

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 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, Alvin Payton, Jr., and Ben Norton. Councilman Robert Yost and Councilwomen Sandra Tooley and Vivian Miller-Cody were absent. The invocation was given by Pastor John Manning, St. Mark Baptist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD**

Consideration of the October, 2016 Employee of the Month Award (Capt. Matt O'Steen and Sgt. Joel Hurley, Police Department).

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that Matt O'Steen began his employment with the Police Department in December, 1995 and currently holds the position of Captain. Capt. O'Steen directs the operation of long and short range plans for the Uniform Patrol Division and reviews and approves reports completed by personnel. He also prepares monthly activity reports and participates in policy making sessions and Staff meetings within the Department. Joel Hurley began his employment with the Police Department in September, 2005 and currently holds the position of Sergeant. Sgt. Hurley supervises Patrol Officers during daily operations and patrols areas within his designated area of concern. He also receives and reviews written reports of Patrol Officers and offers guidance when necessary. In August of this year, Officers were dispatched to a shooting incident on Hamilton Street. Upon arrival, Capt. O'Steen found a citizen lying on the ground unresponsive with a gunshot wound to the chest. Sgt. Hurley arrived shortly thereafter. They were unable to detect a pulse indicating the man was not breathing. Capt. O'Steen and Sgt. Hurley began taking turns with CPR and administering chest compressions until EMS arrived on scene. After a few minutes, the citizen began breathing on his own. Capt. O'Steen and Sgt. Hurley did exactly what they were trained to do in quickly accessing the situation and administering CPR. These two Officers were instrumental in saving the man's life. They are a great credit to the Valdosta Police Department as well as the City of Valdosta. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Capt. Matt O'Steen and Sgt. Joel Hurley as Employees of the Month.

Presentation of the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Champion of Cities Award to Senator Ellis Black.

Marcie Rubensohn, Deputy Director of Governmental Relations with the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), presented the Champion of Cities Award to Senator Ellis Black for sponsorship of two important pieces of legislation. This award is given to legislators who most actively support GMA's initiatives and goals at the end of every two-year legislative term. Based in Atlanta, GMA is a voluntary, non-profit organization that provides legislative advocacy, educational, employee benefit and consulting services to its 520 member cities.

Senator Ellis Black stated that he served in the House of Representatives for 14 years and during those 14 years he had four different Districts. For some reason they would never put him in a District that had a big city in it. All the cities that he had were in Brooks County. The last two years he lost Brooks County and picked up the cities of Homerville, Folkston, and Kingsland. As a Representative for his constituents, he was able to get legislation passed and that was very meaningful to him. Senator Black thanked Ms. Rubensohn and GMA for the Champion of Cities Award.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he has known and worked with Senator Black for many years and he has much respect for him. Senator Black is a person who has served his local community for many years. He served on the Lowndes County Board of Education and was elected to the House of Representatives. When he was elected to the Senate and Valdosta became part of his District, Senator Black reached out to City officials and he has maintained constant communication with them. Senator Black asked City officials about their opinions on

issues that affect cities and he responds to their calls and E-mails during the Legislative Session. He has always shown the ability to seek to understand issues from all sides. That does not mean that he will always agree with you but he will be honest with you. If he tells you he is going to support something then he is a person of his word. If he tells you that he cannot support something then he will explain why he cannot. Larry Hanson stated that he has had many interactions with Senator Black over the years and he has a great deal of respect for him. Senator Black is serving our City, our County, and our Region in a very good way and we appreciate his efforts very much.

Mayor Gayle stated that he wanted to echo the City Manager's comments. When Senator Black was elected he was an infant Mayor and he has gotten to know him much better during the last four years. He has called on Senator Black on a couple of occasions and he has always been there to advise him. Senator Black has a lot of experience that we rely on and that means a lot. Mayor Gayle stated that he is looking forward to serving with Senator Black during the next couple of years and thanked him for his dedication and support.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the September 22, 2016 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (4-0) of the Council.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 2016-22, A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FOR A FOR A POST OFFICE FACILITY IN A DOWNTOWN-COMMERCIAL (C-D) ZONING DISTRICT**

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Post Office facility in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District as requested by Dasher-Little Corporation (File No. CU-2016-04). The property is located at 311 North Patterson Street. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their September Regular Meeting and recommended approval with two conditions (8-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that on behalf of Dasher-Little Corporation, Howard Dasher is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a proposed Post Office facility in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District. The property consists of 1.40 acres located at 311 North Patterson Street. This is the former Southern Stationery property that is between North Patterson and North Ashley Streets, approximately 150 feet south of East Magnolia Street. The property contains an existing commercial building (21,678 square feet) with four commercial/office tenant spaces of varying sizes. The U. S. Postal Service (USPS) is proposing to both downsize and relocate its existing downtown Post Office to this property from its current location at 401 North Patterson Street (Federal Building, 1st floor). Typically, the USPS locates its facilities on government-owned property and is, therefore, exempt from local land development regulations and no CUP would be required; however, in this case, the property is privately owned and therefore requires a CUP approval. The property is located within the Downtown Activity Center (DAC) Character Areas on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. The property is also located within the City's local Historic District, although this building is considered a non-contributing historic resource. Any exterior changes to the building or site shall have historic Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) approval. Approximately 75% of the existing building is already occupied by the Biotest Plasma Center (two tenant spaces). There is also a small professional office located in the southwest corner of the building. The USPS is proposing to occupy the remaining tenant space (area "D", 4,500 square feet) which is along most of the building's southern wall facing the existing parking lot. The USPS is proposing to relocate only its retail function (customer service counter) and bank of P. O. boxes to this new facility, and there are no proposed building expansions. All of the USPS sorting and distribution facilities will be combined with existing facilities at their Northside Station on Inner Perimeter Road. Post Offices are a permitted use in all the main Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts, except for C-D. The C-D Zoning District is exempt from on-site minimum parking requirements. The availability of parking and good access is considered a must for most Post Office facilities, and hence the case-by-case CUP approval requirement in C-D Zoning. Currently, the Post Office occupies most of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Federal Building and shares this building with several Federal government offices which are located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. This building has a total of about 52 public parking spaces, and the subject property has 78. The Biotest facility uses 51 of these spaces and the remaining 27 are available for use by the Post Office and the small professional office. The Post Office will only have about three employees at this

new facility and only needs a dozen or so parking spaces to handle their in-and-out traffic. Because the Post Office is an existing use that is simply being downsized and relocated from only a block away, there would be no measurable change in the overall traffic patterns of the surrounding area. The site itself has more available parking and more access drives than the previous location, and it should be handle this use very effectively. Downtowns in general are intended to comprise a mixture of land uses. Having a Post Office facility that continues to operate in the Downtown area is certainly important to maintaining its role as a center of urban activity. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the following conditions: (1) Approval shall be granted for a local Post Office facility not to exceed 7,000 square feet and to be located in the southern portion of the existing building with direct access to the existing parking lot. The facility shall not include any regional (truck-based) sorting or distribution facilities. (2) Conditional Use approval shall expire after three years from the date of approval if no plans for a building permit (interior renovation) have been submitted by that time. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their September 26, 2016 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the same two conditions as recommended by Staff (8-0 vote).

Councilman Vickers inquired as to what the timeline would be for the relocation. Matt Martin stated that he did not have a specific date but it would be soon. They are anxious to get started on some renovation work and it should take a few months.

Howard Dasher, III, 2701 Green Meadow Drive, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Dasher stated that a Conditional Use Permit is needed in order to relocate the Post Office retail and mailbox service and asked Council's consideration in approving the request. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether there was a tentative date for the relocation. Mr. Dasher stated that if everything goes well it would take place in the spring of 2017.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2016-22, an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Post Office facility in a Downtown-Commercial (C-D) Zoning District as requested by Dasher-Little Corporation, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

**A RESOLUTION TO UPDATE THE GREATER LOWNDES 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POSTPONED**

Consideration of a Resolution to update the Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Plan (File No. VA-2016-14). The Planning Commission reviewed this at their September Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 Vote).

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to postpone this request until a later date.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to postpone the request for a Resolution to update the Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Plan until a later date.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2016-17, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A STANDARD UTILITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF VALDOSTA AND THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR ADJUSTMENT OF UTILITIES FOR A ROADWAY PROJECT**

Consideration of a Resolution of Support for the establishment of a City Center Arts District (CCAD) in Valdosta.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that at the City Council Work Session on September 6, 2016, Buddy Boswell, a Community At Large Member of the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC), gave a presentation to the Mayor and Council on establishing Valdosta's first Arts District, also known as the City Center Arts Districts

(CCAD). Arts Districts are often referred to as a cultural district, creative communities, or an arts and entertainment district. All of these labels refer to a creative economy that encompasses a variety of jobs and industries including sectors of the visual, performing, and literary arts as well as applied fields like architecture, graphic design, marketing, and sometimes even software development. All of these terms link culture with the economy. The primary focus is to advance arts in the U. S. A cultural district, or an arts and entertainment district is a well-recognized, labeled, mixed used area of a city in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor of attraction and robust economic activity. Arts, culture, and creativity can improve a community's competitive edge, create a foundation for defining a sense of place, attract new and visiting populations, integrate the visions of community and business leaders, and contribute to the development of a skilled work force. The PAAC is proposing to establish a City Center Arts District (CCAD) in Valdosta which will promote various types of arts such as visual, performing, music, and poetry. The advantages of a proposed boundary are: (1) walkable area, (2) anchor - Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, (3) promote community art throughout the Downtown area, and (4) highlight the 24 existing art relevant businesses and theaters. The proposed area to be designated as a CCAD follows the Central Valdosta Development Authority (CVDA) western, southern, and eastern boundaries and then moves north two blocks to Webster Street to include the Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts. A key success for the CCAD is to have the community involved and developing relationships and partnerships. Potential partners would be the CVDA, Downtown Development Authority, Annette Howell Turner Center for the Arts, the City of Valdosta, citizens of the City of Valdosta, the Historic Preservation Commission, Valdosta State University, the Chamber of Commerce, Lowndes County, the Lowndes-Valdosta Arts Commission, and local businesses. They will hold a series of charrettes to bring citizens in to help create a mission, set long term goals, and develop an action plan. Initially all of these activities will be handled by the PAAC but eventually it will require a separate entity in order to manage the funding, the marketing, and the evaluation of the activities. A Resolution of Support by the City of Valdosta has been prepared to establish the CCDA. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the Resolution of Support for the CCDA.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to enact Resolution No. 2016-147, a Resolution of Support for the establishment of a City Center Arts District (CCAD) in Valdosta, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

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

Consideration of a request to approve a Change Order for emergency repairs to a sewer main located at 1406 North Ashley Street.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that while performing an emergency replacement of an 18-inch sanitary sewer main in the vicinity of 1406 North Ashley Street, the City's contractor, Radney Plumbing, Inc. (RPI) discovered a substantial flow of water into one of the associated project manholes. A bypass system was in place in the adjoining upstream manhole at the time, which should have prevented any flow from entering the downstream manhole. Utilities Department Staff were notified and responded to the area to determine the source of the inflow. Using video inspection technology, they discovered that a section of the 10-inch sewer main in between the two manholes that crosses One Mile Branch had greatly deteriorated and partially collapsed. The collapsed section of the pipe was allowing water from the creek to flow directly into the sanitary sewer system. A point repair of the collapsed section was briefly considered, but Staff ultimately determined that the best course of action to prevent further pipe failure was to replace the entire 84 linear foot main. A new PVC main would be installed inside a steel casing to prevent any future damage from creek debris. Due to time constraints and the critical need to prevent further pipe failure, an emergency condition was issued for repairs which prevented use of the formal bidding process. Staff used the informal written bid method and requested bids from three local contractors. The sole bidder was Radney Plumbing, Inc. (RPI) with a quote of \$41,631 which includes the cost for creek bank stabilization using #1 rip rap. RPI offered an alternative plan for \$33,905, a deduction of \$7,726. The alternative plan would have used existing material for backfill at the creek crossing in lieu of rip rap. After an onsite evaluation of the creek bank with the Engineering Department, it was determined that the best course of action for long term bank stabilization would be to use the #1 rip rap. RPI agreed to perform the work under emergency conditions and commenced work on Thursday, September 22, 2016. All work was completed in minimal time with no service interruption. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the Change Order for emergency repairs to a sewer main located at 1406 North Ashley Street.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve a Change Order for Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$41,631 for emergency repairs to a sewer main located at 1406 North Ashley Street.

Consideration of a Memorandum of Agreement between the Valdosta Fire Department and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency for Georgia Search and Rescue Team (GSAR) #2.

Assistant Fire Chief Brian Boutwell stated that Georgia's Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Program was established and funded under the authority of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) in 2003. It was designed to establish a framework of local emergency services personnel that are trained and integrated into disaster response task forces. Georgia Search and Rescue Task Force 2 (GA-T2) was established in 2008 and is part of the State's US&R Program. It can be mobilized within four to six hours after proper notification for deployment in-state through the State Mutual Aid Agreement, or out-of-state through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). The State of Georgia is vulnerable to a wide range of natural or man-made disasters and emergencies. The Georgia Emergency Management Act, as amended (The Act) gives the State and local governments the authority to make agreements for mutual aid assistance in emergencies, and through such agreements to ensure the timely reimbursement of costs incurred by the local governments which render such assistance. Under the Act, the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMHSA) has authority to coordinate assistance between local governments during emergencies and to provide available resources, where needed. As part of the aforementioned authority, GEMHSA created the Georgia Search and Rescue (GSAR) teams as special regional response teams comprised of qualified local governmental public safety entities. GEMHSA supplied teams with appropriate equipment, training, and exercises, enabling each team to assist with GSAR personnel, equipment, facilities, services, supplies, and other resources during an emergency or disaster. This Memorandum of Agreement is entered pursuant to authorities contained in Articles I through III, Chapter 3, Title 38, Official Code of Georgia Annotated, including O.C.G.A. § 38-3-29, specifically so that they can continue to house the GSAR apparatus and equipment in the City of Valdosta. The value of the equipment and truck is approximately \$1,000,000. It carries rescue equipment that they are not able to carry on regular fire trucks. The length of time for the Memorandum of Agreement is four years including 2016. They have been able to use this equipment for rescues on the Interstate, several different rescue operations within the City, and in the southwest part of Georgia. Assistant Fire Chief Boutwell recommended that Council approve the Memorandum of Agreement.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve a Memorandum of Agreement between the Valdosta Fire Department and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency for Georgia Search and Rescue Team (GSAR) #2.

Consideration of a request to approve Agreements with Hannah Solar for a Solar Project at both Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant sites on Wetherington Lane.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that several years ago the City of Valdosta partnered with Hannah Solar through the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority to have a solar array at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant. As is often the case, innovation was ahead of regulation and it was the City's goal at the time to find a way to use solar to help power our Treatment Plant in order to save on electrical costs which is one of the major costs of these Plants. At that time, it was not allowed under the Public Service Commission regulations so the City entered into a Land Lease Agreement with Hannah Solar where they are paying us an annual land lease payment of \$18,750 for 20 years. The Agreement has two, five-year options for renewals and rent escalations over the life of the Agreement. A solar array basically consists of panels and there is very little cost in operating them. Following the manufacturer's warranty, the responsibility for maintenance, cleaning, and replacement of the panels falls on the owner. The maintenance of the panels depends upon the area where they are constructed or arrayed and whether or not you get a lot of dust, leaves, or other air particles. The panels are also prone to damage from nature and some mechanical parts. The City could maintain the solar panels or Hannah Solar offers a Service and Maintenance Contract for either five or ten years with the lower price offered in the ten-year Contract. The regulations have now changed and the City has been working with Hannah Solar and Georgia Power through a competitive process to be selected for a solar site where the City would allow Hannah Solar to use some of our excess property for placement of solar panels at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant. At the July 7, 2016

Council Meeting, the City agreed to contract with Hannah Solar on a 2.5 acre tract of land for them to build a solar array by which they would sell power on the grid to Georgia Power. Instead of getting land lease payments from Hannah Solar, Hannah would build the City a separate solar array to provide power to the Mud Creek Plant. At the end of six years, Hannah Solar would deed the solar array to the City. Hannah would have all responsibility for construction, set-up, operation, and maintenance for the first six years. The solar array to be built and ultimately deeded to the City would provide 50kW of power, which would provide a portion of the power needed for the Treatment Plant. Using solar power instead of electricity would provide greater savings to the City than a land lease would generate in income. The solar array would save the City approximately \$9,000 per year and over \$270,000 over a 30-year period in present day costs. Georgia Power has established a very aggressive installation schedule for Hannah Solar and has a project now underway at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant. Mud Creek was the first of three project locations that the City and Hannah Solar agreed to bring to the Council. The next proposal is for solar panels at the new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant site which would bring another megawatt. The third step would be to place solar panels at the old Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant site and Hannah Solar would go through the same process. Hannah Solar has been successful in obtaining approval for all three proposals, so the City could end up, in addition to the 50 kilowatts (kW) at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant, with an additional 150 kW at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plants for a total of 200 kW of renewable, sustainable energy supporting not only the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant but also the new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant. The parties are now proposing to contract for a five acre tract of land at each Withlacoochee site to be used to construct a solar array for Hannah and for one at the new WWTP site for the City. The City has also negotiated with Hannah that in lieu of land lease payments, Hannah will agree to maintain the City's solar array at both locations (Mud Creek and Withlacoochee) for years 7-20, 21-25 (if exercised), and 26-30 (if exercised). The value of the Maintenance and Operation Agreement at each of the two sites is \$20,400.00 (24 years times \$850 per year). This exceeds offered land lease payments of \$1,250 per year at Mud Creek and is in line with offered land lease payments of \$2,500 at Withlacoochee. Importantly it means Hannah Solar will maintain the City's solar arrays at both sites for up to 30 years at their full costs to include annual inspection, cleaning, replacing panels as needed, and more. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the Agreements with Hannah Solar for a Solar Project at both Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant sites on Wetherington Lane. Councilman Carroll stated that this discussion started approximately three years ago with Hannah Solar and the last year it has been close as to whether we were going to get it or not. He appreciated the follow through to bring this about.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve the Agreements with Hannah Solar for a Solar Project at both Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant sites on Wetherington Lane.

## LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to approve the forgiveness of loans for participants in the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) Loan Program.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City's Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) fund holds mortgages receivable from homeowners who qualified for assistance as part of the UDAG program. These notes were set up to be forgiven at the City's option after 30 years if the homeowner satisfied all program conditions. The City has mortgage receivables in a number of funds with automatic forgiveness at the end of an eligibility period; however, the UDAG mortgages were written with the City having the option to forgive them. The following mortgages below have now reached 30 years and are eligible for forgiveness according to the terms of the program: (1) Loan #5003 dated 10/07/1983 - David and Chong Ku Williams (\$10,000.00), (2) Loan #5032 dated 11/30/1984 - James and Karen Wallace (\$10,000.00), (3) Loan #8001 dated 05/09/1985 - Annie Motes (9,593.70), (4) Loan #8003 dated 03/22/1985 - Willie and Martha Homer (\$9,644.66), (5) Loan #8005 dated 07/12/1985 - Gail Shamburger (\$10,000.00), (6) Loan #8040 dated 01/20/1984 - Ralph and Yvonne Wright (\$9,012.69), (7) Loan #5039 dated 06/26/1986 - Glenn and Jean Alexander (\$10,000.00), (8) Loan #7004 dated 02/13/1986 - Ivory J/Beverly A Hampton (\$10,000.00), and (9) Loan #7007 dated 05/07/1986 - Bertha Jackson (10,000.00). Chuck Dinkins recommended that Council approve the forgiveness of loans for participants in the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) Loan Program.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Carroll to approve the forgiveness of loans for participants in the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) Loan Program. Councilman Norton seconded the motion. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the City still had the Community Home Investment Program (CHIP). Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the City was awarded a CHIP Grant by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs several months ago. The amount of the CHIP Grant was \$600,000 with \$250,000 of that amount going to Habitat for Humanity and the remainder to the City of Valdosta. The motion was unanimously adopted (4-0).

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens to be heard.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that Fire Chief Freddie Broome received a call from the State Georgia Emergency Management Agency today our GSAR unit was deployed this afternoon due to the hurricane. They will be leaving tomorrow and will be staged on the coast of Georgia on Saturday. They will be in Waycross tomorrow waiting on their assignment. There are 34 personnel who have been trained to use the resources of that vehicle and deploy to a situation where there is an emergency or crises. Eleven of those are members of the Valdosta Fire Department. This is important and it shows that we help our region when there is a need. They will do a good job at whatever they are asked to do and we are very proud of that.

The Local Maintenance Improvement Program (LMIG) has been sent out for bid. This is last year's LMIG funding because we bid it several times and did not receive any bids. The Georgia Department of Transportation now has the new Transportation tax and they have had a lot of work out there for the contractors. Pat Collins, City Engineer, made multiple communication efforts with contractors to try and find a time we felt they could compete and have window of opportunity. Those bids will be open later in October and we will be bringing those to you the second meeting of the month. Council has already approved the streets last year. This will include the resurfacing as well as the East Park Avenue Project where we are having separate State money to add turn lanes and decel lanes because there are so many schools along that section of roadway.

The City of Valdosta does not appear to be having any bad inclement weather due to the hurricane. We may have 20-30 mph winds and a couple of inches of rain but nothing severe; however, there are a lot of evacuees from the State of Florida coming here. At this point we have three churches that have already opened to house those displaced by the hurricane. Park Avenue United Methodist Church opened this morning and they are already full. First United Methodist Church announced today that they are going to open and they are pet friendly; however, they are nearly full. Prior to the Council Meeting, Cross Pointe Church announced that they will be open by 8:30 p.m. tonight. There are no vacant hotel rooms from Valdosta to Atlanta. We will be doing whatever we can to support the evacuees over the next few days.

The City of Valdosta will be hosting an Affordable Housing Summit and a Town Hall Meeting on Saturday, October 8, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Mildred Hunter Center and Council is encouraged to attend.

There is a new Program offered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to assist homeowners who are under water on their mortgage. Council is encouraged to share this information with their constituents who might fit into that category.

The Fire Department will be hosting the Firefighters Ball which is scheduled for October 15, 2016 at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center from 7:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. Tickets are \$40 each and are still available.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, thanked the Mayor and Council for attending the Pink Heals Tour this afternoon. This is a new initiative that the Fire Department has taken on and it is a nationwide effort. This is our way of showing support for breast cancer awareness in our community.

Councilman Vickers inquired about opening Mathis Auditorium for the evacuees. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the problem with Mathis Auditorium is that it was rented this time. There was an event taking place there and it could not be cancelled. That is why we had a number of churches open their doors.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to adjourn the October 6, 2016 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:08 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, October 20, 2016.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta