

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2007**  
**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, David Sumner, Alvin Payton, Jr., Willie Head, Jr., John Eunice, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Mayor Fretti, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Mayor Fretti introduced Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration, who was sitting in for Larry Hanson, City Manager.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Special presentation by Pam Lightsey, U. S. Attorney's Office, for participation in the youth DEFY program.

Pam Lightsey, U. S. Attorney's Office, stated that approximately ten years ago she began a journey with the City of Valdosta in looking for ways to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in some of the neighborhoods. Ms. Lightsey stated that the community developed a strategy which was implemented through the Department of Justice's Weed and Seed initiative. One of the components of the program that was quickly embraced was Drug Education for Youth (DEFY). DEFY is a preemptive prevention program that was designed to provide 9 to 12 year old children with the knowledge and skills necessary to resist drugs, gangs, and alcohol and become successful adults. DEFY uses law enforcement officers and military personnel to serve as teachers, mentors, and role models for the youth. A partnership between Moody Air Force Base, the Valdosta Police Department, and the Department of Justice has allowed them to provide a summer camp and program and a mentoring program during the school year using DEFY for hundreds of children over the past ten years. Although the Weed and Seed Program ended five years ago, DEFY has continued due to the commitment of Moody Air Base, Police Chief Frank Simons, and the Valdosta Police Department. Because of their desire to see children grow and thrive and their belief in the DEFY concept, they have provided \$10,000 per year in funding which is necessary to sustain and run the DEFY Program. In August, 2007, the Valdosta DEFY Program was recognized with an award at the National Weed and Seed Conference in Detroit, Michigan, along with 12 other sites around the country for their commitment, dedication, and leadership in the continuation of the DEFY Program. Ms. Lightsey acknowledged the dedication and hard work of Valdosta Police Officer Vernotis Williams and Sergeant Keith Switzer from Moody Air Force Base, and with the support of Police Chief Frank Simons and the Base Commander, they have insured the Valdosta DEFY Program is available to any child who wishes to participate. More importantly, they serve as the kind of role models that every parent would like their child to be. Ms. Lightsey presented the award to Mayor and Council.

Chief Frank Simons stated that the Police Department received a first place award in the State for Traffic Enforcement Technology and this is the second time the Police Department has received this award. They will receive approximately \$2,000 in technology equipment of their choice from the State and will be presented with a national award in New Orleans, Louisiana.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the September 6, 2007 Regular Meeting was approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

There were no citizens to be heard.

Consideration of bids for a 70-foot aerial device truck for the Parks and Recreation Department (Bid No. 09-07-08)

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Arbor Division of Parks and Recreation is in need of a new bucket truck to assist with their duties. Their current truck was purchased as a used truck and often needs repairs due to age. This truck is a Council-approved budget item for this fiscal year. Sealed bids were received on September 11, 2007 with the low bid submitted by Altec in the amount of \$143,172. Several other companies did not respond to the invitation to bid. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Altec in the amount of \$143,172 and allow the Parks and Recreation Department to proceed with the purchase.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Altec in the amount of \$143,172 and allow the Parks and Recreation Department to proceed with the purchase of a 70-foot aerial device truck.

Consideration of bids for pavement reconstruction on South Lakeshore Drive.

Von Shipman, City Engineer, stated that South Lakeshore Drive was originally constructed over 45 years ago using a sand/clay base (treated with a bituminous product) with a surface treatment course (layer of rock with liquid asphalt). In the late 1980's, the road was annexed into the City and was resurfaced with a sand asphalt mix. Over the last couple of years, a 1,820-foot section of this road has deteriorated very quickly due to a lack of a suitable base and sub-base material in what was a fill section of the road. Resurfacing this section will not work and it must be reconstructed. The section of road to be reconstructed begins at the northern property line of 829 South Lakeshore and continues to the western property line of 884 South Lakeshore. The existing surface, base, and sub-grade material will be removed and replaced with a select sub-grade material along with eight inches of graded limestone and a one and one-half inch layer of asphalt binder. City Engineering Street Maintenance personnel are working to patch remaining sections of this road so that the section of South Lakeshore from Cherry Creek Road to Ridge Road can be resurfaced either under the Georgia Department of Transportation Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) or using SPLOST VI funds. Bids were received on September 11, 2007 with the low bid submitted by The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$104,258.63. The Engineering estimate was \$130,000. Von Shipman recommended that Council approve the low bid was submitted by The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$104,258.63 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Sumner, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by The Scruggs Company in the amount of \$104,258.63 plus a 10% contingency and allow the Engineering Department to proceed with pavement reconstruction on South Lakeshore Drive.

Consideration of the purchase of 13 Mobile Data Terminals for the Valdosta Police Department.

Chief Frank Simons, Police Department, stated that the Valdosta Police Department has funding allocated from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS) Highway Enforcement of Aggressive Traffic (HEAT) Grant Program for 2006 to purchase three mobile data terminals. The current Fiscal Year 2007 budget allows for the purchase four Mobile Data Terminals and six Mobile Data Terminals to be purchased from SPLOST V for a total of thirteen Mobile Data Terminals (in-car computers) at a cost of \$89,505.65. The Police Department currently has Mobile Data Terminals in each of its vehicles. The equipment will be placed in departmental vehicles which are not currently equipped with computers, as well as vehicles operated by the newly funded Truancy Officer Positions and the GOHS HEAT vehicles. The entire Police Department communications system has been designed by and purchased from Motorola Inc. to ensure component compatibility and interoperability. By maintaining a single equipment supplier, the Police Department is better able to ensure interoperability and consistency of operation and application for both hardware and software applications. Also, if Mobile Data Terminals from other vendors were selected, additional Motorola equipment would be required to facilitate the wireless radio data (RD/lap) transmission necessary to operate on the Valdosta Police Department system. There is also no local repair shop to support maintenance for other Mobile Data Terminals vendors. Chief Simons recommended that Council approve the request as a sole source purchase for 13 Mobile Data Terminals.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Wright, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve purchase of 13 Mobile Data Terminals for the Valdosta Police Department from Motorola Inc. in the amount of \$89,505.65.

Consideration of a request to authorize the Mayor to execute the award document for the Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program and approve the Cooperative Agreement from the Transportation and Security Administration (TSA).

Chief Frank Simons, Police Department, stated that the City was notified on September 14, 2007 that the application submitted for funding in the amount of \$779,640 under the Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program was approved. The period of performance for this award is October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2012. This amount was approximately \$136,000 short of what the actual cost would be over a five-year period. Chief Simons contacted the Transportation and Security Administration (TSA) regarding the shortfall and they were aware of the shortfall but had no more money. TSA had been providing reimbursement at 100% but under the new grant program, they have a limited amount of funds. Funds for future Fiscal Years are contingent upon availability of funds, and recipients may receive a decrease in funding based on funding availability, number of recipients, and/or project under runs. Chief Simons stated that should funds become available, a modification to the Cooperative Agreement would be issued to obligate additional funds. The grant award documents require acceptance of the award documents by the Mayor and his acceptance of the terms and conditions of the Cooperative Agreement. Chief Simons asked Council's consideration in authorizing the Mayor to execute the award document for the Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program and approve the Cooperative Agreement from the Transportation and Security Administration (TSA).

A **MOTION** by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Sumner, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to authorize the Mayor to execute the award document for the Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program and approve the Cooperative Agreement from the Transportation and Security Administration (TSA).

Consideration of a request to approve the Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) list.

Von Shipman, City Engineer, stated that each year the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) asks local governments to submit a list of streets to be considered for resurfacing under their Local Assistance Road Program (LARP). Von Shipman reviewed each street to validate the need for resurfacing, and the DOT will now review and prioritize each street based on need. The amount of streets actually chosen for resurfacing is based on the available funding allocated to the City of Valdosta. The breakdown of the streets by area per Council District is as follows: District 1 – 289,168 square feet, District 2 – 232,271 square feet, District 3 – 228,770 square feet, District 4 – 289,281 square feet, District 5 – 295,355 square feet, and District 6 – 259,950 square feet. The total estimated cost to resurface all 41 streets is approximately \$900,000. Streets not selected for resurfacing under LARP will be targeted for resurfacing using SPLOST VI funds. Additional streets can be added in the future based on need. The DOT normally allocates approximately \$200,000 to Valdosta for street resurfacing, and the DOT Commissioner will announce the streets selected during the City's annual Bird Supper trip to Atlanta in February. Von Shipman recommended that Council approve the Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) list. Mayor Fretti inquired as to the total mileage submitted for street resurfacing. Von Shipman stated that normally two miles of streets are submitted but at the current time there will be six miles of streets submitted. Councilman Yost inquired as to the amount budgeted in SPLOST for street resurfacing this year. Von Shipman stated that there are no remaining SPLOST V funds for resurfacing so SPLOST VI will be utilized. Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration, stated that there is approximately \$2.5 million in SPLOST VI for resurfacing. Von Shipman stated that he would review the allocation of SPLOST funds with the City Manager and then proceed with bidding out a small contract which may take two years to resurface all of the streets. Those streets that were not selected or resurfaced by the City will be resubmitted to the DOT for consideration. Councilman Head inquired as to whether the other streets were higher priority than what was on the LARP list. Von Shipman stated that the LARP list was the highest rated streets in need of resurfacing at the current time. Councilman Head inquired as to whether there were any unpaved streets in Valdosta with the exception of those streets that were annexed into the City with the island annexation. Von Shipman stated that the only dirt street that was not annexed into the City is a part of Stewart Street off of West Hill Avenue. Councilman Vickers stated that a portion of West Magnolia is also dirt but no one lives along that portion of the street.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Head, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) list.

Consideration of a request to approve the grant award documents for the 2007 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) and for the 2007 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) with set aside funding for projects with an approved revitalization area.

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that she would present Agenda Items 6(b) and 6(c) at the same time because they are tied together. The City of Valdosta submitted an application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for funding for six homeowner rehabilitation projects, eight reconstruction projects, and ten down-payment assistance projects. The City was notified in August that their application was approved for a CHIP grant in the amount of \$300,000. The City also submitted an application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for an additional \$200,000 to fund six homeowner rehabilitation projects, four reconstruction projects, and six down-payment assistance projects under the CHIP set-aside funding for projects with an approved revitalization area. There was an additional special condition with the set-aside funding for the City to submit the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approval of the Revitalization Strategy Area Designation (RSA) on or before December 7, 2007 to receive this funding allocation. Mara Register stated that after meeting with HUD officials, they advised that the City of Valdosta should seek further advice from the City of Rome in preparing the RSA because it is a very detailed document. If the City of Valdosta is successful in preparing the RSA and it meets HUD's standards, then we would receive the additional \$200,000. Mara Register recommended that Council approve the grant award documents for the 2007 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) and for the 2007 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) with set aside funding for projects with an approved revitalization area and authorize the Mayor to execute the documents.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Head, seconded by Councilman Eunice, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the grant award documents for the 2007 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) and the 2007 Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP) with set aside funding for projects with an approved revitalization area as presented by the Assistant to the City Manager.

Consideration of a request to apply for grant funds from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs "Hands on Georgia Program."

Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that Hands on Georgia is a Statewide network that supports innovative volunteer approaches to meet Georgia's critical needs through service and civic engagement. Approximately \$200,000 was appropriated in the State budget to offer challenge grants to communities to help build sustainable community volunteer programming, and the funding agency expects to make awards of \$1,000-\$10,000 each, with the final allocation dependent upon the quality and quantity of proposals received. Grants will require a 100% local cash match and the deadline for the grant application is October 12, 2007. The City of Valdosta is currently seeking a \$10,000 grant from the Hands on Georgia Program in order to provide opportunities for the local faith-based community, area youth, and other organizations to participate in a Neighborhood Development Initiative (NDI). The match would be \$10,000 with \$5,000 from City of Valdosta and \$5,000 from sponsorships of local community organizations. The local NDI will be held March 31- April 4, 2008 with approximately ten projects to be completed during the week-long initiative. This initiative will provide much needed minor home repair for low-to-moderate income elderly and or disabled residents and provide an opportunity for the local community to experience outreach mission work. Minor repairs will include pressure washing, scraping, painting, minimal fascia board replacement, repairs to steps, repairs to handicap ramps, skirting repair/installation, repair/installation of handrails, installation of new storm doors, and other minor repairs as needed. Mara Register recommended that Council approve the request to apply for grant funds from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs "Hands on Georgia Program."

A **MOTION** by Councilman Sumner, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request to apply for grant funds from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs "Hands on Georgia Program" with a 100% match by the City of Valdosta.

Consideration of a request for an appointment to the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board.

Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration, stated that the City of Valdosta has four positions on the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful with two of those currently open. The position held by Jeannette Coody expired on June 30, 2006 and the other position, which is held by Kathy Brunot, expired June 30, 2007. The Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Board met on August 20, 2007 and would like to fill the position held by Kathy Brunot. Jeanette Cody has agreed to remain in her position until another name can be presented with the remaining names for the other Valdosta position. The following names were submitted for consideration in order of preference: Kathy Brunot, Angela Wall, and Mike Payne.

Mayor Fretti asked for nominations. Councilman Eunice placed in consideration the name of Kathy Brunot. There being no other nominations, Kathy Brunot was reappointed by acclamation to serve a term of three years on the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board.

**CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration, stated that SPLOST VI passed on Tuesday, September 18, 2007. There was a voter turnout Countywide of 8.5% and overall the “Yes” vote for SPLOST Countywide was 80.75% with a “No” vote of 19.25%. As compared to the City voter turnout, the “Yes” vote was 81.75% and the “No” vote was 18.25%. Mark Barber thanked all those who participated in educating Council and the citizens on SPLOST.

The Statewide Comprehensive Water Management Plan Committee will meet in Valdosta on October 19, 2007 at the Conference Center. This Plan is mandated by the State and the Environmental Protection Division is very heavily involved in this. In the recent past few weeks, there have been a lot of Statewide organizations sponsoring events in Valdosta and our community should be very proud to be selected.

The proposed retail development planned for James Road will go before the Planning Commission on September 24, 2007 and will be presented to Council on October 11, 2007.

The Ribbon Cutting for the Water Treatment Plant Expansion was held on Thursday, September 13, 2007 and was very impressive. Leon Weeks, Director of Utilities, and his Staff did a great job in planning the event.

The Chinese delegation will be visiting Valdosta on September 26-29, 2007 and Council is invited to attend some of the functions.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Vickers stated that he had a received a complaint about the traffic on Hightower Circle from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and asked the City Engineer to look into the situation.

Councilman Payton stated that he would like to get a copy of the ordinance for maintaining right-of-ways going into subdivisions and maintaining the grass on curbs on the sides of the street.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Fretti entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Eunice, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the September 20, 2007 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:25 p.m. to meet again in regular session on Thursday, October 11, 2007.