

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

OPENING CEREMONIES

Call to Order

Mayor Gayle called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. with a Moment of Silence in honor of the nine church members slain on June 17, 2015, at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Carolina. Council members present were Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Alvin Payton, Jr. Sandra Tooley, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Pastor Billy McFadden, and was immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

MINUTES APPROVAL

The minutes of the June 11, 2015, regular meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Consideration of a request to change a street name from Crowder Street to Ruth K. Council Drive.

Patrick Collins, City Engineer, stated that on May 19, 2015, a petition was received asking that the City rename Crowder Street between Bunche Drive and Bethune Street to Ruth K. Council Drive in honor of Ms. Ruth K. Council's outstanding local and state contributions. Ms. Council has been active in her community and for the people of Valdosta and Lowndes County for many years. Her commitment as a public servant has been of great value and has helped to enhance and better our community and surrounding areas. After receiving the petition, staff began processing this request. There are four properties that abut this street but neither has a legal address, which means that the 90-day waiting period that is normally required is not in effect since that 90-day period is normally used to notify the post office, 911, and other correspondents of the name change. The petition has been reviewed by staff and was signed by three of the four residents that abut Crowder Street. The public notice ran the appropriate length of time and notification has been provided to all utility companies and 911 in regards to the street name change.

Mayor Gayle asked if anyone would like to speak in favor of the request

Ms. Evette Council Waters, 4612 Hickory Creek Circle, stated that she is the oldest daughter of Ruth and Ralph Council. I humbly requested that Crowder Street be renamed Ruth K. Council Drive. I followed the process required by the City and also submitted a list of Ms. Council's accomplishments. We feel this honor is befitting of Ms. Council because of her long time commitment to this city and we ask that you honor our request and change the name of Crowder Street to Ruth K. Council Drive.

Mayor Gayle asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition of the request. No one spoke in opposition of the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Payton was unanimously approved (7-0) to rename Crowder Street to Ruth K. Council Drive.

Mayor Gayle congratulated Ms. Council and asked if she would like to say a few words. Ms. Ruth Council stated that she considers it a high honor that Council has agreed to rename Crowder Street in honor of her. I hope that you are proud of your decision; I know that my family is proud. This is a great day for Ruth K. Council and a great day for America.

Councilman Payton asked to make a brief comment and stated that Ms. Council was his second grade teacher and helped lay the foundation for what he is today. Thank you Ms. Council for providing the history behind Crowder Street, I played on that street as a child and I'm glad we changed the name to honor you.

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-14, Public Hearing for the adoption of the FY 2016 Budget. (Third Hearing)

Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration, stated that tonight will act as the third Public Hearing and will allow for adoption of the budget. Comparing this budget to last year's financial plan you will see a slight increase in our revenues. We feel this is because our economy is slowly rebounding so business licenses, franchise fees and things of that nature were increased minimally in hopes that the economy is going to continue to move in a forward direction. If you look at the line item in the budget regarding property taxes we have estimated a higher collection rate from last year. This is because there has been developments in our community over the last twelve months that will add to the tax digest which is where our revenue is derived from. This is not a millage rate increase, but funds that come directly from the tax digest. Comparing the sources in the budget this year to last year's, you will notice a slight difference because of the expected purchase of two fire pumpers through the lease program next year. In government accounting the lease represents a revenue item so when you see that figure, it actually represents a million dollars of the revenue. As for the Uses, it is pretty much status quo; again you will notice that the pumpers are also listed in expenses.

Operationally, we have increased the supply account for Public Works, but the majority of that expense is the 1.25% Cost of Living Adjustment Increase that city employees will receive effective July 1.

Looking at the General Fund you will notice that 64% of expenditures are slotted for Public Safety and if we include Code Enforcement that percentage increases to 65%. When comparing this expenditure with other cities we are right in line because Public Safety is a priority with most entities and that's what our citizens expect. 67% of the budget goes to Personal Services which includes wages and benefits for employees. When comparing that section of our budget to other local governments, the numbers range anywhere to 67 to about 70% of their budgets. A quick overview of the Proposed Capital for FY 2016 totals \$30,220,127. Some of the departments with larger numbers contributing to this figure include Engineering at \$3,194,104; this amount deals with SPLOST projects; the Fire Departments at \$1,050,529 which includes the purchase of the two fire pumpers; the Motor Pool at \$1,165,500 which includes replacement vehicles for various departments, and Utilities listed at \$24,279,714 includes work on the Force Main and the new Withlacoochee Plant. As it relates to funding for these projects, the GEFA loan and User Fees contribute significantly as funding sources and of course we will again use the GMA lease program.

Mayor Gayle informed everyone that this was still a public hearing item and asked if anyone would like to make comments regarding the budget. There were no comments from the audience regarding the budget.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton was unanimously adopted to approve the FY 2016 Budget as presented.

Mr. Hanson recognized all departments for their contributions in the preparation of the budget, but especially the Budget and Finance staff to include Carolyn Burgess, Amy Hall, Chuck Dinkins, and Mark Barber who start budget preparation in January and spend hundreds of hours preparing the budget and helping to get it to this point. I just want to take a moment and recognize and thank them for all of their hard work.

Mayor Gayle also thanked staff for their contributions toward the budget process.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids to purchase office supplies for the City of Valdosta.

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that this is a bid for office supplies for the City of Valdosta. Office supplies are used by all departments throughout the city. This is a one year contract with options to renew. The low bid came in on June 9, 2015, from Lee Office Equipment in the amount of \$10,847.50.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton was approved (7-0) to follow the recommendation of staff.

Consideration of bids for janitorial supplies for the City of Valdosta.

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that janitorial supplies is another item that is used in all departments and at all facilities. The low bid was received on June 9, 2015 from Piedmont National in the amount of \$21,297.23.

Councilman Vickers asked if this was a local company. Mr. Brown stated that the salesman was local and there is discussion regarding locating a warehouse in the City. Mayor Gayle asked where Piedmont National is currently located. Mr. Brown stated that Piedmont National is based in Albany, Georgia. Councilman Wright asked if Catko was a local company. Mr. Brown confirmed that Catko is indeed a local company. Councilman Payton asked who the current janitorial supply contractor was. Mr. Brown stated that Catko was the currently contractor and had been for the past two years. Councilman Vickers stated that the difference in pricing equates to about 500 to 600 dollars. Mayor Gayle asked Mr. Brown if he was recommending Piedmont National. Mr. Brown confirmed that his recommendation was Piedmont National.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Yost was approved (7-0) to follow the recommendation of staff.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2015 – 15, Consideration of a request to approve an ordinance for a New City of Valdosta Personnel and Procedures Manual. (Second Reading)

Renassa Small, Human Resources Director, presented proposed changes to the Personnel Policy Manual Ordinance. Our office has worked with departmental employees in updating this manual. The main changes includes clarification of language, updates on policies, and changes needed due to organizational changes made within the City to include shift changes for the Police Department which affects their leave accrual. The group met for about six weeks to review this manual and provide input for updates and clarification.

Councilman Payton thanked Ms. Small for her response to his request regarding the proposed changes.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Payton was unanimously approved (7-0) to approve Ordinance 2015 – 15, an ordinance to a new the Personal Policy Manual, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XII.

RESOLUTION NO. 2015 – 7, Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing, Adopting, Approving, Accepting and Ratifying the Execution of a Contract for Airport Project [DOT Project Number APO16-9000-31 (185) - Preparing and Remarking Runway 17/35 and Designing Shoulder Marking Removal of Taxiway C at Valdosta Regional Airport] between the Georgia Department of Transportation and the City of Valdosta.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the City administers grants on behalf of the Airport Authority. During a recent inspection from the Federal Aviation Administration it was noted that the Main Runway 17/35 needs to be remarked and the edges and marking along the edge of Taxiway C must be designed so that they

can be removed. This is a request authorizing us to accept and administer a grant from the Georgia

Department of Transportation, which will pay 75% of the cost of the project. The total project cost is \$115,272 and Lowndes County will pay the additional 25%.

Council asked why the County and the City were not splitting the balance after the grant. Mr. Hanson stated that some time ago there was a project at the Airport that the City funded in full therefore the County would pay the balance on this project.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll was adopted unanimously (7-0) to approve the request from the Airport Authority and approve Resolution 2015-7, an ordinance to authorize, adopt, approve, accept, and ratify the execution of a contract for the Airport Project (DOT Number APO16-9000-31 (185), the complete copy of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request for cost sharing per the Municipal Utilities Ordinance on Water and Sewer Lines to Scintilla Charter School.

Henry Hicks, Director of Utilities, stated that the City's current policy states that it will pay for oversizing of newly planned and constructed water and sewer infrastructure in order to meet future growth needs, which means the City covers the expense for all oversizing costs over the required service needs for any specific development. During the planning phase of Scintilla Charter School, staff determined that both the water and sewer mains serving the school would need to be oversized to meet the upcoming construction for the new Valdosta High School along with other potential developments expected to come to that area. Staff agreed to pay for the oversizing costs upon completion of the construction of the water and sewer infrastructure. Water and sewer lines were sized for future growth with a 12-inch water main and 10-inch sewer main. The total cost for Standard Contractors to complete this project is \$79,980.00 which includes 2,375 feet of water and 2,404 feet of sewer main as well as two jack and bores under Park Avenue.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton was unanimously approved (7-0) to share the cost on water and sewer lines to Scintilla Charter School.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Hanson reminded everyone that the Farm Days event would be taking place again downtown this weekend from 9:00 a.m. to noon. This is an excellent opportunity for all to come out and get local produce and see what vendors have to offer.

Mr. Hanson stated that the Valdosta Fire Department Fire Marshal would be providing public safety education on the handling of fireworks. This will be the first year since the new law came into effect and the City wants to ensure that citizens know the proper procedures and best techniques for handling fireworks. We all need to do our part to make sure that our city and citizens are safe.

Mr. Hanson stated that there are ten vacancies on the Boards and Commissions. There are four available positions on the Public Art Advisory Committee, two positions on the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee, three appointments available on the Valdosta Tree Commission, and one position available on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals. The deadline to apply is Wednesday, July 29, 2015. We encourage citizens to apply for these positions. This is a great way to get involved and serve the community.

Mr. Hanson made Council aware that Corey Hull, will be making a special presentation at the July 7, 2015, Work Session on transportation. The Southern Georgia Regional Commission and Valdosta-Lowndes

Metropolitan Planning Organization will also be hosting a public comment period with three public meetings as well as speaking at numerous community civic organization meetings. The three Open House meetings will be held on July 15 (South Georgia Regional Library), July 22 (South Georgia Regional Commission), and July 30 at the Southside Library.

The Valdosta Fire Department will host its 2nd Annual Citizens Fire Academy. This was a great educational addition to our city and provides an excellent opportunity to increase fire and life-safety awareness while establishing a community partnership. The classes will be held each Tuesday night for nine weeks from 6-9 p.m. beginning September 1. The application deadline is Friday, July 31, so please encourage citizens to take advantage of this excellent opportunity.

Mr. Hanson made Council aware that Valdosta will be one of 12 Georgia cities at the GMA Annual Convention showcasing how it has utilized public art and culture as a tool for community and economic development. A banner featuring the City's partnership with the Annette Howell Center for the Arts and their collaborative local arts initiatives will be on display in Savannah this weekend. For those of you attending the conference, please take a moment to visit the display. Of course we are always proud of our partnership with the Annette Howell Turner Center and their unwavering commitment to provide quality of life events and opportunities for our community.

Mr. Hanson informed Mayor and Council that an Executive Session would need to be held for the purpose of discussing real estate, litigation, and personnel.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Joseph Vickers acknowledged Shirley Britt and Cindy Hasty for all of their hard work in the absence of the City Clerk.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council and enter into Executive Session.

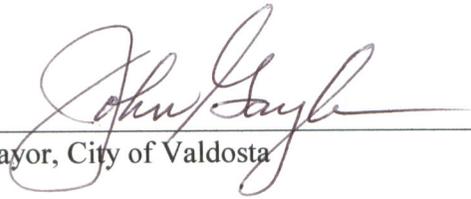
A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Council Vickers was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the June 25, 2015, Regular Meeting at 6:03 p.m. and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation, real estate, and personnel.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the regular City Council meeting at 6:38 p.m. and stated that Council would need to vote on a litigation issue.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton was adopted by Council (6-1) with Councilman Yost voting in opposition, to ratify the settlement in accordance with the discussions in Executive Session and authorize payment of \$500,000 to settle both the federal and state court case in regard to the Parker case.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Council Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the June 25, 2015, meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:40 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, July 9, 2015.



Mayor, City of Valdosta



City Clerk, City of Valdosta