

CITY COUNCIL MEETING - GADSDEN, ALABAMA
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 - 11:00 A.M.

The City Council met on September 14, 2021, in regular session, via teleconference.

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.

The invocation was given by Iva Nelson.

Breonna Cole (Emergency Management Agency) provided updated statistics on Covid-19, noting ICU capacity is still at a critical limit. She reminded everyone they must receive their second shot by October 15 to qualify for the Vaccination Gadsden incentive and announced upcoming vaccination clinics. She noted that September is "Preparedness Month." Chief Reed reported on Fire Department employees and noted protocols are still being followed.

The minutes of the last work session and council meeting held on September 7, 2021, were approved by unanimous vote.

Payment of the HTE System accounts for the week of September 3-9 were ratified by unanimous vote.

#210570-210741	General	\$999,127.24
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President Toles read a joint proclamation from the City Council and Mayor proclaiming Tuesday, September 14, 2021, as "Barbara Reed Day." Mayor Guyton complimented her decades of service as a City employee, an educator, and a member of numerous boards and organizations. Councilman Reed expressed appreciation for the honor bestowed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

ORDINANCE NO. O-11-21

ESTABLISHING BUDGET FOR FUND 002
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

(Establishing Budget for Fund 002 - American Rescue Plan - \$24,042,737.00 - Fire Station: \$1,850,000; Cybersecurity-City Hall: \$150,000; EMA Fire Station Alert System: \$350,000; Fire Department Response Vehicle: \$50,000; Road Improvements: \$1,200,000; Vaccination Gadsden: \$300,000; Infrastructure Improvements: \$11,042,737; Senior Wellness Center: \$4,500,000; Crime Prevention: \$2,500,000; Non-Profit Agencies: \$1,000,000; Premium Pay for City workers: \$600,000; Premium Pay for Health Care workers: \$500,000)

At the request of Councilman Wilson, Finance Director Lisa Rosser clarified that fire department employees are included in premium pay from ARP funds, and non-qualifying employees will be paid from the General Fund. The fire department is also included in 4-step raises (full-time employees making less than \$25,000) and 2-step (full-time employees making more than \$25,000) raises and pay plan changes that deleted the lowest 5 steps and added 3 steps to the high end of each range, which raised entry level salaries.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS

(1) The floor was opened to allow anyone to offer input regarding an ordinance adopted Fiscal Year 2022 Budgets for General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Funds, Enterprise and Internal Service Funds, Capital Projects Fund, and Capital Projects Fund II. No one spoke. President Toles stated the ordinance has been presented today for the first reading, and the Council will vote on it next week.

(The internet connection with Councilman Williams was lost at this time.)

(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 313 Grady Street, the State of Alabama, rights of redemption of Howard Nelson and Thressia Nelson (if deceased their heirs), and Teilian Wilson being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made since procedures began in April 2020, and recommended abatement. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-197-21

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 313 Grady Street - District 6 - State of Alabama; Rights of redemption of Howard Nelson and Thressia Nelson (if deceased their heirs); Teilian Wilson)

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

(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 5 Marston Avenue in District 6, Juan Diego Reyes and Jay & Misty Holcomb being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, described recent improvements made to the structure, which is over 100 years old, and recommended a 30-day extension. Councilman Cannon moved to table the resolution for 30 days, which motion was seconded by Councilman Reed and unanimously carried by those present.

(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 511 Wilson Street, the State of Alabama, subject to the rights of redemption of Evelyn McWhorter and/or heirs, if deceased, being the last known owners. Brian Harbison, Building Inspector, stated no improvements have been made since procedures began in December 2020, and recommended abatement. The following resolution was introduced in writing for consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. R-198-21

ORDERING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE

(Ordering Abatement of Nuisance - 511 Wilson Street - District 6 - State of Alabama; Rights of redemption of Evelyn McWhorter and/or heirs, if deceased)

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

RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED FOR CONSIDERATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-199-21

AUTHORIZING LEASE AGREEMENT WITH
MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF ETOWAH COUNTY

(Authorizing Lease - Mental Health America of Etowah County - For office space on second floor of Gadsden Public Library, 254 South College Street (former Teen Zone space) - \$100.00 per month - Term of 1 year, with option to renew for 5 additional years)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-200-21

AUTHORIZING PERMIT AGREEMENT WITH
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ALDOT)

(Authorizing Agreement - Alabama Department of Transportation - For traffic control signal modification at the intersection of Alabama Highway 77 and Transport Street)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-201-21

AUTHORIZING PERMIT TERMS AND CONDITIONS
WITH ALABAMA POWER

(Authorizing Permit Terms and Conditions - Alabama Power - Regarding Nontransferable Lakeshore Permit for bank stabilization along the Riverwalk at Coosa Landing)

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

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-202-21

AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH RAPHA HOUSE

(Authorizing Agreement - Rapha House, a subsidiary of Family Life Center, Inc. - To provide 10 bed units for City inmates - \$1,666.67 per month)

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

(Councilman Williams was able to reconnect with the meeting at this time.)

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-203-21

AMENDING JOB CLASSIFICATION AND
AMENDING RESOLUTIONS NO. R-403-04 AND R-463-04

(Adding job classifications of Environmental Services Clerk, Secretary to Clerk's Office, Property Housing Code Inspector, Construction Inspector, Deputy Director of EMA, Sports Complex Manager, and Assistant Golf Pro - Moving Campground Manager from Range 3 to Range 5)

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

NEW BUSINESS

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

RESOLUTION NO. R-204-21

RENAMING THE SECOND FLOOR ART GALLERY
AT THE GADSDEN MUSEUM OF ART

(Renaming Second Floor Art Gallery at Gadsden Museum of Art, 515 Broad Street, to "Barbara Reed Gallery" - Honoring Barbara Reed for over 15 years of volunteer service to museum)

Ray Wetzel, GMA Curator, expressed great respect for Mrs. Reed and described her as a great asset to the community who will be missed.

Councilman Back read the resolution in its entirety and moved to adopt it. The motion was seconded by Councilman Worthy and unanimously adopted.

PUBLIC

Kevin Blackwell reported on the Special Programming for Achievement Network (SPAN) of Etowah County program, which provides services to underprivileged students who are falling behind in school. He presented information about the upcoming 40th anniversary celebration on Saturday at The Venue. President Toles and Councilman Back joined in expressing appreciation for the work of the program.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REMARKS

Councilmen Back and Cannon joined in commending Barbara Reed’s dedication to her community and husband. Councilman Reed thanked everyone for today’s recognition.

Councilman Back reiterated the need to consult health care professionals regarding Covid. He commended Craig Scott’s foresight in locating a mental health office at the library, as many homeless persons end up there. Councilman Back wished his wife, Kim, a happy birthday.

Councilman Cannon expressed concern about garbage and litter being placed on streets in the city and encouraged citizens to report offenders. He questioned if the fee can be increased for reissuing a garbage can after removal for non payment.

Councilman Worthy announced an upcoming clinic on September 18 at the Jazmin Lopez agency, sponsored by 21 Kids Foundation. He thanked Dre’ Kirkpatrick, Charlotte Worthy, Wayne Rowe, and Physicians Apothecary for last Sunday’s meal and vaccination event at Elliott Community Center.

Mayor Guyton commended Lisa Rosser’s work on the proposed budget, noting it includes increased starting pay, pay raises, street improvements, and retirement of two bond issues, while maintaining the City’s good financial condition.

President Toles thanked council members for their input and debate as part of the democratic process. She referred to criticism on social media and affirmed the council is functioning as it should.

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

Iva Nelson, City Clerk (9-14-21)
