

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL  
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JULY 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, Alvin Payton, Jr., Robert Yost, Sandra Tooley, and James Wright. Tim Tanner, Attorney with Coleman-Talley, LLP, filled in for George Talley, City Attorney, who was absent. The invocation was given by Pastor Lee Henderson, Second Oak Grove Baptist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

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

Consideration of the July, 2014 Employee of the Month Award (Sergeant Jonathan Yeargin, Fire Department).

Jonathan Yeargin began his employment with the Fire Department in December, 2007 as a Firefighter and was promoted in July, 2008 to Sergeant, which is the position he currently holds. Sergeant Yeargin is currently stationed at Engine Company #2 and is responsible for maintaining and safely operating the fire truck in addition to standing-in as a Company Officer in the absence of his supervisor. As stated in a recent evaluation, Sgt. Yeargin takes great pride in maintaining the appearance of the VFD fire trucks. It is not out of the norm for Sgt. Yeargin to use his personal aluminum polish to polish the fire trucks side-boards for that "showroom" look. Sgt. Yeargin also serves on Valdosta Fire Department's Honor Guard and takes numerous hours out of his personal life to proudly represent the Department at funerals, ceremonies, and different events around the State. On a recent routine residential educational program, a citizen living on Clover Drive asked Engine #2's personnel about her fire extinguisher. After an examination of the extinguisher, the crew found that it was out of date and not safe to use. The next shift, Sgt. Yeargin returned to work with a 5 lb. fire extinguisher that he had acquired from his part-time job. Engine #2's personnel returned to the citizen's residence and delivered the fire extinguisher. Sgt. Yeargin's actions went above and beyond to deliver the highest level of customer service in ensuring the citizens living on Clover Drive are safe. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Sgt. Jon Yeargin as Employee of the Month.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the June 19, 2014 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 11-2006, PERSISTENT AND EXCESSIVE NOISES OF THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S CODE OF ORDINANCES (FIRST READING)**

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend Section 11-2006, Persistent and Excessive Noises of the City of Valdosta's Code of Ordinances. (First Reading)

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that the current Noise Ordinance was adopted in 2005 to address general issues that were occurring at that point in time; however, in the nearly ten years that have passed, many changes have occurred that necessitate a review and update of this Ordinance. The existing Ordinance was uniform across all zoning classifications, but it is understood that excessive noise in a residential area should be managed differently than noise in a commercial area. Likewise, many changes have occurred in areas such as Downtown which were not contemplated in 2005. Events like First Friday and Art After Dark often include sidewalk entertainment. We now have legally permitted open air food and drink establishments that offer entertainment. Part of the ambience of a Downtown is noise as it gives the feel of life and activity. The key is to strike a balance

in regulating noise in such a way as to promote coexistence and provide for economic development; however, understanding the mixed use nature of Downtowns makes this a real challenge. This Ordinance attempts to balance all interests by establishing different noise standards based on zoning classification. Residential standards are stronger than Commercial standards in terms of distance, times, and activities. The goal is to have an Ordinance that is easily understood and enforceable. The proposed Ordinance creates standards based upon zoning and establishes separate distance standards that are stronger for residential areas and more liberal for commercial areas to respect the very nature of those uses. It puts in place specific days, times, distances and times of operation. The biggest changes were as follows: (1) added a Definition Section, (2) added sound measurement standards, and (3) added distances and times in Section E. They have broken it into Residential and Commercial categories based on zoning. The times are different based on those areas. In the Residential areas, there is 100 feet, 300 feet, and 100 feet based on times but when you get to the Commercial areas it is doubled to 200 feet, 600 feet, and 200 feet. They also discussed the multi-family dwellings, apartments, condos, townhouses, duplexes, motels, and hotels as well as adjoining properties where there are walls separating those. In Section E, they added shutting down the music at a certain time and keeping doors closed other than people coming in and out to try and minimize the music specifically in the Downtown area. They wanted to come up with something reasonable and a happy median for businesses versus residential area. Chief Childress stated that no action was needed since this was the First Reading of the Amendment to the Noise Ordinance.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he had sent this to the CVDA as well as all the parties who had contacted him over the past several months regarding this issue. He received a couple of comments which included the following: (1) In Section E where it shows the times, it was suggested to change the time from midnight to 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. on all those days because that is the time they are allowed to be open and have entertainment and serve alcohol. This would make the time consistent with the time that they are allowed. (2) On the outdoor entertainment, allow it to midnight instead of 11:00 p.m. Chief Childress stated that he has shared this Ordinance with Police Officers and the current one is a little more vague and difficult for them to enforce. It was dependent on what the Officers ran into. The proposed Ordinance is a little more clear cut and more specific which will be easier to enforce if they run into a potential violation. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that as he receives suggestions he will try to consolidate and send any recommendations we receive prior to the next Council Meeting so they would have knowledge of those and could take those into account when making a motion.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2014-11, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) TO APPLY FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR A PROGRAM TO ASSIST WITH THE ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING FOR HOUSING NEEDS IN NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN THE DESIGNATED REVITALIZATION AREA (DRA)**

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to apply for grant funds for a Program to assist with the assessment and planning for housing needs in neighborhoods within the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA).

Vanassa Flucas, Neighborhood Development Manager, stated that the City applied for this grant in 2012 but was not approved. Funding would come through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Congress reserves the right to make decisions on the funding for this Program on a yearly basis. This is a Planning Grant for up to \$300,000 and we are looking at receiving \$250,000 which extends for two years. After that Planning Grant, we have the opportunity to receive an Implementation Grant for up to \$5,000,000 upon successful completion of the Planning Grant. There is a 5% cash or in-kind match. The City is seeking funding in conjunction with the Valdosta Housing Authority (VHA) to address neighborhood housing issues within the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA). A Resolution will need to be approved by the Council to authorize the filing of the application. Vanassa Flucas recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to apply for grant funds for a Program to assist with the assessment and planning for housing needs in neighborhoods within the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA). Councilman Payton inquired as to whether the 5% match was on the \$300,000 or \$5,000,000 or both. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that it was on both but we are only applying for the \$300,000 Grant. If we were deemed to be eligible and applied for the \$5,000,000 then we would have to make a

5% match on that as well. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether the Housing Authority was sending in their application separate from us or part of. Vanessa Flucas stated that they would send in a Resolution of Support.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2014-11, a Resolution authorizing the filing of an Application with the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) to apply for grant funds for a Program to assist with the assessment and planning for housing needs in neighborhoods within the Designated Revitalization Area (DRA), the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2014-12, A RESOLUTION TO REQUEST THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (GDOT) MAKE PERMANENT THE EXISTING CONSTRUCTION BY-PASS ROUTE TO ELIMINATE THE OVER THE ROAD (OTR) AND TRACTOR TRAILER TRAFFIC IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA OF THE CITY OF VALDOSTA**

Consideration of a Resolution to request the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) make permanent the existing construction by-pass route to eliminate Over the Road (OTR) and tractor trailer traffic in the Downtown area of the City of Valdosta.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that major tractor trailer and over the road (OTR) truck traffic on the State routes in Downtown Valdosta has had a detrimental effect on economic development and the quality of life, and has created safety concerns to both motorists and pedestrians. For approximately 20 years, the City of Valdosta has requested the assistance of the Georgia Department of Transportation to eliminate through OTR and tractor trailer traffic in the Downtown area. A partial by-pass was built by Lowndes County (Perimeter Road) many years ago and ownership was later taken over by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The Georgia Department of Transportation has previously committed to the City of Valdosta to study and develop plans and alternatives for a by-pass to eliminate the detrimental effects of major truck traffic in the Downtown area. To date, the City is not aware of any by-pass plan developed by the Georgia Department of Transportation to fulfill this commitment. Several local alternatives have been developed over the years, with some submitted to GDOT for consideration. Recently, the Georgia Department of Transportation found it necessary to establish a truck detour by-pass for 18 months because of the Grade Separation/Overpass Project on U. S. 84 in Valdosta. The City has monitored the effects of the detour by-pass, provided law enforcement along the route, and has seen no detrimental effects as a result of the by-pass. City officials met with the Georgia Department of Transportation leadership in both 2013 and 2014 and requested that the current by-pass be made permanent. A Resolution (see attachment) has been drafted to formally request that the Georgia Department of Transportation designate the current by-pass as a permanent by-pass route with full enforcement authority to prohibit through truck traffic on State routes in the Downtown area of the City of Valdosta or until such time as a new by-pass is designed, constructed, and opened for usage. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the Resolution to request the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) make permanent the existing construction by-pass route to eliminate Over the Road (OTR) and tractor trailer traffic in the Downtown area of the City of Valdosta.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to request the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) make permanent the existing construction by-pass route to eliminate Over the Road (OTR) and tractor trailer traffic in the Downtown area of the City of Valdosta.

**BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES**

Consideration of bids for Cured-in-Place-Pipe Lining (CIPP) repairs to sewer lines located on Linda Drive, Roosevelt Drive, and Howell Brook Drive.

David Frost, Assistant Director of Utilities, stated that the Utilities Department has a plan to address storm water inflow and infiltration issues in the sanitary sewer system. The Department contracted for smoke testing of the entire sanitary sewer system over the next four (4) years through a private engineering company, Constantine Engineering. Year one of the testing was recently completed. During the smoke test of the Linda Drive and Roosevelt Drive areas, several locations were identified where smoke was coming out of the sewer system indicating potential pipe failure. The sewer system in Howell Brook Drive area also has storm water infiltration issues, particularly during sustained periods of rainfall. Utility crews performed line cleaning and Closed Circuit

Television Camera (CCTV) inspection of the sewer lines in all three of these areas. These inspections indicated that there were fractured sewer lines in each of these collection systems. Due to the location of the sewer lines, potential repair or rehabilitation methods were very limited. As a result, Staff had only two viable alternatives to solve the problems. The first was to excavate the areas of the sewer lines at all three locations to access the broken sewer pipe and then make necessary repairs. Because of the number of residences, related traffic flow as well as costs related to excavation and repair to roads, sidewalks, driveways, and stormwater systems this was not considered the best option. The least intrusive and most feasible alternative was to utilize Cured-In-Place-Pipe (CIPP) lining technology to rehabilitate the failed sewer pipe. The project to line a combined total of 2,600 linear feet of 8-inch sewer pipe was advertised for bid. Three companies capable of performing this type of sewer line rehabilitation submitted proposals on June 25, 2014. The lowest responsive bidder was American Infrastructure Technologies Corporation (AITC) in the amount of \$113,767. David Frost, Assistant Director of Utilities, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by American Infrastructure Technologies Corporation (AITC) in the amount of \$113,767 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by American Infrastructure Technologies Corporation (AITC) in the amount of \$113,767 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for Cured-in-Place-Pipe Lining (CIPP) repairs to sewer lines located on Linda Drive, Roosevelt Drive, and Howell Brook Drive.

Consideration of bids for the Lift Station Rehabilitation/Replacement Project (Phase 2).

David Frost, Assistant Director of Utilities, stated that the Utilities Department initiated the first of its annual Lift Station Rehabilitation/Replacement Program in 2010. Under that project, Ponderosa, Big Country Club, Mack Drive, and East Wind lift stations were redesigned for upgrades along with specifications and bid documents. That contract was awarded and work completed in 2011-2012. Upon the completion of this work in 2012, five additional lift stations were advertised for design and ASA Engineering and Survey was awarded the contract to perform design documents for those five lift stations. Only three of the five lift stations listed for rehabilitation under Phase 2 will be contracted. The five listed were Rogers Street, Lakeland, Hyde Park, East Wind, and Highway 84. The Highway 84 lift station design is 95% complete with a minor easement issue holding up the 100% design. East Wind was included a second time based on Staff concerns with wetwell capacity and short cycling of pumps. While this is a Staff concern, there have been no major issues with the operation of the East Wind station under these conditions. In place of enlarging the wetwell and installing in new pumps with associated control system, the Utilities Department plans to purchase a backup pump and soft start controller for this station at substantial savings while addressing Staff concerns at the same time. Normally, four lift stations are contracted each year for rehabilitation. This year we plan to contract rehabilitation for three lift stations to stay within budget constraints and since two additional lift stations are being upgraded under the Force Main Project. The Utilities Department began this Lift Station Replacement/Rehabilitation Program to upgrade those stations in the worst condition first (oldest and most deteriorated). The Utilities Department advertised for bids in April of 2014. A mandatory Pre-bid Meeting was held on April 17, 2014, and bids were received from two local contractors on May 30, 2014. The lowest responsive and responsible bidder was Standard Contractors at \$1,778,395 and the second bid was received from Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$1,856,816. Since the lowest bid was over the budgeted amount, the low bidder, Standard Contractors, was asked to submit the savings associated with the elimination of the East Wind Station from their original bid quotation. The savings from elimination of this lift station from the original quotation was \$312,161 for a new total \$1,466,234 which is under the budgeted number. To address Staff concerns with the short cycling issues at the East Wind Station, the Utilities Department is recommending an alternative to substantially increase reliability at this station. That alternative requires purchasing a spare soft start controller for the East Wind station at a cost of \$3,208 and a spare pump at a cost of \$14,668. This alternative is a significant savings when compared to the cost of a second rehab of that lift station. David Frost, Assistant Director of Utilities, recommended that Council approve the low bid of Standard Contractors in the amount of \$1,466,234 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Standard Contractors in the amount of \$1,466,234 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for the Lift Station Rehabilitation/Replacement Project (Phase 2).

Consideration of a Locally Administered Program (LAP) Agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that according to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in 2009, Locally Administered Projects (LAP) by Cities and Counties in 45 states were estimated to involve \$6 to \$8 billion in Federal-Aid contracts. Annually, nearly 20% of the national Federal-Aid Program is now administered by local public agencies and in Georgia's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 20.86% is currently shown as LAP projects. Under Title 23 U.S.C. the State Transportation Agencies are responsible for the administration of Federal-Aid Transportation projects. Title 23 U.S.C. does not recognize local entities as direct recipients of Federal-Aid funds. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) assumes the responsibilities of the Secretary of Transportation for all Federal-Aid projects. GDOT stewardship includes the responsibility to assure local projects meet or exceed all applicable Federal and State laws, standards and regulations. The purpose of the LAP Program is to establish uniform practices and to train, qualify and authorize Local Public Agencies (LPA) to manage certain core activities on Federal-Aid projects. By approving the attached agreement, the City agrees to adhere to all LAP requirements when developing all FHWA projects under GDOT's Qualification Certification Agreement. Pat Collins, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the Locally Administered Program (LAP) Agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this is a difficult thing to achieve and while it is provided to the City it is through the City Engineer. He has gone through a certification process including meeting with the GDOT in order for him to demonstrate that we can comply with managing a Federal Project the same way that the GDOT would. This could be helpful to us in getting selective Projects to happen a little faster.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilman Wright to approve the Locally Administered Program (LAP) Agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation. Councilman Yost seconded the motion. Councilman Payton stated that he was very impressed with all of the certificates and diplomas that were in the Agenda Packet. Mayor Gayle stated that this shows what Pat Collins has gone through to get this certification. The motion was unanimously adopted (7-0).

Consideration of a request to approve an Agreement with South Georgia Medical Center for signage on the City's Right-of-Way.

Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator, stated that this past year, the City completed the extension of Gornto Road and the associated intersection improvements at North Patterson Street and Woodrow Wilson Drive. As part of the project, some additional land was acquired from South Georgia Medical Center (SGMC) through a property exchange at the northeast corner of this intersection in order to comply with GDOT design standards. A portion of this land is now an open grassed and landscaped area immediately between the new sidewalk/road pavement and the SGMC parking lot. This area is being used as an easement for drainage and sanitary sewer facilities. Despite this area appearing to be part of SGMC property, it is now part of the City's public right-of-way. SGMC is proposing to install a monument sign to mark the southwest corner of their campus area and to serve as directional signage to their Emergency Room and other hospital services. At this corner, there is insufficient space for this sign on SGMC property itself without greatly disturbing their existing parking lot. Instead, SGMC is requesting to locate this new sign within this open grassed/landscaped area of the City right-of-way so that the sign will be closer to the roadway and more easily seen by motorists. With these public improvements complete, this intersection area is now becoming one of the main entrances into the SGMC campus and good directional signage here is very important. Normally, no private or institutional signage is allowed within the City's rights-of-way and this area is only reserved for "official signage" as controlled and approved by the City. Therefore, the City's sign regulations prohibit private entities from erecting signs within public rights-of-way. However, any signs that are erected in a right-of-way and are approved by the City are considered exempt from the City's sign regulations. If this proposed signage area were instead located on SGMC property, the signage would also be exempt from the regulations because SGMC is a separate governmental authority. Because this proposed signage area gives the appearance of being SGMC property, it has the same outward effect of being exempt -- like other SGMC signage. Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, recommended that Council approve the Agreement with South Georgia Medical Center for signage on the City's Right-of-Way.

Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether SGMC granted us an easement through their property for us to do the Woodrow Wilson Project. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we did a property exchange. They

owned a piece of property from a lot they had acquired that was inside McKey Park where the playground is located. In exchange we gave them the streets that are now within the SGMC campus such as part of Cowart Avenue.

Councilman Norton inquired as to whether the sprinkler system on this corner that was right up against the curb belonged to the City or SGMC. Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that if it is on their property it will be their system. Mayor Gayle stated that it was on our property right now. Matt Martin stated that he did not think the City had irrigation in place for the landscaping and right-of-way. Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that he did recall some irrigation that was put in for the trees but it is being operated by SGMC. There was some obligation for ensuring that the trees survived so some sprinkler lines were put into place.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the Agreement with South Georgia Medical Center for signage on the City's Right-of-Way.

### **BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority. This appointment was tabled at the May 8, 2014 Council Meeting for 60 days for re-advertisement.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority has a member, Russ Mast, whose term will expire on June 30, 2014. Mr. Mast has not expressed an interest in being reappointed. At the May 8, 2014 Council Meeting, the only applicant applying for this position was Daniel Deaver whose current slot is the rotating appointment on the Parks & Recreation Authority. His term expired on June 30, 2014. The rotating appointment will be made by the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners. A motion was made to table this appointment for 60 days for re-advertisement. After re-advertisement of this appointment according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council, the applicants are as follows in no order of preference: (1) Jake Chitty - Teacher/Therapist, Lowndes County School System and Horizon Academy, (2) Daniel Deaver - Engineer with Georgia Gulf Sulfur, (3) Andrew Gibbs - Teacher, Valdosta Middle School, and (4) L. Andrew Smith - Attorney, Self Employed.

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations. Councilman Yost placed in consideration the name of Andrew Gibbs. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations. Andrew Gibbs was appointed by acclamation to serve a term of three years on the Valdosta-Lowndes Co. Parks & Recreation Authority.

Consideration of an appointment to the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Central Valdosta Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority had, Joe Belson, who resigned from the Authority on April 3, 2014 due to selling his business in the Downtown area. Mr. Belson's term expires on December 31, 2014. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. There were three applicants who applied for this appointment but only one met the requirements of the CVDA. The applicant who met the requirements for the CVDA is Kiera Moritz, Owner of Steel Magnolias Restaurant, and her application is attached for your review.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for an appointment to the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to appoint Kiera Moritz to the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority to serve a term of three years.

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

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that an ad will run in the Valdosta Daily Times within the next few days announcing the dates for the millage rate hearings. The Public Hearings will be held on July 24, 2014 at 12:00

p.m. and 6:00 p.m. and on August 7, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. The City Council Meeting will then be held at 5:30 p.m. that same day and the millage rate increase will be an Agenda Item to be voted on that day. Unfortunately these are requirements in the State law and it is a good thing we do not have a lot of experience in doing this because we have never increased the millage rate; however, since we are increasing it this year we have to comply with the three Public Hearings with one after 6:00 p.m. during the work day.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, thanked Emily Davenport, Stormwater Supervisor, for efforts in arranging for the Governor's Honors Program participants to tour the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Traffic Management Center. It takes a lot of work and the Staff at both of those locations did an outstanding job in explaining the operations to the young people.

We have received the CDBG letter and while it is good that we are funded again in the amount of \$550,525 it is disappointing that the amount continues to go down. When we first became an entitlement community after the 2002 U. S. Census, we received \$725,000 in 2004 and it has continued to decline.

We received a letter regarding the Safe Routes to School Project and they will be having the pre-construction meeting next Thursday, July 17, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. at the Georgia Department of Transportation office. The contractor will work with the DOT in setting the schedule for the Project for a sidewalk to J. L. Newbern Middle School. Reames & Son was the low bidder for the Project.

The Southern Hospitality Group Work Camp has been going on all week and we have had 116 adult and youth volunteers here in Valdosta working on 12 homes in our City. This is the 9<sup>th</sup> year for the Group Work Camp and we are the longest consecutive running Work Camp site in the Program. The Camp Director stated today during the tour that Valdosta does it best and this is the place they want to be. It takes the effort of a lot of people including the Community Development Department, the City Marshals, and the Neighborhood Development Department to make this event successful. We also had the support of Georgia Power, the Valdosta School Board, Wild Adventures, and Lowe's during the Group Work Camp. They will also have a closing ceremony tomorrow night and Council is encouraged to attend and see the gratitude of these homeowners who have benefitted from this service.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that they will need to have an Executive Session tonight on real estate and litigation update.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Vickers stated that he will be out of town on July 24<sup>th</sup> but one of his greatest concerns about this Noise Ordinance is the Downtown area. We have worked very hard over the years to make Downtown viable and we cannot put all of these string holds on Downtown because some of the buildings are old and the walls are not insulated. On Fridays and Saturdays, the hours should be more like midnight or 1:00 a.m. in the Downtown area; however, we have to be careful. We have done a lot to cultivate the Downtown area and we have to be careful just because we get one or two complaints about noise. The Downtown area is the heart of our community and it is a mixed use. When people move Downtown they have to realize what it is.

Councilman Wright stated that he has mentioned it a couple of times before but he would really like to see someone from Public Works as the Employee of the Month. Mayor Gayle stated that he has relayed the message.

## **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Deidra White, 123 North Patterson Street, stated that she wanted to speak about the First Reading of a revision to the City's Noise Ordinance presented by Chief Brian Childress and addressed by Councilman Vickers. While it is not a Public Hearing item, it is important enough to the Historic Downtown Commercial District that she felt compelled to speak to Council tonight during Citizens to be Heard. As a business owner, resident, and former Council representative of District 2 which includes the Historic Downtown Commercial District, she was speaking in favor of the revisions including the current additional comments and requests mentioned early by City Manager Larry Hanson. Ms. White stated that she would not subject the Mayor and Council to a lengthy diatribe tonight of all the reasons why she was in favor of the revision because they are many; however, she would be glad to answer

any questions or concerns that they might have regarding the proposed revision. Councilman Carroll inquired as to what Ms. White thought was the primary function of the Downtown Historic District. Ms. White stated that the primary function of the Downtown District is commercial and that is why it is zoned a Commercial District. It is a Commercial District that allows residential habitation much like we have Industrial Zoning that allows people to live there but the residents of an Industrial Zone do not go in and ask the factory to close down because they are not happy with the level of noise that goes on. Just like we allow people to live next to train tracks but then the residents don't go in expecting the train not to run so 100% of its primary function is a Commercial District. These have been rough years for businesses all across the country but in our Downtown area, the businesses have already given up without any hesitation the First Friday events which was the biggest thing the Downtown area had going as far as business because it was imposing too much on the quality of life in Downtown. Downtown has not recovered from the loss of that big event each month and there is no way that it can sustain another impediment such as hampering businesses to be able to function. Councilman Yost inquired about why they do not have First Friday. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that they still have First Friday. Ms. White stated that there were issues with too many people creating too much noise and too much chaos. They had to make adjustments that made it not as attractive to so many people. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether Ms. White was in agreement with the time limitations on Friday and Saturday nights. Ms. White stated that she was happy with the time that was contained in City Manager Hanson's current comments which Council may not have received yet because he was going to collect them and present all of them to you. Mayor Gayle inquired about the changes that were made to the First Fridays. Ms. White stated that in the beginning the City removed the ability to have a special permit which allowed citizens to walk around with alcohol because they were having too many people bringing alcohol from outside the District and the participants were not going into the Downtown businesses. They were bringing their own bar car and having a party in the street so it became an impediment to the residents predominately but also to the businesses as well. They were too successful too fast. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that his take on that was slightly different in that basically open containers in the Downtown area were prohibited by the Alcohol Ordinance because everything in Downtown was within 500 feet of an establishment so they relaxed a standard to try it.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the July 10, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:17 p.m. and enter into Executive Session to discuss real estate and litigation.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the July 10, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:46 p.m. and stated that no action was taken in Executive Session.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the July 10, 2014 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:46 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, July 24, 2014.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta