

COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
JULY 18, 2023 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on July 18, 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, Back, Minatra and Robinson. Councilman Avery was absent and Councilman Wilson joined the meeting shortly after it began. The clerk stated a quorum was present and the meeting was open for business. Mayor Ford, Heath Williamson, Lee Roberts and Chief Jaggars were also present.

The invocation was given by Heath Williamson.

The minutes of the work session and regular and special council meetings held on July 11, 2023, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of July 7-13 were ratified by unanimous vote.

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| #225631-225825 | General | \$1,608,220.05 |
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

ORDINANCE NO. O-43-23

AMENDING FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET

(Amending FY2023 Budget - Reflecting receipt of Etowah County Community Development Committee Grants - \$2,000 each from Districts 28, 29, and 30 - For purchase of new mattresses for city fire stations)

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

(Councilman Wilson joined the meeting at this time.)

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

ORDINANCE NO. O-44-23

AMENDING FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET

(Amending FY2023 Budget - Reflecting receipt of FY2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant - \$337,090.90, with city's 10% match of \$33,709.10 - For purchase of forty (40) 2018 edition self-contained breathing apparatus packs)

Councilman Smith moved to adopt the ordinance, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Latham 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-45-23

AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PROPERTY

(Authorizing Conveyance of Property - 741 Forrest Avenue - Lots 1-4, Block 2, Standifer Addition - Accepting \$100,000.00 offer from Highlands Bound, LLC - Note: Former Sears building)

Mayor Ford noted this building has been vacant for a long time and local citizens wish to pursue a mixed use development, including townhouse apartments.

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

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION:

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-435-23

AWARDING BID NO. 3500

(Awarding Bid No. 3500 - Janitorial Services for Cabin Rentals at Noccalula Falls Campground - Alabama Rent-A-Maid and Janitorial Services - \$160.00 per cleaning)

Councilman Robinson 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-436-23

APPOINTING MEMBERS TO HUMANE SOCIETY
RESCUE AND ADOPTION CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Appointing J.T. Harrell and John Moore for terms expiring at the end of 2026)

Councilman Smith moved to adopt the resolution as introduced, which motion was seconded by Councilwoman Latham and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Latham, Smith, Back, Minatra, Robinson

ABSTENTION: Wilson

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-437-23

AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF
ALABAMA POWER SHORELINE PERMIT

(Authorizing Alabama Power Shoreline Permit - For construction and operation of new fueling station at Coosa Landing - \$100.00 per year)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-438-23

AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF
ALABAMA POWER SHORELINE PERMIT

(Authorizing Alabama Power Shoreline Permit - For construction and operation of irrigation withdrawal intake structure - For irrigation at Gadsden Sports Park on Gadsden State Community College campus)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-439-23

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
WAGGONER ENGINEERING

(Authorizing Agreement - Waggoner Engineering - \$220,085.00 - Engineering design, permitting, and construction documents - For Lakewood Drive street improvements, from Highway 411 to the intersection of Alpine View and Sunnydale Avenue)

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

NEW BUSINESS

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-440-23

AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF FAA
AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

(Authorizing acceptance of grant - Federal Aviation Administration - New Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Airport Infrastructure Grant - \$376,744.00 - For Runway 6/24 Pavement Failure Reconstruction at Northeast Alabama Regional Airport)

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 Latham and unanimously adopted.

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-441-23

AUTHORIZING ACCEPTANCE OF FAA
AIRPORT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT

(Authorizing acceptance of grant - Federal Aviation Administration - Airport Improvement Program Grant - \$861,278.00 - For Runway 6/24 Sealcoat, Crack Seal, and Remarking Project at Northeast Alabama Regional Airport)

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 Latham and unanimously adopted.

Councilman Wilson noted State funding will cover 5% of the city's 10% match. Mayor Ford thanked Brett Johnson (Chief of Staff) and Heath Williamson (City Engineer), as well as Goodwyn Mills & Cawood (engineering firm) for their work on obtaining the grants.

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-442-23

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH
ETOWAH COUNTY COMMISSION AND
ETOWAH COUNTY SHERIFF

(Authorizing Agreement - Etowah County Commission & Sheriff of Etowah County - Regarding incarceration of City prisoners in Etowah County Detention Center - \$50.00 per city prisoner per day - Term of 1 year, from 8-1-23 to 9-30-24 - Option to extend month-to-month for up to one additional year)

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 Latham and unanimously adopted.

PUBLIC

Joseph Cole requested consideration in next year's budget for construction of an olympic size swimming pool and estimated the cost to be \$300,000 to \$500,000. He thanked the Mayor and Council for improvements in pay for police officers and expressed support for Chief Jaggears and Captain Jackson. Mr. Cole complimented the work of former Chief Carroll and Chief Reed and recommended a pay raise for firemen. He requested assistance from Community Development for a citizen that has a damaged roof.

Josh Dodd (Kerry Wilson Insurance and Natural Illusions Salon) noted fifteen different cosmetology suites are in their building. He explained one of them wishes to offer permanent makeup procedures, which are not governed by the State Cosmetology Board. Mr. Dodd said he is pursuing a variance from the zoning ordinance and requested council support.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilwoman Minatra reported on this morning's Public Works Committee meeting, noting landlords are responsible for "clean-outs" between tenants. She expressed hope that relationships with landlords, as well as cleanliness of the city, will improve.

Councilman Wilson referred to many calls regarding use of the Gadsden Sports Park by soccer leagues. He expressed support for soccer programs, as well as the city's fiscal responsibility, noting taxpayer funds provide maintenance and management of the facility. He joined with Councilman Back in expressing confidence that the Mayor will bring about an amicable resolution. Councilman Back described the large investment made and the many amenities available there. Mayor Ford said he is already speaking with individual members and has a plan to present to the board. He assured everyone that the needs of the children are the priority.

Councilman Smith complimented first responders and department heads for great clean-up work from the recent storm, and thanked Mr. Dodd and Mr. Cole for their remarks. He referred to the city's purchase of the former YMCA and conversations regarding pools, expressing his desire to see a pool in a central location, for the benefit of seniors and children. Councilman Smith referred to a recent Birmingham incident where video footage cleared up speculation, noting Gadsden is seeking to add cameras.

Mayor Ford expressed concern over the Senate's version of Congressional districts, stressing the need to keep Etowah County intact and within District 4, represented by Congressman Aderholt. He announced closure of the west-bound lane of the Memorial Bridge from July 24-26 for utility work. He joined with President Back in welcoming two new police officers, who were sworn in this morning. Mayor Ford presented a \$400,000 check for the sale of a building at the Air Depot and thanked City Attorney Lee Roberts for his work on the transaction.

President Back noted the airport is receiving \$1.3 million in Federal funds and other financial investments are being made in Gadsden, with much positive energy. He added the city sold the former Sears building at 741 Forrest Avenue, and there will be apartments instead of a vacant, dilapidated building.

On behalf of Councilman Avery, City Clerk Iva Nelson announced July's District 3 meeting has been postponed, with an alternate date to be determined. She also announced this Sunday's community clean-up event, which will begin at Valley Street.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (7-18-2023)
