

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 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., Sandra Tooley, Robert Yost, and James Wright. The invocation was given by Councilman Ben Norton, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF THE CALEA LAW ENFORCEMENT ACCREDITATION AWARD

Special Presentation of the CALEA Law Enforcement Accreditation Award.

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that Chief Louis M. Detmar, immediate past and former President of the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, would be presenting the CALEA Law Enforcement Award. Chief Detmar has 36 years of law enforcement experience ranging from Police Officer, Detective, Supervisor, Division Commander, and 22 years as Chief of Police and Chief of Public Safety for the cities of LaGrange and Morrow. He has been employed by six law enforcement agencies and three of those have gone through this rigorous accreditation process. Chief Detmar has been the President of the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police and a former Council member of the Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council. He has also served as a Federal Monitor for the U. S. Department of Justice and Civil Rights Division. He is a graduate of the FBI Academy (142nd Session), and an FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Administration of Justice from the University of Wyoming and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from the Georgia Command College. He is an adjunct Professor for several colleges and institutions. Chief Detmar has served as an Assessor and a Team Leader for CALEA for ten years and in the past five years he has been the Chair and President of CALEA. Chief Childress introduced Chief Louis Detmar.

Chief Louis Detmar stated that it was his privilege to take part in this recognition of the Valdosta Police Department and the recent reaccreditation and the advanced accreditation status. This award is only possible because of the Valdosta Police Department has continued to work as a team. Chief Detmar recognized the former Police Chief Frank Simons, whose leadership brought the Agency into accreditation, and the current Police Chief Brian Childress who has continued the reaccreditation process. CALEA was founded in 1979 by the following four primary law enforcement organizations: International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Sheriff's Association, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, and the Police Executive Research Forum. These professional organizations got together and recognized the need for national standards to increase Police professionalism and accountability. Initially, they generate numerous standards that addressed administrative, operational, and civil rights standards. Currently, there are 463 standards which address all aspects of law enforcement. Over the last 30 years, those standards have been modified and changed as the law enforcement community has evolved. The Commission is composed of 21 members and 11 are Law Enforcement practitioners. The other members include a Supreme Court Justice from South Carolina, a City Manager from Michigan, and a Legislator from Maryland. They represent not only the Law Enforcement community but also the public and private sectors. Once an Agency decides to embark on the initial accreditation, they go through a three year period of self-assessment. They look at the standards, the manual, the process, and the protocols. Those are then modified to ensure they are consistent with the standards. At the point the Agency believes they are in compliance with all the standards, they then go through an on-site assessment. This is done every three years to retain their status. The Assessment Team is made up of Law Enforcement practitioners from North America unknown by the Agency. They verify compliance by reviewing reports, policies, and directives, conduct interviews, participate in ride-alongs with the Officers, and solicit input from the public. The Assessment Team completes a detailed report and that is assigned to a Reviewing Commissioner. The Commissioner and a panel of Commissioners then question the Agency as they did the Valdosta Police Department in July, 2014 in Schaumburg,

Illinois. After considering the report and the appearance by the Agency before the panel, a decision is made whether or not to reaccredit an Agency as in the case of the Valdosta Police Department. The decision in this Agency's case was obvious resulting in the Valdosta Police Department receiving unanimous support for reaccreditation status. The most significant aspect of the CALEA process is the opportunity for outsiders to come into an Agency and make an objective assessment. It is not a rubber stamp process which is why with over 18,500 law enforcement agencies in this country, less than 1,000 are accredited. Many Agencies are reluctant to have outsiders come in and review their work. It also requires that the Agency open itself up to not only criticism and review, but the ability to change and modify as expectations of the community change and the standards of the profession change. The benefits of the CALEA process are clear. It results in a Police Department that is better able to serve its community and demonstrate a commitment to professionalism through a defined set of objective standards. The CALEA process has resulted in numerous benefits to the Valdosta Police Department and the community it serves. Those benefits include international recognition, increased accountability, and reduced liability. The Agency has also demonstrated improvements in their administrative and operational processes. As a part of this Agency's reaccreditation assessment, it also successfully passed a Gold Standard review which emphasizes operational readiness and measured outcomes. Only a select number of Agencies qualify for this sort of assessment. In addition, the Agency also received the Meritorious Award for the manner in which they embrace the standards and for serving as a model for other accredited Agencies. In reviewing the report for the Valdosta Police Department, it was noted how they embrace the spirit of accreditation and use the standards consistently to review the various tasks that Police Agencies are assigned. They measure what they are currently doing now and how they can do something better tomorrow. The Valdosta Police Department continues in the ranks of accredited Agencies and stands as a leader in professional Police services. Each member of the Valdosta Police Department should be proud as should the citizens of this community. Accredited Agencies are like a turtle on a post. They did not get there by themselves. The reason they got there is because there are high expectations from elected officials who reflect the expectations of the community. This accreditation not only reflects on the Valdosta Police Department but also on the City Council's leadership and the expectations that have been set for the Police Department. Mr. Detmar stated that it was with great pleasure that he presented the Valdosta Police Department with their reaccreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that in the CALEA world you have to have a quarterback and in the accreditation world the quarterback is the Accreditation Manager which is an extremely difficult job. There is pressure on you all the time and it never goes away. Chief Childress stated that Captain Bobbi McGraw is the quarterback for this program and she is the best in the business. Chief Childress presented Captain McGraw with a CALEA Award and a new Chief Challenge coin for her contribution to the Law Enforcement Accreditation Program as an Accreditation Manager. Captain Bobbi McGraw thanked the Mayor and Council, Chief Childress, and former Police Chief Frank Simons for their support.

Chief Louis Detmar stated that he has known Frank Simons since 1988 when he went to work for him in Investigations and then as a Captain in Perry, Georgia. He was with him when they started the accreditation process in Perry and they have remained friends since then. Obtaining the CALEA accreditation for the first time is much easier than maintaining it. Often you are generating the policies but you have not had to maintain the proof over the number of years of demonstrating the way you conduct business is consistent with those policies. It is unusual for an Agency to remain successful in the accreditation without hitting some bumps. As a result of that, CALEA has a special award called the Egon Bittner Award. If you have been the head of an Agency that has been accredited continuously for 15 years, that Award is presented to you. Frank Simons retired a year short before he was eligible for that Award; however, he is being recognized for his long term commitment not only here in Valdosta but also in Perry and having served as a lead Assessor. Although the Awards Committee noted that Frank Simons did not have the number of years of service to receive the Egon Bittner Award, they made a presentation to the full Commission as a means of recognizing his support of CALEA accreditation for public safety Agencies and his long term role as serving as an Ambassador for accreditation. It was noted that he had applied for CALEA accreditation and its principles to re-establish the professional standing of the Valdosta Police Department during his tenure. The fact was further established during discussions with Larry Hanson, City Manager, who steadfastly stated that Frank Simons' role in leading the Agency clearly set a positive course for the organization and he was proud to have served with him. Chief Detmar presented former Police Chief Frank Simons with a letter of recognition for CALEA's commitment to him for reflecting his commitment to the accreditation model and leading

the Valdosta Police Department and as an appreciation from CALEA for his on-going support in the field of public safety. Former Police Chief Frank Simons stated that he was very proud that this was the fourth time in a row for reaccreditation that the Valdosta Police Department has received an additional Award of Excellence or recognition above and beyond the minimum standards. That is outstanding and the only reason this happens is due to the men and women of the Police Department and the leadership and support of the Mayor and Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Valdosta City Council Regular Meeting held on September 11, 2014 were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for a backhoe for the Utilities Department (Bid No. 02-14-15).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Utilities Department currently has a backhoe that needs to be bought back by the original dealer. The Department has funding to purchase a replacement machine and take advantage of the government buy-back program. The bid is done in such a way that the new machine will be bought back after five years meaning the net price is used in determining the winning bidder. The buy-back allows the City to operate a current model machine with a full five year warranty. Sealed bids were received on September 9, 2014 with the low bid submitted by Flint Equipment in the amount of \$97,425 (\$51,225 buy back price for a net price of \$46,200). Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Flint Equipment in the amount of \$97,425 and allow the Utilities Department to proceed with the purchase.

A MOTION made by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Flint Equipment in the amount of \$97,425 and allow the Utilities Department to proceed with the purchase.

Consideration of bids for sweeping the City of Valdosta's parking lots (Bid No. 04-14-15).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that Larry Hanson, City Manager, had asked him to solicit bids for the sweeping of 11 City parking lots. These lots are Toombs Street, Mac's Park, Customer Service, Municipal Court, Savannah Avenue (between Oak Street and Toombs Street), Savannah Avenue (between Toombs Street and Patterson Street), Savannah Avenue (between Ashley Street and Lee Street), Florida Avenue and Ashley Street, MLK Park, and Mathis Auditorium on the east side. The lots will be swept once monthly. This is a one year contract expiring on December 31, 2015 with renewal options. Sealed bids were received on September 9, 2014 and the low bid was submitted by Diversified Industry in the amount of \$6,000. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the low bid was submitted by Diversified Industry in the amount of \$6,000 for sweeping the City of Valdosta's parking lots. Councilman Yost inquired as to whether any of these vendors were in the Valdosta Small Emerging Business (VSEB) Program. Greg Brown stated that none of these are in the VSEB Program. Larry Hanson, City Manager, inquired as to whether references were checked on the vendor who submitted the lowest bid. Greg Brown stated that he did check references and they were outstanding. Councilman Vickers inquired about the difference in the bid amounts. Greg Brown stated that he called to verify that Diversified Industry knew what they were doing and found out that they are also doing some sweeping in other communities as well. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether this was the first time the City was outsourcing the sweeping of the parking lots. Greg Brown stated that was correct. Larry Hanson stated that when they were going through the Budget review, he had mentioned that we would be looking at some opportunities to outsource some services due to staffing issues the City has had. The challenge the City has had is that the City employees work during the day and have other competing functions and the parking lots are full. By outsourcing it, they will be required to sweep in the evening when the parking lots are empty. It will be done monthly and on a schedule. This is an example of where you look at what it costs the City and if we cannot do the best job possible because we are working during the day this will free up our employees to do other things that are of a higher priority. The City also solicited bids for street sweeping and those bids showed that the City is able to do the job at a much more cost effective manner than the private sector could.

A **MOTION** made by Councilwoman Tooley, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Diversified Industry in the amount of \$6,000 for sweeping the City of Valdosta's parking lots.

Consideration of bids for turnout gear for Fire Department (Bid No. 06-14-15).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Valdosta Fire Department needs to purchase turnout gear for Fire Department Staff. Due to the nature of their duties, the Fire Department has to follow many mandates which require emergency safety wear to be replaced every so often due to age and new technologies available. The Fire Department was awarded a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Homeland Security Grant for \$160,800 with a 10% City match or \$16,080 to replace some of their turnout gear. The Fire Department is proposing to purchase 67 complete sets of Morning Pride Turnout gear which is worn during emergency situations by the Firefighters for protection. The Morning Pride Turnout Gear is on a State of Georgia Contract that was awarded to Fisher Safety. This contract and the Purchasing Ordinance will allow the City to utilize State Contracts such as this which results in a cost savings through volume buying. Greg Brown recommended that Council that Council approve the purchase of the turnout gear utilizing the State Contract through Fisher Safety for a total of \$160,800 with the City's 10% match of \$16,080. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this is a great example of the benefit of grants. Fire Departments and fire personnel must have turnout gear to perform their duties. The City could purchase this alone and pay 100% of the costs through local taxes, or accept a FEMA grant that will pay 90% of the costs and local taxpayers will pay only 10%.

A **MOTION** made by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the purchase of the turnout gear for the Fire Department utilizing the State Contract through Fisher Safety for a total of \$160,800 with the City's 10% match of \$16,080.

Consideration of bids for water and sewer improvements for annexed Island 85A (Phase 2).

Emily Davenport, Assistant Director of Engineering, stated that the City Council approved contracts with three local engineers to design water and sewer improvements to serve the property in former unincorporated islands that were annexed into the City in 2006. Bids were received at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 16, 2014 for Island 85A which includes Leila Avenue. This Project will include extending an existing water line and putting sewer service in for those properties that currently utilize septic tanks. They will also do some piping of ditches and the dirt road will be paved. The low bid was submitted by Radney Plumbing, Inc. in the amount of \$154,985. The Engineering estimate was \$130,742.50. Emily Davenport recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing, Inc. in the amount of \$154,985 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances.

A **MOTION** made by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing, Inc. in the amount of \$154,985 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for water and sewer improvements for annexed Island 85A (Phase 2).

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we are very proud of Police Chief Brian Childress and the Valdosta Police Department for their great work and the opportunity to share their accomplishments with our community.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we had approximately 100 officials from 15 cities in Georgia that spent several days in our community for a housing conference. They had a chance to tour our City and see many examples of CDBG, CHIP, Federal Home Loan Bank Program, Habitat partnerships, the MLK Park, and the new Pinevale School. The group also toured the Ashley House to see the \$9 million renovation in our Downtown area which is funded primarily with DCA funds and tax credits. All those in attendance were very impressed with what they saw.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this is the third week of the Citizens Fire Academy and it continues to go very well. On September 25, 2014, Police Chief Brian Childress will begin the Citizens Police Academy.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we have 12 Board vacancies and the deadline to apply is October 29, 2014. He encouraged citizens to take advantage of the opportunity to serve our City by applying for one of the many Boards, Commissions, and Authorities.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, introduced Richard Hardy, the new Public Works Director. He recently retired from the Air Force as a Chief Master Sergeant. He has had a lot of experience as an Operations Coordinator, a Squadron Superintendent, a Maintenance Superintendent, Superintendent of Training, and while at Moody Air Force Base he oversaw 500 employees and managed a budget of \$6 million. He has multiple degrees which include an Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree in Science and Occupational Education, a Master of Science Degree in Information Systems. He has a wealth of experience and his resume is impeccable. He started on Monday and has been getting to know the operations as well as interviewing employees.

Richard Hardy, new Public Works Director, stated that he was excited to be in this position and serve the citizens and the City of Valdosta. This is a great opportunity and he is looking forward to being the new Public Works Director. He had an outstanding career serving this country and he wanted to do the same thing for the City of Valdosta. Councilman Vickers inquired as to where he was brought up at. Richard Hardy stated that he was from the small town of Union, South Carolina.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Carroll stated that there is some new public artwork being placed in Bennie's Alley. It is an impressive mural of the history of our City and it is a great thing for the Downtown area. He encouraged members of Council and citizens to visit that area. Also, he recently received an E-mail regarding support of a local river group, WWALS, for a grant application to designate some blue-way trails or river/water-way trails in our community. They are asking for a Resolution of support and it is certainly worth considering.

Councilman Vickers stated that he was excited about the West Hill Overpass Project being completed within the next several days. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that he and Councilman Vickers contacted the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) this week and were disappointed to learn that they did not plan to have a local event; however, they did give the City permission to schedule a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in the near future. We have waited for the completion of the Overpass Project for at least 30 years. Councilman Vickers stated that we need to begin talking to GDOT now about St. Augustine Road because it will take 30 years to get it done.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Yvonne McCallum, owner of Lakes Taxi, stated that she would like for Council to consider changing an Ordinance regulating Taxi companies and make all cabs have meters in their vehicles. She has had customers tell her that one taxi cab company in the City has no meters in their taxis and the driver will take them to a destination, a different driver will pick them up and bring them back to the same place and charge them more money than the first one. If there is a meter in the taxi it keeps all of the cab drivers honest. The customer will be able to see what they are supposed to pay. It would also help Law Enforcement in their investigation if there is a discrepancy over the fare between a cab driver and a customer. It is really the only honest way that a customer is charged a fair rate. Councilman Vickers inquired as to the cost of a meter. Ms. McCallum stated that she is currently waiting on a new meter for one of her taxis and the cost was \$350 which includes the top light. Mayor Gayle inquired as to whether the other cab drivers have a rate schedule or just charge whatever they want to. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the current Ordinance states it is set by zones. Ms. McCallum stated that the meter is calibrated by the odometer and right now the customer has to believe whatever the cab driver of that one company tells them. All cabs should have meters so the customers know that they are being charged an honest rate.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the September 25, 2014 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:16 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Tuesday, October 7, 2014.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta