

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2009**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor John Fretti called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Tim Carroll, Alvin Payton, Jr., Willie Head, Jr., and Robert Yost. Councilmen Sonny Vickers and James Wright were absent. Councilman John Eunice arrived at 5:35 p.m. The invocation was given by Councilman Tim Carroll, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for Awards and Presentations.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (4-0) for the Awards and Presentations.

Special Presentation for the winners of the Georgia Municipal Association's "If I Were Mayor" Essay Contest.

Mayor Fretti stated that each April, cities across the State celebrate Georgia Cities Week. This year's theme was "A Story to Tell." Activities are planned throughout the week to showcase and highlight the many programs and services provided to our citizens. In Valdosta, numerous activities were planned which included the Great American Clean Up, Customer Service Day, Employee Blood Drive, Job Shadow Day with the Valdosta City School System, an Employee Appreciation Luncheon, a Jazz Concert, and "If I Were Mayor" essay contest. This contest is for sixth grade students throughout the community and always provides a great opportunity to see our City from their perspective. In the past there have been some incredible and thought provoking work by our local students and this year's winners were no exception. The winners are as follows: (1) Third Place Winner - Anthony Major from J.L. Newbern Middle School, (2) Second Place Winner - Joseph B. Smith, Jr. from Valdosta Middle School, and (3) First Place Winner - Deedric Mitchell J.L. Newbern Middle School. Mayor Fretti stated that there were more than 5,000 essays submitted State wide and more than 400 essays submitted in Congressional District 11. Deedric Mitchell was the winner for all of Congressional District 11 and he traveled to Atlanta yesterday to be recognized by the Georgia Municipal Association for his outstanding achievement. Deedric was also awarded a \$250 Savings Bond. Mayor Fretti congratulated Deedric and presented him with a framed picture that was taken at the Award Ceremony in Atlanta. Mayor Fretti also recognized and thanked Dr. Bill Cason, Valdosta City School Superintendent, Dr. Janice Richardson, Principal at J.L. Newbern Middle School, and Dr. David Cole, Principal at Valdosta Middle School for being committed partners to this annual contest.

Special Presentation to Valdosta Police Department for State Certification Re-accreditation.

Police Chief Frank Simons introduced Chief Donald Cheek with the Dougherty County Police Department who presented an award on behalf of the Georgia Association of Chiefs to the Valdosta Police Department for the State Certification Re-accreditation.

Chief Donald Cheek stated that it was a privilege for him to represent the Georgia Chiefs and to make the presentation to Chief Frank Simons, the Valdosta Police Department, Mayor and Council, and the community. This is the third time the Valdosta Police Department has received this Law Enforcement Certification Award which is patterned after the National Accreditation guidelines. Chief Cheek presented the award to Chief Frank Simons who then presented the award to Mayor Fretti on behalf of the Valdosta Police Department for the support that they continue to receive from the Mayor and Council and City Manager.

The minutes of the April 9, 2009 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (5-0) of the Council.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Simeon (S. M.) Washington, 1409 Leone Avenue, stated that he had previously spoken before Council and asked for their consideration in paving Leone Avenue because it was patches on top of patches. Approximately three months ago, there were some men sweeping and cleaning Leone Avenue and Mr. Washington thought they were going to patch it again; however, to his surprise the next morning there were trucks and paving equipment on Leone Avenue. Mr. Washington thanked the Mayor and Council for paving Leone Avenue.

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

Consideration of bids for Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Phase 2 water/sewer improvements.

Von Shipman, City Engineer, stated that the City water and sewer infrastructure between South Oak Street and Patterson Street must be replaced or rehabilitated before the streetscape improvements can occur on the corridor upgrade. Bids were received on April 14, 2009 with the low bid submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$193,698. The Engineering estimate was \$227,500. Von Shipman recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$193,698 plus a 10% contingency.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$193,698 plus a 10% contingency for Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Phase 2 water/sewer improvements.

Consideration of bids for a pumper test pit for the Fire Department.

Von Shipman, City Engineer, stated that the Fire Department identified the need for a pumper test pit for fire fighters to use their equipment at the fire maintenance facility on Forrest Street adjacent to the Public Works facility. This will eliminate the need for them to use the facilities at Moody Air Force Base. Crews Engineering, Inc. designed the test pit with input from the Fire Department. Bids were received on April 14, 2009 with the low bid submitted by Southern Allied Contractors in the amount of \$109,743. Von Shipman recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Southern Allied Contractors in the amount of \$109,743 plus a 10% contingency.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to follow the recommendation of the City Engineer and approve the low bid submitted by Southern Allied Contractors in the amount of \$109,743 plus a 10% contingency for a pumper test pit for the Fire Department.

Consideration of bids for water and sewer improvements for Former Island 77B.

Von Shipman, City Engineer, stated that Council approved contracts with three local engineers to design water and sewer improvements to serve the property in former unincorporated islands that were annexed back in 2006. The three locations are as follows: (1) West side of St. Augustine Road and on the north and south sides of River Street, (2) Smithbriar and Pine Point Circle area near Five Points, and (3) Cherry Creek Hills (South Lakeshore, North Lakeshore, Cherry Creek Drive, Cherry Creek Road, Ridge Road). Former Island 77A is being redesigned to include a pump station in order to reduce the depth of the proposed sewer mains. Bids for Former Island 77B were received on April 16, 2009 with the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$382,001. The Engineering estimate was \$428,445. Von Shipman recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$382,001 plus a 10% contingency.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to follow the recommendation of the City Engineer and approve the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$382,001 plus a 10% contingency for water and sewer improvements for Former Island 77B.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2009-9, A RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FOR A CRIME ANALYSIS SOFTWARE PROGRAM AND CRIME ANALYST**

Consideration of a request to apply for grant funds from the United States Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Competitive Grant Program for a crime analysis software program and Crime Analyst.

Police Chief Frank Simons stated that on February 17, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the landmark American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 also known as the Recovery Act. As one of the many elements, the Recovery Act provides the United States Department of Justice with funding for grants to local enforcement including support for hiring to improve the functioning of the criminal justice system, to assist victims of crime, to combat violence against women, to fight internet crimes against children, and to support youth mentoring. DOJ is committed to working with our national, state, local, and tribal partners to ensure this funding invests in the American workforce. The Bureau of Justice Administration will assist state, local, and tribal jurisdictions in improving the criminal justice system, providing assistance to the victims of crime (other than compensation) and supporting communities in preventing drug abuse and crime. This particular facet of the Recovery Act Grant, Category I specifically addresses utilizing a comprehensive, community-based data driven approach to reduce and help resolve violent crime. For the 2009 grant program, the City proposes to acquire a software program and crime analyst in order to uncover connections, patterns, and relationships buried in what may seem to be unrelated data that is gathered in multiple, serious crimes and will help to identify crimes that appear to be unrelated but may have one common thread. The data that is gathered and entered into this program would assist law enforcement officials in areas such as intelligence, narcotic issues, burglaries, homicides, in addition to many other areas of concern. A crime analysis software package would allow law enforcement to gather information from multiple data sources, input this information into one database, and quickly gain insight into patterns, trends, and hotspots. The information provided by the data driven approach will effectively reduce time and resources currently required to extract intricate, case specific information. Also proposed is the addition of a Crime Analyst position. This person would be responsible for maintaining and operating the data driven approach software that is purchased. This person would perform statistical and analytical research involving the use of the chosen computer software application, gather and analyze crime data for crime pattern detection, target and suspect profiles, crime forecasting, and prepare reports regarding crime data and trends to field personnel for response and patrol modifications. The Recovery Act grant may cover 100% of the approved entry-level salary and fringe benefits of a newly hired Crime Analyst over a two-year period. There is no local match or cap on the amount of funding that can be requested, but grant funding will be determined by the Department's current salary and fringe benefits structure. Any additional costs for higher than entry level salaries and fringe benefits are the responsibility of the grantee agency. The Recovery Act grant may also cover 100% of the onetime cost to purchase the crime analysis software program. The yearly maintenance contract would be maintained by the Valdosta Police Department. The total request grant funds for Category I are \$15,000 for software and \$100,162.23 for salary. Chief Simons recommended that Council approve the request to apply for grant funds and authorize the Mayor to sign a resolution for filing of the application.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to enact Resolution No. 2009-9, a Resolution to apply for grant funds from the United States Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Competitive Grant Program and authorize the Mayor to sign a resolution for filing of the application for a crime analysis software program and Crime Analyst, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book IV.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2009-10, A RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM FOR FOUR CIVILIAN INFORMATION COLLECTION SPECIALISTS**

Consideration of a request to apply for grant funds from the United States Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Competitive Grant Program for four civilian Information Collection Specialists.

Police Chief Frank Simons stated that this grant is also presented by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Category IV, specifically addresses the hiring of civilian staff in local law enforcement agencies in order to augment the workforce. This would assist law enforcement agencies in keeping sworn staff in the field in an effort to reduce and prevent crime. For the 2009 grant program, the City proposes to hire four civilian Information Collection Specialists. The Information Collection Specialists would be trained to take specific, non-emergency, basic police reports via a telephone and/or other modes of communication. The Recovery Act grant may cover 100% of the approved entry-level salary and fringe benefits of each newly-hired Information Collection Specialist over a two-year period. There is no local match or cap on the amount of funding that can be requested, but grant funding will be determined by our agency's current salary and fringe benefits structure. Any additional costs for higher than entry level salaries and fringe benefits are the responsibility of the grantee agency. The total requested grant funds are \$295,431.04. Chief Simons recommended that Council approve the request to apply for grant funds and authorize the Mayor to sign a resolution for filing of the application.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to enact Resolution No. 2009-10, a Resolution to apply for grant funds from the United States Department of Justice Edward Byrne Memorial Competitive Grant Program and authorize the Mayor to sign a resolution for filing of the application for four civilian Information Collection Specialists, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book IV.

Consideration of emergency design services for two pump stations for the Utilities Department.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the Ponderosa and Big Country Club Lift Stations were constructed in the 1970's and have never been upgraded to handle wet weather flows as well as their respective growing service areas. Both the Ponderosa and Big Country Lift Stations have been identified as inadequately sized to handle sewer flows entering them from their respective service areas. In addition, equipment in these stations has deteriorated and requires regular repair. As a result, both are susceptible to surcharging during significant rain events. In the most recent storm event, the Big Country Club Lift Station was flooded requiring it to be shut down to prevent significant damage to the station's electrical system. This resulted in sewage spills from the station and associated manholes. Due to the flooding, pump motors were damaged and repaired to get this station back on line. During this same event the Ponderosa Lift Station required ongoing pump downs of it's wet well by the Utility Department's Vac Trucks to minimize sewage spills for this station and manholes associated with it. Both stations continue to pose ongoing operational and maintenance problems. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the request to enter into a contract with Camp, Dresser & McKee (CDM) to begin emergency design and permitting for the replacement and/or upgrades each station to handle two-year storm water event while methodically rehabilitating worst sewer collection service areas.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the request for emergency design services for two pump stations for the Utilities Department.

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, congratulated Mayor Fretti for winning the Valdosta State University Master of Public Administration outstanding Public Official for 2009 which was a well deserved honor.

Georgia Cities Week was a great week. The Job Shadow Day, Blood Drive, and Employee Luncheon events were all a tremendous success. Larry Hanson thanked Sementa Mathews, Public Information Officer, for her efforts in organizing all of these activities in addition to her normal duties.

The Great American Cleanup was successful with 120 tires collected and 44,860 pounds of debris removed from our community.

The Mayor and Council trip to Washington, D. C. is being planned and Council members will need to let the City Manager know if they are interested in attending.

There was a great opportunity to have a partnership with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce in Valdosta and the City co-hosted an event this week because of Mayor Fretti's service on an International Chamber Board.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we are getting close to having the paperless agenda software in place and we are anticipating having the agenda all electronic for the second meeting in May. Bill Martin, with IQM2, has been in Valdosta all week training the Staff.

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Yost stated that he would like to take a tour of the Crime Lab and the building located in the rear of the facility to view the progress. Also, since the floods, the mosquitoes are getting really bad and he has received a lot of phone calls.

Councilman Head stated that Scott Park is approximately 95% complete and he has noticed that people are using the Park. There were some children practicing baseball in the Park and they needed to use the rest rooms but were told that the contractor had the key. If the Park is not complete then we need to stop people from using the Park. There has been a lot of damage to the rest room area and some of the windows have been broken out. There may be a need for more Patrol Officers in the area. Also, the back stop area is turned where the ball is hit toward the retirement center but an earlier drawing indicated that it would be hit back toward the Park and not a building. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Park is not open yet. Von Shipman stated that they are also getting a price from the contractor to change the glass block design windows into clear hard plastic.

Mayor Fretti stated that there was an International Summit held in Valdosta which was sponsored by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce of which he is a member on the International Existing Industry Committee. Former Commissioner Craig Lesser and Chris Young, Protocol Officer for the entire State of Georgia, were in attendance along with Representative Ron Stevens, who is the current Chairman of the House Economic Development Committee. There were also Counsel Generals from other countries at the meeting and they shared a lot of the international thought on commerce and trade. Mayor Fretti stated that when certain opportunities come to the forefront Valdosta will be in a position to take advantage of those opportunities.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fretti 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 Head, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the April 23, 2009 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:43 p.m. and enter into Executive Session.

Mayor Fretti reconvened the regular City Council meeting at 7:21 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of real estate only in the Executive Session and no action was taken.

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the April 23, 2009 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:22 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, May 7, 2009.