

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2010
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Pro Tem John Eunice called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Sonny Vickers, Tim Carroll, Alvin Payton, Jr., Deidra White, Robert Yost, and James Wright. Mayor John Fretti was absent due to his attendance at the U. S. Conference of Mayor's Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. The invocation was given by Councilman Robert Yost, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 7, 2010 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

John Robinson, 3227 San Juline Circle, Lake Park, stated that he has previously addressed Council about the Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) Program and some ongoing issues. They have made a lot of progress but there are still some questions to be addressed. Mr. Robinson stated that there are some local businesses that have the potential to do good work and hire people within the City but they do not qualify for the VSEB Program because they are not within the City limits. This is especially true for minority black businesses and businesses that have not made the \$750,000 that will stem them to qualify. Mr. Robinson asked Council to consider amending the VSEB Program so that if a business is registered in the County then they could also participate in the program. There could be a provision stating that if they employ people from within the City limits they would qualify. Also, there are communication barriers in the City and apparently black people in the community do not seem to get the information that they need. Mr. Robinson stated that as a concerned citizen and a member of the Black Business Association, they were going out and talking with people to get the information out. They are also using radio stations to get the information out and would like to utilize The Obsidian newspaper and WJEM News Station as a promotion mechanism in order to help make this program work. Mr. Robinson stated that he has also made some comments and suggestions about the Martin Luther King, Jr. monument and there were some eye brow moving statements which were not appreciated. He believes that black people should be more responsible for the monuments themselves and be able to show their own appreciation by setting and accomplishing goals. The VSEB Program will lead to this one day and black businesses will be able to make contributions instead of being a burden on the taxpayers. Mr. Robinson asked Council to come up with some type of accommodation and formulation that addresses the issue of people living outside of the City limits. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the VSEB Program already authorizes any business within the Valdosta Metropolitan Statistical Area, which includes Lowndes County, Brooks County, Echols County, and Lanier County, to participate.

Barthaniel Werts, 903 North Troup Street, stated that he lives on the corner of Force Street and Troup Street and there has been flooding in this area. The water comes down the street and floods his yard and is up to the vents on his brick house. He called the City yesterday to drain it but when he looked this morning there was standing water that comes down the street and into his yard. Mr. Werts stated that he was concerned and wanted to know what could be done about it. Mayor Pro Tem Eunice stated that Von Shipman, City Engineer, and Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, could possibly visit the property and meet with Mr. Werts to discuss his concerns. Larry Hanson, City Manager, asked that Mr. Werts meet with Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, to discuss the problem. This could be a catch basin clog and with the recent rain event, the City received four inches of rain in 15 hours which is a substantial amount of rainfall for the system to absorb.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request for Councilman Tim Carroll to attend the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.

Larry Hanson stated that for the past 13 years, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has provided training for hundreds of non-professional economic developers around the State of Georgia through the Georgia Academy for Economic Development. Recently, Councilman Tim Carroll was notified by Scott Purvis, Regional Representative for Region 11 with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, that he was selected to participate in the upcoming Georgia Academy for Economic Development. The first session will be held on February 17, 2010 at the East Central Technical College in Fitzgerald, Georgia. Succeeding classes will be held on March 17th, April 28th, and May 26th. The Georgia Municipal Association will award credit for this class towards various certification levels for elected officials if all classes are attended and the elected officials graduate. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the request for Councilman Tim Carroll to attend the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve a request for Councilman Tim Carroll to attend the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.

Consideration of a request for Councilman James Wright to attend the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials Conference.

Larry Hanson stated that the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials (GABEO), an affiliate of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, holds an Annual Conference each year. This year GABEO will hold its Annual Winter Board Meeting and Conference in Athens, Georgia on February 26-28, 2010. Hosts for the 2009 event include the Honorable Michael Thurmond, Georgia Commissioner of Labor, Ms. Hattie Lawson, Chair of the Athens Area Human Relations Council, and State Representative Keith Heard, District 114. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the request for Councilman James Wright to attend the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials Conference.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Vickers to approve a request for Councilman James Wright to attend the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials Conference. Councilman Carroll seconded the request. Councilman Wright stated that in the Council Agenda Item it was noted that he attended the Conference in 2008 but he did not attend the Conference due to economic conditions. The motion was unanimously adopted (6-0).

Consideration of a request to approve sponsorship of a table at the Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Rotary Club of Valdosta has hosted a Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner for the past two years. This event is one small way to show the Law Enforcement professionals that their community supports and appreciates their efforts and funds raised are used to assist the area's Local Law Enforcement personnel and their families in times of special need. This year, the Rotary Club of Valdosta will host its 3rd Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner on Thursday, February 18, 2010 at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center. The event will begin at 6:00 p.m. with a reception and dinner at 7:00 p.m. Retired Chief Judge Arthur "Mac" McLane will serve as the Master of Ceremonies and will recognize the "Officers of the Year" for participating Departments. A table of 10 can be purchased for \$1,000 or individual tickets are \$100 each. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve sponsorship of a table at the Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve sponsorship of a table at the Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Georgia Municipal Association Mayor's Day Conference will be held January 22-25, 2010 in Atlanta and the Mayor and several members of Council will be attending.

There will be a Community Task Force on Violence Listening Session on Tuesday, February 2, 2009 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center. They are expecting a large turnout from the community and Council is invited to attend.

The Bird Supper will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at The Depot in Atlanta. Tickets are \$50 per person and can be purchased at the City of Valdosta.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, thanked Sementa Mathews, Public Information Officer, and members of the Sesquicentennial Committee for their work on the successful Dosta Fest which was the kickoff for the City's Sesquicentennial Celebration.

The Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) Program will hold a ceremony on Wednesday, January 28, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. in the City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room to recognize the first seven businesses that are being certified into VSEB Program. We are hopeful that the exposure from this event will encourage many other businesses to apply.

The City held up extremely well during the recent storm which produced four inches of rain and more in some parts of the County. The river will crest on Monday, January 25, 2010 at 16 feet and if this is accurate the City will have minimal problems with flooding.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park Dedication Ceremony has been rescheduled for Saturday, February 6, 2010 at 12:00 p.m. rather than 2:00 p.m.

The first Valdosta City Government 101 Program will be held on April 6, 2010 and there are currently 16 citizens registered. The Program can hold up to 25 people and citizens are encouraged to sign up.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers inquired about the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) Public Hearing concerning the West Hill Avenue overpass. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Public Hearing will be held on Thursday, January 28, 2010 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Lowndes County Administration Office located on Savannah Avenue. This will be a drop in meeting for citizens to review the map and DOT Staff will be on-hand to answer any questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Eunice entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the January 21, 2010 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 5:46 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, February 11, 2010.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta