

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2011
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Joseph "Sonny" Vickers called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Hoke Hampton, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Alvin Payton, Jr., Robert Yost, Deidra White, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Rabbi Moshe Elbaz, Temple Israel, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION OF THE NOVEMBER, 2011 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, presented the November, 2011 Employee of the Month Award (William Jeff Henley, Utilities Department).

William Jeff Henley began his employment with the City of Valdosta in March, 1993 as an Automotive Service Worker in the Vehicle Maintenance Shop. In 1997, he transferred to the Utilities Department as a Lift Station Operator Trainee. He was promoted to Senior Lift Station Operator in November, 2009 which is the position he currently holds. In his position, Jeff supervises other employees and performs preventative maintenance and repairs to the City's lift stations. Jeff has distinguished himself repeatedly while servicing 22 sewer lift stations and routinely goes above and beyond to ensure they continue to function properly. A recent example was when the Big Country Club lift station went down. This station is 25 years old and on the replacement list but failed suddenly. Jeff had to perform emergency repairs and supervised a team of Department Staff and a contractor in what turned into an 18-hour job. As a result of his professionalism and dedication to the job, the repair was successful and resulted in a minimal cost to the City allowing the station to continue in use until time for replacement. Aristotle once stated, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." The repair of the Big Country Club lift station is only one recent example of where Jeff has distinguished himself. The City and its citizens are fortunate to have his habits and talents at work for them to ensure service is always available. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated William "Jeff" Henley as Employee of the Month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October 20, 2011 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCE NO. 2011-36, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 3.25 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H) with conditions to Highway-Commercial (C-H) with different conditions for buffer requirements as requested by Hand Properties, Inc. (File No. VA-2011-23). The property is located along the east side of Brookfield Drive, south of Inner Perimeter Road. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at the regular October meeting and recommended approval (8-0 vote).

Tracy Tolley, Planner, stated that Hand Properties, Inc. is requesting to rezone 3.25 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H) with conditions to Highway-Commercial (C-H) with different conditions for buffer requirements. The property is located along the east side of Brookfield Drive, south of Inner Perimeter Road and is immediately east of the Wal-Mart shopping center behind the new Murphy Express gas station. The property is currently undeveloped but has an existing buffer yard requirement when it was annexed and rezoned to C-H in

1999. The applicant is proposing to develop a shopping center and Publix grocery store but with a different buffer yard configuration. The property is located within a Community Activity Center Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of C-H zoning. The property is located immediately outside the Inner Perimeter Road Corridor Overlay District. When the property was annexed and rezoned in 1999, the following conditions were placed on the zoning: (1) A 5' grassed earthen berm along the entire southern boundary line (along Hunters Point subdivision). The top of the berm shall be planted with a row of Leyland Cypress, 5-6 feet in height planted on 8-foot centers. The trees will be irrigated and provided with a 1-year guarantee. (2) A 6' high vinyl-coated chain link fence (black or dark green if available) will be installed along the southern boundary line where existing fencing of at least 6' does not already exist. New fencing shall tie into the corners of any existing fences so there will be no openings for pass-through. (3) Any commercial lighting shall be shielded away from the Hunters Point subdivision. In lieu of the required berm and chain link fence mentioned above, the applicant is instead proposing to lower the grade of the new development by 8' and construct an earthen "slope" beginning 10' north of the rear property line. At the top of the slope would instead be a 6' solid wooden fence installed along the property line where such fencing does not already exist, and the new fence corners will still be tied into the existing fence in order to avoid gaps. In lieu of the Leyland Cypress (5-6' high), the applicant is proposing to install Stevens Holly and other evergreens at 6-8' height at time of planting, still planted on 8' centers but in staggered rows. In addition, the applicant is proposing to plant a row of Southern Magnolias (12-14' height at time of planting) on 50' centers within 20' of the privacy fence. Additional landscaping on the rear of the property (outside the buffer yard) also includes 17 Live Oak trees as well as other trees and shrubs. In essence, the applicant is proposing a different but "much better" buffer yard and screening than is currently required by the conditional zoning. It should also be noted that the applicant's proposal even exceeds the minimum requirements of the LDR for buffer yards in this situation (C-H zoning next to R-10). Furthermore, the applicant has already discussed their proposal with the residents of Hunters Point and they are reportedly in full agreement with the proposal. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval with the following conditions: (1) Construct an earthen slope beginning at a point 10 feet north of the rear property line and sloping downward toward the proposed development approximately 8 feet vertical at a maximum slope of 3:1. (2) Install a 6' high solid wood privacy fence along the rear property line where an existing privacy fence of at least 6' does not already exist. The new fencing will tie into the corners directly adjacent to any existing 6' fencing along the property line (with the property owner's permission) such that there will not be any openings to allow pass-through. (3) Install a minimum 20' wide buffer yard along the entire southern boundary as indicated by the pattern on the submitted plans. As indicated, vegetation shall include Stevens Holly (or other similar evergreen vegetation approved by the City Arborist). Such vegetation shall be planted in staggered rows within 10' of the fence, planted on 8' centers, and shall be a minimum 6-8' in height at the time of planting. The buffer yard shall also include a row of Southern Magnolia trees (12-14' at time of planting) which are planted on 50' centers and approximately 20' north of the privacy fence. Additional small shrubs shall also be included in the buffer yard, as approved by the City Arborist, in order to meet minimum shrub quantity requirements. (4) All trees and shrubs in the rear yard shall be irrigated and provided with a minimum one year guarantee such that any that die within the first year shall be replaced. (5) Any commercial lighting shall be directed away from the Hunters Point subdivision. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their October 31, 2011 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (8-0 vote) with the following conditions: (1) Construct an earthen slope beginning at a point 10 feet north of the rear property line and sloping downward toward the proposed development approximately 8 feet vertical at a maximum slope of 3:1. (2) Install a 6' high solid wood privacy fence along the rear property line where an existing privacy fence of at least 6' does not already exist. The new fencing will tie into the corners directly adjacent to any existing 6' fencing along the property line (with the property owner's permission) such that there will not be any openings to allow pass-through. (3) Install a minimum 20' wide buffer yard along the entire southern boundary as indicated by the pattern on the submitted plans. As indicated, vegetation shall include Stevens Holly (or other similar evergreen vegetation approved by the City Arborist). Such vegetation shall be planted in staggered rows within 10' of the fence, planted on 8' centers, and shall be a minimum 6-8' in height at the time of planting. The buffer yard shall also include a row of Southern Magnolia trees (12-14' at time of planting) which are planted on 50' centers and approximately 20' north of the privacy fence. Additional small shrubs shall also be included in the buffer yard, as approved by the City Arborist, in order to meet minimum shrub quantity requirements. (4) All trees and shrubs in the rear yard shall be irrigated and provided with a minimum 1-year guarantee such that any that die within the first year shall be replaced. (5) Any commercial lighting shall be directed away from the Hunters Point subdivision. Councilman Payton inquired

about the drainage area behind some of the houses where it had washed out and trees were laying in the culvert. Tracy Tolley stated that the Engineer for the project was in attendance tonight and would address the drainage questions.

Don Carter, Carter & Sloop Engineers, 6310 Peak Road, Macon, Georgia, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Carter stated that he represented the applicant, Hand Properties, Inc., and they are planning to development a Publix store and retail shopping center. Mr. Carter stated that they would be addressing the drainage area. There is a culvert that drains from the subdivision and they will connect to a pipe and extend it across the back which will daylight out onto the balance of Mr. Gray’s property. Ultimately it will be picked up with the next development and carried further on down. They will also maintain the culvert as part of their project since it falls within the buffer area they are planning. There have been a couple of meetings with the residents in the area and they are supportive of the project.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2011-36, an Ordinance to rezone 3.25 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H) with conditions to Highway-Commercial (C-H) with the five stated conditions for buffer requirements as requested by Hand Properties, Inc., the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XII.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2011-37, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE GRASS AND WEEDS ORDINANCE

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the Grass and Weeds Ordinance.

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that the proposed Amendment addresses two significant changes which came about due to issues they have been having with right-of-way maintenance within the newer platted subdivisions where the City has accepted the easement but has not actually accepted ownership of the property. This will provide greater assistance to the City Marshals in getting those areas adjacent to our streets mowed where the developers still own lots in these subdivisions. The other change is with the progressive fines. One of the issues the City Marshals have had with the fines not being a deterrent is that these are not invoked until they get to Court. There is a constant cycle of sending notices out and then people will mow the grass right before it is time to get a Court summons. With this new change, upon a second notice to the same owner on the same piece of property within 12 calendar months, they will then receive a summons to Municipal Court and the Judge will be able to impose the increasing fine schedule that was put into place years ago. Mara Register recommended that Council approve the amendment to the Grass and Weeds Ordinance.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Hampton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2011-37, an Ordinance to amend the Grass and Weeds Ordinance, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XII.

ORDINANCE NO. 2011-38, AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL AND REPLACE THE DEMOLITION LIEN ORDINANCE

Consideration of an Ordinance to repeal and replace the Demolition Lien Ordinance.

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that the City has had an Ordinance in place for some time that allows the City to place liens on property where we have demolished a dilapidated structure so that we can take the necessary steps to recoup taxpayers’ dollars when the owner does not actually abate the nuisance themselves. Because of some changes in the State law, the City Attorney has prepared an Amendment to the existing Ordinance so that we will now file a lis pendens. When the complaint is filed by the City Marshal, the owner is notified what the process is and the potential for a lien. Councilman Hampton stated that he recently called the City Marshal about a house on Ridgewood because something needs to be done about it.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Hampton, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2011-38, an Ordinance to repeal and replace the Demolition Lien Ordinance, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XII.

AN ORDINANCE TO REPEAL AND REPLACE THE CURRENT ALCOHOL ORDINANCE (FIRST READING)

Consideration of an Ordinance to repeal and replace the current Alcohol Ordinance. (First Reading)

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this is the first reading of the revised Alcohol Ordinance and there would be no action taken on it tonight; however, there will be discussion and debate on this Ordinance at the first Work Session in December. It will then come before Mayor and Council for adoption on December 8, 2011. This is a working draft and Mayor and Council are encouraged to review it and provide any comments within the 30-day period. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether the recent passage of the Sunday Alcohol Sales would be included in the Ordinance. Larry Hanson stated that the revised draft would include Sunday Alcohol Sales for convenience stores, package stores, and grocery stores effective January 1, 2012 from the hours of 12:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. as well as the necessary licensing requirements. Mayor Vickers inquired as to whether there would be any additional increase to the license renewal. Larry Hanson stated that license renewals are on calendar year so the City will inform those parties who are interested in obtaining a license that they could buy a license in November or December and it would take effect in January, 2012 so they would have a full year license. There will be a requirement and a fee for that. Alcohol licenses are complicated and the State caps it at a certain amount but for a convenience store, grocery store, or a package store to sell alcohol 52 Sundays a year is a substantial opportunity.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for the new elevated storage tank located at Savannah Avenue and Fry Street.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that in 2006, the City of Valdosta was approved for a special appropriations grant of \$477,000 as well as \$7,210,306 in a Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) loan to design and construct an elevated water storage tank at Scott Park. In 2007, Camp Dresser & McKey (CDM) updated the Water Distribution System Hydraulic Model and determined that the best location for an elevated water storage tank would be at the current Savannah Avenue/Fry Street location. In 2009, the Utility Department was allowed to modify the special appropriations scope to change the location to the Savannah Avenue/Fry Street location based on the recommendations of the 2007 model update. The current elevated water storage tank at Savannah Avenue/Fry Street has a limited capacity of 300,000 gallons and has deteriorated to a point where this tank needs to be replaced. The size and capacity of the replacement tank would be 2.0 million gallons of water and will significantly improve water flow and firefighting capabilities throughout this service area. Design of this new tank is currently at 75% completion. Funding for this work may still be available under the special appropriations grant and is still funded under the 2006 GEFA loan. Funding for completing the design, construction, and purchase of property for the elevated storage tank has been carried forward into the FY12 budget. In accordance with GEFA and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements, proposals for the construction of this elevated storage tank were advertised in the local newspaper on September 3, 2011 and September 17, 2011. A mandatory pre-bid meeting for interested companies was held on September 20, 2011 and the bid opening was held on October 11, 2011. The two bids received, CB&I, Inc. and Landmark Structures LLP, met all bid requirements outlined in the contract documents. CB&I Inc. submitted a bid of \$3,491,000 and was the low bidder by approximately \$300,000. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by CB&I Inc. in the amount of \$3,491,000. Mayor Vickers inquired about the life of a tank. Henry Hicks stated that a steel structure should last 40-50 years and should be repaired and repainted every 10 years. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether this was another step in getting the ISO rating lowered from two to one. Henry Hicks stated that the City's water system is already rated at one and this will help us for the future storage capacity. Based on the capacity of the Water Treatment Plant, the City is required to have so many million gallons of storage capacity in the system so this not only helps the City to meet those needs but also helps for the future. Councilman Payton inquired as to when the decision would be made as to what would go on the outside of the tower. Henry Hicks stated it would be the City logo "Valdosta, A City Without Limits."

A **MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by CB&I Inc. in the amount of at \$3,491,000 for the new elevated storage tank located at Savannah Avenue and Fry Street.

Consideration of bids for the maintenance of stormwater retention ponds and canals throughout the City (Bid No. 03-11-12).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that this bid contains the labor necessary to maintain certain City stormwater ponds and canals that are broken into cluster areas. The maintenance includes monthly mowing, trimming, and picking up trash and it is awarded to multiple vendors with the best price for each cluster and canal area. Currently, the City is paying approximately \$64,000 for this service. The request for bids was sent to five Valdosta Small Emerging Businesses (VSEB) and three responded. Sealed bids were received on November 1, 2011 after mandatory pre-bid site visits were completed. The recommended vendors and prices are as follows: (1) Cluster 1 - Ultimate Underground, \$9,630, (2) Canal 1 - Grace Lawn Care, \$18,000, (3) Cluster 2 - Grace Lawn Care, \$2,400, (4) Canal 2a - Grace Lawn Care, \$4,300, (5) Canal 2b - Grace Lawn Care, \$4,300, (6) Cluster 3 - 1st Choice Lawn Care, \$3,000, (7) Canal 3 - Ultimate Underground, \$3,540, (8) Cluster 4 - 1st Choice Lawn Care, \$7,500, (9) Canal 4a - Ultimate Underground, \$4,350, (10) Canal 4b - Grace Lawn Care, \$4,500, (11) Canal 4c - Grace Lawn Care, \$18,000, (12) Cluster 5 - Ultimate Underground, \$8,760, and (13) Canal 5 - Grace Lawn Care, \$18,000. The total amount is \$106,280. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the following bids: (1) Grace Lawn Care be awarded Cluster 2, Canal 1, 2a, 2b, 4b, 4c, 5 in the amount of \$69,500, (2) Ultimate Underground be awarded Clusters 1 and 5, and Canals 3 and 4a in the amount of \$26,280, and (3) 1st Choice Lawn Care be awarded Clusters 3 and 4 in the amount of \$10,500. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this was bid three years ago as just retention ponds and it was one lump sum bid which might limit businesses so we broke this up into multiple clusters and added canals. This will improve the appearance of the community but more importantly it gave small contractors and VSEB contractors the chance to compete. The City is committed to the VSEB program and we are pleased with the results. Mayor Vickers inquired as to whether we would make special provisions for them to receive a check. Greg Brown stated that they take the total price and divide it by 12 and when they complete the work they will sign off on it and will be paid once a month. Mayor Vickers stated that as a small business the cash flow is very important. Greg Brown stated that was listed in the bid document and they all signed off on it. Councilman Wright inquired about a few of the canals that he receives calls about. Larry Hanson stated that the City is not outsourcing all of the work and this will allow Emily Davenport, Stormwater Superintendent, to use her resources to take care of the rest of the work. Emily Davenport stated that the City has 18,000 feet of linear canals which is just under 10% of the total. Larry Hanson stated that this does not mean that any canals that you have an interest in or that have complaints about will not be addressed but rather it will help the City do a better job by outsourcing some of the work. Councilman Wright inquired as to what would happen if the canal is not on the list. Larry Hanson stated that it would not be maintained by the private contractor but it would be maintained by the City. If this is successful then the City could continue to add more going forward but there is a limit as to the amount that we can afford to outsource because it is based upon the revenues collected for this service. Greg Brown stated that this took everything that was in the Stormwater budget. Larry Hanson stated that prior to this the City was using a Prison Work Detail and we were having on-going problems with that. We converted that effective July 1, 2011 into five positions so now we have five people working five days a week.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the following bids: (1) Grace Lawn Care be awarded Cluster 2, Canal 1, 2a, 2b, 4b, 4c, and 5 in the amount of \$69,500, (2) Ultimate Underground be awarded Cluster 1, 5, Canal 3 and 4a in the amount of \$26,280, and (3) 1st Choice Lawn Care be awarded Cluster 3 and 4, in the amount of \$10,500 for the maintenance of stormwater retention ponds and canals throughout the City.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to abandon an easement in Pebblewood Subdivision.

William Sims, Surveyor with the Engineering Department, stated that the City was granted a 20 foot sanitary sewer easement centered on the boundary line between lots 1 and 2 of Pebblewood Subdivision, Phase 3, Section 2 with the recording of the subdivision plat in December, 1987. The City utilized this easement until

October, 2011. The owner of property, which is traversed by the easement, installed a new sanitary sewer line at his own expense to serve the lots around Woodward Circle for the purpose of abandoning the existing line and easement so that a swimming pool and house addition could be constructed. An easement for the new line has been secured by the property owner from George Eager, dedicated to the City, and duly recorded. With the installation of the new line and acquisition of the new easement, the old line has been plugged and abandoned and the existing easement is no longer needed. William Sims recommended that Council approve the request to abandon an easement in Pebblewood Subdivision.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Hampton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request to abandon an easement in Pebblewood Subdivision.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Consideration of appointments to the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Central Valdosta Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority has the following three members whose terms will expire December 31, 2011: (1) Sue Cox, (2) Rodney Flucas, and (3) Wanda Hunter. Ms. Cox and Ms. Hunter have not expressed an interest in being reappointed but Mr. Flucas has expressed an interest in serving again. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration in no order of preference are: (1) James Blake - Self Employed & General Contractor, Arkad Enterprises, Inc., (2) Gino Fina - Self-Employed, Valdosta Shared Office Space, (3) Rodney Flucas - Field Asset & Property Management, and (4) Baha Zeidan - CEO, Azalea Health Innovations, Inc.

Mayor Vickers asked for nominations for Position No. 1. Councilwoman White placed in consideration the name of Baha Zeidan. There being no other nominations, Mayor Vickers closed nominations. Baha Zeidan was appointed by acclamation to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority.

Mayor Vickers asked for nominations for Position No. 2. Councilwoman White placed in consideration the name of Gino Fina. Councilman Wright placed in consideration the name of James Blake. There being no other nominations, Mayor Vickers closed nominations. James Blake received two votes and Gino Fina received five votes. Gino Fina was appointed to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority.

Mayor Vickers asked for nominations for Position No. 3. Councilman Wright placed in consideration the name of James Blake. Councilwoman White placed in consideration the name of Rodney Flucas. There being no other nominations, Mayor Vickers closed nominations. Rodney Flucas received six votes and James Blake received one vote. Rodney Flucas was reappointed to serve a term of two years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority.

Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta Housing Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta Housing Authority has the following appointments to be made by Mayor Joseph "Sonny" Vickers: (1) Joyce Evans whose term will expire December 31, 2011, (2) Resident Appointment to fill the unexpired term of James Franklin who passed away several months ago (term expiration - 07/01/12). Ms. Evans has expressed an interest in being reappointed. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration by Mayor Vickers in no order of preference are: (1) Joyce Evans - Self Employed & Consultant, and (2) Carlos D. Hunley - Communicable Disease Specialist, South Health District (first choice); Resident Appointment: (1) DeShonda Jenkins - Laundry, Best Western Plus, and (2) Jacqueline E. Williams - Head Teller, Southeastern Federal Credit Union.

Mayor Vickers stated that he was going to reappoint Joyce Evans for a term of five years on the Housing Authority. Ms. Evans is a good advocate for the community and has been a good resource for assisting people with finding housing.

Mayor Vickers stated that for the Resident appointment on the Housing Authority he would appoint DeShonda Jenkins to fill the unexpired term of James Franklin who passed away several months ago.

Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority has the following members whose terms will expire December 31, 2011: (1) Dr. John Gaston - At Large Appointment, and (2) Councilman Tim Carroll - City Council Appointment. Dr. Gaston has not expressed an interest in being reappointed while Councilman Carroll has expressed an interested in serving again. The appointment for Dr. Gaston's position was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration in no order of preference are as follows: Position No. 1 (City At Large Appointment) - (1) Emily Browning - Accountant, Fowler, Holley, Rambo & Stalvey, P.C., and Position No. 2 (City Council Appointment) - (1) Councilman Tim Carroll - Store Manager, Farmers Home Furniture.

Councilman Yost placed in consideration the names of Emily Browning for the City At Large appointment and Councilman Tim Carroll for the City Council appointment. There being no other nominations, Mayor Vickers closed nominations. Emily Browning was appointed by acclamation to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center and Tourism Authority and Councilman Tim Carroll was reappointed by acclamation to serve a term of three years on the Central Valdosta Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the term of Jerry Jennett on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority will expire January 1, 2012. Mr. Jennett expressed an interest in being reappointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants for consideration in no order of preference are: (1) Carlos D. Hunley - Communicable Disease Specialist, South Health District (this is Mr. Hunley's second choice), and (2) Jerry Jennett - CEO, Georgia Gulf Sulfur Corporation.

Mayor Vickers asked for nominations. Councilman Payton placed in consideration the name of Jerry Jennett. Councilman Wright placed in consideration the name of Carlos Hundley. There being no other nominations, Mayor Vickers closed nominations. Carlos Hundley received two votes and Jerry Jennett received five votes. Jerry Jennett was reappointed to serve a term of five years on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that Make A Difference Day was held on October 22, 2011 and during the cleanup event there were 20,120 pounds or 10 tons of debris, including 68 tires, removed from neighborhoods. The Rivers Alive was held on October 8, 2011 and there were a number of sites in or around the City that were worked by volunteers. The sites included the Little River at the Withlacoochee River, the Withlacoochee River at St. Augustine Road, Two Mile Branch at the Valdosta State University north campus, One Mile Branch at the Valdosta State University main campus, and Sugar Creek at Gornto Road. There were over 200 volunteers who put in over 600 hours and during the course of the day. They removed approximately 4,000 tons of debris from these water and river sites.

Also, the City hosted its semi-annual Electronics Recycling Event at Mathis Auditorium on November 3, 2011 and since the event was started in 2006, we have collected over 137 tons or 274,000 pounds of electronic waste and prevented it from being disposed of in a landfill. This has been a very successful program.

The Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be Wednesday, November 23, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. on the front lawn of City Hall and Mayor Vickers and his family will be participating in the event. Council is encouraged to attend.

The City has volunteered to work with the Salvation Army for several years in their Bell Ringing Event to raise money for Christmas gifts for needy families and this year the City will be ringing the bell at Wal-Mart on Perimeter Road on Thursday, December 8, 2011 from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Anyone who would like to take a one hour time slot will need to contact Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Project is coming along very well. Rountree Construction completed all of the sidewalk work and Quality Companies has completed all of the landscape pavers and irrigation. Rountree Construction resumed work today on the paving and completed the north and southbound lanes of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. They are on schedule to pave the intersection on MLK Drive and Lee Street and will then pave MLK Drive and Ashley Street tomorrow. Georgia Power has completed their work on the pedestrian lights so the bulk of the work will be completed by Friday afternoon and most of the remaining items will be punch list items. It appears that the project will be completed by Thanksgiving.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, thanked everyone who attended the Thanksgiving Luncheon today. There was a great turnout with over 500 employees coming out for the event and to be recognized for their service to the community. Also, due to the holidays the City Council will not have a second meeting in November or December.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he attended a regional Stormwater Meeting yesterday and they are working on a plan to present to the Governor who has indicated a willingness to support such a project.

There will be a Veterans Day program tomorrow at Bazemore-Hyder Stadium and the City of Valdosta salutes all of our active, retired, and fallen military personnel and their families and would like to express our deep appreciation for their service and sacrifice to our community and our nation.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Vickers inquired as to why the City lights the Christmas tree at 2:00 p.m. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that is generally done to help with the media timelines. It is nice to have a picture on the front page of the newspaper and be on the 6:00 p.m. news and it has historically been done in the afternoon. We also bring some groups in such as day care children from Moody Air Force Base and senior citizens from the Ashley House to be a part of the ceremony.

Councilman Yost stated that the Parks and Recreation Authority will be creating a new Master Plan using Lose & Associates so if there is anything that Council would like to see included in it please let the City Manager know. Councilman Yost also thanked everyone who threw their hat in the ring to run for public office this year because it takes a lot to run a good campaign and get elected. He congratulated the new Mayor and all those who would be returning to Council.

Councilman Wright commended Staff for moving forward with the new elevated water storage tank because it will create better water quality and lower the ISO rating. Also, the new lift station is being installed on Ponderosa Drive and that was something they have been working on for a while. Councilman Wright stated that he was excited to see the VSEB program working to make opportunities for small businesses in the City and obtain funding. Councilman Wright also congratulated the new Mayor and Councilman Norton.

Councilman Hampton thanked Taylor Insurance for the food they provided at their annual City of Valdosta Employee Appreciation Luncheon. He took his 95 year old mother-in-law a plate and she was very thankful. Councilman Hampton stated that he appreciated what they do for the City of Valdosta.

Mayor Vickers stated that he wanted to recognize the newly elected Mayor, John Gayle and asked him to stand.

Roy Taylor, 2209 Bridlewood Drive, stated that we need bicycle paths in this community very badly. He just returned from a trip to Europe and they have bicycle paths all over. This helps our children as they are growing up and it helps us as adults to maintain our weight. Mr. Taylor stated that he owns a little farm near Lakeland and there is a nice level road where you will find a lot of bicycle riders but it is still not wide enough. A young lady in her twenties was killed out there through no fault of the driver. If there had been another two feet of pavement it could have saved her life. We also need to thank about the health care costs that we could save if we keep our bodies in good shape by riding bicycles. Other cities have bicycle lanes and some automatically add an extra two feet. The City has received a grant in the amount of \$75,000 to \$100,000 so that a sidewalk could be installed and children could either walk or ride a bicycle to J. L. Newbern Middle School. Mr. Taylor asked Council's consideration to add bicycle paths.

Ken Klanicki, 2208 Jerry Jones Drive, stated that we have just had a rather divisive issue that has come to the voters on school consolidation and the voters have spoken. He also read the newspaper this morning and the chief spokesman for the Friends of the Valdosta City School System made a statement that was very troubling. It was a thinly veiled threat apparently aimed at either the Chamber of Commerce or those private citizens of CUEE that there would be consequences if this matter was pursued. It was also troubling that he also made a statement on the south steps of the Valdosta City Hall. There was one person there from the City and it was Mayor Vickers. A few meetings ago it was the Mayor who pushed Council to have a Resolution to back the opposition side. It was Councilman Carroll that stated it would set a bad precedent but this Council still voted and that Resolution is on record. Mr. Klanicki inquired as to who approved the group to meet on the steps of City Hall with the rather ill worded statement and whether this Mayor and Council approved the statement prior to it being made. He was very troubled because we should be healing after this controversy and Mr. Allen was only stoking the fire.

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that he attended the meeting at the steps of City Hall when that outstanding presentation was given by the former Superintendent of Valdosta City Schools, Mr. Sam Allen. For those who were not able to attend and hear what the Superintendent said, he spoke about unity and forgetting everything that had been said by CUEE that was not true. He asked for a mending of the community and stated that they would be having another meeting at the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) monument so everyone involved in getting this process through could join hands as a sign of fellowship and unity and follow the principles of non-violence as stated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. There were things that went down concerning the school consolidation issue and he heard lies not only against CUEE but vice versa; however, there were things said about the President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) that were really uncalled for. They do not want to go back there and Sam Allen closed the door on that when he made his speech on the steps of City Hall. He was not there to defend Sam Allen but he wanted the record to show that former Superintendent Sam Allen acted as a professional. Mr. Rhynes stated that for him to sit there and not say anything would lessen him as a human being on earth. The issue is dead now at least for a while and if it is ever resurrected again then they would deal with it on that morning. Mr. Rhynes stated they should let the dead bury the dead and let by-gones be by-gones. This is a public facility and even the Klan, white Supremist group, NAACP, or the SCLC has a right to meet out there if they want to. Mr. Rhynes stated that he served his country for 20 years and he has a right to speak. They have to understand that this is a new day and it is not the 1800's anymore. Sam Allen had a right to be out there and he was there to defend his own rights and say what he felt. Mr. Rhynes also commended the bicyclists for being at the Council meeting tonight. He recorded the bicycles out in front of City Hall and will post that on U-Tube (Boston GBR) along with the presentation made by Sam Allen. Citizens will be able to see if anything he said was out of order and they can also hear everything that CUEE said and compare the two comments. Mr. Rhynes stated that Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set and make you free." By him speaking the truth, the more truth he speaks and the freer he becomes.

Heather Evans, 1613 Williams Street, stated that she wanted to draw attention to our community's need for a public transportation system as well as more bike lanes, walking trails, and sidewalks in order to make our community more accessible. Ms. Evans stated that many community organizations and individuals have advocated for this issue and she wanted to show her support for those who have spoken in the past and those who still speak today. Ms. Evans presented a formal petition to the Mayor and Council which was put into circulation a week ago. They received almost 200 signatures without really trying and have had in-depth conversations with most of the people who signed the petition regarding transportation issues. One individual also presented her with video footage of some areas of town where infrastructure is worn and neglected. There are dirt trails where sidewalks are

needed and evidence of poor treatment of bicyclists and pedestrians as they are trying to make it to work or school. During the time that she relied on walking or bicycling for transportation, she has been screamed at, cursed at, and almost killed which is a fate that unfortunately some have suffered. This treatment is the fault of those who feel that automobiles constitute a privilege in class. They have a narrow minded perspective and are a true example of the lack of compassion that some may harbor. Ms. Evans stated that she and other supporters would like to see more done rapidly. Of course these changes cannot be made overnight, but she wanted to propose some small changes that could be made. First, she would like to request bike lanes on major roads such as Jerry Jones Drive and St. Augustine Road, Baytree Road from Valdosta State University to the Gornto Road intersection, St. Augustine Road from West Hill Avenue to Exit 18 and possibly further, north and south Oak Street all the way from Highway 41 to Five Points, all of Norman Drive, and West Hill Avenue from Inner Perimeter Road to link up with Norman Drive. Ideally, she would like to see bike lanes all over town but if she had to pick one to start with it would be St. Augustine Road because it also needs to have a completed sidewalk segment. There have been many people endangered while using this portion of the road. Many of the clients that she works with on a daily basis use this road so this would provide a great boost to the economic growth of that part of town and also alleviate some of their concerns. Also, building a sidewalk would be a great concurrent goal for such a project. Next, she is thankful for the MIDS Transport services but a strain on their resources shows even further proof that public transportation should be expanded to match the needs of our community. Many agree that a smaller model bus system would be a great way to start. She has spoken with many who have become discouraged due to the lack of transportation and have moved out of Valdosta to larger cities with more accessibility. Those are people who could potentially stay and contribute to our community's overall growth. From a long time perspective, she could only see this hurting our economy even more. Just think of all the benefits of such a proposed system. Perhaps larger local employers would support shuttles or maybe each family could pay a monthly share. From her understanding, there are many types of financial support, maybe not as many now as in the past, but there are many private donors who may be interested in contributing to such causes. In short, she would like to see Valdosta set a shining example of efficiency and sustainable growth. Such implementations would clearly improve our quality of life, energy efficiency, and increase tourist amenities.

Matt Portwood, 4233 Wilshire Drive, stated that he wanted to thank Larry Hanson, City Manager, for letting him know that the City does have an active plan for every road widening project and it includes bike lanes. He also thanked Sementa Mathews, Public Information Officer, for introducing him to the "Georgia Bike Sense Guide for Cyclists and Motorists." The idea is not just building up the infrastructure in Valdosta but also educating motorists and cyclists. At their last ride, they gave out approximately 45 guide books. Mr. Portwood also thanked the City Engineer, Pat Collins, who is working to with him to create a public forum to allow interested people to open up a dialog about the City's plans or project list. He is trying to get the word out about what the City is doing. The Transportation Master Plan is a great plan but a lot of the people in the community who do not know what the City's plans are. The second goal was to have places where they could lock up bikes in the Downtown area. There are two racks in the Toombs Street parking lot near the Bleu Pub that could park approximately five bikes each. At the last critical mass ride, which is held the last Friday of every month, the Valdosta Daily Times noted about 40 cyclists. Cycling as a hobby is outpacing the City's implementation of what the Transportation Master Plan calls cycling amenities. That was the idea of parking out front of City Hall so that everyone could see the bikes locked to the steps of City Hall. Mr. Portwood asked Council's consideration in getting some bike racks which range from \$75-\$200. One rack would hold five bikes and these could be placed around the Downtown area as a start to show that the City is thinking about cyclists and working toward helping them.

Kenwin Jones, 1015 Bunche Drive, stated that he was a bicyclist and had been doing this for a number of years. He graduated as a certified technician from the United Bicycle Institute and went to work at Community Cycle Center in Portland, Oregon. Portland is already about 40 years ahead of Valdosta on the bicycle community recycle and repair operations. Bicycles are going to be a big part of our future with the gas prices so high and people getting their licenses suspended. Mr. Jones stated that he supported his friends in trying to make Valdosta more bicycle friendly. There is only one bicycle shop in Valdosta and that is in Remerton. He works out of the backyard of his grandparents' house repairing bicycles so that he can make a contribution to the community. He is trying to meet the needs of the children in his neighborhood and provide a service to repair the bicycles. People are going to be leaning more and more toward bicycle transportation and while some are too expensive for people to purchase, he is trying to bring old bicycles up to standard like they are brand new. In moving forward with the bike lanes that is preparing for what is to come. Mr. Jones stated that he wanted to step up and make his services available.

Jim Jones, 207 West Jane Street, stated that he has been riding a bicycle to and from work five days a week for three years. His family had financial straits so they are a one-car family and since they have a small child his wife keeps the car most of the time. He rides St. Augustine Road and Baytree Road regularly. His daughter has a bicycle that she does not ride because he is terrified to let her out on the streets. He has heard people use expletives that would make a sailor blush simply for the fact that he is on the street while they are driving their car. He is riding a white line or in a gutter taking a risk of blowing tires out or wrecking and killing himself so that they can have complete reign of 8 feet of space for a 6 foot vehicle. He would like for his daughter to ride because he has enjoyed it all his life. There needs to be more laws or classes, especially at the college level, to educate people about the driving laws and repercussions for doing something wrong to someone riding a bicycle. Mr. Jones stated that he has had things thrown at him and has been run off the road. There is really no place to ride so a bike park would be wonderful. Mr. Jones stated that he would like to see more done for the children and our City.

Dan Davis, 1001 Cherry Creek Drive, thanked the Mayor and Council for taking their position on supporting the "no vote" on the school consolidation. He also thanked Dr. Sam Allen for everything he did and as a voter and taxpayer he had the right to speak on the City Hall steps. He was not in attendance at the speech but he did read an article in the Valdosta Daily Times which stated they must let go of all the pettiness that went on during the election and get along together in harmony. The school consolidation did not have the support of the community and he welcomed the support of CUEE to improve education. Their intentions were good but it was misdirected. Anything less than 100% graduation rate from any school system is unsatisfactory because there is always room for improvement in education.

Mayor Vickers stated that he was going to suspend the Citizens to be Heard portion because Council needed to enter into Executive Session to discuss other items; however, there were several good ideas such as the bike park and the Master Plan for Parks and Recreation. He has been on City Council for a long time and there are two things that they understand: (1) They understand there is a transportation need but the City has not had the ability to pay for it, and (2) They understand there is a need for bike lanes but the City has not had the ability to pay for that either. They will be doing some of these things as they go along because they are in the plan but the City does not have the money right now. Also, when you have an election there is a lot of emotion and when looking back there may have been some things that should not have been said; however, that is part of a good campaign. There may be things that were said on both sides that could have been said a little different but they are going to come together and rally around the two school systems for the good of the community.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Vickers entertained a motion to adjourn the Council meeting and enter into an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing litigation.

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the November 10, 2011 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:11 p.m. and enter into Executive Session.

Mayor Vickers reconvened the regular City Council meeting at 7:38 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of real estate in the Executive Session and no action was taken.

Mayor Vickers entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the November 10, 2011 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:38 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, December 8, 2011.