

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2014
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor John Gayle called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, and Robert Yost. Council members absent were Alvin Payton, Jr., Sandra Tooley, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Pastor Reginald Benjamin, Lighthouse Christian Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Special Presentation by the U. S. Post Office.

Grant Baker, U. S. Post Office, stated that he was with the Facilities Department (Design and Construction) and Sandra Rybicki is with the Real Estate Department. There is a Project currently under study for the main Post Office in Downtown Valdosta. They wanted to keep the local Elected Officials and the community updated and to inform them of any plans the Post Office might make. There is a legal mandated process that they have to follow with core strategies regarding the organization and the process for public input. The legal mandate is 39 CFR 241.4 and it requires that the Post Office provides the public with notification to the City Officials and community who may be affected by this Project. The public input will be considered prior to any final decisions by the Post Office. As part of a national effort, the Postal Service is evaluating the current inventory of all of the facilities in an effort to try and optimize the entire Postal network. As a result, they are looking for ways to reduce costs, consolidate operations, and increase the efficiency. They are not closing the main Post Office but identifying a new possible location. This facility currently houses the retail, P. O. boxes, and the delivery operations (carriers). It is their desire to retain the retail presence in close proximity to the existing main Post Office. For any retail location, they are legally mandated to follow a specific process and obtain public input. The steps include the following: (1) Notification of the Project with the Mayor, (2) Notification of the Project to all the City Officials in the community in a public forum, (3) Following this meeting, there is a 15-day waiting period to evaluate the comments received by the City Officials or the general public. Once this step has been accomplished, they will formalize the decision by sending written notification to the Mayor. This letter will be posted at the Post Office for the community to review. There will be a 30-day waiting period to evaluate the appeals received from the City Officials or the community. This is the official appeal period. During the waiting period, they will evaluate the market for the potential sites to meet Postal requirements. At the end of the period, they will conduct a site selection with Postal Officials to evaluate all the potential sites. Following this step, a letter will be sent to the Mayor outlining the contending and non-contending sites, and a letter will be posted in the lobby of the Post Office during the 30-day waiting period. Once a final decision has been made, a letter will be sent to the Mayor indicating the selected site and it will also be posted at the Post Office. They will take no final action for 30 days. At this point they will consider the notification process to be complete; however, throughout the process they will continue to keep the channels of communication open.

Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the P. O. boxes would be located within the same Downtown area. Mr. Baker stated they would be located with the same area. Councilman Vickers asked if they would have any type of appeal process they could make if they disagree with their findings at the end. Ms. Rybicki stated that the only appeal process there is would be when the decision is made to relocate the retail services. There will be a 30-day appeal period. Councilman Vickers inquired as to who they would make the appeal to. Ms. Rybicki stated that all comments and appeals would need to be in writing and should be sent to her through December 5, 2014. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that it was his understanding that the mail handling, the trucks and drivers, and those disseminating mail would be moved to the Inner Perimeter Road Post Office. Nothing is closing but they will go through a study process to look at sites. The General Services Administration (GSA) owns the building and the U. S. Post Office is basically a tenant and they lease the space they occupy. There could be a possibility that they go through the process and stay there. Ms. Rybicki stated that was correct and they would start discussions with GSA about the possibility of downsizing. If they do downsize where they are currently located, her process comes to a complete halt. Larry Hanson stated that they feel their minimum needs would be one acre of land and approximately 4,000 square feet of space. They are required to stay within two to three miles. Councilman Norton inquired as to how this would affect jobs at the Post Office. Ms. Rybicki stated that it would be position neutral

and it would not affect any jobs at all. Mayor Gayle inquired as to whether they would stay in the current location if they found another location and it cost them an enormous amount of money to rehab it. Mr. Rybicki stated that at this point they have had no discussions with GSA and she did not know if they were interested or would even consider it. If they were willing and Mr. Baker could work it out on the space, then that would probably be their best bet. Larry Hanson stated that this starts the clock ticking and if people who have buildings and are interested they should contact Mr. Rybicki. Mayor Gayle also noted that there is a different location for the media to send comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 6, 2014 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (4-0) of the Council.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2014-19, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) TO PURCHASE A 100 FOOT AERIAL PLATFORM FIRE TRUCK AND EQUIPMENT

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase a 100 foot Aerial Platform Fire Truck and equipment.

Fire Chief Freddie Broome stated that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grants Program directorate is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. The primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. In order to keep up with the demands of growth, ISO requirements, and basic wear and tear on a constantly running fleet of fire engines, the City of Valdosta and the Valdosta Fire Department must take advantage of every opportunity to replace equipment. The Valdosta Fire Department currently has two, 100 foot aerial platform ladders that are operating as "front-line" ladder companies. Tower 2 is the oldest and was purchased in 1993. The standard "operational life span" for a "front-line" aerial ladder is 20 years. NFPA 1901 recommends that all fire apparatus older than 25 years (Front-line or Reserve) be removed from service. Tower 2 was purchased in 1993 and currently exceeds the recommended "operational life span" of an aerial ladder. The Maintenance Division has seen an increase in maintain cost, repair hours, and operational downtime due to the aging aerial ladder. There is a 10% required match in the amount of \$150,000; however, funds approved in SPLOST VII for the Fire Department could be used if successful in receiving the \$1,500,000.00 in grants funds. Chief Broome recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase a 100 foot Aerial Platform Fire Truck and equipment plus a 10% match. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we applied for this grant last calendar year but we were not funded so we are re-applying. We have \$1.1 million in SPLOST funds to purchase this but this would allow us to purchase it for \$150,000 saving our local taxpayers money rather than have to pay the full cost of it. If we were funded then Chief Broome would write a set of specifications and we would go through a bid process which would be brought back before Council. Chief Broome stated that the application needs to be submitted by December 5, 2014. Councilman Yost inquired about the timeline when it would be brought back before Council. Chief Broome stated that it would be announced in the spring and then they give you up to 18 months for large items once you have been awarded the grant. Larry Hanson stated that Chief Broome has reviewed the application and will be strengthening it in certain areas. Chief Broome stated that our SPLOST is down and that is why we need to reach out for government assistance to help fund this apparatus. Mayor Gayle inquired as to when we last received one of these grants. Chief Broome stated that we received this type of grant approximately three months ago but not one of this size.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to enact Resolution No. 2014-19, a Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of

Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase a 100 foot Aerial Platform Fire Truck and equipment plus a 10% match, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

RESOLUTION NO. 2014-20, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) TO PURCHASE FOUR FIRE ENGINES AND EQUIPMENT

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase four Fire Engines and equipment.

Fire Chief Freddie Broome stated that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grants Program directorate is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. The primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. In order to keep up with the demands of growth, ISO requirements, and basic wear and tear on a constantly running fleet of fire engines, the City of Valdosta and the Valdosta Fire Department must take advantage of every opportunity to replace equipment. The Valdosta Fire Department currently has four Pierce Quantum fire engines that are operating as "front-line" engine companies. The standard "operational life span" for a "front-line" fire engine is 15 years. The City purchased six Pierce Quantum fire engines in 1998, which two are currently being used as reserve apparatus. The Maintenance Division has seen an increase in maintain cost, repair hours and operational downtime due to the aging fire engines. In addition, due to the aging apparatus, it is becoming increasingly harder and expensive to find replace parts to keep the apparatus operating on a day-to-day basis. There is a 10% required match in the amount of \$200,000; however, funds approved in SPLOST VII for the Fire Department could be used if successful in receiving the \$2,000,000.00 in grants funds. Chief Broome recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase four Fire Engines and equipment plus a 10% match.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to enact Resolution No. 2014-20, a Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase four Fire Engines and equipment plus a 10% match, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

RESOLUTION NO. 2014-21, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) TO PURCHASE TEN THERMAL IMAGING CAMERAS

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase ten Thermal Imaging Cameras.

Fire Chief Freddie Broome stated that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Grants Program directorate is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. The primary goal of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) is to meet the firefighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped firefighters and other first responders to obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. The Valdosta Fire Department currently uses Thermal Imaging Cameras to search buildings with limited visibility for citizens, lost firefighters, and hidden fires. In addition, Thermal Imaging Cameras are used to aid in searching various areas in efforts to locate citizens. The mission of the Valdosta Fire Department is to protect lives and property. The use of Thermal Imagers allows firefighters to conduct searches in smoke filled structures much faster by providing visibility. Without Thermal Imaging Cameras, firefighters are forced to rely on feel to locate potential lives to save. Patients will have permanent brain damage after four to six minutes without oxygen. Thermal Imaging Cameras allow firefighters to locate patients and remove them from harm within minutes after arriving on scene. Firefighters can

become disoriented when working in conditions with limited visibility. Thermal Imaging Cameras have enabled firefighter rescue crews to locate lost firefighters and remove them from danger without injury. Without the use of Thermal Imaging Cameras, locating a lost firefighter is much more difficult because of the conditions that limit visibility. The Valdosta Fire Department takes great pride in conserving property. This is often more time consuming than extinguishing the fire. Firefighters spend hours on scene searching for and extinguishing hidden fires. Fires can stay concealed within walls, ceilings, cabinets, and attic spaces. These hidden fires can grow and ignite other materials after the Fire Department has left the scene if they are not detected. Without Thermal Imagers, firefighters are forced to cut into walls and punch holes in ceilings searching for hidden fires. Thermal Imaging Cameras detect temperature differences allowing firefighters to determine exact areas to access hidden fires, limiting the damage caused from seeking out hidden fires. The Thermal Imaging Cameras that we currently have are over eight years old and are no longer reliable. We are often ordering new battery packs for the Thermal Imaging Cameras and they do not stay operational very long. It is not uncommon to be on scene without a Thermal Imaging Camera that is operating properly. The condition of our current Thermal Imaging Cameras makes them no longer an essential resource but an unreliable hazard. The Valdosta Fire Department will provide a 10% match or \$13,000 from City Funds if successful in receiving the \$130,000 in grant funds. Chief Broome recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase ten Thermal Imaging Cameras plus a 10% match.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to enact Resolution No. 2014-21, a Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to purchase ten Thermal Imaging Cameras plus a 10% match, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

RESOLUTION NO. 2014-22, A RESOLUTION FOR THE SALE OF TWO REMNANT PARCELS OF LAND OWNED BY THE CITY OF VALDOSTA

Consideration of a request for the sale of two remnant parcels of land owned by the City of Valdosta.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the City of Valdosta currently owns two remnant parcels of land left from the Woodrow Wilson Extension Project. The parcels are located at the corner of Bemiss Road and Woodrow Wilson Drive and on North Oak Street at Gornto Road. The first parcel is very small and marginally developable; however, the second one is 0.66 acres and would lend itself to a professional office. To dispose of these lots, the City needs to declare them surplus property. The City will then need to authorize the City Attorney to advertise for sealed bids and sell it to the highest bidder, along with the right to reject bids if necessary. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the recommendation of the City Attorney for the sale of two remnant parcels of land owned by the City of Valdosta.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Vickers to approve the request and Resolution as presented for the sale of two remnant parcels of land owned by the City of Valdosta. Councilman Yost seconded the motion. Councilman Carroll stated that they could not adopt this as presented because tomorrow is the deadline. George Talley, City Attorney, stated that was not part of the presentation and was an error. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the City Attorney will advertise it and accept bids for two weeks. George Talley stated that they would advertise it for two consecutive weeks beginning the week after Thanksgiving and open bids the following Monday. Councilman Carroll stated that December 9, 2014 would be the deadline. George Talley stated that was correct. The motion was unanimously adopted (4-0) to enact Resolution No. 2014-22, a Resolution for the sale of two remnant parcels of land owned by the City of Valdosta, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of a request to approve a Change Order with Radney Plumbing for resurfacing Eager Road and Jerry Jones Road.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that on December 6, 2013 the City of Valdosta entered into an agreement with Radney Plumbing for \$1,256,940.05 to construct utility line extensions in Island 35B, Pineridge Subdivision. As part of the contract for the sewer and water expansion, the work included resurfacing of roadways and sidewalk

construction along Oak Street. All the water and sewer line extensions are installed and the construction is nearly complete. One of the last remaining tasks is to resurface Walmar and Jadan Streets and a portion of Eager Road. As you know, Eager Road and Jerry Jones have experienced base failure in multiple locations and the City went in and cut out those sections and made temporary repairs. Given the paving subcontractor will soon be mobilized for the resurfacing of Jadan, Walmar and a portion of Eager Road, and all the base repairs to resurface Eager Road and Jerry Jones are complete, Staff saw an opportunity to merge these projects to save money, time, and inconvenience to the traveling public. Both Eager Road and Jerry Jones Drive are included in the list of streets to be resurfaced in the LMIG 2015. In order to avoid (within a matter of months) both the inconvenience of closing and cost of resurfacing a portion of Eager Road and to take advantage of the current unit price for paving in the contract with Radney Plumbing for Island 35B (which saves approximately \$83,732.25 when compared to the LMIG 2015 engineering estimate of \$302,519.00), Staff is recommending that the City Council carefully consider and authorize a change order to Radney Plumbing to resurface Eager Road and Jerry Jones Drive from Oak Street to Gornto Road in the amount of \$218,786.75 (along with a 10% contingency). This is not a new project and it will save the City money and will save the traveling public major inconvenience of closing the same road in a matter of several months. Councilman Norton inquired as to whether Pat Collins could comment on why the patchwork was done so that everyone was clear that was money well spent. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the road was experiencing base failure due to an extremely cold and wet winter. If you do not repair a road when it has base failure then even resurfacing becomes very temporary and within a year or two it would be falling apart again. You would have to cut out the entire section and go back to the base, put a new one in, and then the resurfacing would be on top of that. We would be wasting money by resurfacing knowing that it would return.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve a Change Order with Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$218,786.75 plus a 10% contingency for resurfacing Eager Road and Jerry Jones Road.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on December 5, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. This coincides with our Christmas Open House and Parade which will be held on Saturday, December 6, 2014. We also have several Departments that help out with the holidays and the Shop with a Firefighter Program will be held on Tuesday, December 16th and the Shop with a Cop Program will be held on Monday, December 22nd.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we had a citizen who appeared before the Mayor and Council regarding taxis and fares so he and Chief Childress looked at some other cities such as Savannah to come up with some ideas. Chief Childress conducted a meeting with all the taxicab companies in the City and they came up with a consensus plan of what they would like to see implemented. At the first Council Meeting in December there will be a recommendation to improve the Ordinance and all the taxi companies are in support of this.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Electronics Recycling Event has become very popular and on Saturday, November 20, 2014, they collected 29,000 pounds of electronics and of that over 2,500 pounds were television sets. We do two of these events a year and this is a great environmentally way to dispose of all these electronic devices. Since 2006 and including last Saturday, we have now saved over 265 tons of electronic waste, which is over one-half a million pounds (530,000 pounds), from going into the landfill.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no Council comments.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Dr. Michael Noll, 2305 Glynnedale Drive, stated that he wanted to discuss the Sabal Trail interview that was published in the Valdosta Daily Times recently. When he read the Sabal Trail representative's comments he could not help but laugh because humor is usually the best medicine if you want to deal with certain situations. They are dealing with severe cases of amnesia when it comes with certain entities. They usually do not get any replies from representatives of Sabal Trail when it comes to addressing a simple fact that there will be a loss of property values

once the pipeline goes through. They also forget to mention that they have a rather poor maintenance and safety record themselves which are openly available if you go to the respective websites of the Federal government. There is no mention of the millions of dollars of property damage. There is now a myth about a jobs available next year, but in the end the number of permanent jobs that may be available are in the dozens and do not go to people in communities because these are highly specialized jobs. There is also no mention of the involvement of Florida Governor Rick Scott who is the driving factor behind making this pipeline even part of our discussions. If you wanted to build a pipeline it would just go from Alabama directly down to the coast. The most amazing part of this is what they stated about eminent domain. There have been many examples of letters that landowners have received last year where the use of eminent domain appears to basically put land owners under pressure so they feel compelled to sign an agreement so Sabal Trail representatives can go and survey on the property. That is not telling the truth when you are quoted as saying there are no such things as them using eminent domain and pressuring landowners to sign the document. The landowners are concerned about repercussions if they actually share their names. It is also interesting to note the refusal to accept the realities that there have been trespassing on pieces of property. Last July there was a Court Hearing in Lee County where a family took Sabal Trail to Court because they did trespass on their property. Dr. Noll stated that we cannot trust one thing that Sabal Trail representatives are telling us and he wanted to inform the Mayor and Council. Dr. Noll challenged Sabal Trail to have a panel discussion where there was an open forum where they discuss these things with a neutral moderator. This could be done by the Valdosta Daily Times or other entities in the community so that we do not have this "he said/she said" thing. We would have the opportunity as a community to ask questions, demand answers, and have those answers all supported by documents.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to adjourn the November 20, 2014 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:16 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, December 11, 2014.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta