

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
7:30 A.M., MONDAY, JULY 9, 2007
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor John J. Fretti called the Special Called meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 7:30 a.m. Council members present were: Sonny Vickers, David Sumner, Alvin Payton, Jr., Willie Head, John Eunice, and James Wright. Councilman Robert Yost was absent. The invocation was given by Councilman Head followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of an Intergovernmental Agreement with Lowndes County for the SPLOST VI referendum.

Mayor Fretti stated that he and Larry Hanson, City Manager, met with the County on Friday, July 6, 2007 to discuss SPLOST VI. The other Cities were notified of the meeting and that they would be represented by the Mayor and Larry Hanson. An agreement was reached for a fair and equitable distribution of the SPLOST VI with the County and the other Cities. The distribution will be based on the percentage each month from the beginning month and will start January 1, 2008 if passed by the citizens. All of the components that were highlighted by Council have been addressed in an Intergovernmental Agreement as opposed to a Level 1 or Level 2 option that would have been available. This is the preferred method from the State Legislature and the method chosen 85% of the time since the new SPLOST. Councilman Head inquired about the distribution each month. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the percentage of distribution each month would be 56.07% for Lowndes County, 39.65% for Valdosta, 2.18% for Hahira, 1.09% for Remerton, 0.60% for Dasher, and 0.41% for Lake Park. Mayor Fretti stated that he was proud of Council for their efforts and support through the entire negotiation process.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that at the meeting with the County on July 6, 2007, the County reconsidered their position and made changes which resulted in the City getting \$12,757,750 in additional funds. The City had a \$60,000,000 proposal and a \$76,000,000 proposal which was the target number so the City still had to scale projects back to be within \$72,755,828. The money will be allocated to each entity based upon their distribution percentage beginning in January, 2008. The money for the City's projects has been reallocated and the ballot is in very broad categories as follows: (1) Construction of and improvements to road, street, and bridge facilities to include sidewalks, bike trails and lanes, piping of ditches, City entrances and rights-of way to include land acquisition and other public transportation system and equipment improvements, (2) Construction of and improvements to drainage infrastructure and facilities and the purchase of equipment for maintenance of drainage systems, (3) Land acquisition, construction of, improvements to, and major capital equipment for police facilities, including crime lab facilities, and other police equipment and technology improvements, (4) Construction of, improvements to, and major capital equipment for parks and recreation and public meeting facilities to include land acquisition, (5) Construction of, improvements to, and major capital equipment for firefighting, training, and fire station facilities to include land acquisition and purchase of firefighting vehicles, (6) Land acquisition and design for a public assembly facility and improvements to administration facilities, (7) Construction of and improvements to water and sewer facilities to include equipment, land acquisition, and construction, (8) Construction of, improvements to, and major capital equipment for public works facilities, including sanitation vehicles, (9) Major capital equipment for administrative buildings, including computer hardware and software, (10) Acquisition of and improvements to property for economic development purposes to include infrastructure, land acquisition, and construction, (11) Construction of a parking facility to be owned and operated by the Hospital Authority of Valdosta and Lowndes County, and (12) Improvements to and major capital equipment for airport facilities to be owned and operated by the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority, including air traffic control facilities and hangar facilities. Larry Hanson stated that the City and County have agreed to provide \$1,000,000 each for the

Airport Authority and \$1,500,000 for the Hospital project. The City's projects ended up as follows: (1) Engineering - \$20,000,000, (2) Drainage - \$4,000,000, (3) Police - \$2.75 million, (4) Parks and Recreation - \$11,257,750, (5) Fire Fighting, Fire Station, and Fire Trucks - \$3,700,000, (6) Land Acquisition and Design of a Public Assembly Facility - \$5,000,000, (7) Water and Sewer - \$18,000,000, (8) Public Works - \$ 2,000,000, (9) Hardware and Software and Minor Administrative Building Improvements - \$2,500,000, (10) Economic Development Purposes - \$1,050,000, (11) Parking Facility - \$1,500,000, and (12) Airport Facility - \$1,000,000. The total is now \$72,757,750 which changed slightly from what was previously sent to Council. Councilman Head inquired as to whether the Troup Street project was accounted for in the funding. Larry Hanson stated that Council will have to prioritize the projects with Engineering because they turned in \$35,000,000 for street and road projects and now there is only \$20,000,000 allocated for those projects. Council will make the final decisions about the allocation of funds. Councilman Head stated that there is \$350,000 allocated for a pool at the Senior Citizens Center and while that would be nice it would be a lower priority to insure that some of the infrastructure needs are addressed. Larry Hanson stated that they have been asking for a pool at the Senior Citizens Center for a number of years. When putting together a successful menu of projects, they have historically tried to make sure that the projects reach all segments of the community. Historically, senior citizens are less inclined to vote for a tax so having a project like that will give them a reason to support the referendum. The project is needed and there is a very large senior citizens program but it does not minimize any of the transportation projects.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Sumner to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement for Lowndes County SPLOST VI referendum with agreement that the distribution be based upon the percentage of allocation to the Cities on a monthly basis. Councilman Vickers seconded the motion. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether the percentages would change as far as the Census. Larry Hanson stated that those percentages are locked in for the life of the tax. The motion was unanimously adopted (6-0).

Consideration of a revision of the proposed ballot language for the SPLOST VI referendum.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that Council will need to approve the revised ballot referendum language because of discussion and action taken at the July 5, 2007 Council Meeting. Council was hopeful that some projects would be added and there were questions as to whether the ballot language accurately reflected the projects the City would be able to do. Based upon having a known amount, the language has been revised and is included in the referendum. Larry Hanson asked Council's consideration in approving the revised ballot language.

A MOTION by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the revision of the proposed ballot language for the SPLOST VI referendum.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that these were very difficult negotiations and he appreciated the support of Council in placing their trust in him and Mayor Fretti to try and negotiate for a more fair and equitable distribution of funds for the City. Without the position that Council took on this issue, none of this would have happened.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that at the July 6, 2007 meeting with the County, they mentioned the Service Delivery Extension Agreement that Council had tabled because they were hopeful to hear from the County about the City's proposal to end the Service Delivery dispute altogether and resolve all of the issues. Larry Hanson stated that he prepared a written proposal for review by the Lowndes County Commission Chairman and asked for a response within the next seven to ten days so that Council would have the County's response before they took action at the next Council meeting on the Service Delivery request and the change of funding for the Industrial Authority. Mayor Fretti stated that this was a very equitable presentation and was hopeful that this would circumvent any Court-ordered arbitration. Larry Hanson stated that this was intended to be a fair, balanced, revenue-neutral proposal that puts the interest of the community and the affected agencies above any political considerations. It will also allow the City and the County to return their focus and energy to the many pressing issues that need time and attention. It will end the Court and arbitration process, remove a community stigma that is being attached to both the City and the County, and put statesmanship, cooperation, and compromise back at the forefront where it rightfully belongs.

Councilman Vickers commended the Mayor and the City Manager on their negotiations with the County and commended the County for coming back to the table. Councilman Vickers stated that when he was first elected to office, Mayor James Beck came by his office and told him that one thing to remember was that when you go to the table in negotiations you rarely get everything you want; however, to be successful you have to learn to compromise. Councilman Vickers stated that he could support the SPLOST 100% even though it is not everything he would like to have.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Fretti adjourned the Special Called Session of the Council meeting at 8:08 a.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, July 19, 2007.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta