

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2016
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, Alvin Payton, Jr., Sandra Tooley, Robert Yost, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Pastor William Morgan, Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the February 11, 2016 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Consideration of a request to close a portion of an alley located on Highland Heights Drive.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that in January, 2016, Mr. Bill Holland formally petitioned the City to close 85 feet of a 10 foot wide alley located at the rear of his property at 104 Highland Heights Drive for the purpose of squaring up the property. He is the owner of the parcels adjacent to this alley. The petition to close the alley has been properly completed and reviewed by the Engineering Staff and all of the pertinent utility companies. Colquitt EMC does have a line that runs in the back of the property and as long as they have access for maintenance they are in agreement with the closure. Mr. Holland has been contacted and agreed to the access. There were no objections to the closure of the alley. The Public Notice was advertised for the required amount of time. The Engineering Department is recommending closure of the alley.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request to close a portion of an alley located on Highland Heights Drive.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for a tractor and boom mower for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 09-15-16).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Public Works Department is in need of a new tractor and boom mower to replace an existing tractor and mower that was purchased in 1997. This piece of equipment is used to mow right-of-ways that have severe slopes, deep ditches, brush, and branches that reach out to the right-of-way. This is a Council-approved budget item for the current year budget. Sealed bids were received on February 11, 2016 with the low bid submitted by Ag Pro in the amount of \$107,180.24. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Ag Pro in the amount of \$107,180.24 and allow the Public Works Department to proceed with the purchase.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Ag Pro in the amount of \$107,180.24 and allow the Public Works Department to proceed with the purchase of a tractor and boom mower.

Consideration of bids for the Sugar Creek aerial and trunk line replacement and West Dukes Bay sewer main replacement.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that in 2015 the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the City agreed that the City would perform a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP). Updating the Withlacoochee sewer collection system flow model was approved as the SEP and that Project was completed and accepted by the EPD. The new model assisted the Utilities Department in further identifying potential sewage overflow locations as well as areas with high inflow and infiltration probability. The model and associated report identified two high priority sewer main upgrade projects. A third sewer main was identified for replacement through the Smoke Testing Program. This Project upsizes the lines and will eliminate flow restricting bottlenecks at all three of the following locations: (1) Sugar Creek Aerial Line Replacement is located near the City of Remerton Public Works facility and the new Remer Lane Pump Station. It includes the replacement of two aerial sewer crossings with approximately 383 linear feet (lf) of 12" PVC, 461 lf of 24" PVC, and 560 lf of 30" Ductile Iron Pipe (DIP) gravity sewer with new manholes. (2) Sugar Creek Trunk Line Replacement is located along Sugar Creek behind the Salty Snapper and includes the replacement of four existing manholes and two parallel gravity sewer lines with approximately 222 lf of 42" DIP and 22 lf of 24" DIP gravity sewer and two new manholes. (3) West Dukes Bay Sewer Main Replacement is located near the railroad crossing on Lankford Drive. This Project includes the replacement of an existing gravity sewer line with approximately 1,832 lf of 24" PVC. It includes a jack and bore under Lankford Drive and a new aerial crossing over a stream. The proposed construction at all three locations will take place within a combination of permanent and temporary easements acquired by the City of Valdosta. On December 14, 2015, the Utilities Department advertised for bids for the Project to replace the Sugar Creek aerial and trunk lines and the West Dukes Bay sewer main. A mandatory pre-bid conference was held on January 19, 2016 with five potential bidders attending. Bids were received from two bidders and opened on February 10, 2016. The lowest responsive and eligible bidder for the Project was Garney Construction in the amount of \$1,615,000. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Garney Construction in the amount of \$1,615,000 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Garney Construction in the amount of \$1,615,000 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for the Sugar Creek aerial and trunk line replacement and West Dukes Bay sewer main replacement.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-4, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A LEASE SUPPLEMENT UNDER THE GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION (GMA) LEASE POOL PROGRAM

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the execution of a Lease Supplement under the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Lease Pool Program.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City of Valdosta's Fire Department is in need of four new pumper trucks to provide fire protection in the City. Sutphen is currently offering the lowest total price for all four trucks in the amount of \$1,932,479. In order to take full advantage of this pricing, the City needs to purchase all four trucks now. The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Lease Pool is offering a rate of 2.25% for ten years with the first payment annual payment of \$217,960 due on February 25, 2017. Utilizing the GMA Lease Pool to make all purchases allows the City to receive the best available price for the trucks, utilize existing financing sources at attractive rates, and spread the cost of the trucks over ten years. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing the Assistant City Manager to execute and deliver a Lease Supplement pursuant to the Master Lease for the four Sutphen Pumper Trucks. Chuck Dinkins recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the Assistant City Manager to execute and deliver a Lease Supplement pursuant to the Master Lease for the four Sutphen Pumper Trucks for the Fire Department. Councilman Vickers inquired as to what the payment would be each year. Chuck Dinkins stated that it would be a ten year lease with each annual payment of \$217,959.83. The estimated useful life of the fire trucks is ten years and they will be depreciated over that period of time. It is expected that the fire trucks will last longer than ten years though. Mayor Gayle stated that the new fire trucks are replacing ones that are 20 years old. Larry Hanson stated that the fire trucks are normally depreciated over a 15 year schedule but no one would do a 15 year term on a lease. The financial institutions were five years and GMA had a ten year lease. Chuck Dinkins stated that the 2.25% interest rate is lower than most of the other places.

Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether these were the four pumper trucks Council had previously approved to purchase. Chuck Dinkins stated that was correct and that Council was not approving the purchase but the method of financing the trucks. Larry Hanson stated that the way the GMA Lease Pool Program works is that Council approves the bids and when using GMA for the lease, they require an Ordinance or Resolution to be adopted for each item that we are purchasing and leasing. We could also accelerate the payments if we have the available funds or if SPLOST collections start trending up. Councilman Carroll stated that the fire trucks are built upon order. Larry Hanson stated that it would take close to a year to obtain these fire trucks and the minimum would be seven months.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2016-4, a Resolution authorizing the execution of a Lease Supplement under the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Lease Pool Program for four new pumper trucks for the Fire Department, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Bird Supper was held in Atlanta last night and it was a great success. There were several hundred people in attendance including Gov. Nathan Deal and his wife as well as the Secretary of State and the Attorney General. There were also members of the Georgia House and Senate and a number of Committee Chairmen. They discussed many things that were important to Valdosta and Lowndes County. Sementha Mathews, Public Information Officer, did a great job in working with the County to plan and coordinate the event.

The City of Valdosta and the Lowndes County Extension Office sponsored a free tree pruning class today at 2:00 p.m. at the City Hall Annex Building. There were approximately 30 tree and landscape companies who participated. They were shown the proper techniques for trimming trees. This is the type of thing we are doing to help educate the community and address some issues that we have had this year.

The Valdosta Youth Council met today at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers and they are currently working on several projects including an Anti-Bullying Campaign. They will be submitting letters to the Editor and the Valdosta Daily Times and to some private and public schools seeking their support.

The Municipal Court will be holding a mock trial tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. for students in order to create an awareness of the Court and how it operates.

The Public Works Department will be making some changes to the sanitation routes and a map has been sent out to the Mayor and Council regarding the changes. Richard Hardy, Public Works Director, and DeMarcus Marshall, Public Works Superintendent, have done a good job in getting the City prepared for the changes. A Press Release will be going out tomorrow and this information is also posted on the City's website. It will also go out in the City Beat the first week of March. The implementation date is March 14, 2016 and flyers will go out in the utility bills. A sticker that person's pickup day will be placed on every rollout trash can in the City and they will be color coordinated with the map.

The Valdosta See Click Fix is doing very well and we are getting a lot of positive feedback. As of today we have had 49 reports and 43 of those have been closed. The system also measures the timeliness of response and the average time to acknowledge receipt of the concern is approximately three hours. The average time to resolve an issue is 2.7 days. There have been 13 potholes reported, street sign issues, street light outages, trash can violations, dead animals, and a sight visibility issue. It is working very well and we are pleased that citizens are using this because these are all legitimate issues.

The City of Valdosta is approaching the end of completing our two major Wastewater Treatment Plant Projects. The Contractors have to notify the EPD and schedule a date for them to come and inspect everything so it will come on-line in sections. Parsons has submitted a report to the EPD saying they are going to certify the new headworks and the biological treatment systems on March 14, 2016. The EPD will inspect those by March 21, 2016 and issue a permit. The influent flow is going to initially have to be split between the new Plant and the old

Plant because the winter season is a wet time of year and the water table rises. The water table is so high around the YMCA they cannot connect the new pump station until the water table goes down. For a period of time, part of the new Force Main will go to the new Plant and a part of the old 54" line will go to the old Plant until the water table comes down. We will then be certifying the solid waste handling systems on April 6, 2016 and start handling that April 10, 2016. Everything will go to the new Plant by April 22, 2016. At that point we will be able to schedule a nice public event and a ceremony. During the first 30 days the Contractor will be operating the Plant to ensure that everything is working properly. We are 5 months ahead of schedule on the Force Main Project and 15 months ahead of schedule on the new Wastewater Treatment Plant. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether any of the old lines would be removed. Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the section between Gornto Road and Remer Lane will be left in place because if we ever have a problem on Gornto Road it will automatically gravitate to Remer. This was left in as a backup. They will leave the old 54" line for the time being to make sure everything is working. It will be the same thing at the Treatment Plant. Parts of the old Treatment Plant will still be used. Councilman Vickers stated that he heard that Daugherty County was looking to buy out four or five houses through FEMA because of repeat flooding and inquired as to whether the Mayor or City Manager had heard about that. Mayor Gayle stated that Albany had a lot of houses under water. Larry Hanson stated that we have not had repeat flooding of homes. We only had one event in 2009 where water was in homes and that was considered a Presidentially-declared disaster flood. If there was a second flood event then we could become eligible but thankfully we have not had that.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Yost stated that as a governing body the City makes appointments to Boards and Authorities. He inquired as to whether we have the authority to ask one of the Authorities to present their financial information, debt information, and other related items to us. We may be able to get the information through an Open Records Request, but as a governing body that appoints people to serve on these could we ask them for that information? George Talley, City Attorney, stated not necessarily unless there was some Act that allows you to do that. There is no law against asking and they might give it to you just because you asked. They should not have any reason not to give out that information. He was not aware, without doing some research, of any particular law says that just because you appoint people to the Authority you can get financial information. You certainly can if you are funding their budget. Councilman Vickers stated that Authorities are created through the State Legislature and the power comes from how that Legislation is drawn up. Though he is not in disagreement, they may need to be real careful because this may not be proper. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that every Authority is a unit of government under Georgia law and they are required to have an annual audit and they are required to submit that to the State by December 31st of each year with a grace period of 60 days. It is harder and harder to get these audits done due to the changes in recent years with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Audit reports are on record for every Authority. Councilman Vickers stated that he thought Councilman Yost was talking about personal financial information. Larry Hanson stated that several of the Authorities are required by their enabling Legislation to submit a copy of their annual audit to the City and the County.

Councilman Norton congratulated Mayor Gayle on his endeavor to create the Valdosta Youth Council (VYC). He was in attendance at the VYC Meeting today and he appreciated the work of Sementha Mathews and Teresa Bolden, VYC Advisory Board Members, throughout the month. The students are learning a lot and taking this very serious. The parents are also learning by attending so this has been a great endeavor.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Judy Haverkamp, 3922 Island Creek Road, stated that the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners was presented a proposal over a year ago about anti-tethering of dogs and inquired as to whether it has been presented to the City Council. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that they not received the proposal as of this date. Ms. Haverkamp inquired as to whether the City had an Ordinance that states any person who stands on the side of the road selling animals must have a permit. Larry Hanson stated that we do have an Ordinance but it would fall under the Business License. Ms. Haverkamp inquired as to whether it was specific about selling animals or was it more like a vendor-type permit. Mayor Gayle asked Ms. Haverkamp if she had a specific example or noticed this type of activity going on. Ms. Haverkamp stated that she has notified three different property owners and they have put up signs but they have a real bad problem by T. J. Maxx which she is now in the process of contacting the owner to see

if they will put up signs. Meanwhile, these people are all over town selling animals. With spring and summer coming up there will be a lot more. They have had some really bad situations with people selling dogs with diseases and then they end up dying after a couple of days. They are trying to eliminate some of this and keep after these people. If they want to sell dogs then they should put it in the newspaper. She does not want to see people selling sick animals. Larry Hanson stated that if she does have some locations in mind then we could send a City Marshal by there to check to see if they do have the proper permit.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the February 25, 2016 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:05 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, March 10, 2016.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta