

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2018
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, Sandra Tooley, Eric Howard, Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Pastor Mark Brady, Anchor Faith Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Mayor Gayle recognized several members of the 2018 Leadership Lowndes class who were in attendance at the Council Meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 11, 2018 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2018-1, A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE PASSAGE OF HOUSE RESOLUTION 158 FOR DEDICATED FEE COLLECTIONS IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Consideration of a Resolution of Support for the passage of House Resolution 158 for dedicated fee collections in the State of Georgia.

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that in the State of Georgia there are more than 500 municipalities, local businesses, and citizens that submit millions of dollars in fees and payments annually to the State. Many of these fees were created to aid local governments in implementing various programs such as hazardous waste cleanups, clean community programs, indigent defense and judicial programs, Peace Officer training, and teen driver training. The State of Georgia has been significantly redirecting these fees to fund unrelated portions of the State Budget. Without funding from these fees, many local governments often have to raise taxes to fund the programs that are designed to keep their citizens healthy and safe. House Representative Jay Powell of Camilla has proposed a new House Resolution (HR 158) which would provide by general law for the dedication of revenues derived from fees or taxes to the public purpose for which such fees or taxes were imposed. HR 158 is currently in review by the House Ways and Means Committee. Representative Powell has asked local governments for their support to address this ongoing funding problem by adopting a Resolution of Support for HR 158 in order to establish dedicated trust funds. If the General Assembly adopts a Resolution on this issue during the 2018 Legislative Session, a Constitutional Amendment could be put before the voters in November, 2018. Mark Barber recommended that Council approve the Resolution of Support for the passage of House Resolution 158 for dedicated fee collections in Georgia. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether we receive any of those fees now. Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that it is hard to tell but this is a good start; however, it may still lack something for us to be able to tell if we are beginning to receive money. The fees will go into a bank to be held and cannot exceed more than 1% of the budget from the State the prior year. The fees will be distributed from there. Mayor Gayle stated that he read today that there was \$16 million collected from the Hazardous Waste Fund and the State only put \$4 million in that Fund. The rest of the money was put into the General Fund and used for other things. There is currently a backlog of 65 toxic waste dumps in the State. Councilman Carroll stated that there is a firestorm across the State and more and more cities and counties are adopting this Resolution in support of HR 158. He could not imagine any State Representative voting against this when it hits the floor. Mayor Gayle stated that the Georgia Municipal Association also endorses this.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2018-1, a Resolution of Support for the passage of House Resolution 158 for dedicated fee collections in the State of Georgia, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

Consideration of bids for a four-wheel drive rubber tire backhoe for the Engineering Department.

Emily Davenport, Assistant Director of Engineering, stated that the Engineering Department has a backhoe that needs to be bought back by the original seller. The Engineering Department has funding for the purchase to replace the 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 bumper-to-bumper warranty. Sealed bids were received on January 9, 2018 with the low bid submitted by Flint Equipment in the amount of \$97,908. The last machine the City purchased was in 2014 and had a net price of \$48,823 which is an increase of \$3,085 over a four-year period. Emily Davenport recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Flint Equipment in the amount of \$97,908. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether \$46,000 was the buy-back price from Flint Equipment. Emily Davenport stated that they would get a different amount for the piece of equipment they are turning in and the \$46,000 is what Flint Equipment will pay the City in five years for buying this one back. Councilman Vickers inquired as to what amount they are getting for the one they are turning in now. Emily Davenport stated that she would need to check the purchase for 2013 but it would probably be around \$40,000.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Flint Equipment in the amount of \$97,908 for a four-wheel drive rubber tire backhoe for the Engineering Department.

Consideration of bids for new tactical equipment for the Police Department Tactical Operations Unit.

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that the Valdosta Police Department Tactical Operations Unit needs to replace old equipment that is out of compliance and no longer serviceable. This new equipment consists of such things as tactical helmets, ballistic panels, protectors worn over various parts of the body, and other equipment utilized when the Unit is called out for service. There is no longer any Homeland Security funding or Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) Area II funds available for this purchase; however, Council-approved funds are currently available in the Budget. Sealed bids were received on January 16, 2018 with the low bid was submitted by Smyrna Police Distributors in the amount of \$72,235. Several other vendors were sent the invitation to bid but for whatever reason did not respond. They will send all of the old equipment to a company who will destroy it. Chief Brian Childress recommended that Council approve the low bid was submitted by Smyrna Police Distributors in the amount of \$72,235. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether we get any funds from the company who destroys the equipment. Chief Childress stated that we do not get any funds because it is difficult to dispose of the equipment. They will send us a letter back which is kept on file stating that the equipment has been destroyed. The vests will last for approximately five years and the helmets and shields a little longer. Councilman Norton inquired as to how many Police Officers will get this new equipment. Chief Childress stated that it will outfit 23 Police Officers.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Smyrna Police Distributors in the amount of \$72,235 for new tactical equipment for the Police Department Tactical Operations Unit.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

John Quarterman, 6565 Quarterman Road, thanked the Council for passing the Resolution of Support for dedicated fee collections in Georgia. Several other cities and counties who have also adopted a Resolution of Support are Lanier County, the City of Adel, Atkinson County, and Lowndes County. It is also on the Agenda for the City of Hahira next week. Mr. Quarterman also stated that it turns out that there is access to the Withlacoochee River off of Gornto Road. There is a little sliver of land just to the left of the City's lift station and according to a map that the YMCA has, it has always been public access. That is good news because people can put in at Langdale Park and paddle down the Withlacoochee River to that point or paddle on to the Prison Boat Ramp. There is recreation on the river right here in Valdosta.

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that the Bird Supper will be held on January 31, 2018 at The Depot in Atlanta from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Tomorrow is the last day that citizens can purchase tickets.

The Valdosta City Beat Newsletter for January - March, 2018 is available on-line and contains a lot of great information.

The Crime Lab recently had the National Accreditation Board come in and there were no findings. Becky Parker-Hall, Crime Lab Director, and Police Chief Brian Childress have done an excellent job with the Crime Lab.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Homeless Count will be conducted from January 22-29, 2018 and the Community Development Department will coordinate that event. DCA has also asked us to coordinate the Homeless Count for other local governments such as Quitman and Brooks County.

The Valdosta Fire Department recently completed two weeks of training in ropes rescue which was part of an effort to train 30 new GSAR members who came from the Valdosta, Moultrie, Thomasville, and Thomas County Fire Departments. They utilized some of our facilities in Lowndes County which shows how we can work together with local governments and collaborate with each other.

There are six opportunities to serve on Boards and Commissions and applications will be accepted through January 31, 2018.

City Government 101 Classes are right around the corner and we have already had ten citizens sign up. Council members are encouraged to reach out to citizens in their Districts.

There will be a Think Tank Meeting on January 29, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in the City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room and it will feature a guest speaker from Augusta who will talk to the group about revitalization and the plans for Ora Lee West and the surrounding neighborhoods of Brookwood and Tom Town.

The Police Department will be hosting a Community Forum tonight from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Trinity Presbyterian Church located at 3501 Bemiss Road.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Carroll stated that he and several Council members just returned from the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Mayor's Day Conference in Atlanta and he wanted to thank the Department Heads and key City Staff for doing such a great job with their presentations. Every time he comes back from a GMA Conference he has more City officials from across the State make great comments about our Staff and their presentations. The most recent one is Fire Chief Freddie Broome who did a presentation for the Emergency Management Class this past weekend at the Mayor's Day Conference. This shines well on the City of Valdosta and our Staff, and it helps other communities across the State of Georgia.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that she echoed Councilman Carroll's comments. City Staff did a great job at the GMA Conference and they are to be commended for their efforts.

Mayor Gayle stated that he wanted to compliment Councilman Howard on the Youth Basketball Program. That is a great thing for the youth to participate in this summer. Also, the TSPLOST Executive Committee has finalized the regional TSPLOST list last week and there was \$296 million in Projects plus the State put in \$107 million; however, this could change because there were some people who were not happy with their share. On Monday, January 29, 2018, there will be a Public Comment Meeting in Pearson from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and again on Tuesday, January 30, 2018 in Valdosta from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission. This \$400 million in Projects will create many jobs for our region. Mayor Gayle stated that he hoped the list would be finalized on February 13, 2018 and he will provide a copy to the Council. Councilman Vickers inquired about using some of the funds for buses. Mayor Gayle stated that some of it could be used for buses and the good thing about it is that there is a Discretionary Fund that they could use any way they want to. These Projects that have already been approved are mostly roads, bridges, and streets. The 25% Discretionary Fund

Projects will be up to us. There will be another several million dollars because we are currently paying a 30% match due to TSPLOST not being approved in 2012. If we approve it this time then it will reduce the match from 30% to 10% which will create more money. Councilwoman Tooley inquired about the Meeting next Tuesday and if it was just for the TSPLOST Committee. Mayor Gayle stated that this would be a Public Meeting and anyone could attend and have input.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the January 25, 2018 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 5:53 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, February 8, 2018.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta