

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 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: Sonny Vickers, Tim Carroll, Willie Head, Jr., Alvin Payton, Jr., John Eunice, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Councilman Head, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

State of the City Address – Mayor John Fretti

Mr. Mayor Pro-Tem, City Council Members, City Manager, City Attorney, City Department Heads, employees, distinguished guests, and most importantly, my fellow Valdostans. I want to begin this evening with telling you that while the current impacts of the economic downturn are being felt on a Global and National scale, and even many in and around our community are enduring this pain, I look around and I see that the City of Valdosta has every indicator showing that we are collectively fairing better than the rest. We fully realize that our community is not immune to the effects of an economic crisis, but I have to say, we experienced an overall good year for our City. In a year which we witnessed record budget deficits around the country, energy and fuel prices climbing higher than ever, cities and counties forcing to declare bankruptcy and many reducing manpower through attrition and staff reductions, your City government did not have to furlough raises in pay, positions, work hours, or benefits. Now don't get me wrong, we hear of another cut or freeze in grants or relied upon supplements from the State or Federal Governments almost every week. And every time our parental State or National government takes away that which we had become used to, it makes us have more resolve to become self sufficient. These economic times have forced all of us to examine how we manage our budgets in our homes and in our businesses. I want to assure all of you that your City government took steps early in the year to prepare for the economic uncertainties that faced our community in 2008, which will continue to impact us through 2009. The officials and staff of the City implemented stringent fuel conservation measures, as well as policies and procedures to ensure that we operate the City in a fiscally sound manner. Nearly a dozen changes were put in place by the management to ensure we live within the revenues we have available. This was done delicately and without fanfare and I am proud of our staff and employees for understanding and implementing the pro-active steps to manage the dramatic increase in costs the City was experiencing. I commit to all of our citizens that your City will continue to be fiscally responsible in all of our efforts to serve our community during the continued economic climate of which we are in. We have had to do more with less opposed to many around us that have had to do less with less. Like families sitting around their kitchen tables all over Valdosta, we are doing what is necessary to balance our checkbook. One small example of this is moving the annual Mayor and Council planning retreat this February from St. Simons to be held more locally. We will be within 30 minutes of home with only the costs of some food to be incurred. We will be at a facility in nearby Lenox, Georgia owned by a Valdosta businessman, and we will conduct our necessary planning during the day and return at night. We have witnessed the results of undisciplined fiscal management in other communities and will always attempt to live within the resources that are provided to us by our citizens. With that said, I have some impressive economic indicators from our community this last year that will certainly set the stage for next year and the future. I offer these numbers tonight because confidence is contagious and action is additive. I am amazed at the resolve of Valdosta. It seems that almost every week we read a report in our local Valdosta Daily Times of a new local restaurant, retail shop, or business opening up. And the City continues to encourage and assist through permitting, zoning, economic development, plan review, and first step meetings the development of many areas of town as business people continue to have the confidence to begin anew. So much goes on before an announcement can be made and these people are just some of the economic development team.

On the agency side, Valdosta State University continued its pattern of growth with 11,490 students enrolled as of the fall 2008 semester. During 2008, the University completed more than \$60.5 million in construction

projects, with an additional \$72 million in construction projects to be completed in 2009. This year, we welcomed Dr. Patrick Schloss as our new University President. I have come to know and trust Dr. Schloss and feel confident in his leadership. South Georgia Medical Center, the preeminent medical center of our region, added more than \$21.2 million in new facilities to include the new Professional Building and Ambulatory Surgery Center. Moody Air Force Base completed the new Jet Engine Shop, a Dormitory, the Main Gate, and a Youth Center Expansion, which represented a \$34.7 million investment in this critical military facility. The base is planning an additional \$45.5 million in construction projects for 2009. Under the guidance of Dr. F. D. Toth, Valdosta Technical College completed construction of the new \$14 million classroom and student center facility. Industrial training through the Quickstart program was provided to eight companies and the nearly 200 new employees at no cost to these industries. Wild Adventures Theme Park completed its first full year under the ownership of Herschend Family Entertainment. The Park welcomed more than 1.5 million visitors during 2008 and the owners are making further capital investments as we speak.

On the industry side of the house, our City welcomed Smith Drugs and IJ Foods with a total investment of \$13 million and 110 new industrial jobs. Construction was completed on Steeda Auto Sports and Martin's Famous Pastries which totaled more than \$61 million invested in our community and adding more than 200 new jobs to our City's economy. In total, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority assisted five specific industries, bringing in nearly 800 jobs into our community. The Authority continues to be working with many other industrial prospects that will yield benefits to our City in the future. Our City also continued to show strength in the hospitality sector with the opening of the Wingate Inn, the Hilton Garden Inn, and the Holiday Inn Express. Over the past two years, Valdosta's accommodation capacity has nearly doubled.

The City continues to be an economic leader and among the many State and National awards and recognitions we have had bestowed upon us this past year, none this year can compare to the excitement and energy that was felt when our community was named ESPN's TitleTown USA in July by fans across America. This honor came about not only due to the hundreds of sporting titles and records held by various teams and individuals in our community, but the commitment to excellence and the desire to achieve the best in all areas of our great City. This truly was a historic moment in our community and once again proved that our community can come together when it's on the line.

Five years ago, 18% of the total tax bill paid by a resident went to the City Valdosta, compared to just over 13% they now pay. That's because this past year, the City of Valdosta rolled back reassessment value again. We rolled back \$22.7 million decreasing the millage rate to 4.11 mills, down from last year's 4.18. We did this at a time when we saw dramatic increases in construction, electricity, fuel, chemicals, and other costs associated with doing business as a city. Yet, the City millage rate is the lowest it has been since 1989. The City continues to support the intent of State law by rolling back the amount of property tax millage associated with growth in the tax digest due to reassessment. To do otherwise, is simply a back door tax increase for our citizens who are working to meet their own household budget demands in the face of the current economic climate.

Our City had another successfully completed financial audit for the fiscal year with outstanding remarks. Furthermore, and I cannot stress how important this is, with the leadership of City Manager Larry Hanson and Mark Barber, the City has no General Fund debt, no bonded debt, and less than \$10 million in total Enterprise Fund loans which is a remarkable accomplishment achieved by sound financial management. Other cities, counties, and states around the country have to borrow money just to make the loan payments on all the debt they have accumulated. It may not be a big shock to hear that they are asking for bailouts to merely pay the bond debt payments or the borrowed money from pension funds all because they were living on the fiscal edge. Ladies and gentlemen, the City of Valdosta does not have to worry about paying the mortgage payment and can rather focus on services and that is rare in today's climate.

Speaking of Finance, the Department was awarded the Achievement for Excellence by their National Association for last fiscal year and also received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the same year. Their finance and budget preparations continue to be awarded best in the nation. We are grateful for the grants that support regionalism such as GSAR and TSA reimbursement and the City received more than \$1.5 million in grant funding through the Grants Administration Division.

This year, the outstanding men and women of the Valdosta Police Department, showing the highest levels of professionalism and integrity, were reaccredited by CALEA and were also renamed as a "Flagship Agency" making the Department the only agency to receive this honor twice and back-to-back competing with more than 400 state and international agencies.

Health and wellness continues to be a priority for our employees and in April, the City, through the Human Resources Department, was recognized as the first City in Georgia to achieve the Fit Friendly designation and was listed in the October edition of Forbes magazine for obtaining this distinction. These are all outstanding achievements and while only a few could be mentioned tonight, all of the Departments are to be commended for achieving the highest awards.

The Community Development Department, which includes Engineering, Planning and Zoning, Community Protection, Permitting, Inspections, Plan Review, and the Landscape Division, continued to make advancements through technology and relationships with agencies within the construction industry.

The Engineering Department continued to provide professional civil engineering and surveying services, management and coordination of SPLOST projects, and reviewed all private development plans proposed for construction in the City to ensure conformance with various City codes. The Community Protection Division, which is comprised of seven City Marshals and two technicians, continued the "property line to property line" enforcement system allowing greater accuracy in case development and was responsible for more than 5,200 code enforcement cases. This is a difficult job and one that gets complaints by neighbors that we don't come down hard enough or quick enough and complaints by defendants that we come down too hard and too quickly. These folks have my utmost respect for facing the daily fire of a better quality of life. And now with the new Land Development Regulations (LDR) passed with higher degrees of parking standards and renter occupancy enforcement, these folks truly have their work cut out for them. Speaking of the LDR, the Planning and Zoning Division successfully completed the 18 month update and adoption of the new Land Development Regulations, which came into effect on January 1st of this year.

The Inspections Division, the Street Division, and the Traffic Division kept us safe and flowing through inspections, repairs, and new sidewalks. The measure of true success for a Fire Department is the commitment to saving lives and the protection of property. This year could certainly be considered a good year for the Valdosta Fire Department. Not a single life was lost due to fire and the amount of property saved was tremendous in spite of three major apartment building fires that occurred. They responded to more than 2,300 fire alarm calls and the overall annual response time was 3 minutes and 57 seconds. The Valdosta Fire Department also completed more than 1,700 pre-fire plan surveys, inspected more than 2,600 fire hydrants, and educated more than 3,200 students from our local schools. There are two noteworthy additions with the first being the pre-emption devices that allow the fire trucks, when in a coded response, to turn red lights to green allowing for safer travel through intersections, and the second is the addition of the custom built structural collapse vehicle for the Georgia Search and Rescue Task Force 2 team. The vehicle and equipment was completely funded by a grant awarded by the State and supports techniques such as concrete extraction and confined place rescues. This unit is responsible for the entire southwest Georgia.

Over 1,000 people applied to work for the City of Valdosta last year and our Human Resources Department was able to fill 45 positions in 2008. The Department also worked with Valdosta Technical College in providing testing space for more than 40 City employees who participated in the Georgia Work Ready Assessment Initiative. The Employee Relations Committee continued their efforts to support the City and the various Departments with recognition programs such as the Employee of the Month Award and assisting in the annual Thanksgiving luncheon.

The award winning Valdosta Police Department responded to more than 70,600 calls for service, made more than 3,400 arrests, and recovered more than \$290,000 in stolen property, contraband, and cash during narcotics investigations. With the current economy, Valdosta continues to see waves of crime sprees. As we do, the men and women of the Valdosta Police Department will continue to track down these offenders as they have in the past. Chief Simons will tell you that we continue to arrest the same people, but for different or repeated

offenses. They are put back out on the street either for lack of jail space or court time and there is something inherently wrong with that. I don't have the answer to that yet, but it certainly needs to be addressed by someone and by someone soon.

Once again, our Public Involvement Department coordinated the 2008 Southern Hospitality Work Camp with 360 youth and adults from 10 different states, repairing 39 owner-occupied homes for elderly and disabled families. To date, the City has completed home repair to over 180 homes during the four summers of hosting the Work Camp. The Neighborhood Development Division continued to promote opportunities available for first-time homebuyers through partnerships with our Valdosta Housing Authority, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Public Information Division continues to promote to our community and region, hosted many special events during Georgia Cities Week, and was actively involved in the new and improved City website. They also completed numerous publications of importance for our citizens. A goal of mine and Council was to develop and expand local programming on the Valdosta Metro 96 Government Access Channel. We welcomed Jade Belucza to our team and the move to Channel 17 was a highlight and important milestone for the station and the City. Jade and Sementha Mathews, Public Information Officer, are certainly meeting our goal of improved programming.

In its third year, the Economic Development Division continued to assist developers, site selectors, and property owners regarding various development opportunities in the community. The City's Community Profile remains in high demand as staff circulated hundreds of copies throughout the United States. This profile allows developers to know traffic counts, cluster, and prime areas for development as well as purchasing power of our citizens. This profile answers many questions for national developers by providing a detailed look at our community that shows how they can be successful by developing in the City of Valdosta. Staff also assisted the Industrial Authority on various projects and events, as well as continued to monitor critical economic indicator data relevant to the current business climate.

The Public Works Department played a critical role in the City's fuel conservation efforts during 2008. Through coordination by the Maintenance Division, the Department reported a savings of nearly \$50,000 through dramatic reduction in vehicle use and behavior. We became very busy through this past hurricane season and collected over 1,300 tons of debris in a three week period compared to the 6,000 tons of debris total that is collected annually.

The Utilities Department continues to be the big dog of infrastructure and quality of life delivering over 3.5 billion gallons water and treating nearly the same amount of return wastewater during 2008 and we are approaching 20,000 customers. The Stormwater Division continues to examine and contain potential flooding in low areas and we are seeing the positive results of stormwater management. This Division led the effort to the City receiving the Outstanding Stormwater Management Program of the Year for a Phase II Community. Savannah, Georgia has yet to implement a system like this and we just hosted them for a full day briefing. As they said to us, "We saw Valdosta did it the best way, and so do we." We welcomed Henry Hicks as our new Utilities Director and he will be over this side of the house, supervising the final phase of utilities installation for the annexed islands as well as the major expansion of the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility and upgrades at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Facility this year.

In addition to maintaining a full Court schedule, Municipal Court Judge Vernita Lee Bender remained active with the youth in our community through participation in the Junior Fire Marshal Banquet and hosting several special events which included a Mock Trial affording area school children the opportunity to learn about the Court system.

In 2008, we transitioned the Parks and Recreation Department to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority. The Authority is growing into the job and they are going through the maturation of setting up their own services such as legal, finance, accounting, and human resources and they will soon see that authorities are often duplicative and more expensive. Authorities can have all the trimmings of bigger government and more bureaucracy, but the independent and autonomous form is designed for the overall good of the mission. Perhaps in the end, an authority may just be the tool that can get the job done by setting turf aside and creating programming for the people at large. Eric Hahn has served as Interim Director for over three years while at the

same time performing the duties of his previous and current job as Assistant Director. I don't know if he's been thanked publicly for his dual leadership but he should and I do thank him while at the same time look forward to his Continued management. While the name and organizational structure of the Department has changed, the focus must still be to provide clean and safe parks and active programs that fulfill the recreational needs of a growing and diverse community. With that, additional capital funding from City SPLOST was infused to continue the sustainability of the services. Specifically, more than \$1 million dollars was invested in a major renovation of Scott Park providing for improved picnic shelters, a multi-use field, and a 400-meter track for walking. Renovations and improvements are making progress at the Wood Valley Community Center, and the design of a new Tennis Complex at McKey Park is before Council tonight for action. We are very excited to begin the new indoor swimming facility at the Senior Citizens' Center. This will be an enclosed, zero grade entry aquatics center that can be heated in the winter and opened up for the warmer months. Last but not least, and always important, our Special Olympians continued to bring home numerous medals on the local and State levels, and our floor hockey team was chosen to participate in the world Special Olympics games to be held in Idaho in early 2009.

Elsewhere in our greater community, we welcomed a new County Chairman, a new Commissioner, a new Sheriff, a new Superior Court Judge, and we welcome back several incumbents. Let them know that all roads lead to the City of Valdosta, the County Seat, and we stand ready in partnership for the greater good of our community. We look forward to working with these individuals.

This is normally the time in past speeches when I have put forth several initiatives in the hopes to better our City. The initiatives are meant to be seeds of ideas planted to germinate, some quickly and some in the normal course of time. Over the years, I have proposed 26 initiatives with 15 of those completed or making considerable progress. So for this year's sake of an efficient and effective government, doing more with less, all I ask of Council this year is to lend their support in looking back over the previous initiatives yet to be implemented so that perhaps we can refocus efforts and concentrate on that which can be done with less. Now is not the time for expensive capital projects, large buildings, and oversize offices. We have a crime lab to finish, important water and sewer projects to concentrate upon, and roads to build. We can stay the course and continue the progress.

In closing, to the members of Council I thank you for your unwavering leadership and commitment to our community and our citizens. Gentlemen, this last year we worked hard to do more with less and we came together like no other time before. To our City Manager, Deputy Managers, Department Heads, and Staff, I thank you for your diligence and dedication. You are the tie that binds us. To my wife Robin, my daughters, and my parents, thank you for your patience and understanding for my time that you so willingly share with the entire community. To our employees, none of the work, service, and achievements mentioned tonight would be accomplished without the dedication of you. From the crews on the streets to the people turning the valves at the plant, from the early morning sanitation workers to the mechanics in the garage, from the first year fire fighter carrying hose to the night shift officer making his rounds and the people climbing up ladders to inspect framing to the guy or girl walking the ditches to make sure water passes in the next storm, they are all the stuff that makes us great and we couldn't do anything without them. They made 2008 an outstanding year for Valdosta and tonight's speech is a tribute to them. To the citizens, I say, this year, your City held their ground firm, made the necessary corrections and adapted for the times. While others are wavering, we stand tall and are holding the line. This is why we will all get through these times intact and in short order. It is my privilege to declare to you that the City of Valdosta is strong and on solid ground and more than that, prepared for the opportunities ahead. God bless our City, our State, and the United States of America.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 8, 2009 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

ORDINANCE NO. 2009-2, AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH QUALIFYING FEES AND DATES FOR THE 2009 CITY OF VALDOSTA MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Consideration of a request to establish qualifying fees and dates for the 2009 City of Valdosta municipal elections.

Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration, stated that the Georgia Code 21-2-131(a)(1)(A) states that the governing authority of any county or municipality shall fix and publish a qualifying fee for each county or municipal office to be filled in the upcoming primary or election not later than February 1 of any year in which a general primary, nonpartisan election, or general election is to be held and at least 35 days prior to the special primary or election. This year the election will be held on November 3, 2009 and the districts up for election and the qualifying fees are listed as follows: (1) Mayor/Council: District 2, Willie T. Head Jr.-\$465, District 4, Alvin Payton-\$465, District 6, Robert Yost-\$465, (2) School Board: District 4, Unexpired term of Mike Pitts-\$35, District 7 (East), Willie R. Jones -\$35, District 8 (West), Ricky Rowe-\$35, and At Large, Jeana Beeland-\$35. Additionally, the contract requests the services of the Lowndes County Board of Elections which include qualifying of candidates, training poll workers, placing required ads, and other duties as may be required to conduct the municipal election. Mark Barber recommended that Council approve the Ordinance to call for the November 3, 2009 Municipal Election, set the qualifying fees for each post with expiring terms, and execute a contract with the Lowndes County Board of Elections to render services in regard to the November 3, 2009 Municipal Election.

A MOTION by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2009-2, an Ordinance to call for the November 3, 2009 Municipal Election, establish qualifying fees and dates for the 2009 City of Valdosta Municipal Election, and execute a contract with the Lowndes County Board of Elections to render services for the November 3, 2009 Municipal Election, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XI.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES**RESOLUTION NO. 2009-1, A RESOLUTION FOR REHABILITATION OF AIRFIELD LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE FOR THE VALDOSTA-LOWNDES COUNTY AIRPORT**

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to accept and execute the Federal Aviation Administration's Grant Agreement and resolution for rehabilitation of airfield lighting and signage (Airport Project #AIP-25).

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the design work will be completed under this Grant (Phase 1) as well as a portion of the rehabilitation of the airfield lighting and signage construction and associated work (Phase 2). The primary runway, 17-35, recently experienced an outage of the high intensity runway lights which lasted several days. This impacted the commercial daily scheduled flights by forcing the operations to be flown into Runway 4-22. Approximately 6,500 feet of Runway 17-35 as well as Runway 4-22 have very old direct buried cable, lighting fixtures, and signs. Additionally, the airfield lighting systems which support Taxiways A, C, F, and the connector taxiways between Runway 17-35 and Taxiway A are old and in need of immediate replacement. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the request to authorize the Mayor to accept and execute the Grant and the City to accept and administer this Grant on behalf of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2009-1, a Resolution to accept the Federal Aviation Administration's Grant in the amount of approximately \$583,000, execute the Grant and authorize the Mayor to sign, and agree for the City to administer the Grant for rehabilitation of airfield lighting and signage (Airport Project #AIP-25), the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book IV.

Consideration of bids for bulletproof vests and helmets for the Police Department (Bid No. 22-08-09).

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Police Department needs to purchase some bulletproof vests and helmets for their current and future Officers. These items are in the Council-approved budget for this fiscal year. This will be a one-year contract that locks in pricing until December 31, 2009 and has two, one-year renewals. Sealed bids were received on January 13, 2009 and the low bid was submitted by Command Uniforms in the amount of \$43,880.60. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Command Uniforms in the amount of \$43,880.60 and allow the Police Department to proceed with the purchase.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve low bid submitted by Command Uniforms in the amount of \$43,880.60 and allow the Police Department to proceed with the purchase of bulletproof vests and helmets.

Consideration of bids for the design of improvements to the McKey Park Tennis Center.

Von Shipman, City Engineer, stated that \$1.75 million was identified in SPLOST VI to design and construct improvements to the existing McKey Park (Anderson) Tennis Center. A Consultant Selection Committee was created with the following members: Councilman Alvin Payton, Jr., Von Shipman, City Engineer, Jenne Brandon, citizen and Recreation Authority Board Member, and Cecil Whitehead and Kathy Wortham, Parks and Recreation Authority employees. Eight firms responded in October, 2008 to the advertised Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The following firms were selected for interviews and presentations which were held in early December, 2008: IPG Architects, Lose and Associates, and Foley Design Associates. The unanimous choice of the Committee was IPG Architects. A fee proposal was submitted by IPG on January 13, 2009. Von Shipman recommended that Council approve the selection of IPG, Incorporated and their bid in the amount of \$121,625 to design improvements for the McKey Park Tennis Center. Councilman Yost stated that he wanted to ensure that repairs to the area between the main courts and the back court were included in this project. Von Shipman stated that the drainage issues and differences in elevation were discussed in great detail. Councilman Yost stated that with the current tennis courts it is very difficult for visitors to watch the matches due to the netting and he would like to see a new design. Councilman Head inquired as to the timeline for design completion. Larry Hanson stated that it would be 60-90 days. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether they were looking at 6.75% of the estimated \$1.75 million total cost for the project. Rob Evans, IPG Incorporated, stated that there was some money added to that which may not be part of the actual fees. They had intended to go look at various facilities in several communities and those travel dollars were included in that fee. There may be approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000 more if they were going to travel but that money may not be part of the fee and they would not use the money unless it was approved. Councilman Payton stated that the bid notes that travel would be an additional cost. Rob Evans stated that was incorrect. It should state that the lump sum fee includes travel and reimbursable expenses and those would not be charged unless it was agreed for IPG to make those trips. Councilman Payton was concerned that if Council commits to the \$121,625 then that could increase. Rob Evans stated this is a lump sum based upon what they understand about the project and he hoped there would be no reason for the fee to increase. Councilman Head inquired as to whether the facility will have a concession stand. Von Shipman stated that there would be a facility that is handicap accessible where drinks and food could be served but it may not be a full kitchen. Councilman Head inquired about the parking situation and where additional parking would be located. Von Shipman stated that Valdosta Middle School has a large parking lot but there may be some walking to the tennis courts. They did attempt to prepare a plan for some parking to be added on the west side of McKey Park off of Roosevelt but there was language in the original deed restrictions which did not allow any type of paving. Larry Hanson stated that the property was deeded to the City many years ago with some deed restrictions about how it could be used; however, there is some potential to add some parking if there is a slight adjustment to the intersection of Pendleton and Roosevelt. Von Shipman stated that they would be able to create 30 additional parking spots and there could be a foot bridge for people who park on the back side. Councilman Payton stated that the Selection Committee felt that selecting IPG, a local firm, brought a lot of credence and close communication to the project and the questions pertaining to the screening and concession stand were discussed in detail. They also discussed keeping the trees at the facility and the Committee is confident that this will be a tennis facility second to none in this area.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the selection of IPG, Incorporated to design improvements for McKey Park Tennis Center.

Consideration of a request to apply for grants funds with the Historic Preservation Division with a 40% (\$2,000) match from the City for Sunset Hill Cemetery.

Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that in August, 2008 the Mayor and City Council approved a request to apply for the Historic Cemetery Heritage Tourism Grant in order to develop the Sunset Hill Cemetery Interactive Website project. Unfortunately, the City was not selected to receive the grant funds. This request is for the application to a similar yet different grant fund for the same project which will allow for the creation of an interactive, GIS-enabled website for Sunset Hill Cemetery that will be accessible via the City of Valdosta's current Internet site. The purpose of this website is two-fold. First, it will be an archive of valuable historical information reflecting Valdosta's heritage. It is anticipated that users of this website will be those interested in local history, genealogy, and heritage tourism. Secondly, the website will function as a management tool for the cemetery, allowing the public to find what plots are available for purchase, and Sunset Hill Cemetery's regulations for interment and visitation. The total project cost is \$5,000 and the grant amount requested will be \$3,000. The grant requires a 40% match, or \$2,000 of which a portion must be a cash match. The City's grant match would be broken down as follows: \$1,000 will be in-kind by VALOR-GIS, \$500 will be cash donated to the Sunset Hill Cemetery by the Association for Veterans of Foreign Wars, and \$500 will be contributed by the Public Works Department from its annual budget. Anne-Marie Wolff recommended that Council approve the request to apply for grants funds with the Historic Preservation Division with a 40% (\$2,000) match from the City for Sunset Hill Cemetery.

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request to apply for grants funds with the Historic Preservation Division with a 40% (\$2,000) match from the City for Sunset Hill Cemetery.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Georgia Municipal Association Mayor's Day Conference will be held January 23-27, 2009 in Atlanta.

Anne-Marie Wolff, Planning and Zoning Administrator, will be holding a public hearing for the Urban Redevelopment Plan on January 27, 2009 to introduce it to the community and to get comments and feedback. This was one of the Council goals for this year and there will be a presentation to Council at the February Work Session with adoption anticipated in March.

There is also a new project management form which will now be provided in the Council packets in order to keep Council up-to-date on various projects going on in the community. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Corridor project was not on the list but bids have been advertised for the water and sewer improvement portion of this project. The City also met with the Georgia Department of Transportation this week to discuss some utility issues. Appraisals and negotiations with property owners will begin next week and there is some property acquisition for both the memorial site and for some of the future pocket parks. A memorandum will be sent to Council within the next couple of days to provide an update on the entire project; however, there will be a ground breaking ceremony in April during the annual vigil that takes place.

Savannah officials were in Valdosta yesterday to discuss the City of Valdosta's stormwater utility as well as the Career Center that was built. They were very impressed with the project that we did with the State of Georgia to build a facility, lease it to the State, and consolidate three State agencies and bring services to an area in the City where they are needed. Savannah would like to model a project after that and we in turn look to cities like Savannah to help us in different areas. Savannah has implemented a 3-1-1 Call Center and has been used as a national model and they are sharing that information with us.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Yost stated that he appreciated the project report which will be very helpful. Councilman Yost also congratulated the Mayor on his appointment by the Governor. That is a good indication of the respect that we

have from others for our City, Council, Mayor, and City Manager. Councilman Yost thanked Mike Martin and the City Marshals for their efforts in enforcing the new parking ordinance which was necessary in his district.

Councilman Head stated that he would like to give project updates to the citizens either through the City Beat or Metro 17. Councilman Head stated that he had recently spent time in Municipal Court and inquired about the salary paid to the part time Court Solicitor for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008. Councilman Head also thanked Von Shipman for the project update list and inquired about the status of six projects that were awarded that are waiting on the signed contract and bond. Von Shipman stated that there is some flexibility given to the contractor in getting the contract back to the City and then it is given to the City Attorney. They need to start giving the contractor a minimum number of days to get the contract signed and back to the City.

Councilman Payton inquired about the status of applications for the Valdosta Small Emerging Business position. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there were quite a few applications and once it is closed out all of the resumes will be reviewed. The close out date is January 30, 2009.

Council Carroll congratulated Mayor Fretti on his State of the City Address.

Councilman Vickers thanked Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration, for getting the W-2's to Council in such a timely manner.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the January 22, 2009 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:42 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, February 5, 2009.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta