Wilson introduced the following ordinance in writing for consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. O-38-23

AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PROPERTY

(Authorizing Conveyance of Property - Gunn-Bellenger House - 872 Chestnut Street - Accepting \$240,000.00 offer from Sandpiper, LLC)

Councilman Wilson moved to suspend the rules to immediately consider the ordinance as an item of new business. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Minatra and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Latham, Avery, Back, Wilson, Minatra, Robinson

NAYS: None

Councilman Wilson moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Minatra and unanimously adopted.

(2) Councilman Wilson introduced the following ordinance in writing for consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. O-39-23

AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PROPERTY

(Authorizing Conveyance of Property - Building T-4, portion of Houston Street and portion of Pike Avenue at Air Depot - Accepting offer of \$400,000.00 from Dairyman's Supply Company)

Councilman Wilson moved to suspend the rules to immediately consider the ordinance as an item of new business. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Minatra and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Latham, Avery, Back, Wilson, Minatra, Robinson

NAYS: None

Councilman Wilson moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Minatra and unanimously adopted.

(3) Councilman Wilson introduced the following resolution in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-398-23

AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT
FROM ALABAMA TOURISM DEPARTMENT

(Authorizing Grant Acceptance - Alabama Tourism Department - \$10,400.00 - To assist with expenses involved with Coosa Landing Super Bass Tournament, Memorial Day Bash, Summer Concerts, Independence Day Fireworks, and Mistletoe Market)

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

(4) Councilman Wilson introduced the following ordinance in writing for consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. O-40-23

AMENDING FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET

(Amending FY2023 Budget - Reflecting receipt of Alabama Tourism Department Grant approved by R-398-23 - Appropriating \$10,400.00 to Special Events, including Coosa Landing Super Bass Tournament, Memorial Day Bash, Summer Concerts, Independence Day Fireworks, and Mistletoe Market)

Councilman Wilson moved to suspend the rules to immediately consider the ordinance as an item of new business. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Minatra and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Latham, Avery, Back, Wilson, Minatra, Robinson

NAYS: None

Councilman Wilson moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Minatra and unanimously adopted.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Howell Mathews (Public Works Director) announced receipt of an Alabama Department of Environmental Management Recycling Grant in the amount of \$73,373, which will be used for a forklift, rolling gates, and improvements at the transfer station.

Fire Chief Wil Reed announced a partnership with Workforce Development that will pay tuition for firefighters to attend paramedic school and recruit school. He also announced receipt of a \$6,000 grant from the Etowah County Community Development Committee for purchase of mattresses for fire stations. Chief Reed also announced a \$337,000 grant was received for replacement of air packs for the department.

Mayor Ford commended Mr. Mathews and Chief Reed for their initiative in applying for these grants. He noted the Mayor's discretionary funds have been used for matching funds and to assist with departmental needs.

Derek Mummert (Emergency Management Agency) spoke about the potential of extreme heat advisories and provided information regarding precautions. He announced the location of cooling centers that will be open, beginning Thursday, noting the information will be posted on social media.

Sgt. Jacob Entrekin provided an update on the new task force on street-level crimes. He noted 214 arrests were made from June 1-26, with 35 of those being individuals documented as homeless. He described the crimes involved, including drug and gun related offenses, trespass, arson, and auto theft, and others. Mayor Ford said these individuals are committing crimes and are not the homeless in need of help. He said our resources are being overwhelmed by other cities sending homeless individuals here, such as Rome, GA

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Mayor Ford, President Back, and Councilman Wilson congratulated Mayor Joe Taylor for Rainbow City being selected to host the Challenger Center.

The Council joined in congratulating Craig Scott, as well as the police officers recognized today. They expressed appreciation for the work of all officers, and Councilwoman Minatra thanked the new task force for its impact on Walnut Park and the Mill Village.

Councilwoman Latham and Councilman Robinson joined in thanking Superintendent Reddick, Dr. Maness, and school principals for the information provided in today's committee meeting. Councilwoman Latham expressed her desire to lend assistance in meeting educational needs.

Councilman Wilson advised he is working to find a solution to performance driving issues in his district. Councilman Avery noted the same problems occur on Tuscaloosa Avenue every weekend.

Councilman Avery thanked everyone who participated in last weekend's District 3 cleanup event in North Gadsden. He announced upcoming events, including: cleanup event on July 23 in the Valley Street area; community meeting on July 9; District 3 meeting on July 18; Parent Symposium at The Venue on August 12. Councilman Avery commended WMGJ for the recent Juneteenth banquet.

Councilman Avery referred to recent television interviews regarding the 6th Street pool, stating he didn't invite the participants but was called to provide feedback. He agreed with the city engineer's assessment of repairs needed to reopen the pool, stressed its importance, and expressed hope that the Mayor would be open to discussion. Mayor Ford said the city had managed the pool and contracted with the YMCA for lifeguards. He said it is not feasible to reopen the pool, due to repair estimates of \$800,000 to \$1 million and a shortage of lifeguards. He added it is not in the city's best interest to construct a pool and cited potential replacement with green space, basketball courts, or a splash pad. Mayor Ford requested the Finance Chairman to address the issue in a committee meeting and render a report. He also expressed willingness to talk and to do the right thing.

Councilwoman Latham stated she is choosing to believe that city officials are stronger together and can have constructive discussions, and she believes the best is yet to come. She thanked citizens who bring their concerns and are willing to offer assistance.

Mayor Ford announced the fireworks display at 9 p.m. on July 4, noting the Memorial Bridge will be closed at 6 p.m. to provide viewing. He referred to recent removal of playground equipment, noting it was the Board of Education's action as the property owner.

President Back announced that next week's council meeting will be held on July 5, due to the July 4 holiday, and also announced changes in the garbage collection schedule. He commended the Mayor's initiative in recent sales of city property. He described Ultra Safe Nuclear's announcement of locating in Gadsden as a "game changer" and commended the Mayor and Industrial Development Authority Director David Hooks.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (6-27-23)
