

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2012
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., Deidra White, and James Wright. Councilman Robert Yost was absent. The invocation was given by Senior Pastor Curtis Jenkins, New Life Bible Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Special introduction of Tim Riddle, Executive Director of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, introduced Tim Riddle, the new Executive Director of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority. Mr. Riddle will also serve as the General Manager of the James H. Rainwater Conference Center. He previously ran the facility in Chattanooga, Tennessee for many years and will be a great fit for Valdosta and Lowndes County.

Tim Riddle stated that he has been on the job for a little less than two weeks and has done some research on the Authority and the Conference Center partnership with Valdosta and Lowndes County. The hospitality and tourism industry calls for partnerships with stakeholders such as lodging establishments, restaurants, and attractions and the goal is to raise Valdosta's level in terms of people thinking about it as a tourism destination and also a destination for group business and conventions. Mr. Riddle stated that he looked forward to working with everyone and moving forward on several fronts. Councilman Vickers inquired about the capacity of the facility that Mr. Riddle formerly worked at. Mr. Riddle stated that they could handle approximately 2,000 banquet style and seat approximately 9,000 theater style. He has also been in a smaller facility in Cave City which had the combination of the CDB and facility together which is very similar in many respects to the way the Tourism Authority is set up here. Larry Hanson stated that Mr. Riddle is also a CPA and has a lot of management experience. He has held offices in his national and regional associations and his references were impeccable. Mayor Gayle welcomed Mr. Riddle to Valdosta and stated that he was looking forward to working with him.

Special Presentation of the 2012 Southern Hospitality Group Workcamp.

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that the Southern Hospitality Workcamp is truly a partnership between various community organizations, key City of Valdosta Departments, and many dedicated individuals. This evening, individuals and organizations that are critical to the success of this endeavor will be recognized. Also, the wonderful homeowners will be recognized for their participation and a special video highlighting the 2012 Southern Hospitality Workcamp will be presented. Mara Register stated that this year's Workcamp was truly the best yet! Through the Workcamp, a total of 257 homes have been repaired. To date, the City has hosted seven Workcamps that have yielded a \$1.5 million economic investment in our community through capital improvements to housing stock, the value of volunteer housing, their spending in our community, and the value of their labor. This figure also represents the investment of the City of Valdosta, Lowe's Distribution Center, and the Group Cares Foundation in this effort. We were fortunate to host approximately 150 campers and red shirt staff here the week of June 24-30, 2012, and 17 houses were repaired. Over this summer, 40 camps will be held all over the country supported by more than 25,000 youth volunteers. Most important to our community is that this effort helps to stop the deterioration of valuable housing stock and places us closer to accomplishing our goal of eliminating all substandard housing by the year 2020. Mara Register thanked Mayor Gayle, City Council members, and the City Manager for their support of this effort. Without their vision and guidance, we would not be here to celebrate another successful Workcamp. Next, Mara Register thanked the Public Works Department, the Police Department, and the Fire Department for their strong support. It is truly a great team here at the City and this effort is a shining testament to that spirit of cooperation. Many individuals and organizations provided construction assistance and site coaching for the week of Workcamp, as well as other important support for our campers. These individuals also insured that the campers were safe, stayed well hydrated, and received the assistance they needed

to be successful. We are fortunate to have dedicated City Staff, Lowe's Distribution Center Staff, Habitat for Humanity Staff, and local General Contractors willing to give of their time and talents in providing expertise to our campers so they could successfully complete their projects. Mara Register presented the following individuals with a Certificate of Appreciation: (1) Greg Battles, Lowe's Distribution Center, (2) James Dean, City Marshal, (3) Rick Folsom, City Marshal, (4) Stuart Mullis, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity, (5) Mike Eddington, Habitat for Humanity, (6) Larry Henderson, Habitat for Humanity, (7) Terry Cumbus, Habitat for Humanity, (8) Kevin Brown, Habitat for Humanity, (9) Michael Miller, General Contractor, and (10) America's Second Harvest Food Bank. Mara Register also recognized the following individuals from Lowe's Retail Store for their support and efforts in delivering supplies during the week of Workcamp and presented them with a token of appreciation: (1) Corbin Neeley, Store Manager, (2) Larry Smith, and (3) Renee Parish. Each year, the campers get great enjoyment in spending their Wednesday afternoon off either floating down a lazy river or riding wild roller coasters. Mara Register thanked Wild Adventures Theme Park for their continued support. They have donated park passes for all of the campers and camp staff every year since 2005. This is an incredible donation and Mara Register thanked Greg Charbeneau, Vice President and General Manager of Wild Adventures, for this generous contribution. The City of Valdosta literally could not host the Southern Hospitality Work Camp without our incredible co-sponsor and partner, Lowe's Distribution Center. Lowe's RDC has been on board, standing by the City's side in this endeavor since the Workcamp began in 2005. Lowe's Distribution Center Regional Manager, Chris Lilly, has been an avid supporter of the Workcamp for many years and the City of Valdosta is eternally grateful for his significant contribution and continued commitment to the Southern Hospitality Workcamp. This partnership has truly made a significant difference in the lives of our citizens and we look forward to many more years of this wonderful partnership. Mara Register stated that she would be attending the July 23rd Valdosta Board of Education meeting to present them with a token of appreciation from the City for their dedicated commitment to the Workcamp. All of the campers are housed and fed at the Valdosta Middle School every year and we are extremely grateful for the School Board's partnership in this effort. Mara Register thanked Richard Joyner, Rehabilitation Construction Coordinator, for his incredible effort. This Workcamp would not serve as the Gold Standard throughout the country for organization and support if it were not for Richard and his hard work. Mara Register also recognized the 2012 Southern Hospitality Workcamp homeowners and asked Bishop John Tooley, Doris Washington, and William Southers to come forward and share some of their thoughts and experiences with the Mayor and Council.

Bishop John Tooley, homeowner, stated that he was very thankful to be here and the Southern Hospitality Workcamp meant so much to him and his neighborhood. The campers displayed great character and not only made an improvement to his home, but to the community as well. Bishop Tooley thanked the Mayor and Council, Richard Joyner, and everyone involved in the Workcamp because it was a great success. It brightened up the community and it means so much when you invest back into the community. If the City is concerned about their residents you can sure tell. This was a great service that was shown and someone was checking on the campers all the time to ensure they had the best service. They took pride in the quality of the work they did on the homes. They enjoyed the campers and hated to see them leave. Bishop Tooley stated that this was a great program and one that was truly needed.

Doris Washington, homeowner, stated that she was very thankful for the hard work the campers put in on her home and the professionalism that they showed. They only had two and one-half days to work on her home due to the rain but they did such a great job. Ms. Washington stated that the campers were like her children. She has a lot of disabilities and at times she is unable to get out of bed or do anything. The campers showed such Christianity and they were so sweet. She participated with them each day in their devotionals and that entire week she was able to get up early in the mornings and prepare a meal for them. This was something she had not been able to do in months. Ms. Washington stated that God enabled her to participate with them and showed her their love, devotion, and dedication. This was such a wonderful occasion and she will always be grateful to the campers and the City of Valdosta for what they have done.

William Southers, homeowner at 1809 North Troup Street, thanked the Mayor and City Council for making this project happen because there is no way the elderly and disabled could afford all of the work done on their homes. He also thanked Richard Joyner because he was out there day after day ensuring that everything was done right. The young people who came in from everywhere did such a good job even with the rain.

In closing, the Staff presented a video of the 2021 Southern Hospitality Workcamp which was produced by Shemeeka Johnson, Metro Valdosta 17 Coordinator.

The minutes of the July 5, 2012 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for the Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program for road resurfacing.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) previously used the popular Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) and City/County contracts process to help local governments with some of their transportation projects. They have now moved to the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program which allocates transportation funding from the State based on a formula that includes population and street mileage (paved or unpaved). Most communities will use the funds to resurface streets. The City has received a grant in the amount of \$347,000. The City submitted a list of streets for resurfacing to GDOT for their review. Thirteen streets were selected from the list for this year's LMIG program based on funding availability and conditions of the roads. A list of the selected streets and a map has been provided. Bids were received and opened publicly on July 19, 2012 with Reames & Son Construction submitting the low bid in the amount of \$1,622,402.05. The SPLOST VI resurfacing account will be used to pay the amount over the GDOT commitment level. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Reames & Son Construction in the amount of \$1,622,402.05 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a total of \$1,784,642.26.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Reames & Son Construction in the amount of \$1,622,402.05 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for the Georgia Department of Transportation Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program for road resurfacing.

Consideration of a request to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement between Lowndes County, Valdosta, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Dasher for SPLOST VII.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we have been working with Lowndes County and the other Cities on an Intergovernmental Agreement and a project list for the SPLOST VII Referendum which will be held as part of the November 6, 2012 General Election. The decision to hold it early was made in order to save the cost of having to have a Special Election next year which would cost approximately \$50,000. The five Cities and the County have all agreed and the Attorneys have reviewed the Agreement and made changes. All of the Cities and the County will have to approve this by August 6, 2012 so that it can then meet the advertising requirements and the call for election by the Lowndes County Board of Elections. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the Intergovernmental Agreement. Councilman Vickers inquired as to how much money will be brought in. Larry Hanson stated that the estimate is \$150 million County-wide over six years starting January 1, 2014 until December 31, 2019. The City of Valdosta's portion is slightly less than 50%.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement between Lowndes County, Valdosta, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Dasher for SPLOST VII.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to establish a Fair Housing Committee.

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that the Mayor and Council received a Memorandum from the City Manager dated July 3, 2012 requesting guidance in formulating the Fair Housing Committee as we begin to address the impediments listed in the 2012 Analysis of Impediments. It will be the responsibility of the Committee to provide guidance, insight, and action in addressing some issues raised in the Analysis. It is the recommendation of Staff that a fourteen (14) person Steering Committee be established with the following structure: eight (8) members representing the community that are submitted by the Mayor and each City Council

member, two (2) members from the CDBG Citizen Advisory Committee, the Executive Director of the Lowndes/Valdosta Commission for Children and Youth, two (2) representatives of the Valdosta City School System to be appointed by the School System, and one (1) member of the local banking/mortgage industry. The Committee will be staffed by the Neighborhood Development Coordinator upon filling of that open position and the Assistant to the City Manager as needed. Mara Register stated that the following names have been submitted for consideration to serve on the Fair Housing Committee: (1) Councilman Wright selected Pastor David Adams, (2) Councilman Yost selected Will Kemp, First State Bank, (3) Councilwoman White selected Dr. Penelope Schmidt, Executive Director of Institutional Advancement at Wiregrass Technical College, (4) Mayor Gayle selected Clay Haddock, Sr. Mortgage Banker at Wells Fargo, (5) Councilman Carroll selected Robert Jefferson, (6) Councilman Norton selected Yolanda Robinson, (7) Councilman Payton selected Herbert Williams, (8) Councilman Vickers selected Rachael Bradley, and (9) CDBG Advisory Committee selected Rebecca Taylor, Office of Testing at Valdosta State University, and Kelly Strozier, Sr. Case Manager with the South Georgia Partnership to end Homelessness. Mara Register stated that she will also be reaching out to Dr. Bill Cason, Superintendent of the Valdosta City School System, seeking an appointee from the Valdosta City School Board and an additional Staff member, and she will also be working Will Kemp and Clay Haddock to select the last member from the mortgage and banking industry.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Wright to approve the Fair Housing Committee as presented by Staff. Councilwoman White seconded the motion. Councilman Wright stated that this is an excellent start to address the issues raised in the Analysis of Impediments and the Committee will definitely make an impact on the community. The motion was unanimously adopted (6-0).

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that Council has received an invitation to attend a Commemoration Ceremony on Friday, August 3, 2012 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Cotton Corner, 101 North Ashley Street to celebrate the end of the Community Improvement Tax. This is a renovated building by CJB Industries and it is a great Downtown re-development project.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he wanted to update the Mayor and Council on several projects in the City. The Twin Street Intersection Improvement Project started on Monday, July 16, 2012. Bids will go out this weekend for the Woodrow Wilson Extension Project. The Elevated Water Storage Tank Project is taking shape and is a very impressive project. This will be our largest elevated water storage tank with 2 million gallons of capacity. Also, the Utilities Department has completed some sewer line improvement projects. The large line behind Target has been completed and sewer line improvements have been made at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant. Bids are out for viewing sewer lines using a TV camera in order find any existing holes so that those can be repaired and additional sewer spills eliminated. Also, we hope to bring to you at the next Council Meeting a Water and Wastewater Sales Agreement between the City and the County that demonstrates our commitment to help and support each other.

The Southern Hospitality Group Workcamp was our 7th event and we have renovated over 200 homes through this effort. We made a commitment several years ago to try and eliminate sub-standard housing by 2020 and to be successful takes attacking that issue from many angles. While we do eliminate 50 sub-standard houses a year and we have made a lot of progress, we will never solve the problem by merely eliminating sub-standard houses because each year more would fall in that category. Part of the solution has to be programs like this that prevent houses from becoming sub-standard and make improvements to bring them out of that category. This is an important and necessary part of the program and it has been very successful. We owe the success of these Workcamps to the community partners and the support of the Mayor and Council. This is a great demonstration of government and volunteers working together to do something good for the community.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no Council comments.

Eva Mae Davis, 1806 Springfield Drive, stated that she has made several calls regarding the Weatherization Program and the units that are replaced in elderly citizens' houses are not being serviced by the people who install them. They only give the City one year of service and most of the repairs that need to be done to a new unit are not affordable for the elderly because they are on a set income and cannot replace it. A unit that is two years old should not break down. Ms. Davis asked that the person who is in charge of that Program look into it. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Weatherization Program is handled through Coastal Plains but we will contact them and ask them to look into the problem.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman White, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the July 19, 2012 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:30 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, August 9, 2012.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta