

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 2012**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor John Gayle called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Deidra White, and James Wright. Councilmen Alvin Payton, Jr. and Robert Yost were absent. The invocation was given by Chris Musgrove, Future Now Ministry, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Comments from the new President of Valdosta State University, Dr. William McKinney.

Mayor Gayle recognized Dr. William McKinney, new President of Valdosta State University, and his wife, Dr. Dacia Charlesworth, and welcomed them to the Council meeting. Dr. William McKinney stated that every new University President has a wish list and that list often varies as much as new Presidents vary; however, one thing he could almost guarantee is that every new University President has on her/his wish list is for a good town gown relationship. His wish list contains that wish and it is already clear that he can check that off because he has everyone in this room to thank for that. You have all given him and his wife such an incredibly warm welcome. He also is not so naïve to miss the fact that a big part of that is because of how highly the Mayor and Council regard Valdosta State University. Dr. McKinney thanked the Mayor and Council and those in attendance for helping to fulfill at least part of his wish list because he knows that when he wakes up in the morning he gets to take a look at this great town gown relationship and know that they can build on it and derive strength from it. Together they can do great things with it. Dr. McKinney thanked the Mayor and Council for their hospitality and stated that he looked forward to a wonderful working relationship. Mayor Gayle stated that we consider Valdosta State University a major part of this City and they all look forward to working with Dr. McKinney and keeping the relationship as it has been in the past. Mayor Gayle also recognized the following Valdosta State University Staff who were also in attendance: Russ Mast, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Carla Hull, Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, Sue Fuciarelli, Vice President of Finance and Administration, and Andy Clark, Associate Vice President for Enrollment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the August 9, 2012 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (5-0) of the Council.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2012-13, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT WITH THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to approve a Resolution authorizing execution of a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation to proceed with the Construct ARFF Building, Obstruction Clearing - Phase 1, Wildlife Hazard Assessment, and Pavement Evaluation Study at the Valdosta Regional Airport.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority has recently received information from the Georgia Department of Transportation about some upcoming projects. The amount of money that is stipulated to come from the City of Valdosta will actually come from the Airport's Passenger Facility Charge Program from which they collect approximately \$12,000 per month and have approximately \$100,000 already collected for these upcoming projects. These projects will be spread out from September, 2012 through mid-2014. The Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) has announced a tentative allocation of State funding assistance in the amount of \$73,889.00 for the following project at the Valdosta Regional Airport:

Construct ARFF Building; Obstruction Clearing - Phase 1, Wildlife Hazard Assessment and Pavement Evaluation Study. The DOT is asking for confirmation by letter no later than August 31, 2012 about the Airport's intent to proceed with and fund this Project in the State's fiscal year 2013 which ends June 30, 2013. Any State and/or Federal funding for this project if unconfirmed by this date may be reassigned. The Federal funding participation percentage changed from 95% to 90% in Federal Fiscal Year 2012. Also, due to budget restraints, Aviation Programs are providing a 2.5% State funding match for this Project and the Airport will pay the remaining 2.5% out of their own generated proceeds. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor John Gayle to confirm the Airport's intention of proceeding with the Project by August 31, 2012. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the execution of a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation to proceed with the Construct ARFF Building, Obstruction Clearing - Phase 1, Wildlife Hazard Assessment, and Pavement Evaluation Study at the Valdosta Regional Airport. Larry Hanson also noted that Jim Galloway, Executive Director of the Valdosta Regional Airport, indicated that the bids for the new fire station were opened today and they will be awarding that contract very soon so that construction on the new Fire Station No. 7 can begin. They have also recently purchased a new fire truck to go in there as well.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to enact Resolution No. 2012-13, a Resolution authorizing the execution of a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation to proceed with the Construct ARFF Building, Obstruction Clearing - Phase 1, Wildlife Hazard Assessment, and Pavement Evaluation Study at the Valdosta Regional Airport, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

### **BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES**

Consideration of bids for extension of utilities for Phase 1 of the annexed Island 69C2.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City Council approved contracts with three local engineers to design water and sewer improvements to serve the property in former unincorporated islands that were annexed into the City in 2006. Island 69C2 includes the following streets: Blich, Dogwood, Moss, Melbor, and Magnolia. A public meeting was held on Tuesday, August 14, 2012. Bids were received on August 16, 2012 for Island 69C2 with the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$886,302.97. The Engineering estimate was \$899,302.50. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$886,302.97 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances. Mayor Gayle inquired as to how many of the islands had utilities extended to them. Larry Hanson stated that Cherry Creek alone was 22 islands out of 86 and we are nearing the half-way point. The largest populated islands have been done and the decision on how to do them was made by the residents themselves. There was a poll taken in each of the islands and those that wanted the services immediately had to have 50% or more of the residents request it. Those were given first priority and others did not want the service until as late as possible so they are not scheduled until 2014 by design.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$886,302.97 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for extension of utilities for Phase 1 of the annexed Island 69C2.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we will begin the new campaign to educate the community about the SPLOST VII Referendum which will be held in November. The City and the County are working together to establish a Citizens Committee to promote the campaign. The Valdosta Daily Times will also be doing some stories about SPLOST and educating the public about the history and benefits of it. This was an impressive list of projects and it has had a positive impact on the City and community as a whole.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, noted that the Mayor and Council will need to have a brief Executive Session tonight to discuss a real estate matter.

Councilman Carroll thanked the Staff and City Attorney for their work on the LOST mediation this week. The team was very professional, very well prepared, and aided all of the Council members in making a fully informed decision as they move through the process. Councilman Carroll stated that it should also be noted that out of the six local governments in Lowndes County, five of them agree.

### CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, thanked Larry Hanson, City Manager, for coming to a public meeting that was held on August 14, 2012 at the Mildred Hunter Center. He provided some good information to the citizens. Mr. Rhynes asked Council if they could find some place in the basement or open up a janitorial room and turn it into an office so that citizens could have access to each of the Council members. This would be a great asset and he asked that Council consider this but without increasing the size of the government.

Dr. L. W. Williams, 415 South Ashley Street, stated that he recently had a bad experience which he has shared with the Mayor and Council in a letter. He had a horrific experience with a local Policeman on August 15, 2012 and it is clear why so many citizens here have been sent to Municipal Court with charges of interfering with an Officer in the line of duty. Almost every day the Valdosta Daily Times reports these incidents and it seem unusual that so many citizens are being charged with that same offense. Dr. Williams stated that he felt many others have been grossly mistreated in this manner and unfortunately, their complaints are being stifled, ignored, or suppressed. Once a badge and gun is issued to a Police Officer, it appears that they ascend to a new level of authority giving them God-like powers to impose upon others whatever they feel and in any manner they so desire. This flagrant abuse of authority must come to a halt. Time after time, and much too frequently, those in authority brush these acquisitions of bullying, assault, and intimidation aside because the aggressive behavior of the Police are overshadowed by other charges placed against individuals who are arrested. Dr. Williams stated that the disturbing fact here is that he would have become another statistic if he had made a physical effort to defend himself from the aggressive behavior of one misguided Police Officer entering his office and brutally assaulting him on the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month. It required every bit of stamina and personal restraint to prevent him from defending himself when this incident occurred. Clearly the intent of Patrolman Jason Davis coming to his office was not to ask him a few questions concerning a telephone conversation. He had much more in mind. Dr. Williams stated that he was here as an ordinary citizen and he goes to Court frequently where lots of bad things happen. People go in there and come out with criminal charges against them, placed on probation, or receive fines for interfering with an Officer. This needs to be looked into and investigated. He is not the only one who has been intimidated in this manner. Others experience this daily but they do not come forward so it goes on and on. It is not fair and it is not liberty and justice for all as long as this exists. The Policemen should have morals and standards and you are the overseer of this to make sure they are doing it. He has approached Chief Simons on different occasions and sometimes Chief Simons responds but most of the time he does not get the response that he feels would meet the occasion for which he has addressed here. Dr. Williams stated that he would like to see something done about this incident and for others not to have to go through what he endured. The Mayor and Council received some letters from him explaining exactly what occurred and there was some profanity in it but that is what he endured. He has witnesses to what he went through. He does not think it was right and a slap on the wrist will not correct this.

### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to adjourn the Council meeting and enter into an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the August 23, 2012 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 5:55 p.m. and enter into Executive Session.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the regular City Council meeting at 6:19 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of real estate and no action was taken.

Mayor Gayle stated that he wanted to thank the Utilities Department for their efforts in resolving the problems at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the August 23, 2012 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:20 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, September 6, 2012.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta