

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MARH 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, Deidra White, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Councilman Carroll, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag led by Boy Scout Troop 415 of Park Avenue United Methodist Church.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Dr. Angela Manning, 4470 Robert Drive, stated that the mission and purpose of the City is to provide public services that meet or exceed the expectations of citizens, to improve the quality of life in the community by a sincere commitment to the ideas of public service, to be creative and innovative in our approach to the needs of citizens recognizing the trust and confidence that our citizens place in us as caretakers of governmental services, and to be efficient and effective and use wisely the public resources we are entrusted to manage. Dr. Manning inquired as to how the City Council, as the governing body for the City and community, plan to adhere to the Mission Statement and improve the quality of life for the community by allowing the Biomass Plant to come here with the poisons and toxins that will kill us. We as citizens have put our trust and confidence in a Council who apparently does not care about or have our best interests in mind. The Biomass Plant will release four pounds of dioxins each year which is a highly toxic pollutant that causes reproductive and developmental problems, damage to the immune system, interfere with hormones, and cause cancer. The Biomass Plant is allowed to release eight tons of mercury each year and mercury is a poison which when inhaled or absorbed through the skin causes oral inflammation, blue gum line, pain and tremors in arms and legs, weight loss, and mental changes. The American Lung Association says that Biomass causes asthma and lung disease. The American Heart Association says that particulate matter causes heart attacks and the onset of asthma. The American Cancer Society projects an increase in cancer cases. These organizations are saying no to Biomass and the citizens that Dr. Manning represents are saying no to Biomass. When people start dying, who could be members of your own families, as a result of the Biomass Plant, she would not want that on her conscious. If there are no citizens then there is no community. If there is no community then there is no city. If there is no city then there will be no City Council. Dr. Manning stated that she has a list of people in her church who suffer from breathing problems and if a survey was taken of the entire City you could just imagine how many people suffer from breathing problems like asthma, COPD, emphysema, and bronchitis. The Council Meeting was started by a prayer and if we believe and trust in God we should pray and ask God if we are making the right decision by bringing the Biomass Plant to Valdosta. Dr. Manning stated that she was against the Biomass Plant as a citizen of Valdosta and as a Pastor of 1,500 people who make up the community of Valdosta and they are saying no to the Biomass Plant.

Karen Noll, 2305 Glynndale Drive, stated that she was pleased to stand before Council with this call to action supported by so many citizens and organizations. Ms. Noll asked those in the audience who were in opposition of the Biomass Plant to stand and then asked that the City Council to protect the citizens of the City of Valdosta from the Electricity Plant that produces more dangerous emissions than a comparable Coal Plant. The American Lung Association opposes specifically this Plant because it causes new onset asthma and lung disease. Ms. Noll asked the City to stand against the dirtier than coal incinerator for someone that they know with asthma. The American Heart Association has found that particulate matter from the emissions of the incinerator cause heart attacks. Ms. Noll asked City officials to stand against increased heart attack victims in our community. The American Cancer Society projects an increase of 3-7% in cancer cases with the air pollutants from the proposed Biomass Plant. Ms. Noll stated that we all know someone who suffers from cancer and asked Council to stand against an increase in cancer in our community. Ms. Noll presented the Council with 500 plus signatures from

community members and organizations requesting that the Council take action to stop the Biomass Plant and not sell any water to Wiregrass Biomass, LLC. Ms. Noll also asked for a response to their request from each member of Council in writing before the next Council meeting.

Dr. Mark Patrick George, 1022 Cherokee Street, stated that he has lived in this community for almost 35 years and it is his home and home to his 80 year old mother and a lot of people that he loves. Dr. George stated that he had been corresponding today with Larry Hanson, City Manager, about the process by which you would either support the Biomass Plant or not. Given the correspondence with the City Manager, Dr. George stated that he understood that Council does not even have to vote on it and it is up to the discretion of the Utilities Director. Dr. George stated that he was concerned because you have been in negotiations two years ago and agreed to do this orally and no one as of yet, that he knows of, on the Council or the Mayor has taken a public position. He fears that it is going to go through and the buzz in the community is that it is a done deal. Dr. George inquired as to whether this was true and whether the process to sell water and human waste to the Wiregrass people even require a vote and what does Council need to see that this is a bad idea. Dr. George stated that he has spoken with several Council members individually and in those interactions it is very clear that people make up their minds regardless of evidence. He has not seen 500 signatures for people who support this but there have been claims by Board members that their constituents do support it and they have asked where they are so they can talk to them. Dr. George stated that he was confused given the public outcry about this across the political spectrum, from conservative to liberal, and why we are still talking about it and why we have not decided as a community and Council as a body that it is a bad idea. Dr. George asked that he be given a response to his two questions which were whether a vote was required or if this something that could happen without any public input and what evidence would Council need to see to conclude that this is a bad idea. The Valdosta State University folks have suggested that this is going to create a lot of jobs but that is speculation at best in terms of trickledown economics. Dr. George stated that even if that is true the jobs will outweigh the health costs that are sure to follow. Mayor Fretti stated that the questions would be answered in writing.

Ann Hurley, 1505 Lankford Drive, Apt. 812, stated that she is the President of Students Against Violating the Environment (SAVE) at Valdosta State University and represents the 200 plus members of SAVE that consists of students, faculty members, and community members who are deeply concerned with environmental issues. They are working together to make this City a more green and sustainable community for future generations. Ms. Hurley stated that, as a student, she felt she had the right to be able to breathe clean air at the college she attends. With the possibility of the Biomass Plant being built here, the future for generations to come is in jeopardy and they want to protect the health of fellow and future students. Ms. Hurley asked that Council take into consideration the future health of the University and the community and not sell gray water to the proposed Biomass Plant.

Stewart Taylor, 1726 Poplar Street, Apt. C-7, Remerton, Georgia, stated that when he was a child he accidently drank bleach when his mother was bleaching the tea pitcher. She called the Poison Hotline and they told her to flush it out of his system and he would be fine. She flushed it out of his system and he was fine. He now knows what bleach is and it is no longer a problem, but sometimes we think we are getting something that isn't what we end up getting. Mr. Taylor stated that he understood why they wanted to put this through and he did not blame them for wanting to put this through. There is speculation that this will bring in jobs and money and those are the two things that we have been taught to value above all else; however, sometimes we think we are getting something but it is not what we end up getting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A REQUEST TO CLOSE AN ALLEY LOCATED BETWEEN ALLEY STREET AND FORCE STREET

Consideration of a request to close an alley located between Alley Street and Force Street.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that Mr. Barthaniel Werts approached the City with a request to close an alley which runs in a southern direction between Alley and Force Streets. The alley begins at Alley Street and extends approximately 206 feet to the south. Five of the six residents who abut this alley signed a petition in favor of closing this alley. 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. Councilman Wright inquired as to

why one person was against the alley closure. Pat Collins stated that he was not certain as to the reason but he did not receive any objections.

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 close an alley located between Alley Street and Force Street.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2011-9, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MAYOR/COUNCIL TRAVEL POLICY

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the Mayor/Council Travel Policy.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Mayor and Council recently held their annual Retreat and one of the issues for consideration was to amend various sections of the Travel Policy for elected officials as it pertains to eligible expenses. Proposed changes to the Travel Policy are as follows: (1) An amendment that addresses travel expenses for elected officials that have not qualified for re-election or have resigned from office, (2) Requiring staff to seek the lowest possible prices for travel arrangements, (3) Clarifying the rate for mileage reimbursement based on the prevailing IRS rate at the time of travel, (4) The time frame for filing and approving travel reimbursement statements, (5) The provision of the opportunity to report on trips during Council Comments during a meeting of the Mayor and City Council, and (6) Various other minor revisions as presented. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the Ordinance to amend the Mayor/Council Travel Policy. Mayor Fretti inquired as to whether there was any objection by Council to take all of the amendments in one vote. There was no objection from Council and Mayor Fretti entertained a motion.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Carroll to approve the amendments to the Mayor/Council Travel Policy as presented. Councilwoman White seconded the motion. Mayor Fretti asked if there was any discussion on the motion. Councilwoman White stated that she was not comfortable with all of the language in the Travel Policy and has some grievances with Paragraph 1.b. Mayor Fretti stated that they either needed to restate the motion or have a motion to pass everything except 1.b. They could discuss this and then put forth a motion to amend the motion or they could just put forth a motion to amend it.

AN AMENDED MOTION was made by Councilwoman White to pass the Travel Policy as presented and to strike Paragraph 1.b. in its entirety. Councilman Payton seconded the motion. Councilman Yost asked that Paragraph 1.b. be read for the record. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that Paragraph 1.b. reads as follows: Members of Mayor and Council not qualifying for re-election or that have resigned from office will not be authorized to travel following the end of qualifying or the date of their defeat, whichever is appropriate. Members who have been defeated in a general or run-off election will not be authorized to travel without first requesting approval of the Mayor and Council. Any such request must be made in writing, specifying the reason and justification for the travel, the benefit to the City, the cost for the travel, any costs already incurred, refund policies, and must be voted upon and approved by the Mayor and Council in a scheduled meeting prior to any travel arrangements being made and the travel taking place, notwithstanding any travel arrangements made prior to the circumstances listed above. Mayor Fretti stated that this was his amendment and they used to call it the "lame duck" amendment. People rarely run thinking they are going to lose and everybody wants to win so this modifies that if someone runs for office and loses and they already have some plans to travel they would need to come forth to this body and state that they have already paid on the deposit and the airfare cost and it would be up to Council to make the decision if that person could go. It also includes that if someone does not qualify and has no intention of running or if someone has resigned then should not travel within that period. Councilwoman White stated that part of her being against it is the "lame duck" phrase. She has never used that term and did not appreciate it. If she is going to serve on this Council then she is going to serve just as strongly to the last day even if she decides and announces that she is not going to run again. Councilwoman White stated that she took offense that she would

become a "lame duck" just because she decides and announces that she is not going to run for office. Also, if she decided to resign, any taxpayer would appreciate her announcing her resignation and being able to add on to an already in process election, which costs the City of Valdosta qualifying fees only, versus not announcing her resignation which would then limit her travel ability and having to come before Council to make a case for it versus spending \$25,000 to have a special election. Council does not need to box themselves in on having to make a decision when to announce their resignation. Councilwoman White stated that she found the "lame duck" term offensive because she was not going to turn into a "lame duck" if she decides not to run or is defeated and would serve to the fullest extent. There may be things included in that trip that she may need to tie up. There could be business that she has been working on for three and a half years or relationships that have been developed that she may need to see through and transition over to the next Council Member. She did not understand why they had to rewrite the Travel Policy or what the benefit of doing this would be. Mayor Fretti stated that the "lame duck" language has been removed and he did not make that up because it has been used for hundreds of years. Councilwoman White stated that was an opinion. Mayor Fretti stated that it was a terminology used fairly regularly. On the resignation from office, someone who resigns does not have to come forward to ask about travel. They would just not be allowed and that would begin on the day of qualifying for the seat that they have resigned from. Mayor Fretti stated that he agreed on a modification if someone loses an election and they have already made plans to travel and continue their education because they never really thought about losing and you run to win. This is a money saving amendment and he did not feel people should travel after they have stated that they are not going to run again. Councilwoman White inquired as to where it ends if she decides not to run or is defeated and whether it ends with just travel or all of her benefits such as stopping her medical benefits, paychecks, and car allowances. If she becomes useless the day she announces her resignation or the day she is defeated then why would she still be there and why would she not just turn her keys in and go home immediately. Mayor Fretti stated that this was for the Travel Policy. Councilman Vickers stated that since 1985 this has never happened except for three times over 25 or 26 years. He knew of one instance where a Mayor let it be known that he was not going to run for a second term for a whole year and whenever you get elected you are elected with all rights until the time you leave. A Councilman is elected from that day forward until the day he leaves and Councilwoman White made a good point. That person could be working on some issues and they may need to go to Atlanta. In two of the three cases, the Council person was defeated but they had already made plans to travel. Councilman Carroll stated that the way he was reading this was that not qualifying for re-election would not actually apply until the end of September after qualifying so anything prior to that if you do not qualify it would not make any difference. It also states that if a person has resigned from office he could announce on the second day that he was sworn into office that he was not going to run in four more years and it does not matter because it is not until he has officially resigned from office. As far as announcing that you are going to resign, it has no play on this because they have not actually resigned. Councilman Carroll stated that if there were no objections he wanted to call for the question. Mayor Fretti stated that this would be a primary motion and in Parliamentary procedure he would need a second to limit discussion or end the discussion.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Carroll to call for the question and end the debate. The motion died for lack of a second.

Councilman Wright stated that he wanted to look at this and pull himself out of the equation to think about how it affects the citizens and the people that Council represents. When he travels to a meeting he gets a lot of valuable information in the form of books as well as talking with people from other cities; however, he was hoping that they could set up a smooth transition of this information to the next person coming in. He would like for Council to have documents in a central location so that a person coming in would have access to that information. What is happening now is that you are denying the representative the ability to receive training so that he could possibly pass on to the next person and could utilize that to effectively represent their District. If he is not allowed to do that then we do not have representation. Councilman Yost stated that he was concerned that they put limits on the amount for travel and it was decided that would be discussed in the Budget Hearings. Councilman Yost inquired as to whether they were voting on the amended motion or the main motion. Mayor Fretti stated that if the amended motion passes that is the last of the voting and they would not have to go back to the main motion. If the amended motion fails then they would have to go back to the main motion. Councilwoman White stated that she wanted to be clear and if this was about saving money then she felt like the budgeting process is where they need to focus on saving taxpayer money and not pick and choose little pieces of the Travel Policy that are not logical in her mind. Traveling is not a benefit or privilege but it is a necessary component to being a good representative because

of the relationships and learning. She does not go to take a vacation but goes to learn and work for the City of Valdosta so if they are talking about saving money they should put it in the budgeting process and not try to carve up policy a piece at the time unless they are going to do it comprehensively with benefits and car allowances. Councilwoman White stated that if it is all about that we have become a lame duck and this is not the place to do it and she was against it. Mayor Fretti stated that his main reason is that the purpose for which expense is incurred must be for the benefit of the City. In 2003, 2009, and 2010 when those three instances of travel occurred, he did not see or realize and he asked if there was any benefit to the City and nothing was brought back to the Council to be shared. It may have been shared with the next person that came in or they may use it 20 years down the road for some other office, but in his mind it should be a benefit to the City. You can take that as broadly as you want to define that or as narrowly as you want to define that but it should be to the direct and immediate benefit of the City. George Talley, City Attorney, stated that what they were discussing is Section 1, (a)(ii) in the Ordinance.

The amended motion was adopted (5-2) with Councilman Norton and Councilman Carroll voting in opposition to enact Ordinance No. 2011-9, an Ordinance to amend the Mayor/Council Travel Policy, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XII.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request by the Boys and Girls Club of Valdosta for the City of Valdosta to deed for property located at 597 North Oak Street to the Land Bank Authority.

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that the Boys and Girls Club of Valdosta recently completed a large addition and renovation to their existing facilities located at 614 North Toombs Street. The organization is trying to secure additional adjacent property to expand the Club campus and they recently sent a letter of request to the City asking for consideration to deed the City-owned vacant lot located at 597 North Oak Street to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority for subsequent transfer to the Boys and Girls Club. The City originally acquired the property and removed the structure due to chronic flooding issues. The Boys and Girls Club is currently in negotiations for the two adjacent properties and hopes to assemble all of the parcels as part of their main facility located at 614 North Toombs Street. They have committed in their letter not to build anything on the property at 597 North Oak Street except for a fence, and they are aware of the previous flooding issue impacting the property. Mara Register recommended that Council approve the request as presented with the following stipulations: (1) nothing may be constructed on the property except for a fence due to the previous flooding issue which is acknowledged in the Club's letter of March 2, 2011, (2) the property may never be transferred by the Boys and Girls Club to any private owner and only to an entity affiliated with the Boys and Girls Club, (3) the use of the property must always be related to the programs and services of the Boys and Girls Club, and (4) the City requests, with the transfer to the Land Bank Authority, that the property be donated to the Boys and Girls Club with the exception of all costs related to the transfer to be paid by the Boys and Girls Club.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request as presented for the City of Valdosta to deed for property located at 597 North Oak Street to the Land Bank Authority.

Consideration of a request to approve the project list for T-SPLOST.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that in 2010, the State Legislature passed House Bill 277 which became the Transportation Investment Act of 2010. This Act provides for the collection of a T-SPLOST tax which will be used to fund transportation projects throughout the State for ten years. Under the provisions of this Act, communities will submit a list of eligible projects for Roundtable discussion and, hopefully, inclusion on the final list of regional projects which will go before the voters in a regional referendum in 2012. Project lists, along with completed submittal forms, must be submitted to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) by March 30, 2011, in order to be included in the Roundtable discussion. The City's list of projects, which is an unconstrained list with no priorities, includes 18 MPO projects, 7 from the local Transportation Master Plan List, and 4 additional projects. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the project list for T-SPLOST. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Referendum will be held in the fall of 2012 and it is a regional tax so it must pass in the entire 18 county region by a majority vote. It could pass in 12 counties and fail in Lowndes but be

imposed anyway. We have an obligation to submit a list of projects but at this point in time we do not know whether one or ten will be selected by this Regional Council. The tax is expected to generate \$550 million over the ten years. Since Valdosta is the largest city in the region we could expect a sizeable amount of that money. We consulted with the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) as to whether to put more or less projects and they suggested that we put more projects. The projects must be of regional significance in order to be eligible and that is why there are no projects of a local nature on this list. Councilman Yost inquired as to whether the Regional Council will prioritize the list. Larry Hanson stated that was correct. Councilman Yost inquired as to whether a project that was not on the list could be placed on the list within the ten year period. Larry Hanson stated that it could not be placed on the list. The projects must first be approved by the five member Executive Committee, then by the entire 18 member Regional Council, and then by the DOT Director of Planning. We will have one vote in all of that. Mayor Fretti stated that these projects come after the DOT decides to spend the money that is collected in this region on the widening of U. S. Highway 84 or the connection of Highway 133 to Moultrie. The DOT is out of money and they have too many projects. The Legislature will not raise taxes so they are not going to raise a penny State-wide for more DOT money to stay with the same system they have had for 20 or 30 years. In the past the Mayor would go to Atlanta to ask for money for our district based on the gas fuel tax and what we contribute in our sales tax since we are a regional hub. Now the sales tax raised in this region has to go for all those projects first and then maybe they would get to this. Mayor Fretti stated that this is not an endorsement for the T-SPLOST but we are doing what we have to do and that is providing this list. Larry Hanson stated that as an organization and a body we do not have a position yet because we do not know what projects have been selected yet. Councilman Wright inquired as to how they will determine which project should be done first. Larry Hanson stated that we do not know because this has never been done and is a brand new exercise. Mayor Fretti stated that the Regional Roundtable consists of 18 counties with two people from each county, the Chairman and the Mayor. The Executive Board consists of five elected County Commissions and the cities were completely shut out. Mayor Fretti offered a motion to have two city appointees, two county appointees, and one chosen between the two county and two city representatives on the Executive Board but that did not work out. Councilman Wright inquired who they should direct their concerns to. Mayor Fretti stated that they should contact Jeff Mullis, Senate Chair of Transportation, Jay Roberts, House Chair of Transportation, and the Transportation Committees of the House and the Senate. There is a list of approximately 12 major concerns and eight minor concerns with the House Bill that has been communicated to them by Mayor Fretti and the Georgia Municipal Association. This is going to go toward paving dirt roads and the majority of the revenue will be collected in urbanized areas like the City of Valdosta. Councilman Yost inquired as to where funding would come from for any projects if our region as a whole votes against this. Mayor Fretti stated that we would get what is left out of the current budget. Larry Hanson stated that not only would we not get any of this funding but we would also be penalized in the future with less formula funding from DOT. We are penalized if we do not have the Referendum and then we are penalized if we have the Referendum and it fails. We are even slightly penalized if we have a Referendum and it passes. The State is just using this as an opportunity to reduce the funding they provide to local communities. There would be a 50% loss of DOT funding if you do not have a Referendum, 30% loss of DOT funding if you have a Referendum and it fails, and 10% loss if you have a Referendum and it passes. Councilman Vickers inquired as to when the SPLOST would come up for a vote. Larry Hanson stated that it would be in 2013 since it expires December 31st. Councilman Vickers stated that would be two SPLOSTs right there together. Larry Hanson stated that would need to be considered as well. Councilman Yost inquired as to whether they could move the 2013 SPLOST vote. Mayor Fretti stated that could get with the County and vote any time but collections would not start until January 1, 2014.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the project list for T-SPLOST.

Consideration of a request to replace two belt press sludge pumps at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the two sludge pumps used to convey sludge to the dewatering belt press at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant are over 30-years old, worn out, and in a constant state of repair. Belt press operation and efficiency is significantly reduced due to these pumps constantly being repaired and new parts fabricated. This in turn causes excess sludge inventories to be carried in the facility's sludge digestion tanks making their operation more expensive and less efficient as well as leading to potential permit violations because of the excess solids inventory stored. The Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant provides

sewer service to approximately 70% of the City. Annual repair costs for these pumps are now exceeding the cost of replacement pumps as well as increasing other operational costs at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant. Without the ability to regularly maintain and control digester sludge levels the overall treatment process could be upset leading to violation of the operating permit. Relocation of the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant cannot take place for at least three to five years at the earliest. Replacement pumps with associated equipment and controls are provided through by Penn Valley Pumps at a cost of \$53,627. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the request to replace two belt press sludge pumps at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Councilman Yost inquired as to whether they could take Agenda Items 6(c), 6(d), and 6(e) as a Consent Agenda. There was no objection from Council.

Consideration of a request to replace the nitrification pumps at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the three existing nitrification pumps at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant are over 30-years old and are now being pulled for repairs on a three-month cycle due to their age and worn out condition. These ongoing repairs are costing over \$6,000 for each repair. As a result, annual repairs on these pumps are now exceeding their replacement costs. Due to the time it takes for repairs, costs associated with repetitive repairs, the poor reliability of the existing pumps, and the potential for additional permit violations, it is prudent to replace all three pumps. The provider of these replacement pumps is WILO Pumps with a quoted replacement cost for all three pumps at \$59,571. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the request to replace the nitrification pumps at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant at the quoted replacement cost by WILO in the amount of \$59,571.

Consideration of a request to replace impellers at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the impellers for three 12-inch main influent pumps and the six 6-inch RAS (return activated sludge) pumps at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant are severely deteriorated, worn out, and require replacement to maintain Plant operation and avoid permit violations associated with this equipment's failure. Replacement impellers are still available and needed to keep these pumps functioning efficiently and the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant operational. Due to the present condition of these impellers, the associated pumps are not operating efficiently, lowering pump capacity, and increasing electrical costs. The existing condition of the RAS pump impellers were a direct cause of the most recent permit violation at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant. Sykes Industries is the provider for the replacement impellers for three RAS pumps used on the West side of the Plant at a cost of at \$15,684 and three main influent pump impellers at a cost of \$65,097 for a total cost of \$80,781. Carter VerPlanck is the provider of the impellers for the three RAS pumps used on the East side of the Plant at a cost of \$17,958. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the request to replace the impellers at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant at the quoted replacement costs submitted by Sykes Industries in the amount of \$80,781 and Carter VerPlanck in the amount of 17,958.

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilwoman White, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve Agenda Items 6(c), 6(d), and 6(e) as presented and replace two belt press sludge pumps supplied by Penn Valley Pumps at a cost of \$53,627, replace the nitrification pumps supplied by WILO in the amount of \$59,571, and replace the impellers at cost of \$80,781 submitted by Sykes Industries and Carter VerPlanck in the amount of 17,958 at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Consideration of a request for speed humps for Willow Wood Circle.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that in January, 2011, an accident occurred at 2836 Willow Wood Circle due to excessive speeding and the driver's failure to maintain the vehicle. A speed/count study was conducted in February, 2011 and it indicated that the 85th percentile speed limit was 12 mph over the posted speed limit of 15 mph. This is an indication that speed humps are warranted for this neighborhood. Over the last two months, Mr. Jeff Cutchens secured signatures from 46 of the 65 property owners or residents on this street meeting the 70% rule of the Speed Hump Policy. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the request for speed humps for Willow

Wood Circle. Mayor Fretti inquired as to what type of speed humps would be placed on Willow Wood Circle and where would they be located. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that it would be the permanent speed humps and not the abrupt humps which are generally at a Stop sign and based on distance, there would probably be three or four speed humps.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request for speed humps for Willow Wood Circle.

Consideration of a request to approve sponsorship of a table at the 100 Black Men of Valdosta Black Tie Gala.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the 100 Black Men of Valdosta sponsor a Black Tie Banquet each year with a featured speaker. The event this year will be held on Thursday, April 7, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at Valdosta Middle School and the featured speaker will be Victoria Rowell, Actress, Author, and Foster Care Advocate. Tables of nine for the event are \$800. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the request to sponsor a table at the 100 Black Men of Valdosta Black Tie Gala.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Payton to approve the request to sponsor a table at the 100 Black Men of Valdosta Black Tie Gala. Councilman Vickers seconded the motion. The motion was adopted (6-1) with Councilman Norton voting in opposition.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the U. S. Census information down to the Census block and tract level has been released today so we have requested a meeting with the Reapportionment Office in Atlanta. We gave them five dates to consider and the time would be 1:00 p.m. since it would be in Atlanta. The request must come from a Senator or Representative and Senator Tim Golden has made the request. In terms of the Census numbers it was very positive for Valdosta. Our population grew from 43,724 to 54,518 (27% increase). If you go back to 1970, that is the largest percentage of growth the City has had in any decade in 50 years. From 1970 to 1980, the City grew by 16%, from 1980 to 1990 the City grew by 6%, from 1990 to 2000 the City grew 9.2%, and 2000 to 2010, the City grew 24.7%. If you look at the 15 largest cities in Georgia that is unusual to have experienced the growth we have had. The City of Atlanta grew by .8%, Augusta grew by .4%, Columbus grew by 1.9%, Savannah grew by 3.6%, Macon declined by 6.1%, and Albany grew by .6%. Our population as a county went from 92,115 to 109,233 and that is an 18.6% growth. For the individual jurisdictions, Valdosta grew 24.7%, Dasher grew 9.4%, Hahira grew 68.3%, Lake Park grew 33.3%, Remerton grew by 32.6%, and the unincorporated area grew by 10.5%.

The Public Works Department will be holding the annual Spring Electronics Recycling Event on Saturday, April 2, 2010 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Mathis Auditorium. This has been a very successful for the City and helps to keep televisions and computers out of the landfill.

The City Government 101 Program will begin on Monday, April 4, 2010 and Council members have been invited to speak to the classes.

The Fire Department was recently notified that we have received a Class 2 ISO rating and we have moved closer to a Class 1 rating. We could not make all the changes that we wanted to due to the economy but we are moving in the right direction.

Forbes Magazine recently listed Valdosta as the 79th best small place in America for businesses and careers. This makes a statement that even national magazines are looking at our community as a place to do business and be successful.

Also, the Mayor attended a U. S. Conference of Mayors Meeting a while ago and brought back information about an Energy Efficiency Grant which we applied for and received approximately \$250,000. One of the things we did was to make our City buildings more energy efficient and the remainder of that was to be used for a study of

traffic signals in the northwest quadrant of the City. A firm was hired to analyze the signals and traffic flow in the City. They have done that and made adjustments to 34 signals to improve traffic flow, minimize idling, and improve commuting times. They have been tweaking the system in the field this week. Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the firm began making adjustments to the signals on March 21, 2010 to improve the timing patterns.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Carroll stated that he has been working with the Chamber's SORT Committee and this past week Larry Hanson, City Manager, spoke at the Chamber's Board Meeting where a special presentation on SORT was made. He was very well prepared, had some great statistics, and did a super job. Councilman Carroll thanked the City for the effort they are taking to keep working with this kind of organization and others to make our City a pro-business City. Larry Hanson, City Manager, complimented the employees of the Building Inspections Department, Planning and Zoning, and all of those involved in the plan review and development process because that is really who deserves the praise and recognition for a job well done.

Councilman Yost stated that there will be a reception held for the new Parks and Recreation Director who will begin April 1, 2010 and Council members will be invited to attend. Also, he will not be able to attend the 100 Black Men Banquet and his tickets are available. Councilman Yost inquired as to when the Budget Hearings would be held. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Departmental Budget Hearings will be April 13-14, 2011 and the dates for Council have not yet been set.

Councilman Vickers stated that he was concerned about the Land Use Regulations (LDR) and not being able to use metal buildings on St. Augustine Road from Lankford Drive to Hill Avenue. There are several buildings that have some type metal on them and it would be good to review the LDR. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that it was not retroactive so it does not affect any existing buildings. They can certainly reconsider that but there is nothing in the LDR that prohibits metal buildings. It was really only the front of the building and it had to be something other than metal such as brick, wood, or stucco. Councilman Vickers stated that he was more concerned about the sides. Matt Martin, Interim Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that in the Overlay Districts, which includes that part of St. Augustine Road and many other places, metal siding is prohibited on all sides of the building. Elsewhere City-wide, metal is prohibited on the fronts of buildings. Councilman Vickers stated that he would like to have that reviewed and discussed by Council. Matt Martin stated that was on their list to review. Mayor Fretti stated that Councilman Vickers wants that to come before Council as a Text Amendment to the LDR for Council to vote on it.

Councilman Wright stated that the Veolia Adopt-A-Spot on Forrest Street looks really good and asked that Council recognize those people who are maintaining those spots above and beyond what they agreed to. Councilman Wright thanked Council for their support of the Community Builders Banquet which recognizes people in our community who give so much. Also, the SOS Program is looking at joining with the Service Learning Project at Valdosta High School to expand the Project.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the March 24, 2011 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:12 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, April 7, 2011.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta