

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 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 Robert Yost, Sandra Tooley, and James Wright. Councilman Alvin Payton, Jr. was absent. The invocation was given by Pastor Curtis Jenkins, New Life Bible Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag led by Boy Scout Troop 491 of St. John's Catholic Church.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION FOR THE WINNERS OF GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION'S "IF I WERE MAYOR" ESSAY CONTEST**

Mayor John Gayle stated that cities across our State will celebrate Georgia Cities Week from April 13-19, 2014 with activities that highlight the programs and services and enhance the quality of life for our citizens. In Valdosta, citizens and City of Valdosta employees can participate in several activities such as the Electronic Recycling Day, Customer Service Day, the Employee Blood Drive, Job Shadow Day for Valdosta High School students, and others. One of the most popular activities during Georgia Cities Week is the "If I Were Mayor" Essay Contest. This Essay Contest challenges 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in our community to use their grade-level writing skills and civic knowledge to express in 350 words or less what they would do if they had the top elected position in the City. Over the years, the City has received some incredible and thought-provoking work from our local students and this year's winners are no exception. We are proud to announce that each winner in this year's local contest is a student in the classroom of Ms. Jessica LeFiles, Valdosta Early College Academy, with Ms. Ingrid Hall as their School Principal. This year's winners are as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner - Nia Scott, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner - Cayla Rowland, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner - Da'Jai Thomas. It is an incredible honor to announce that Nia Scott also placed first in the State-wide competition in Georgia's District 11 in which 1,056 essays were received. This was the most essays out of all 12 GMA districts. Nia will be recognized for her outstanding achievement at a special luncheon on May 8, 2014 at the 755 Club at Turner Field in Atlanta. She will be awarded a \$250 check and other small prizes. Over 5,623 essays were received from all over the State in this annual competition and we are extremely proud that Nia has placed first in Congressional District 11 bringing honor and credit to the Valdosta Early College Academy, the Valdosta City Schools System, and the City of Valdosta. We are equally proud of Cayla and Da'Jai for their second and third place accomplishments. The City of Valdosta invites citizens of all ages to participate in the Georgia Cities Week activities taking place in the coming week.

**PRESENTATION OF THE APRIL, 2014 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD**

Consideration of the April, 2014 Employee of the Month Award (Scott Nobles, Stormwater Division of the Engineering Department).

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that Scott Nobles began his employment with the City of Valdosta Utilities Department in October, 1995 as a Utility Service Worker. After several promotions over the years, Scott is presently the Supervisor for the Stormwater Division which is now housed in the Engineering Department. As the Supervisor, Scott assigns tasks and oversees all activities involving maintenance and drainage crews in performing preventative and emergency maintenance, installing and maintaining storm drains, drainage ditches, canals, and other stormwater facilities. Scott also maintains records which include personnel time records, material usage, inventory, and completed work orders. The Division's largest challenges are manpower and equipment; however, because Scott is a dependable and capable supervisor, he has found ways to keep the work crews moving forward and continuously improving. Early this year, a citizen was having problems with sediment build-up and standing water in the driveway. While at the resident's house, he attempted to find an equipment operator to help correct the problem; however, no one was available at that time. Scott walked a couple of blocks to the Utilities yard and returned to the resident's house with a tractor to complete the job and correct the problems. This incident is a perfect example to show Scott's resourcefulness, initiative, and good relations with citizens of Valdosta. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Scott Nobles as Employee of the Month.

The minutes of the March 20, 2014 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

### **BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGEEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES**

Consideration of bids for stormwater catch basin and sewer repairs in Downtown Valdosta.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the sanitary sewer system has a history of stormwater inflow and infiltration issues. The Utilities Department recently contracted for smoke testing of the entire sanitary sewer system over the next four years through a private engineering company, Constantine Engineering. This year's scheduled smoke testing work started on a single block in Downtown Valdosta before moving to higher priority areas. During the smoke testing of the one block area of Downtown, several locations were identified where smoke was coming out of the sewer system with one specific location associated with the City's stormwater system. Utility crews performed line cleaning and Closed Circuit Television Camera (CCTV) televising of the sewer lines in the vicinity of the stormwater catch basin as well as performing dye tests to identify the source of the smoke entering the catch basin. These tests indicated that there was a fractured sewer line at this location but Staff could not pinpoint the exact location. Due to the location of the sewer lines and a stormwater catch basin at the corner of Toombs Street and Central Avenue, potential repair or rehabilitation methods were very limited. As a result, Staff had only two viable alternatives to remedy the situation. The first was to excavate the area of the stormwater catch basin and adjacent sewer lines to find the broken sewer pipe and then make necessary repairs. Because of heavy traffic volume throughout the day in this area as well as costs related to excavation and repair to roads, sidewalks, as well as both stormwater and sewer systems, this was not considered the best option. The second less expensive alternative was to insert a new liner material into the existing pipe and quotations were requested from three companies capable of performing this type of sewer line rehabilitation technology on approximately 1,230 linear feet of 8-inch sewer lines. Quotations for this work were received during the month of March, 2014. The lowest responsive bidder was Southeast Pipe Survey at \$57,240. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Southeast Pipe Survey in the amount of \$57,240 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the approve the low bid submitted by Southeast Pipe Survey in the amount of \$57,240 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for stormwater catch basin and sewer repairs in Downtown Valdosta.

Consideration of bids for a work utility truck for the Stormwater Division in the Engineering Department (Bid No. 15-13-14).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Stormwater Division of the Engineering Department needs to replace an existing truck that has rising mileage and maintenance cost. This is an approved Council budget item for this fiscal year. Sealed bids were received on March 2, 2014 and the low bid meeting specifications was submitted by Brannen Motor Company in the amount of \$40,172.16. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Brannen Motor Company in the amount of \$40,172.16 and allow the Stormwater Division of the Engineering Department to proceed with the purchase of an F-450 work utility truck.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the bid submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$40,214 and allow the Stormwater Division of the Engineering Department to proceed with the purchase of an F-450 work utility truck.

Consideration of bids for a work utility truck for the Utilities Department (Bid No. 14-13-14).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Utilities Department needs to replace an existing truck that has rising mileage and maintenance cost. This is a current year Council approved budget item. Sealed bids were received on March 25, 2014 with the low bid meeting specification submitted by Nextran Ford in the amount of \$33,436.16. It has been several years since the City has bought this type of truck with the desired options. The last purchase price in 2010 was \$27,413 with less options. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid

meeting specification submitted by Nextran Ford in the amount of \$33,436.16 for an F-350 work utility truck for the Utilities Department.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid meeting specification submitted by Nextran Ford in the amount of \$33,436.16 and allow the Utilities Department to proceed with the purchase of an F-350 work utility truck.

Consideration of bids for a new mini excavator for the Utilities Department (Bid No. 13-13-14).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Utilities Department is in need of a new mini excavator to help perform their duties. This equipment will be used for digging, lifting, and other tasks associated with water and sewer work. This is a current year budget item approved by Council. Sealed bids were received on March 25, 2014 with the low bid meeting specifications submitted by United Rental of Valdosta in the amount of \$47,823.86. It has been quite a while since the City has bought a machine of this type, but the pricing was under the budgetary number submitted to Council. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid meeting specification submitted by United Rental of Valdosta in the amount of \$47,823.86 and allow the Utilities Department to proceed with the purchase of a new mini excavator.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid meeting specification submitted by United Rental of Valdosta in the amount of \$47,823.86 and allow the Utilities Department to proceed with the purchase of a new mini excavator.

## **LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS**

Consideration of a request to approve emergency repairs to a sewer main located in the 1800 block of South Patterson Street and Dukes Bay Canal.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that on March 19, 2014 at approximately 10:00 a.m., Utilities Department Staff located an active sewer spill behind the 1800 block of South Patterson Street entering Dukes Bay Canal. This portion of Dukes Bay Canal is bordered by Tucker Road on the north and Gil Harbin Industrial Boulevard on the south. Due to the location and equipment needed for the repairs, the Utilities Department contacted Standard Contractors to undertake the necessary emergency repairs. Standard Contractors performed the emergency repairs and completed this work immediately after the blockage was cleared by Utilities Department Staff. Because of the emergency nature of this work and the ongoing sewage spill estimated at 300,000 gallons, it was not feasible to advertise this work for bids. The contractor set up a bypass pumping system and completed repairs to the sewer main. During preparation for the bypass work, the contractor discovered that there was a very large blockage further downstream which was preventing sewage from getting to the main sewer interceptor. City Staff and the contractor have determined that this blockage actually caused the rupture of the upstream sewer main. Utilities Staff worked continuously throughout the day to remove this very large blockage consisting of a combination of rags, grease, plastics, and other debris clogging the sewer main over numerous lengths of pipe. They moved approximately 16 cubic yards of debris from the line at that time. Once that was done, the contractor was able to get the by-pass system up and running and pumping. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve an invoice submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$31,908.70 for emergency repairs work to the sewer main located in the 1800 block of South Patterson Street and Dukes Bay Canal.

Councilman Norton inquired as to whether we are doing anything to prevent the clogs or whether this is just an accumulation of normal stuff. Henry Hicks stated that they have identified one of the City's larger customers in that area that is the probable cause of the blockage. He will be meeting with them next Thursday to see what they can do to prevent this type of debris from being discharged into the system. At that time, the City will issue them a discharge permit for that facility which will require them to have remedial measures in place in order to prevent it from happening in the future. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether they take pictures of the clogged sewer line. Henry Hicks stated that they do take pictures and that is the proof that they need in order for the customer to do what they need to do. Councilman Carroll stated that we have had a number of spills that were the result of clogged lines from grease, fats, and oils and we instituted the FOG Ordinance to help address that approximately three or four years ago. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether there were any municipalities that levy fines for this. Henry Hicks stated that is part of the process and in the Ordinance the City can levy fines

and take them to Municipal Court. The City can even take further measures and disconnect them from the sewer system if that does not get their attention. There is a list of steps that are in the Ordinance that are followed in order to bring the customer into compliance. Councilman Carroll stated that this is a perfect example where it is a known quantity and it will cost the City approximately \$32,000 to \$33,000. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this Agenda Item did not have to come before Council for approval because it was less than \$50,000 and we actually had three of these ongoing. The other two are greater than \$50,000 so this was a communication issue that it ended up on the Agenda. We are asking for approval by Mayor and Council even though this was an authorized emergency and it was less than the authorized amount. Councilman Yost inquired as to where the funding was coming from. Henry Hicks stated that it was the Lowndes County Jail that caused the blockage and the funding to pay for the repairs would come from User Fees.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the invoice submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$31,908.70 for emergency repairs to a sewer main located in the 1800 block of South Patterson Street and Dukes Bay Canal.

## **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2014-8, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A LOAN FROM THE CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND, ADMINISTERED BY GEFA FOR THE PUMP STATION, FORCE MAIN, HEADWORKS, AND EQ BASIN PROJECT**

Consideration of a Resolution to approve a loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, administered by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), for the Pump Station, Force Main, Headworks, and EQ Basin Project.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that this is the issuance of a new loan in the amount of \$36,781,448 with the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) in order to complete construction of the Pump Station, Force Main, Headworks, and EQ Basin Project. The total loan amount of \$36,781,448 has \$3,085,000 allocated for Engineering Services (including permitting) and Construction Management as well as \$1,696,448 for contingency. GEFA requires a new Promissory Note, Legal Opinion of Borrowers Counsel, and a new City Council Resolution agreeing to the conditions in the loan (GEFA Loan CWSRF 13-006) to finalize the loan and make those funds available. Henry Hicks recommended that Council adopt a Resolution approving a loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, administered by GEFA for the Pump Station, Force Main, Headworks, and EQ Basin Project. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the money would be drawn down as needed. Mayor Gayle stated we will only pay interest on what we owe and we will only draw money as we have to pay. Larry Hanson stated that when we receive an invoice we will pay it and then it will immediately be sent to GEFA for reimbursement.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adopt Resolution No. 2014-8, a Resolution to approve a loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, administered by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), for the Pump Station, Force Main, Headworks, and EQ Basin Project, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated the CALEA assessment took place last Monday, March 31, 2014 and CALEA will be making a positive recommendation for reaccreditation as well as the Gold Standard which is the highest accreditation that they have. He thanked Councilman Carroll, Councilwoman Tooley, and Councilman Payton for attending and speaking.

The City Government 101 Introduction Class was held on Monday, April 7, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers and there were 22 citizens in attendance. Mayor Gayle, Councilman Carroll, Councilman Norton, Councilman Vickers, and Councilwoman Tooley also attended and spoke to the class. The next City Government 101 Class will feature Public Safety and will be held on April 14, 2014 at the Police Department.

The Spring Electronics Recycling Event will be held on Saturday, April 12, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Mathis Auditorium. They collect cell phones, computer monitors, laptops, disk and floppy drives, test

equipment, modems, circuit boards, typewriters, cables, 8-track players, computer accessories, video machines, stereos, CD radios, scanners, speakers, camcorders, and cameras and televisions. There is a small charge for televisions because they have to disassemble them and the only thing that is recyclable is the electronics on the inside. This has been a very successful event and last year we were able to collect 30,000 lbs of electronics. Since the inception of the program in 2006, we have collected approximately 500,000 lbs of electronics which is over 241 tons of electronic waste that has been prevented from going into the landfill. This is very positive and our citizens look forward to this event each year.

Georgia Cities Week will be held April 13-19, 2014 and the "If I Were Mayor" Essay Contest is part of that program. There will also be a number of activities scheduled throughout the week which include Customer Service Day, a City Blood Drive, Job Shadow Day, and the Employee Appreciation Luncheon.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Mayor and Council would need to have an Executive Session to discuss real estate and litigation.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Carroll stated that he wanted to apologize to the men and women at the Valdosta Police Department. Chief Brian Childress presented a very detailed and thorough analysis of Part I Crimes in our community and a comparison over the last decade. It clearly showed a decrease in Part I Crimes in our City and unfortunately we received poor news coverage on that. Councilman Carroll stated that he would like to post that data on the City's website so that citizens can get some news that is worth reading.

Councilman Wright stated that he was very impressed with the "If I Were Mayor" Essay Contest winners and there was one common theme that came through in their speeches and that was the cleanliness of our City. He hoped that Council would pay more attention to that and he encouraged the students to go into politics because they have a real passion for it. He would like to see this great City of ours in a place that is presentable.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that she was happy to see all the citizens who are coming to the City Council Meeting and encouraged them to keep up their attendance and come with questions so that the Mayor and Council would know their thoughts, what is going on, and how they can be helpful.

### CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate and litigation.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the April 10, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:16 p.m. and enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate and litigation.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the April 10, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:36 p.m. and stated that action was taken in Executive Session on a real estate matter. Mayor Gayle entertained a motion.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the purchase of property located at 1021 West Hill Avenue in the amount of \$100,000 to replace an 18" sewer line running underneath Hill Avenue that has collapsed in the central portion of the road.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the purpose of this property acquisition was to replace an 18 inch sewer line that is running underneath Hill Avenue that has collapsed in the central part of the road. They will have to jack and bore to replace it and in order to do the jack and bore they will need two receiving pits. There will be a receiving pit on the south side of West Hill Avenue on this property which will take up most of the property.

The front of the property will be just for the bore pit and the rest will be used to store the dirt from the bore pit until it is completed. The side of the property will be used for reconnection to the existing sewer. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this is an existing issue and they have been doing by-pass pumping for several weeks. When they finished the Summerlin Street Project they were getting ready to cut the by-pass off and when they re-opened the line that was going under Hill Avenue it started backing up on the Summerlin side on Cherry Street. They immediately turned the by-pass pumps on and placed a camera in the line and found a huge blockage about 67 feet in from the Cherry Street side. This 18 inch pipe is buried 27 feet deep so the road would have been closed for at least a couple of months in order to complete the repairs. The two options they had were to either cut open Hill Avenue across the entire width of the road which would have been 12 feet wide with trench boxes or to do a jack and bore which would allow the work to be done much quicker at approximately the same cost. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether the sewer line was made out of steel and concrete. Henry Hicks stated that it was a concrete line in a steel casing because whenever you go under a major road or the railroad tracks you have to have a steel casing. Councilman Carroll inquired as to what made the line fail. Henry Hicks stated that it was probably a combination of sewer gas, corrosion of the pipe, and age. It could have been from some of the work they are doing on the Hill Avenue Overpass Project because they did have to drive piling around the tracks. There have also been a lot of heavy trucks going across that area during construction but he could not really say it was one or the other.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the April 10, 2014 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:40 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, April 24, 2014.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta