

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2011**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor John Fretti called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Sonny Vickers, Tim Carroll, Alvin Payton, Jr., Ben Norton, Robert Yost, and James Wright. Councilwoman Deidra White arrived late at 5:35 p.m. The invocation was given by Councilman Alvin Payton, Jr., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

John Quarterman, 6565 Quarterman Road, stated that he was concerned about a water issue that Council may have seen in the newspaper. The headline states that the “Industrial Authority Should Listen to Other Sources” and Ben Copeland, former Chairman of Wiregrass Technical College, gave a very good speech at the Lake Park Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Copeland is a member of the Water Authority and pointed out that there is only so much water. They have discovered that the rivers are not running like they used to be and one of the things that keeps them running is wastewater from Treatment Plants. Mr. Copeland asked how much growth they wanted because water is going to be important as we expand our industrial base, in particular we have to use our resources very carefully and at the same time providing jobs to our citizens for prosperity. Mr. Quarterman stated that the Industrial Authority has in its charter that they are supposed to be promoting the public good and the welfare of the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County. This goes a little beyond just bringing in jobs. It also means paying attention to health and safety and the general livability of the community. Council is one of the two bodies that appoint people to the Industrial Authority and it is the responsibility of Council to appoint people to the Industrial Authority who will pay attention to that part in their Charter about the public good and general welfare of the community.

Dr. Michael Noll, 2305 Glynndale Drive, thanked the Mayor and Council for the ground breaking of the Solar Plant. This is a good step forward and he appreciated seeing all of them with the gold shovels breaking ground for it.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for Awards and Presentations.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) for the Awards and Presentations.

**STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS – MAYOR JOHN FRETTI**

Mr. Mayor Pro-Tem, City Council, City Manager, City Attorney, employees, distinguished guests, and my fellow Valdostans, it is my honor to present to you this evening the annual State of the City Address. Ladies and gentlemen, 2010 represented another year of the continued impacts of the recession on our national, state and local economy. We continued to see the symptoms and hear the stories of the impacts of this crisis along with the pain of our citizens impacted by the economy through job loss, reductions in income, home foreclosures, and overall increases in costs. These components also continued to reduce the income to the city of Valdosta, yet your City continued to maintain the quality services our citizens expect even with dwindling resources. I began my second term in January, 2008 and it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of '08 that the economy started to take a dive. It of course has been dipping ever since and it was due to the true business acumen of our leadership that kept our City responsive and stable. Throughout this time, one of the more popular mantras around the country has been to “Do more with less” but with the screams of smaller government, doing more with less seemed to invoke more government and so the mantra was then changed to “Do less with less.” What rings true in both those statements is that we certainly have had to do with less. We have had to do with less revenue, less fuel, less energy, less paper, pens, and people – considerably less people. Staff reductions have been heavy and it was difficult to do. Yet you haven’t heard of the City putting moratoriums on the paving of roads, funding outside agencies, pulling sponsorship of events such as

the annual Chamber dinner or the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) banquet or even pulling back on maintenance or infrastructure upgrades. We just got smarter about it and perhaps what we can truly say about 2010 is that we have simply been able to “do better with less.”

It is because of “doing better with less” and working smarter beginning three years ago that the City continued to maintain our current property tax millage rate of 4.11 mils. This is your annual property tax bill. We all have had to pay more in the last years, but it wasn't to the City of Valdosta. One reason the millage has also been able to stay low for the property tax paying citizens is due to our local sales tax. Keep in mind that of an \$80 million budget, only \$5 million of that comes from property taxes. It is the local sales tax that pays for police cars, fire trucks, garbage trucks, roads, water plants, sewer lines, and storm drains to name a few; however, over the past 12 months the sales tax collections have mirrored the collection rates dating back to 2006 and in some instances 2005. In fact, last year the City had to reduce capital SPLOST projects and expenses by \$10 million. Now most all of the projects are still programmed just at a lesser amount while other projects were delayed until collections increase.

In response to these difficult times, all City departments have reduced their operating budgets by a minimum of five percent for each of the last four fiscal years. The City has and will continue to hold the line on expenditures to keep them in line with revenues as we continue to weather this economic storm. These are just a few examples of how we are continuing to focus on providing those services to our citizens that represent the core mission of a municipal government and how we are doing better with less. Much of what I just shared with you will be supported when 2010 audit is presented next month. With guidance from our City Manager, our Finance Department continued its tradition of excellence in properly managing the City's funds, and the audit demonstrates the financial challenges the City faces while pointing with clarity to the need to have sufficient fund balances to weather economic storms – which we do. Furthermore, you will hear that the City has no general fund debt and as of June 30, 2010, less than \$10 million in total enterprise debt which is a remarkable accomplishment achieved by sound financial management. You have read and will hear that Debt is a large factor affecting many governments and they will be asking for money to repay that debt. The City of Valdosta is fortunate to have not relied on or borrowed into alarming levels of debt to operate or provide the necessary infrastructure for our City.

Along with anemic property tax revenues, continued decreases in sales tax revenues, increases in fuel, and energy costs, and of course, surging healthcare costs, the year 2010 again brought more downturns in some of our local indicators. Yet, I'm an optimist and always look for uplifting trends in the data. Single family construction totaled \$7.6 million this year which is a 29% decrease. We saw decreases in new commercial construction of 64% from 2009. Even though the total value of new construction permits was at \$11.5 million, an additional of \$13 million was expended for commercial additions and expansions for a total of \$41 million of new growth in the City. Also, our main street area saw an increase of 70 employees, all of course who eat shop and play in downtown Valdosta now. Other indicators include an unemployment rate of 8.9 for the City while the State holds at 10.2. The City also saw a net gain, yes a net gain of 713 new business licenses issued in 2010, which was a significant increase over the 2009 net gain of 548. And our Retail Pull Factor is still holding at 2.17. This pull factor is the definitive proof of our being a hub for retail and services. This equates to 59% of what we collect on sales tax being generated by out of county residents and not just Interstate 75 folks, but Thomasville, Waycross, Douglas, Tifton, Moultrie, and Madison, Florida. On the other side of the coin, our average weekly wage county-wide declined from \$570 to \$568 and I attribute this to employee scale backs and in some cases attrition of the higher paid employees that were close to retirement from the weekly payrolls. More indicators include: (1) Valdosta State University (VSU) grew in to a 12,898 student enrollment which is a 4.9% increase over last year. VSU also completed more than \$80 million in new construction and renovations in the last two years and planned projects of academic buildings and residence halls in the next two years. They have just begun a \$3 million project for a combination football practice field and soccer complex, and as an added note, more than 200 trained and qualified nurses were placed in local hospitals and healthcare facilities in our community last year. (2) Wiregrass Technical College is the fastest growing technical and community college in the nation and was named the Technical College of the Year for the State of Georgia. Their enrollment topped out at more than 9,100 students last year making Wiregrass the largest technical college south of Macon. (3) The Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority announced \$156 million in capital investment and 579 new jobs in our community. (4) Moody AFB has begun \$34 million in new construction and completed \$96 million of construction in their last fiscal year.

I want to highlight some notable development projects in our community during 2010 that are a sign of positive movement in our local economy. We saw the construction of The Residences at Five Points which is a high end multi residential complex in our midtown area, Southwest Georgia Bank, and the always capacity crowds at the new Cheddar's Restaurant were constructed this year. We also saw the startup of the new First State Bank project on Baytree road and the Grove Apartment Complex. The Grove is part of the Campus Crest project that will include more than 580 residential units along with future commercial development on site. This project is turning old and unused property into a vibrant community complex. Now, these projects represent an investment of more than \$42 million into our local economy. All of these projects not only represent growth, construction work and ancillary jobs for our local citizens, but the confidence that private business will be successful in Valdosta. So you see, the general outlook for Valdosta has improved steady yet slowly over the past year and it is anticipated that growth in real estate, industry, hospitality, and retail development will continue to slowly rebound as Valdosta emerges from the effects of the national economic downturn. The financial condition and long term outlook for the City is truly better than most areas around the country. Not only did every department buckle down to ensure they have lean budgets, knowing that we have asked for a 5% reduction each year over the last three years and another 5% reduction this year, but they performed with stellar productivity and continued to be the best in their field and State.

I appreciate every department and division and every employee that wakes early to be at work at 5 in the morning and stays late when needed. Every employee is a member of Team Valdosta – from firefighters to finance, sanitation to Stormwater, from reading meters in every yard to recording minutes in every meeting, our people are the best and I would like to take a moment to highlight some of the more notable achievements or work projects of the year. First and foremost, just this past Monday, Teresa Bolden, our City Clerk and Clerk of Council earned what some may claim as the pinnacle of her career as she was awarded City Clerk of the Year by the Georgia Municipal Clerks and Finance Officers Association. We thank Teresa for her dedicated service and agree with her Association that she is indeed the best Clerk in the State.

The Community Development Department along with City Senior Staff and elected officials, the County and our Chamber of Commerce worked together to improve the plan review and inspection processes. While striving to minimize the time it takes for plan review, Staff and permit holders alike now utilize a tracking system which enables anyone involved the ability to monitor their permits and inspections, and track their progress while other Departments enter comments. All information entered may be monitored by all in real time. This is called streamlining and it's smart. This is a perfect example of government listening to its citizens, working through our local Chamber and responding to make a laborious process more efficient and effective. This is community in action with its government and it's taking the steps to achieve a higher level of productivity for our citizens.

The Planning and Zoning Division processed more than 800 various planning and zoning applications during 2010 to include business license applications, annexation and rezoning requests, variance applications, and sign permits. It's their job to interpret the development regulations and when they see areas of duplicity or conflict, they bring forth a request to get it straight. During 2010, 27 sections totaling more than 125 pages of amendments were made to the City's Land Development Regulations, all reducing or clarifying an existing standard. No code, law, or ordinance is perfect. At times, we have to consider them a fluid document and realize that there can be a balance between needed regulations for the safety, health, and welfare of the collective community and the strain of regulations that can damper the business environment.

It's difficult to describe the feeling that came over me when I was told that 20,000 citizens and 3,000 businesses woke up on a Saturday morning to turn on their water faucet and nothing came out. I can tell you that all the experts came together as did this community to assess and correct the problem as quickly as could be expected. The Water Plant performed as it should and protected itself from electricity surges that could have easily fried the entire Water Plant. The Water Plant was so self-protective that it would not let us open up a switch gear to allow the transfer of more electricity. It was logically predicting more surges and thus protecting itself. Georgia Power has repaired all of the underground splices that contributed to the surges, we have run a separate and permanent bypass for electricity and we now have a manual override for the switchgear. I was proud of our Plant and even more proud of our Water Plant Staff. It was an inconvenience for sure and for that I apologize to the citizens; but I want you to know that we had employees that would not go home during this event. They dug in and wanted to see this to its end. I am extremely proud of Henry Hicks, John Whitehead, and the team of professionals

that poured all they have into this event. It does also prove that together we can overcome obstacles and become better for them. We also have several major utility system upgrades in the works as we continue the tradition of 112 years of providing water and sewer to our community. In the summer of last year and after 40 years in the same facility, we built the Utilities Department a new central office complex. The new administration and operations building brings together various divisions under one roof which streamlines internal operations and provides a City-wide emergency operations control room. In fact, the entire building can function as a City EOC should the need arise and that's smart planning. This new building was opened with no debt and is completely paid.

The City of Valdosta has submitted our latest application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to replace and relocate the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant that was badly damaged in the floods of 2009. The proposed cost of this major project is approximately \$95 million and should be fully eligible for Federal funding under FEMA guidelines. The City has already acquired 75 acres for the Plant relocation and stands ready to proceed with the project upon approval by FEMA.

The 96 full time, nationally and state certified firefighters of the Valdosta Fire Department are always ready to serve the 52,000 citizens of Valdosta along with the 400,000 visitors we host every year in our community. We were all proud when this past year the American Legion National Organization selected Valdosta Firefighter Marcus Haynes as their National Firefighter of the Year – another title to add to TitleTown. Of course, most recently the Valdosta Fire Department responded to a devastating fire at the Roberts house – the oldest home in town. Our Fire Department responded admirably to save a historic structure that tells a story of the beginning of our great City. It should be incumbent upon all of us to preserve the history and heritage of this wonderful landmark. Our firefighters are the best in the State and when you see one in the community, please tell them thank you.

The Valdosta Police Department consists of 145 sworn personnel, 23 support personnel, and 18 part-time employees. While all the divisions performed professionally and above the mark this year, the Bureau of Investigative Services (BIS) had a notable year in the detection and apprehension of criminals. While we would prefer to have no crimes committed in our City, we did record four homicides in 2010 which is four too many; however, the next best thing one can hope for is to catch the criminals that commit the crimes and the Person's Crime Unit along with other departmental personnel worked diligently to solve all four of homicides, giving a solvability rating of 100% for homicides. Other clearance rate improvements included a 38.5% increase in clearing burglaries, a 52% increase in clearing rapes, and a 43.96% increase in clearing robberies. Valdosta Police Department Officers also successfully recovered approximately \$271,826 in stolen property and \$167,334 in property used in the commission of a crime. Also, 78 of our luckiest citizens had the opportunity to meet a member of our K-9 team, Rudy, one of the hardest working Narcotics Officers on the force. With long teeth, a fast gate, and an aggressive personality towards criminals, Rudy, along with his partner and handler, Officer Alan Girsch, confiscated more than \$76,121 in currency, weapons, and illegal drugs last year and made the 78 arrests mentioned above. Over the past four years, Officer Girsch and Rudy have seized over \$315,850 in narcotics, currency, and weapons. This year was a notable year for this team, I personally appreciate all they do to keep our city safe and I'm sure Rudy gave these 78 lucky citizens a moment in time they won't soon forget. We have one more member of our elite Police Department that I want to introduce you to and this is Wally. Wally is a tactical anti-crime unit robot. We were particularly fortunate this past Saturday early morning to have Wally. You see, we had a very bad guy that had barricaded himself in a local hotel room after breaking in and harming some citizens. After a victim got away and called the police, the hotel was quickly evacuated. All indications were that this guy was a Federal fugitive, liked to use automatic weapons, and was to be considered extremely dangerous. To keep our Officers safe from walking into a dangerous small space, they dispatched Wally who climbed the stairs, easily broke through the door, entered the room, and helped us communicate through video and an audio speaker that the suspect should immediately surrender – which he did. I probably shouldn't tell you this but this alleged hard core, dangerous, and felonious bad guy upon seeing Wally enter the room was so startled that he ran and literally jumped under the covers. Of course, I told Chief Simons that we should have walked out right then knowing that you become invisible and nothing can get you once under the covers; however, good Police training kicked in and they immediately secured the suspect. Now Wally was purchased with grant funds and Rudy was trained with grant funds. Our mobile command center was purchased with grant funds. Several other pieces of equipment for Police and Fire Departments were purchased with grants. Now, there are those that scream and shake their fist at

government to say, “Take no grants, for they are evil.” Through our Grant Division and the efforts of our Grant Director, Kathy Brunot, the City secured over \$3 million in grants this year alone through State and Federal agencies to support the Fire Department, Police Department, Housing Division, the Utilities Department, and the Public Works Department. All were put to good use and all have a direct benefit to the citizens of Valdosta. Our philosophy at the City is that if we have a need and it’s a growing need, then look for a grant. The reverse is never true with us. That is to say, we do not get offered a grant and then scrape and scratch to create a need for that grant. That is playing a game with serious grant money and we just simply won’t do it. These are competitive grants – all of them. Once submitted they have to be presented and sold and that is where the Department Directors, Mr. Hanson, and I come in. That’s also where travel expenses prove their worth - the worth of more than \$17 million over the last three years. Just last week while at the Bird Supper, that next day when I always submit projects to the leadership and the Governor, the City had two major local transportation projects to present. After sitting with some of the Chairmen of different committees, senior Staff, and Senator Tim Golden at the Capital, I walked out with a commitment of \$3 million. This is just one example of how these trips pay for themselves over and over again. Grants play an important part in funding needs that are provided to the citizens and give benefit to the greater good, such as Wally and Rudy, whom you met here tonight. Finally, under the ultimate direction of Chief Frank Simons, the Valdosta/Lowndes Regional Crime Laboratory has opened its doors for business. The Crime Lab is staffed by crime scene personnel from the City and County, forensic specialists, an evidence custodian, and a crime laboratory director, Barry Funck who came on board with the City of Valdosta in March, 2010. While the Regional Crime Lab primarily provides fingerprint and ballistic services, in the near future, the Lab will offer toxicology services and other chemistry related analysis. We are currently working on a project to provide a vehicle processing area in a building adjacent to the laboratory. The dream of operating a joint crime laboratory with state of the art equipment and room for growth has become a reality and we continue to pursue Crime Lab accreditation status and then have our sites set to move into DNA analysis.

While we would rather have a Court where business is slow, the Court has been rather busy of late. I cannot think of a better use for the people that go before our Judge than what was initiated this past year. Over 16,000 cases were docketed in our Municipal Court and of those cases, the resulting probationers completed 36,288 hours of community service at soup kitchens, libraries, non-profit organizations, recreational facilities, and public cemeteries. In addition to community service, probationers were ordered to donate food to the local food bank. Consequently, approximately 17,225 pounds of food was donated to our local food bank. I am a proponent of creative sentencing and the more public, the better.

The Public Involvement Department includes Neighborhood Development, Public Information, Grant Administration and the Main Street Program. Now, there are those same people that scream about grants that also scream about assisting people with housing. They say, “Let them keep their house in order themselves or let them lose it.” Ladies and gentlemen, the people that we help are home owners, elderly, on a fixed income and many times disabled. Frankly, the philosophy of no assistance and letting their house fall down around them is contrary to the human spirit and is insulting. Our Neighborhood Development Division continues to promote reinvestment in the City’s neighborhoods through owner occupied repair assistance, homebuyer education, and down payment assistance. We help preserve existing homes by repair, rehabilitation, and reconstruction through many national and local repair programs. Twenty-seven families were assisted through these programs in 2010 and over 450 homes in the last 10 years, More than 220 citizens attended homebuyer education classes and a total of 15 families were assisted in purchasing their first home. We capped off the year with notification from the Federal Home Loan Bank of an award of \$800,000 from the Affordable Housing Program fund. This is the single largest award the City has received to assist homeowners and the funds will work in conjunction with other grant funds to assist in homeowner repair in the Designated Revitalization Areas of Valdosta. Homeownership is a dream of every person and it should be something possible to achieve and we are proud to be a part of that effort.

My message tonight to our City Council is this. All of us individually sought office and positions of leadership to share and create a vision for a better community. This vision must then be molded into a plan for the future. Whether they are strategic plans for redevelopment of corridors, gateways, bike lanes, infrastructure, performing arts, or beautification through planting a couple trees to bring about a higher sense of place, we must have the individual and collective courage to pass and execute those plans because we are either moving ahead or we are standing still. In today’s world, standing still is losing ground. I believe that we are all here to take the risks that are worth taking and those risks are courageously taken for the betterment of the greater good and for the

many. We must never let the few or the one hold back a vision for an entire City and a better community, and when we do that we remember that the needs of the many always outweigh the needs of the few or the one. We will soon begin to see confidence come back. We will soon begin to see jobs grow. We will soon begin to see construction on every corner and activity on every level, and we will soon begin see our community back to where it needs to be. My message tonight to the citizens is that the City of Valdosta is persevering and still progressing. I see a slow yet progressive upward curve in various and new sectors and we will continue to capitalize on that growth. Where others are shaky, we are sturdy. It is my wish for this great City that 2011 will be a year of good growth that stimulates confidence and in turn more growth in our community. I truly believe we can be successful even in the face of continued economic uncertainty. I want to give a hardy welcome to our newest member of Council, Councilman At Large Ben Norton, and thank the City Council for their commitment as we work together to serve all of our citizens.

Finally, I want to express my sincere appreciation to my wife Robin, my daughters, and my mom and pop. They continue to support me and the time I invest into serving as your Mayor. It is truly an honor for me and they know it is my passion to serve my community. Finally, I must thank all of our citizens of this great City. You are the reason we are all here - to serve you, and to do it with pride, honor, and great care. It is my privilege to serve you as Mayor and to declare to you that the City of Valdosta remains stable and strong during these trying times and that I continue to look forward to a great future for our community. May God bless you and keep you.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the February 10, 2011 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**AN ORDINANCE FOR TEXT AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS (LDR) FOR APPENDIX J WITHDRAWN**

Consideration of an Ordinance for Text Amendments to the Land Development Regulations (LDR) for Appendix J as requested by the City of Valdosta (File No. VA-2011-04). The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their January Regular Meeting and recommended approval (8-0 vote). The Interim Director of Planning and Zoning has recommended that this request be withdrawn.

Mayor Fretti stated that the Interim Director of Planning and Zoning has recommended that this request be withdrawn and if there is no objection from Council the request to withdraw will be honored. There was no objection from Council.

**A REQUEST TO CHANGE THE NAME OF TWITTY LANE TO KINCHEN LANE**

Consideration of a request to change the name of Twitty Lane to Kinchen Lane.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that in late 2010, Mr. Norvell Kinchen approached the City with a request to rename Twitty Lane to Kinchen Lane. Mr. Kinchen's family was one of the first families to reside on this street. A petition was signed by 60% of the residents all in favor of changing the name, and a letter was sent to all residents outlining the procedures they would need to take if the name is changed. The public notice ran for the appropriate length of time and all departments were notified about the request. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the request to change the name of Twitty Lane to Kinchen Lane. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether there was any opposition to change the name. Pat Collins stated that there was no opposition.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request

**A MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request to change the name of Twitty Lane to Kinchen Lane.

Consideration of a request for emergency replacement of a culvert on Country Club Drive.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City of Valdosta closed a portion of Country Club Drive on February 7, 2011 to repair a collapsed manhole which was discovered after heavy area rains. While working on the collapsed manhole, workers discovered a nearby failed culvert crossing at Three Mile Branch that needed an emergency replacement. Engineers were called to the scene and determined that emergency replacement is needed before the road can be safely reopened. At the time of the discovery, Standard Contractors was mobilized at the scene and given the urgency of the situation, Administration decided to expand the contractual services for the manhole repair to include the culvert replacement. A bid was submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$165,315.27. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the bid submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$165,315.27 plus a 10% contingency to cover any unforeseen circumstances for a total cost of \$181,846.80. Councilman Yost inquired as to how high this project was ranked in the Master Plan. Pat Collins stated that it was not ranked high in the Master Plan but was in the list of projects that needed to be done. In forward thinking, instead of going back and replacing it with an existing 48 inch pipe, it made sense to proceed with this project. It had also been estimated in the original study by CDM at a cost of \$215,000 and because we had a contractor on site to repair the manhole for the sewer the City got a very good price. Larry Hanson stated that the estimates were approximately half of this to replace what was there but then it would have been torn out in a few years and we would have spent that money again. The new pipe is 72 inches and they had to make those sections of pipe. Pat Collins stated that it would take two days to set each one as they come in. Councilman Yost inquired about the funding for the project and when it would be completed. Pat Collins stated that the funding source is SPLOST and the timeline for the project is approximately two weeks. Larry Hanson stated that the pipe manufacturer was located in Florida and as quick as they are pouring the pipe they are delivering it to Valdosta.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the bid submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$165,315.27 plus a 10% contingency to cover any unforeseen circumstances for emergency replacement of a culvert on Country Club Drive.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, thanked Sementha Mathews, Public Information Officer, for her work on the Bird Supper which was very well attended by members of the General Assembly.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he and Mayor Pro Tem Alvin Payton attended the Arbor Day Celebration and the City received the Tree City USA designation for the 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. There are only 3 cities out of 535 cities in Georgia, Valdosta, Macon, and Savannah, that have ever achieved 25 consecutive years of the Tree City designation.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he and Shirley Britt, Deputy City Clerk, attended the Georgia Municipal Clerk/Finance Officers Association Meeting in Athens, Georgia, on February 21, 2011 to surprise Teresa Bolden, City Clerk, as she was named Clerk of the Year. Mayor Fretti was unable to attend but it was his suggestion that they nominate Teresa for the award. It was great to see one of the City's employees recognized by her peers, which is the highest honor one can achieve.

The Mayor and Council Retreat will be held March 4-5, 2011 at the Lenox River Ranch in Lenox, Georgia. Council will be receiving the Retreat information next week.

The Parks and Recreation Authority has formally offered the position of Director to a gentleman who is currently in South Carolina. They are hopeful that he will accept the position and begin on April 1, 2011.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Yost stated that the Bird Supper was well attended by the Legislative delegation from around the State and the City of Valdosta was well represented. He also attended the Transportation Meeting yesterday and there is a lot to look at and discuss in the future.

Councilman Carroll thanked the Valdosta Police Department for doing a terrific job in catching the bad guys who are committing crimes in our City. They are running well above the national average in clearance rates and convictions. In all fairness, especially in light of some recent press coverage of the Valdosta Police Department, it is unfair to target these Police Officers as they are doing their jobs day in and day out in catching the same bad guys over and over again.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the February 24, 2011 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:35 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, March10, 2011.

---

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

---

Mayor, City of Valdosta