

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2007
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, David Sumner, Alvin Payton, Jr., Willie Head, Jr., John Eunice, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Councilman John Eunice, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION FROM VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Presentation from Valdosta State University Head Coach David Dean and Athletic Director Herb Reinhard.

Coach David Dean, Valdosta State University, stated that the Valdosta State Football Team has put together an outstanding season this year with a record of 9-1. The Blazers will be playing in the first playoff game at home on Saturday, November 24, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. against Catawba College from Salisbury, North Carolina. The Blazers are one of 16 teams remaining in Division II football which consists of 144 teams. On behalf of Dr. Ronald Zaccari, President of Valdosta State University, Herb Reinhard of the Valdosta State Athletic Department, Coach Dean extended an invitation to each Council member, Mayor Fretti, and Larry Hanson, City Manager, to attend and presented each with 20 tickets to be given to constituents. Coach Dean stated that they appreciated the support of the community and this was their opportunity to say thanks and to give back to the community. Mayor Fretti thanked Coach Dean on behalf of Council for his leadership and wished the Blazers the best of luck in the playoff game.

READING OF ELECTION RESULTS

Reading of Election Results for the General Municipal Election by the City Manager.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that an election was held on November 6, 2007 for the Georgia General Municipal and Special Election. The following election results have now been certified by the Board of Elections: (1) Mayor - Ron Borders received 2,390 (37.36%) and John J. Fretti (Incumbent) received 4004 (62.58%), and 4 write-in votes, (2) Council At Large - David Dempsey received 385 (6.11%), John A. Eunice (Incumbent) received 3,681 (58.38%), Dexter L. Sharper received 2,223 (35.26%), and 16 write-in votes, (3) Council District 1 – Wade S. McCrae received 344 (37.64%), James R. Wright (Incumbent) received 568 (62.14%), and 2 write-in votes, (4) Council District 3 – Sonny Vickers (Incumbent) received 541 (98.54%), and 8 write-in votes, and (5) Council District 5 – Tim Carroll received 1,116 (51.71%), David Sumner (Incumbent) received 1,041 (48.24%), and 1 write-in vote. Winners of the election were (1) Mayor - John J. Fretti, (2) Council At Large - John A. Eunice, (3) District 1 – James R. Wright, (4) District 3 – Joseph Sonny Vickers, and (5) District 5 – Tim Carroll. Results for the Valdosta City School Board were as follows: (1) District 1 - Annie S. Fisher (Incumbent) received 855 (99.19%), (2) District 2 – Joseph Brown received 417 (98.12%), and (3) District 3 – Warren Sweet Lee received 525 (98.87%).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 8, 2007 Regular Meeting was approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

Floyd Rose, President of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 411 Orange Street, congratulated Mayor Fretti on his re-election and stated that Mayor Fretti carried every precinct including the ones in predominately black neighborhoods. Mr. Rose stated that he had several concerns about some misleading radio ads attributed to Mayor Fretti's campaign that were directed at the black community. The ad, which was written by the Mayor's campaign and read by influential black radio personalities, read as follows: "Who's the man who brought over \$11 million dollars to our community. The same man who helps each year organize Juneteenth for us. He's the guy who has attended every watch night with us in our community since the beginning of his term. The man behind more than 4,000 new jobs in our community. Who is this man? Well you need to know. He is Mayor John Fretti. The man who serves us all – all of us and he is serving with action and doing positive things that make a difference to our own community." Mr. Rose inquired as to where the more than \$11 million dollars came from and where was it spent in our community. Mayor Fretti stated that he would be glad to get back to Mr. Rose on his concern at a later date and he would entertain any comments on the operation of the municipal government. Mr. Rose inquired as to when the Mayor would get back to him. Mayor Fretti stated that Citizens to be Heard portion of the Council Meeting was not for engaging individual Council members. Mr. Rose asked again what the source was for the \$11 million dollars that the Mayor's campaign claimed was spent in the black community and where was it spent. Mayor Fretti stated that he would not answer the question because this is government and not politics or campaigning. Mr. Rose asked about the 4,000 jobs and inquired as to where they were in the community that the Mayor's ad said he was behind. Mayor Fretti stated that he would not answer the question because this was government and not campaigning. Mr. Rose inquired as to whether he and some others could meet with the Mayor later to discuss who got the jobs. Mayor Fretti stated that Mr. Rose could give him a call tomorrow, but not at City Hall, and he would entertain the call. Mr. Rose stated that he was insulted by the statement that the Mayor had attended every watch night with them in their community. The watch night service began on December 31, 1862 in anticipation of the emancipation proclamation by President Lincoln. Africans and slaves gathered in their churches, private homes, and other places and watched the clock hit midnight and gave thanks to God in anticipation of their freedom. For the Mayor and any other white politician to come into a black church and use this as some reason for blacks to vote for him and had absolutely nothing to do with their freedom is at best insulting. Mr. Rose stated that the Mayor's ad mentioned that he had organized Juneteenth and perhaps so but he was not sure if the Mayor understood or appreciated the meaning of Juneteenth. It began on the 19th of June in 1863 when the slaves did not get the message that they had been physically freed in Galveston, Texas until five months after the emancipation proclamation. Juneteenth was not simply a celebration of their freedom but the occasion was used to teach them about their new rights and how to go into business, and for the Mayor's campaign to use that he helped to organize it for them in their community was insulting. Mr. Rose stated that there are two Valdostas – one white and one black. They are separate and unequal. Blacks have a medium income of \$18,600 per year and whites have a medium income of \$36,400 per year. There is a poll that the New York Times took recently and it indicated that the least trusted group of professionals in this country are politicians and the most respected professional group are the preachers and that is true of the black community. The preacher is the highest respected man in the black community and Mayor Fretti has cleverly used the black preacher and the black church. The Mayor visited the black church and was warmly greeted by the black preacher and he waved to the audience and then left. Mayor Fretti got what he wanted but left the black preacher and his people with nothing. The problem is that there is a difference with being satisfied and pacified. The Mayor is satisfied and then you pacify him before an unsuspecting, gullible black audience. Mr. Rose stated that every road has an end however crooked it might be. Mr. Rose appealed to the Mayor and stated that his ad led this community to believe that he had brought more than \$11 million dollars to our community and 4,000 jobs and nobody can tell us who got the money and who got the jobs. Mr. Rose stated that he and others would be glad to meet with the Mayor and inquired as to whether the Mayor would be prepared to tell them about the money and the jobs. Mayor Fretti stated that Mr. Rose could give him a call.

Willie Head, 1315 River Street, Apt. D-52, stated that the Mayor used a case of manipulation. They take their churches seriously and a lot of their people are not politically inclined. They are not looking for political apexes but if the Mayor is not going to serve them then he should not go to their churches because they hold those things sacred.

Sam A. Robinson, Jr., 3213 Perimeter Circle, stated that he was concerned about the lack of sidewalks in that area. Mr. Robinson would like to get sidewalks on both sides of the street and if not both sides then at least on one side. There are a lot of houses going up in that area off of Tyndall and the children are walking in the streets.

Mr. Robinson asked for Council's consideration in placing sidewalks in that area leading to Valdosta High School. Mayor Fretti stated that the Sidewalk Committee had been re-established and Mr. Robinson would be contacted either by telephone or letter to advise when the Committee would be meeting. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the City has hired a Transportation Consultant who is developing a comprehensive long range Transportation Plan that includes not only road widening and public transportation but sidewalks as well. The Transportation Consultant is scheduled to make a presentation at the December City Council Work Session and with a final plan in February or March, 2008 which will include an entire sidewalk plan.

Queen Ann Robinson stated that she was homeless and was forced into behavior services some years ago. She was supposed to get a house which she did but keeping the house was dependant upon her taking medication and seeing a doctor when she did not need to do that. Dana Thomas from the Shelter Plus Program came uninvited into her home to check out all of the things that she does. Ms. Robinson stated that she is multi-gifted and had created a lot of things like clothing and furniture and she also writes and recites poetry. Ms. Thomas liked her work and wanted all of the things that Ms. Robinson had done. Ms. Thomas brought back all of the originals and copies and later she told Ms. Robinson that she wanted her to be featured in the Georgia magazine and do a presentation at Jekyll Island. Ms. Robinson asked if she was going to be paid for that and Ms. Thomas told her she had no option. Ms. Robinson stated that she had an option and she did not go. Ms. Thomas told Ms. Robinson that the government gave the Georgia Department of Community Affairs more grant money than ever and Ms. Robinson inquired as to why she could not get a house unless she takes medication when she does not need it. Ms. Robinson stated that she has a right to refuse to see a doctor and to refuse to take medication. There is nothing wrong with her and she was supposed to be there in the first place. Someone did something to her that caused her to be there and she needs a home of her own but does not want to take the medication because there is nothing wrong with her. Ms. Robinson believes that if she is part of the reason that the government gave the Georgia Department of Community Affairs more grant money than ever then she wants her money. Ms. Robinson stated that God is just so you must be just. Mayor Fretti stated that the Community Development Department would be in touch with Ms. Robinson to see if they could assist her.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

A RESOLUTION FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND (DDRLF) POSTPONED

Consideration of a request to approve a resolution for Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) for 117-119 North Patterson Street (ClientTell, Inc.).

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that the purpose of the DDRLF is to assist cities and counties in implementing quality downtown development projects. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) administers the fund and makes loans to eligible applicants. This project involves the rehabilitation of the existing structure at 117-119 North Patterson Street which has been off the tax roll for several years. Pat Sullivan and Chris Williams, owners of ClientTell, Inc., are purchasing and rehabilitating the property, and the Main Street Director, Jan Harris, has had the State Architect from the Historic Preservation Division go through the building with them to see about utilizing the rehabilitation tax credits. The required Initial Project Assessment (IPA) sets forth a detailed project description, overview of the financial structure of the project, and the public benefit to the downtown area and community. The maximum proposed DDRLF loan amount is \$250,000 and the applicants project their loan amount to be \$170,000. This type of project requires 50% of the total financing to be from a private financial institution, 10% of owner's equity injection into the project, and the remaining 40% from the low interest loan funds which is 3% and amortized over a 10-year period. The City of Valdosta is the pass through agency to the Central Valdosta Development Authority and in turn it is done as a loan to the private developer who must post adequate collateral for the loan. Mara Register recommended that Council approve a resolution for Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund for 117-119 North Patterson Street. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether this was the same type loan that Covington's received. Mara Register stated that it was very similar to the loan that Covington's received but this project is much smaller so they only needed to use one source for funding which is the DDRLF. This will be the 40% portion of the loan and they are also going to use the rehabilitation tax credits which means that they will be restoring that property to the Secretary of Interior's standards for historic properties. Councilman Head stated that there was less information attached to this request

**A RESOLUTION FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
REVOLVING LOAN FUND (DDRLF) POSTPONED (CON'T)**

11/19/07 CONTINUED

than in the past and inquired as to whether there was additional information. Mara Register stated that the IPA should have been attached to the request to show the breakdown and requested that this be postponed until the first meeting in December in order to give Council time to review the IPA.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Head to postpone the request to approve a resolution for Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) for 117-119 North Patterson Street (ClientTell, Inc.) until the first Council meeting in December. Councilman Payton seconded the motion. Councilman Eunice inquired as to whether the postponement would hold up the project in any way. Councilman Head stated that it would be inappropriate to vote on a package that was not complete. The motion was unanimously adopted (7-0).

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for half-ton pick-up trucks for the various City of Valdosta Departments (Bid No. 18-07-08).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that various Departments are in need of new trucks to assist with their duties due to high mileage and rising maintenance costs. These trucks are Council-approved budget items for this fiscal year. Sealed bids were received on November 13, 2007 with the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$89,549.70. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$89,549.70 and allow the Departments to proceed with the purchase. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the older vehicles would be auctioned. Greg Brown stated that they would be placed on the Gov Deals web site for auction.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to follow the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent and approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$89,549.70 and allow the Departments to proceed with the purchase of half-ton pick-up trucks.

Consideration of bids for one, F-350 truck with utility body for the Water and Sewer Department (Bid No. 20-07-08).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Water and Sewer Department is in need of a new truck to assist with their duties due to high mileage and rising maintenance costs. This truck is a Council-approved budget item for this fiscal year. Sealed bids were received on November 13, 2007 with the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$23,948.27. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$23,948.27 and allow the Water and Sewer Department to proceed with the purchase.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$23,948.27 and allow the Water and Sewer Department to proceed with the purchase.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to apply for grant funds for the 2007 Fire Prevention and Safety Grants Program.

Fire Chief J. D. Rice stated that the City of Valdosta has received funding under the 2003, 2004, and 2006 Assistance to Firefighter's Grant cycles. The 2003 and 2004 funding provided for exercise equipment to assist firefighters with a wellness and fitness program that has enhanced their fitness and health levels and improved their physical endurance in responding to fire incidents. The 2006 funding allowed the City to purchase 40 Integrated PASS (Personal Alert Safety System) device upgrades for self-contained breathing apparatus, 2 RIT (Rapid Intervention Team) bags and computers, printers, and supporting software to comply with NFIRS (National Fire Incident Reporting System). The City is requesting 2007 grant funds in the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants Program for the purchase of equipment necessary to implement fire prevention and safety program which includes

CD's and other educational material. The total grant request is for up to \$13,000 of which up to \$1,300 (10%) is the required match. Chief Rice recommended that Council approve the request to apply for grant funds for the 2007 Fire Prevention and Safety Grants Program and the 10% cash match that will be paid from SPLOST funds.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to follow the recommendation of the Fire Chief and approve the request to apply for grant funds for the 2007 Fire Prevention and Safety Grants Program with the 10% cash match to be paid from SPLOST funds.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta Tree Commission.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there are two positions on the Valdosta Tree Commission that are open. The first position was held by Brett Ganas whose term expired on May 22, 2007, and the second position was held by Richard Carter who resigned. For Position #1 which was held by Brett Ganas, the following names were submitted for consideration: Brenda Thrasher - Retired Teacher, Laura Yale - Assistant Landscape Designer with Ganas Landscape Designs, and Angela Wall - Environmental Planner with South Georgia Regional Development Center. The Tree Commission recommended Brenda Thrasher for the appointment. For Position #2 which was held by Richard Carter whose term expires September 6, 2008, the following names were submitted for consideration: Amy Burch, Accountant with the City of Valdosta, Richard Kerby, Environmental Specialist with the Lowndes County Health Department, and Bobby Flowers, Horticulturist with Valdosta State University. The Tree Commission recommended Amy Burch for the appointment. Councilman Payton asked for clarification of the responsibilities of the Tree Commission. Larry Hanson stated that the City budgets \$10,000 each year that is designated for the Tree Commission and they participate in educational programs like the Arbor Day celebration, Christmas Tree Recycling Program, and also educate school children. They use the funds provided by the City and any other grant funds to plant trees throughout public areas including parks and the downtown area.

Mayor Fretti asked for nominations for Position #1. Councilman Yost placed in consideration the name of Brenda Thrasher. Councilman Payton placed in consideration the name of Angela K. Wall. There being no other nominations, Mayor Fretti closed nominations. Brenda Thrasher received five votes and Angela K. Wall received two votes. Brenda Thrasher was appointed to serve a term of four years on the Valdosta Tree Commission.

Mayor Fretti asked for nominations for Position #2. Councilman Eunice placed in consideration the name of Angela K. Wall. Councilman Payton asked for clarification on the nomination of Angela K. Wall for Position #2. Mayor Fretti stated that Ms. Wall could cross over and be nominated again. There being no other nominations, Angela K. Wall was appointed by acclamation to fill the unexpired term of Richard Carter on the Valdosta Tree Commission.

Consideration of appointments to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Committee.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Committee was created to give guidance to Staff and be an outreach to the community to insure that we are using the CDBG grants in the way that they are intended and to the best use for the community. The Committee is also a sounding board and receives advice from the community to insure that they are meeting the needs in the best way possible. Councilman Vickers stated that this money has to be spent in a Census tract area. Larry Hanson stated that was correct and the money has to be spent in the Census tract areas that meet the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) criteria for entitlement funds. Councilman Head inquired as to whether the committee was involved in the expenditure of the funds. Larry Hanson stated that they were involved in the expenditure of the funds. Mayor Fretti asked that in the future information on the responsibilities of boards, authorities, or committees be provided in the nomination letter to Mayor and Council. Larry Hanson stated that there are four positions on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Committee that are open. The names are listed in order of recommendation. For Position #1, which was held by Mary Bryant whose term expired February 24, 2007, the following names were submitted for consideration: Mary Bryant, Direct Support Staff with Normal Life of Georgia, Johnny Washington, Retired, and Doris E. Foy, Dietician with Smith Northview Hospital. For Position #2, which was held by Cora Williams whose term expired February 24, 2007, the following names were submitted

for consideration: Cora Williams, Phlebotomist with the Lowndes County Health Department, Deloris Mitchell, Retired Teacher, and Henry Calhoun, Grounds Equipment Operator with Valdosta State University. For Position #3, which was held by Evelyn Mitchell whose term expired February 24, 2007, the following names were submitted for consideration: Bessie Evans, Retired from Packaging Corporation of America, Grace McCray, Juvenile Court Tracker with Southwest Juvenile Tracking, and Betty Rogers, Retired Teacher. For Position #4, which was held by Melissa Coleman who resigned and whose term expires February 24, 2009, the following names were submitted for consideration: Lisa Hannan, Photographer and owner of Lisa Hannan Fine Art Photography, Dr. Jackson Gates, Pathologist with the Doctors Laboratory, Inc., and Celine Gladwin, Architect with Barnett, Fronczak, Barlowe Architects.

Councilman Vickers inquired as to how often the Committee meets. Mara Register stated that they meet quarterly and work with Staff on the Annual Action Plan and the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether most of the nominees live in the Census tract areas. Mara Register stated that most of the nominees do live in the Census tract areas. Melissa Coleman, a minister in the downtown area, has property in the downtown area and the downtown area sits at the heart and convergence of all of the designated Census tracts. That is why the names under Position #4 are property owners or business people in the downtown area. Councilman Vickers stated that this money would not actually be used for the downtown area since they already have funds for that area. Larry Hanson stated that in recent years the emphasis has been on housing and some on programs which is really not what is happening in the downtown area at this time. Councilman Vickers stated that to him the boundary lines for the downtown area are Magnolia Avenue, Oak Street, Savannah Avenue, and back to Lee Street and he would not want the money to be used for that. Mara Register stated that is why they bring the Annual Action Plan before Council for approval. Councilman Wright stated that he shared some of the same concerns as Councilman Vickers and if Council was having problems understanding that then the people who are volunteering to serve would also be confused. Another person who had submitted an application stated that their community affiliation was none and Council has worked hard to get this committee up and going because of the impact they can have in the revitalization areas. For that reason, there should be as many people as possible involved who are involved in the community. Ms. Betty Rogers and Ms. Grace McCray are both active in the community and would be positive for the area; however, there are other people who could contribute and help out with what is being doing. Councilman Wright asked that Council postpone the request until there is a better selection of nominees who live in these areas and are active in the community. Councilman Head stated that he had gained a better understanding of the down payment assistance portion of the CDBG funds. Kelley Thomas, Neighborhood Development Coordinator, stated that for the past two years there was \$100,000 in annual allocation and the year before that there was \$75,000. Ms. Thomas had indicated that they had problems in finding qualified applicants. Councilman Head stated that he was surprised to learn that of the \$75,000 in funding only \$35,000 had been spent and none of the \$100,000 in funds for both of the immediate past years had been spent so of \$275,000 total funds on \$5,000/applicant for down payment assistance only \$35,000 had been spent. Councilman Head inquired as to how the program was advertised and getting the word out to those living in the Census tract regarding the availability of the program. Those serving on the Committee could help get the word out so we should appoint those who are willing to reach out into communities and find those who can qualify. Councilman Head stated that this was a poor spending rate when you look at how much has been allocated and spent over the period. Mara Register stated that was a good point because it goes back to one of the goals of Mayor and Council and that was activities to promote home ownership and Staff has been working very hard on that for the past eight months. DCA has been in Valdosta three or four times to meet with Staff and they have had meetings with realtors and mortgage bankers and they have an upcoming interactive meeting which will be held on the campus of Valdosta State University. They are also bringing in "for profit" general contractors and going on-line with them with these applications so they can see that it is not a difficult process. Mara Register stated that they would continue the active participation with DCA to help get the word out because home ownership is a great key to the re-development of these neighborhoods. Councilman Wright stated that one of the reasons we have problems is that it is easy to go into a Hudson Docket neighborhood and put up a flyer inquiring as to whether the residents would like to be a homeowner. Probably everyone in Hudson Docket would like to be a homeowner but how many are willing to take the necessary steps to do that. That is where we need to focus and people on this Committee who are familiar with it and know other people in the community will help direct us to people who are willing to go through this process. Councilman Vickers stated that maybe some of Council members who live in these Census tract areas could become more involved in assisting them and getting the word out and attend some of the meetings. Larry Hanson stated that there are two more slots for this Committee that will be brought before Council with names for

appointments and Council could appoint from among this group tonight to fill the current slots and then have the remaining two slots brought before Council at another time. Councilman Wright stated that he would like to postpone the appointment for all for positions. Mayor Fretti inquired as to how many representatives Councilman Wright would like to have on this committee who reside in the Census tract. Councilman Wright stated that he thought they had discussed the idea of having each Council member select a nominee from the area. Mayor Fretti inquired as to how many nominees for the current slots are from the Census tract areas. Mara Register stated that all of the nominees from Positions 1, 2, and 3 were from the Census Tract areas.

A MOTION by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to postpone the appointments to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Committee until the December 6, 2007 Council meeting.

Mayor Fretti stated that he needed to leave the Council meeting early and asked Mayor Pro Tem Head to continue the meeting in his absence. Mayor Fretti left the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, commended Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, and the Community Development Staff for their work last week in hosting the National Community Development Association Board and Training meeting in Valdosta. There were 90 professionals in attendance from all over the southeast and they were very impressed with Valdosta and the hospitality they received.

A survey has been sent out to Mayor and Council about postponing the December 20, 2007 since several Council members may be out of town for the holidays and it will need to be returned as soon as possible indicating your preference.

The Jingle Bell Festival is scheduled for Saturday, December 1, 2007 and will be a great event. Council members are invited to attend the event which has grown and prospered over the last several years.

The Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony which is scheduled for November 21, 2007 will begin at 2:00 p.m. in front on City Hall on the Central Avenue side. Refreshments will be served.

There was an incident this morning involving a wastewater spill on Bemiss Road in the Skipper Bridge Road area and there were 7,000 gallons of wastewater that discharged into a stream from a lift station. The City crews were alerted and were on the scene quickly and are in the process of cleaning it up. The City will be issuing an advisory to those downstream customers such as Cherry Creek to be careful about any contact with the stream and the lake. It was an unfortunate incident and the cause is under investigation. A press release has been sent out and the Environmental Protection Division has been notified as required. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether all of the City's lift stations were around ponds and streams. Larry Hanson stated that not all of them were around ponds and streams. There are generally located where they are out of need. There is a point where gravity flow will not work and you have to have a lift station because you have an area that has been developed and you need sewer and the purpose of the lift station is to pump it up to a point where gravity flow takes over and works with the rest of the system.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Yost stated that he spoke with Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, about Council members riding on a fire truck in the Christmas parade and getting off at the bleachers downtown to watch the rest of the parade. Council members are encouraged to participate in the parade.

Councilman Sumner stated that he had a previous engagement and would not be in attendance at Executive Session.

Mayor Pro Tem Head entertained a motion to adjourn the Council meeting and enter into an Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate and litigation.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the November 19, 2007 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:39 p.m. and enter into Executive Session.

Mayor Pro Tem Head reconvened the regular City Council meeting at 7:10 p.m. and stated that the discussion on litigation was for an update and on the real estate discussion, Council voted to purchase property to alleviate some flooding problems.

Mayor Pro Tem Head entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the November 19, 2007 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:11 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, December 6, 2007.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta