

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2017
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 Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Pastor Leroy Butler, Woodlawn Forrest Church of Christ, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

SPECIAL PRESENTATION FOR COUNCILMAN ALVIN PAYTON, JR. AND COUNCILMAN ROBERT YOST

Special Presentation for Councilman Alvin Payton, Jr. and Councilman Robert Yost.

Mayor John Gayle stated that Councilman Alvin Payton, Jr., District 4, ran for office in November of 2005 against incumbent Councilman J. R. Sessions. He defeated Councilman Sessions in a Run-Off Election and was officially sworn into office on January 5, 2006. Councilman Payton ran again for a second term in November of 2009 and was re-elected with no opposition. He took his Oath of Office for a second four-year term on January 7, 2010. On August 19, 2010, Councilman Payton was elected by the Valdosta City Council to serve as Mayor Pro Tem when the former Mayor Pro Tem John Eunice resigned to attend law school. Councilman Payton sought a third term as the representative for District 4 in November of 2013 and was re-elected. He was sworn into office for a third four-year term on January 9, 2014 and was also re-elected as Mayor Pro Tem. Mayor Gayle presented Councilman Payton with a framed collage of pictures during his tenure as a City Councilman and thanked him for his 12 years of service. Councilman Payton thanked Mayor Gayle, Council members, City Staff, and the citizens of Valdosta for all of their support during his time on the City Council.

Mayor Gayle stated that Councilman Robert Yost, District 6, ran for office in November of 2001 and defeated incumbent Councilman Richard Hill. Councilman Yost was officially sworn into office on January 10, 2002. Councilman Yost ran again for a second term in November of 2005 and was re-elected. He took his Oath of Office for a second four-year term on January 5, 2006. Councilman Yost sought a third term as the representative for District 6 in November of 2009 and was re-elected. He was sworn into office for a third four-year term on January 7, 2010. Councilman Yost sought his fourth term on November of 2013 and was re-elected by his constituents to serve his final term. He was sworn into office on January 9, 2014. Mayor Gayle presented Councilman Yost with a framed collage of pictures during his tenure as a City Councilman and thanked Councilman Yost for his 16 years of service. Councilman Yost thanked Mayor Gayle, Council members, City Staff, and the citizens of Valdosta for all of their support during his time on the City Council.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2017 GREATER VALDOSTA CHRISTMAS PARADE AWARDS

Presentation of the 2017 Greater Valdosta Christmas Parade Awards.

Mayor Gayle stated that the 2017 Greater Valdosta Community Christmas Parade was held on Saturday, December 2, 2017. Sponsors for the event were the Ossipe Temple #65, the Valdosta Daily Times, the City of Valdosta, Wild Adventures Theme Park, and Coca Cola. Mayor Gayle and members of Ossipe Temple #65 presented the following Christmas Parade Awards: Third Place – CJB Industries, Second Place – New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, and First Place – Wild Adventures. The proceeds raised by Ossipe Temple #65 through parade entry fees were donated to various charities.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA PROJECT WITH THE VALDOSTA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Special recognition of Valdosta State University Students for their Social Media Project with the Valdosta Main Street Program.

Ellen Hill, Main Street Manager, stated that organizations all over the world, including municipalities and local authorities, are using social media to communicate with increasingly diverse and large audiences. The City's Main Street Program has continued a partnership with Valdosta State University's Social Media Theory class which began through the Public Information Office in 2015. Taught by Dr. David Nelson, the students were divided into groups and tasked with developing a realistic social media campaign that targeted and engaged millennials in their historic Downtown. The Project, which was judged by the Main Street Office, constituted a large part of their overall class grade and provided a real-life experience for the students. Students provided the Main Street Program with innovative ideas for reaching other students who attend Valdosta State University, who use social media as their primary source of communication, and who seek new and engaging experiences in their community. The plan included creatively building upon the Main Street Program's current social media strategy as well as promoting a proposed large scale event for the Downtown area. The winning team's outstanding ideas are being scheduled for implementation and will significantly impact the way the Main Street Program communicates more effectively with students at the University. Overall, these efforts have demonstrated the Main Street Program's continued efforts to provide applicable experiences to our local university students that will help bridge the gap between the University and Downtown. Mayor Gayle congratulated the winners and presented them with a Certificate of Recognition for their creative efforts and contributions to the community.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY THE VALDOSTA FIRE DEPARTMENT

Special Presentation by the Valdosta Fire Department.

Fire Chief Freddie Broome stated that the National Fire Academy's (NFA's) Managing Officer Program is a two-year curriculum that introduces emerging emergency services leaders to personal and professional skills in change management, risk reduction, and adaptive leadership. Acceptance into the Program is highly competitive. The Managing Officer Program helps first or mid-level officers/supervisors, jump-start professional development early on in their career. The Program is designed to build on foundational management and technical competencies, learning to address issues of interpersonal and cultural sensitivity, professional ethics, and outcome-based performance. On November 1, 2017, Chief Broome was notified that Lieutenant Robert Mercer had successfully completed the Managing Officer Program and the required Capstone Project. Lieutenant Mercer is only the second Officer in the Valdosta Fire Department to complete the Managing Officer Program. Chief Broome congratulated Lieutenant Mercer for his great accomplishment of completing the Managing Officer Program.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

Consideration of the December, 2017 Employee of the Month Award (Henry Courson, Valdosta Fire Department).

Henry Courson began his employment with the City of Valdosta Fire Department (VFD) in May of 2003 and presently holds the position of Sergeant. Sgt. Courson is responsible for driving the fire apparatus to and from emergency scenes, operating fire pumps and hydraulic ladders, and is responsible for all equipment assigned to the apparatus. Sgt. Courson graduated last year from the Valdosta Fire Rescue EMT program offered through Wiregrass. Shortly after, he entered the Wiregrass EMT-A Program to receive a higher level of medical training giving him the opportunity to teach medical classes to VFD personnel. After receiving his certification, Sgt. Courson started teaching Emergency Medical Responder training during recruit schools. On his days off, Sgt. Courson also began teaching VFD employees to help them meet their annual required training hours and he also serves as a tutor for VFD employees working towards their EMT National Registry Certification. Sgt. Courson's efforts saved the City money by volunteering to teach other personnel and is helping the VFD to achieve its overall mission. Sgt. Courson is recommended for his outstanding teamwork and commitment to making the City of Valdosta, "A City without Limits." It is for these reasons and many others that the Employee Relations Committee nominated Sergeant Henry Courson as Employee of the Month.

The minutes of the November 9, 2017 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 0.58 ACRES FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-6) TO MANUFACTURING/HEAVY INDUSTRIAL (M-2) ZONING DENIED

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.58 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-6) to Manufacturing/Heavy Industrial (M-2) as requested by Murray Gaskins, Environmental Audit and Assessment Inc. (File No. VA-2017-16). The property is located at 220 and 224 Myddleton Road. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their November Regular Meeting and recommended approval (5-1 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Murray Gaskins, on behalf of Environmental Audit and Assessment, Inc., is requesting to rezone three parcels totaling 0.58 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-6) to Manufacturing/Heavy Industrial (M-2). The property is located at 220 and 224 Myddleton Road. This is at the northwest corner of Myddleton Road and Hawkins Street, and is about 650 feet south of West Savannah Avenue. The property currently contains a single-family rental residence (768 square feet) and the applicant is proposing to utilize the majority of the property for outdoor storage of building materials. The property is currently located within an Industrial Activity Center (IAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of M-2 Zoning. The proposed M-2 Zoning is the same as the properties on three sides of the subject property and the proposed use as outdoor storage is also the same as most of these properties. The property is within a heavy industrial corridor along the south side of West Savannah Avenue which is dominated by the Georgia Power Storage Yard to the east, Jerry Cooper's Salvage Yard to the southeast, the entrance to the Advance Disposal Storage Yard to the south, and the Tobacco Warehouse Complex to the west of Williams Lane. Immediately west of the property and along the east side of Williams Lane is a row of five houses zoned Single-Family Residential (R-6) which is all that remains of a residential development pattern that once dominated this area many decades ago. All of the new development and redevelopment in this area over the past several decades has been for industrial development. The Future Development Map gives this entire area a Character Area designation of Industrial Activity Center which is indicative of the area's dominant existing industrial land use pattern. Interestingly, the area's existing R-6 Zoning is non-compliant with the Industrial character area, and these properties long-term should be zoned either commercial or industrial. Therefore, the continued use and zoning of the property as Single-Family Residential is no longer appropriate in this dominantly industrial area. The applicant is proposing to use this as outdoor storage which requires M-2 Zoning as the primary use of the property and by the Land Development Regulations (LDR) it is also required to be fully screened from view from adjacent properties and streets by an eight foot tall opaque fence. In addition to that, it should have 15 feet wide of evergreen landscaping to screen it from view on the rear and side. The site plan does meet those requirements and the applicant is proposing that the eight foot fence completely surround the storage area. The 15 feet of landscaped area will be planted pine trees. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their November 27, 2017 Regular Meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (5-1 vote).

Murray Gaskins, applicant, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Gaskins stated that all the property around this area, with the exception of one parcel that is adjacent, is already zoned commercial. He is looking for a place to store some of his heavy equipment and have access to get in and out. He does demolition projects and this would keep him from having to move a heavy trailer. He believes that the intended use of the property is consistent with the pattern and asked Council's consideration in approving the request. Councilman Payton inquired about storing the heavy equipment on the property. Mr. Gaskins stated that there is one house on the property that he could use for an office and it is not being rezoned. The parcels that run to the south toward the Airport and along Myddleton Road to Hawkins Street is where he is proposing to store the equipment. The previous owners had cut all the trees down on the property and left some large root balls. He has gone in there and dug them up but they have not hauled them away. When he purchased the property from Larry Johnson, the house was in bad shape. A storm actually blew the house down. Councilman Payton inquired about the debris in the area and whether that was from the

AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 0.58 ACRES FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-6) TO MANUFACTURING/HEAVY INDUSTRIAL (M-2) ZONING DENIED (CON'T)

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house that was blown down. Mr. Gaskins stated that some of that was from the house that was blown down and some of it is wood that they have recovered from other projects which will be hauled away. Some of the root balls are huge and they are taking up a substantial amount of the space that he would want to use to store heavy equipment such as backhoes, skid-steers, and medium size trailers. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to how the equipment would be brought in. Mr. Gaskins stated that they would unload it right there and then come straight in the gate. Most of the track vehicles are not kept there but some of the smaller tractors he can load himself onto a trailer that could be pulled behind a 2500 size truck or Suburban. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to how long Mr. Gaskins has owned the property because the wood pile has been there a while. Mr. Gaskins stated that they had stacked the wood up from other demolition projects and covered it up.

Bruce Berry, 217 Williams Lane, spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Berry stated that his mother owns the property at 219 Williams Lane and Gloria Clines owns the property at 215 Williams Lane. They have lived in this area for approximately 40 years and before his father passed away, he wanted to make sure that the area remained residential. They live in this area and have children and grandchildren who live there. They oppose this request not only because of what the development is trying to bring about but this is a residential area. Also, he has written letters to the City of Valdosta because they have always had a problem with this particular property being maintained. There are a lot of snakes and rats the size of cats due to the overgrowth. They also have a problem with Advanced Disposal during the summer with the smell and they cannot sit outside and enjoy the outdoors. There is also a lot of dust from the lime rock they put down and they have to pressure wash their homes to keep them up and maintain them. They do not want to see developers come in and take what is theirs and turn it into commercial because they will not have anything left. They live there and do not want this to be turned into more of an industrial area. Mr. Berry asked Council's consideration in denying the request.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to deny the request to rezone 0.58 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-6) to Manufacturing/Heavy Industrial (M-2) as requested by Murray Gaskins, Environmental Audit and Assessment Inc.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS (LDR) WITHDRAWN

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the Land Development Regulations (LDR) Chapter 218 - Use Regulations, Section 218-13 - Standards of Use and Development as requested by the City of Valdosta (File No. VA-2017-17). The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their November Regular Meeting and recommended denial (5-0-1 Vote). Mayor Gayle stated that the applicant has withdrawn the request to amend the Land Development Regulations.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-17, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A LOAN FROM THE GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY (GEFA) FOR WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Consideration of a Resolution to approve a loan from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) for Water and Sewer Infrastructure Projects.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that this is a new loan from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) for the purpose of completing service connections to annexed islands. The City of Valdosta is requesting funding from GEFA in the amount of \$8,000,000 in order to complete work on the annexed islands. It is anticipated that the total cost will be approximately \$6.9 million; however, with a contingency the cost will be approximately \$7 million. The monthly debt service on \$7 million would be \$36,859 or an annual debt service of \$442,068. GEFA has agreed to extend an \$8,000,000 loan at 2.39% which would yield \$42,102 monthly or \$505,224 annually. This will complete the last of the annexed islands and we are under a Court Order to have it completed by December 31, 2018. GEFA requires a Promissory Note, Legal Opinion of Borrowers Counsel, and a City Council Resolution agreeing to the loan. Chuck Dinkins recommended that Council approve the Resolution to

approve a loan from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) for Water and Sewer Infrastructure Projects.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2017-17, a Resolution to approve a loan from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) for Water and Sewer Infrastructure Projects, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-18, A RESOLUTION FOR THE GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION'S CERTIFIED CITY OF ETHICS PROGRAM

Consideration of a Resolution for the Georgia Municipal Association's Certified City of Ethics Program.

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) appointed an Ethics Task Force in 1998 to address concerns over a trend toward less confidence in public officials. The Ethics Task Force was comprised of municipal elected officials, community and industry leaders, and academics. The result of their work was the publication of a "Model Code of Ethics for Georgia City Officials" in September of 1999 and the implementation of GMA's Certified City of Ethics program. Certification under this program is not in any way approval of past or present conduct by the city or any city official. Instead it is an attempt to raise awareness about ethics issues at the local level and provide a local forum for the airing and resolution of legitimate concerns. The use of a local Ethics Ordinance allows citizens to raise their concerns and participate in the ethics investigation process at the local level where the voice and influence of the individual citizen is strongest. To earn a "Certified City of Ethics" designation, a city must take the following two actions: (1) Adopt a Resolution establishing the five ethics principles for the conduct of your city's officials, (2) Adopt an Ethics Ordinance that meets minimum standards approved by the GMA Board. The City of Valdosta is currently a Certified City of Ethics and is scheduled to recertify in January of 2018. To remain certified, the City must submit to GMA for review and approval a copy of any changes to the City's Ethics Ordinance since the initial certification and a current Resolution signed by a majority of the governing body re-adopting the five ethics principles. The recertification process must be completed no later than 12 months after the City's scheduled recertification date. To recertify and be recognized at the GMA Mayors' Day Conference in January of 2018, GMA must receive the necessary documents no later than December 15, 2017. Mark Barber recommended that Council approve the Resolution for the Georgia Municipal Association's Certified City of Ethics Program.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2017-18, a Resolution for the Georgia Municipal Association's Certified City of Ethics Program, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for the purchase of two, 100' mid mount aerial fire trucks for the Valdosta Fire Department (Bid No. 04-17-18).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Valdosta Mayor and Council approved the purchase of two, 100' mid mount aerial fire trucks as part of the current year budget. The aerial trucks are utilized for multi-story buildings and have a fire nozzle as well as oxygen lines for firefighters piped to the top of the ladder to an operator station. The new trucks meet all current NFPA requirements and assist with the ISO rating. To aid in a cost savings measure and as a part of the bid, two trade-in units were placed as mandatory trade-ins. These include a 1993 Sutphen SP100 (Unit 3021) and a 2005 E-One Bronto (Unit 3028) which are both aerial ladder trucks. Due to the dependability problems of the newer Unit 3028, the Fire Department has spent in excess of \$146,000 to keep the truck operable through the years. Parts are becoming hard to locate for the older Unit 3021 which is utilized more often for calls. Both trucks need to be replaced due to mechanical issues, age, dependability, and finding necessary parts. Over the next few years, the Fire Department will spend more in maintenance costs for these two trucks than the trucks are actually worth. Sealed bids were received after holding a mandatory pre-bid meeting regarding the truck specifications. Several bidders attended the meeting. The sealed bids were due and opened on November 28, 2017 in the Purchasing Division's Office. Only one vendor choose to respond which was Sutphen

Corporation although several companies were solicited prior to the pre-bid meeting. The prices are as follows: (1) Two fire trucks at \$1,365,973 each for a total of \$2,731,946, (2) Trade in Unit 3021 in the amount of \$70,000, (3) Trade in Unit 3028 in the amount of \$100,000, (4) Total Cost of the two fire trucks less trade in amounts is \$2,561,946. The pricing for the new trucks was within cost estimates received before the current year budget was approved and the trade-in pricing offered for Unit 3021 and Unit 3028 is fair in Staff's opinion. The new trucks will be obtained through a lease/purchase program and will be ready for service after delivery has taken place. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the purchase of two, 100' mid mount aerial fire trucks in the amount of \$2,731,946 from Sutphen, approve the trade in value of \$170,000 for the other two Units, and declare those Units as surplus for a total price of \$2,561,946. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether the total price included the customization of the fire trucks. Greg Brown stated that was correct. The factory fire truck that rolls down the line has specific things such as the shelves in a certain position and the compartments are a certain size. The City of Valdosta's Fire Department has different needs so customization is needed in order to fit our equipment and those adjustments are made as they build the fire truck. We tell the manufacturer up front what we are looking for. Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that Fire Chief Broome can put together a list of the special items that are needed on the new fire trucks. Chief Broome stated that Sutphen is known for customization of fire trucks and all of the Sutphen fire trucks are already customized. There are some other vendors who do not customize fire trucks and that is why they put specifications in the bid.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the purchase of two, 100' mid mount aerial fire trucks in the amount of \$2,731,946 from Sutphen, approve the trade in value of \$170,000 for the other two Units, and declare those Units as surplus for a total price of \$2,561,946.

Consideration of bids for 18-gallon recycling containers for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 16-17-18).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the current recycling containers contract bid is due to expire on December 31, 2017. These containers are used by the Public Works Department to collect recyclable items from sanitation customers. The purpose of this bid is to have one source of supply and to obtain a better price through volume buying. This is a one year contract with options to renew. Sealed bids were received on November 28, 2017. Rehrig Pacific submitted a bid meeting specifications in the amount of \$7.50 per 18-gallon container which is a slight increase over what we have been paying in the past; however, it has been several years of a renewable contract so this is a reasonable increase for the timeframe.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the bid submitted by Rehrig Pacific in the amount of \$7.50 per 18-gallon container and allow the Public Works Department to proceed with the purchase.

Consideration of the purchase of a FATS Fire Arm Simulator System for the Valdosta Police Department (Bid No. 08-17-18).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Police Department purchased a FATS fire arm simulator many years ago to train Officers for situational use of force tactics. The simulator is operated by computer hardware and software which flashes images and scenarios on a screen wherein the Officer has to determine what action is warranted for that particular situation (use of force). The current machine no longer functions as the entire operation system is outdated and is no longer supported by the manufacturer. The technology has advanced so far in that the new systems train in both lethal and non-lethal weapons, air speed, temperature, elevation, etc. The new system enhances the understanding of shoot/don't shoot situations and the corresponding decision making process. This system effectively reinforces judgmental training objectives, concealed carry, less than lethal (tazer/pepper spray), and general weapons familiarization skills. Weapons that have been converted not to accept live rounds are utilized with the training simulator, unlike other systems with fabricated weapons, provide actual recoil, fit, feel, and function to the training experience. Also, Officers can perform additional range qualifications on this machine (handgun, shotgun, and rifle) without expending expensive ammunition. The simulator can also be used to educate our community through the Government 101 class, Citizens Police Academy, and other groups as necessary. The purchasing process of the simulator can be viewed in two ways. One is that the software system has patent pending

software making it sole source due to the BlueFire Weapons Systems and secondly, the system is software and hardware based exempting it from the bidding process. The simulator cost is \$81,444.60 from the manufacturer Meggit Training Systems. This simulator is used by many larger Police Departments who are extremely happy with the functionality, performance, and servicing of the system by Meggit. Council has approved \$67,283 in the Police Department budget for the purchase of this unit and the balance of the cost will come from the Police Department's Drugs Seized Fund (\$14,161.60). The current machine was purchased approximately 15 years ago and the software is now obsolete. Greg Brown recommended that Council approve the price submitted by Meggit in the amount of \$81,444.60 for the purchase of a FATS Fire Arm Simulator System for the Valdosta Police Department.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the price submitted by Meggit in the amount of \$81,444.60 for the purchase of a FATS Fire Arm Simulator System for the Valdosta Police Department.

Consideration of bids for stormwater piping and associated ditch improvements on West Alden Avenue.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that West Alden Avenue between Baytree Road and Jerry Jones Drive has many homes that were built in the late 1950s and 1960s. Commercial properties are migrating into the western end of the corridor near the West Alden Avenue intersection with Baytree Road. The Project extends from Canterbury Drive on the east end to McRee Drive on the west end. There are 28 lots within the Project limits, and the roadway is classified as a major collector. Currently, the West Alden Avenue corridor has three to five foot deep ditches along the north side with fewer deep open ditches along the south side. These separate ditch systems convey drainage west to Sugar Creek. There are no sidewalks or bicycle lanes. As a result, vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists often compete for use of the street's paved roadway surface. The mix of vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles poses a safety concern for users. The Project is identified as an Operations/Safety Project in the City's Master Transportation Plan. The purpose of the Project is to improve the quality of life within the neighborhood by building improvements that safely separate vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian movements along the corridor. The proposed improvements include a sodded shoulder, underground storm sewer, drainage inlets, and new driveway aprons. The Project is contained in the FY 2018 SPLOST Projects List and budgeted for \$253,200. If approved, construction will commence in the first quarter of 2018. On December 5, 2017, three bids were received. The lowest base bid was submitted by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$235,624.50. The base bid consists of the construction of piping improvements along the north side of West Alden Avenue only. This bid captures the original budgeted scope of work (which pipes the north side with the deeper ditches and the most observed pedestrian movements). When piping is complete, there will be adequate room to accommodate and construct a future sidewalk as a separate Project. Concurrent with the base bid, Staff developed two alternate bid items, Alternate A and Alternate B. These two items were bid separately. Alternate A is piping work along the south side of the street (exact same scope of work as the north side) and Alternate B is the removal of the open asphalt-paved ditch on the extreme west end of the corridor and its replacement with a storm drainage pipe, topsoil, and sod. The low Alternate A bid was submitted by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$98,549.25. The low Alternate B bid was also submitted by Roundtree Construction in the amount of \$33,390.50. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the base bid in the amount of \$235,624.50, Alternate Bids A & B which total \$131,939.75, and a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a total project cost of \$404,320.68.

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve lowest base bid was submitted by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$235,624.50, Alternate Bid A in the amount of \$98,549.25, Alternate Bid B in the amount of \$33,390.50, and a 10% contingency (\$36,756.43) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a total project cost of \$404,320.68 for stormwater piping and associated ditch improvements on West Alden Avenue.

Consideration of bids for traffic improvements to the West Alden Avenue approach to Baytree Road.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that at the 2015 Mayor and Council Retreat, several Traffic Improvement Projects were discussed including the rush hour peak congestion at the intersection of Baytree Road and West Alden Avenue. This intersection typically backs up westbound, especially along the Alden Avenue leg as many vehicles make their way to Valdosta Mall and surrounding businesses. Currently, the Alden Avenue leg has two

westbound lanes and one eastbound lane at the intersection. The westbound left lane is marked for both through movements (across Baytree Road to the Gordon Street leg) and left turn movements (to Baytree Road). The westbound right lane is marked for right turns only. During peak periods, vehicles queued in the westbound lanes on Alden Avenue have been observed to intrude on each other when the signal is green and the westbound traffic on Alden Avenue is snarled by either lack of access to the dual use through-left turn lane or backed up by the right turn lane onto Baytree Road (either by insufficient right turn storage volume on Alden Avenue or the nearby train crossing on Baytree Road). The Project's scope of work includes adding westbound vehicle storage (by widening the Alden Avenue leg and lengthening the two westbound approach lanes) and considers an Alternate A scope which repaves the entire Alden Avenue leg (both westbound and eastbound) from Baytree Road to the West Alden Avenue split. The Project is contained in the FY 2018 SPLOST Projects List and budgeted for \$99,200. Funding for the work is from local SPLOST VII funds and would begin in the first quarter of 2018. On December 5, 2017, two bids were received and opened. The low base bid was submitted by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$70,348.75. The base bid is for the construction of the widened and lengthened westbound lanes only and does not include resurfacing outside these two approach lanes. The Alternate A bid is for the milling and resurfacing of the entire Alden Avenue leg (both eastbound and westbound) from Baytree Road to the "y" split. The pavement, especially in the eastbound Alden Avenue leg, is quite distressed and requires frequent patching. This alternate would give the entire West Alden Avenue leg (both eastbound and westbound) from Baytree Road, to the split, a new uniform surface. The Alternate A price submitted by Rountree Construction was in the amount of \$31,843. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the low base bid submitted by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$70,348.75 and Alternate A in the amount of \$31,843 for a total bid of to \$102,191.75 plus a 10% contingency (\$10,219.18) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a grand total of \$112,410.93

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low base bid submitted by Rountree Construction in the amount of \$70,348.75 and Alternate A in the amount of \$31,843 for a total \$102,191.75 plus a 10% contingency (\$10,219.18) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a grand total of \$112,410.93 for traffic improvements to the West Alden Avenue approach to Baytree Road.

Consideration of a request to approve an Agreement with the Exchange Club for placement of benches in the City of Valdosta.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Exchange Club has been installing benches at various places in the City for the past 67 years. The revenue received for the advertisements placed on these benches has benefited many community improvement projects throughout the City. The current Agreement states that the number shall not exceed 60 benches on the City right-of-way. On January 7, 2016, Council voted to adopt the current Bench Agreement for two years. The current agreement expires on midnight of January 7, 2018. The bench inventory list was received on November 29, 2017. The list identified the existing locations of 59 benches within the City right-of-way (below the agreement limit of 60 within the right-of-way) with 6 benches on private property and 6 benches in the County jurisdiction. All locations submitted were accurately listed and all of the 59 benches have been verified by the Engineering Staff as to their exact location within the City right-of-way. Please note that locations 8 and 12 were removed. It is noted that the existing bench locations are not currently equally distributed among the 6 City Council Districts. There are no benches in District 1, 10 benches in District 2, 10 benches in District 3, 11 benches in District 4, 15 benches in District 5, and 18 benches in District 6. These District number totals account for the 59 benches in the City right-of-way and 6 benches within the City limits located on private property. On December 10, 2015, this Agreement came up for renewal before the City Council. A candid discussion ensued and several points were brought up which were targeted at the Bench Program itself and not directed to the many good merits of the Exchange Club or charities. Ultimately, a motion was made to table making a final decision for 30 days to allow Staff ample time to research the facts related to the discussion and to provide each City Council member additional time to carefully consider the facts and muster their thoughts before a final vote. Under the current Land Development Regulations (LDR), signs are prohibited on street furniture and all signs, except where specifically otherwise authorized, are to be located on or over private property outside the right-of-way. This Agreement, if authorized, does conflict with Section 230-7 and Section 230-9 of the LDR as follows: (1) LDR Chapter 230, Sign Regulations, Section 230-7, Prohibited Signs - The following signs and devices are found to be unlawful and are prohibited within the city limits: (L) Signs located on waste containers, or other forms of street furniture. (2) Section 230-9, Sign Standards, (A) Location in General - (1) All signs shall be located only on or over

private property and outside any street or railroad right-of-way, except where specifically otherwise authorized by this Chapter 230. The Sign Ordinance was adopted on September 19, 1992 and stated that signs were not allowed on street furniture and where signs could be located. Over the years we have received calls from business owners and citizens to remove and relocate benches for various reasons including crowding or obstruction on the right-of-way, sidewalks or cross walks, blocking sight distances at intersections or driveways, loitering, and safety or aesthetic reasons; however, in each and every case the Exchange Club has been very responsive and has come out and corrected all situations. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve a contract extension with the Exchange Club to expire on December 31, 2019 with no further renewal clause which will allow the Exchange Club ample time to find a new revenue source and to remove the benches from the City's right-of-ways.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Vickers to approve the request for a contract extension with the Exchange Club and to bring it back before Council when the contract expires on December 31, 2019. Councilman Yost seconded the motion. Pat Collins stated that it also had in the contract a 90-day clause where either side could cancel the contract. Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that for clarification, the contract as presented would expire on December 14, 2019 and inquired as to whether Councilman Vickers would like to amend the motion to have the contract expire on December 14, 2019 and if Councilman Yost was in agreement. Councilman Vickers and Councilman Yost were in agreement. Councilman Payton stated that the thought Councilman Vickers wanted the ending point taken completely out. Councilman Vickers stated that he wanted the Exchange Club to have the opportunity to ask for it to be renewed again for two years. Councilman Payton stated that Councilman Vickers wanted the wording "no further renewal" clause to be taken out. Tim Tanner stated that the Exchange Club could come back and ask for another contract. That is just administrative comments and this contract would expire on December 14, 2019 if Council voted to approve it. At that time Council could entertain another contract and Council could vote it up or down again. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether she could exclude herself due to impartiality. Mayor Gayle stated that impartiality was really not a reason to excuse yourself because they all have impartialities. Tim Tanner stated that if Councilwoman Tooley had a conflict of interest she would have to state it on the record and she would have to specifically name the conflict. Mayor Gayle stated that Councilwoman Tooley was elected to vote on these things and unless she is a member of the Exchange Club, which would give her a conflict of interest, she was are expected to vote. Councilman Payton asked for clarification of the motion. Mayor Gayle stated that the motion is to approve a contract extension with the Exchange Club for two more years. Tim Tanner stated that the contract presented is for that term and it will expire on December 14, 2019. Pat Collins stated that the contract is for two years but they were recommending that it sunset after those two years; however, the motion was not for that. Tim Tanner stated that they could recommend that it sunset or never occur again but that would bind any future Councils from making decisions the same way as if they voted a contract to last 20 years. It would bind a Council for not wanting this contract in existence. You would have to allow them to vote it up or down if you are going to enter into an agreement. Councilman Carroll stated that he wanted it to be clear what they were doing. This is not new to any of them on this Council and they are allowing an organization to do something that totally violates our Ordinance. As he understands it, this could possibly violate State law when it comes to State right-of-ways. He wanted to make sure that they all understood that and asked Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, to clarify the State laws. Matt Martin stated that in the State of Georgia, O.C.G.A. Section 32-6-51, there is language in there about signage in the public right-of-ways. Within Georgia it is not just State highways but all right-of-ways unless it is prescribed by a local Ordinance that anything whether it be a sign or other object in that right-of-way is considered a nuisance and is to be disposed of. The local governments are given the authority to take care of that. In layman's terms you equate that with a littering Ordinance. Things that are in the street right-of-way that are not official signage or traffic control devices would be the same as litter which is prohibited. Having campaign signs or yard signs out in the street right-of-way would be a violation of both the local Ordinance and State law. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether the City had an Ordinance on the books that prohibits and supports what the State law says. Matt Martin stated that we do. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether the City had any Ordinances on the books that allowed this. Matt Martin stated no. Councilman Norton stated that he did not know how they could continue to allow this violation. Two years ago they had the discussion to give the Exchange Club an opportunity to look for other sources of revenue and not just pull this out from under them and he thinks it is time for it to stop. The motion was adopted 4-3 with Councilman Carroll, Councilman Norton, and Councilman Payton voting in opposition to approve a Contract with the Exchange Club to expire on December 14, 2019.

Consideration of a Contract extension with CSRA Probation Services.

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that many municipalities around the State are currently reviewing the probation services that they are using for their Municipal Courts. The City of Valdosta's Municipal Court Judge Vernita Bender has reviewed the current Contract with CSRA Probation Services and would like to send out a Request for Qualification in order to see what other Probation Service providers have to offer. City of Valdosta Staff and the City Attorney met with CSRA Probation Services recently to review the current Contract which expires on February 16, 2018. CSRA Probation Services provided us with a Contract that went through the remainder of 2018 and because we want to bid out these services we did not want to extend the Contract that long. We have now been presented with a Contract through June 30, 2018 which will give us ample time to bid out these services and it gives us time to make the transition with records and things of that nature. Mark Barber stated that he met with Judge Bender last week and she is in agreement with this. CSRA is also in agreement with this. Mark Barber recommended that Council approve the Contract extension with Sentinel Probation Services through June 30, 2018. Councilman Vickers inquired as to what the State is requesting that has to be done. Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that it used to be solely up to the Judge to enter into these contracts with private probation companies and the law has now been changed where you have to have the consent of the Judge but it is up to the governing authority at this point. A lot of the old contracts only had the Judge's signature so they wanted the governing authorities to ratify that. Our existing Contract with CSRA was actually signed by the governing authority and the Judge so we did not have to follow State law on this because we were ahead of the curve. This is just a six month Contract and CSRA had a little increase in the per probation fee of \$30 which had not changed in ten years and they went up to \$35. The Judge wants some competition through a Request for Proposal and we will have time to have some input into that so six months will be perfect for both sides. CSRA had actually bought out Sentinel Probation and they were unaware that we actually had a Contract until we showed it to them.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the contract extension with CSRA Probation Services to June 30, 2018.

Consideration of an Agreement with Verizon Wireless for reasonable safeguards on the placement and maintenance of wireless equipment and facilities in the City's right-of-way and compensation to be paid by Verizon Wireless for its use of the right-of-way.

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that over the past year, cities throughout Georgia have been approached by wireless infrastructure companies such as Verizon Wireless requesting permits to install poles in municipal rights-of-way and/or place equipment on existing poles. While municipalities recognize the need to accommodate wireless infrastructure, they also recognize the importance of addressing the health, safety, and welfare of the public given the numerous facilities and infrastructure that will need to be placed in the right-of-way. The small cell service boosts the existing Wi-Fi structure where there are antennas and it comes in handy when more band width is needed. It is not inclusive to only Verizon customers and it is just a method to boost the Wi-Fi in our community. The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) has assisted the City in negotiating an Agreement with Verizon. The Agreement imposes reasonable safeguards on the placement and maintenance of wireless equipment and facilities in the right-of-way while also addressing reasonable compensation to be paid by Verizon Wireless for its use of the right-of-way. This is the same type of contract that was approved for Molitite on April 27, 2017 and has the same fee and same structure. Highlights include: (1) requires colocation of communications equipment on existing poles unless Verizon Wireless provides proof colocation is not possible; (2) the City has discretion over appearance of new poles, and new poles must meet the city's approval regarding aesthetics, visibility, environmental, and safety standards; (3) Verizon Wireless agrees to pay an annual license fee to the city of \$500/ site/ year for pole attachments to existing poles. For new poles, Verizon Wireless will pay \$1350/ site/ year with a 3% annual escalator plus \$500/ year for any other carrier that locates on the new Verizon Wireless pole; (4) Verizon Wireless will honor executed agreements with cities that are in place if Federal or State laws change to preempt local control over permitting or compensation; and (5) the permitting process consistent with Georgia Department of Transportation's Utilities Accommodation Policy and Standards Manual (UAM) in addition to requiring Verizon Wireless to follow local codes and ordinances to obtain a permit. Mark Barber recommended that Council approve the Agreement with Verizon Wireless for reasonable safeguards on the placement and maintenance of wireless equipment and facilities in the City's right-of-way and compensation to be paid by Verizon Wireless for its use of the right-of-way.

A **MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve an Agreement with Verizon Wireless for reasonable safeguards on the placement and maintenance of wireless equipment and facilities in the City's right-of-way and compensation to be paid by Verizon Wireless for its use of the right-of-way.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to approve street selections for the Georgia Department of Transportation 2018 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant Program.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) assists Cities and Counties by awarding funds for resurfacing as well as other local transportation-related improvements via their Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program. LMIG awards are formula based and proportionate to a combination of a local jurisdiction's population and centerline street mileage. Every LMIG award requires a minimum of a 30% match from the local jurisdiction. Our 2018 formula-based allotment is \$611,748.48 and, therefore, our required 30% match is \$183,524.54. Consequently, the minimum total required to be spent in 2018 is \$795,273.02. In the previous year, the City Engineer prepared a Comprehensive Evaluation Form. Key staff rode together and evaluated and scored each and every road in the City. This information was then compiled by District and by condition and is the most comprehensive analysis of the City's streets in the history of the City. This data, along with City Council input from riding the Districts with the City Engineer, was used to develop a recommended list. The recommended resurfacing list prepared by Staff picks up whole length street segments of the worst condition streets while considering expressed Council-member priorities and balancing the total mileage among the Districts. The recommended list resurfaces 5.16 miles total and is estimated to cost \$910,000 to \$983,000. The construction cost range was created by taking our latest costs (using the 2016 recently bid LMIG unit values). The actual amount of base repair/root removal will be field measured and included in the future bid packet once the 2018 list has been finalized and may cause the estimate to go up or down depending on the conditions of the streets ultimately selected. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the street selections for the Georgia Department of Transportation 2018 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant Program. Councilman Vickers inquired as to when the 2017 LMIG streets would be resurfaced. Pat Collins stated that as soon as we have the SPLOST funds in they will be ready to resurface the streets.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the street selections for the Georgia Department of Transportation 2018 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant Program.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Sydney Blanton, member of the Valdosta Exchange Club and State President for the Georgia District Exchange Club, thanked the Mayor and Council for approving their Bench Agreement. They will be looking into other revenue sources. He has noticed during his travels around the State that there are billboards in other communities that list the civic organizations of the city along with their logo. He has proposed to the Valdosta Daily Times on several occasions to run an article about the different civic organizations in Valdosta. A lot of times the larger companies who are looking to relocate will have civic organizations on their criteria for the city they are looking at. Valdosta has four main thoroughfares coming into Valdosta and it would behoove the City to put one of those signs up and list the civic organizations in our community.

Margie Guyton, 500 South Sunset Drive, Apt. 122, Quitman, stated that she is also known to many as "Ms. Cookie" and she feeds the homeless in Valdosta, Quitman, and Thomasville. She wanted to ask the Council for their participation in helping her to feed 125 homeless people in Valdosta. She also has a list of things that she needs to go into some personal care bags that she making for the homeless people. She has a non-profit organization, Love in Action, and she has been doing this for 11 years. She has had a lot of help from Mayor Gayle, Chief Childress, and other City staff as well as St. Joseph's Thrift Store, Mr. B's IGA, and Winn Dixie. She also helps 800 children in our community and is soliciting toys to give to them at Christmas. Ms. Cookie asked for their help and support.

Rose Monroe stated that she has been in Valdosta for two months and she is a motivational speaker. She speaks to the youth and was at the Boys and Girls Club recently and she saw a lot of things that disturbed her. She spoke with the Coordinator about the over-crowding at the Boys and Girls Club. They would like for the Mayor and Council to visit so they can show them what they have going on and see if they could expand over to the Police Department. If we can get in a position to provide more space for these children then we can bring more things to the community. Ms. Monroe stated that she would like to see what we could do together as a community and provide more services for the children. She has been hearing a lot of complaints in the community about crimes and if we can provide more services for the youth it would help to cut back on that. Ms. Monroe asked Council's consideration in visiting the Boys and Girls Club.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that this week the Valdosta Police Department had the Georgia State Certification on-site inspection and the Assessor from the Association of Chiefs of Police reported that there were no compliance issues. This is a great feat and the Police Department is to be commended for that.

The City of Valdosta was awarded the 2017 Outstanding Community Grand Award by the Georgia Urban Forest Council recently and recognized the City's commitment to the overall health of our community in building strong forestry programs. The Engineering Department has done a good job in promoting the forestry programs.

The Georgia Department of Transportation will be putting a \$2 million investment in our community between now and November, 2018 on Ashley Street and Patterson Street. They will be putting up mast signage over the roads along with traffic detection devices on Hill Avenue at Fry Street, North Oak Street, Toombs Street, South Patterson Street, North Ashley, and Lee Street, Hill Avenue at Central Avenue and Forrest Street, West Central Avenue at North Lee Street, North Ashley Street, Valley Street, and South Patterson Street at Valley Street and Magnolia Street.

The Bird Supper is Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at The Depot in Atlanta which is a little earlier this year. It was decided last year to have it earlier before the Legislature really gets going.

An advertisement has gone out about the City Government 101 Class and we have already had two people to sign up for it. Citizens are encouraged to complete the application and return it to Sementa Mathews, Public Information Officer.

There will be a lot of Christmas activities going on in Valdosta this year. The Downtown area will be hosting "14 Days of Christmas" this year. Marcus McConico, Media Coordinator, videotaped the Christmas Parade and it will be airing at 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. on Channel 17. The Shop with a Cop event will be held on Monday, December 18, 2017 and they have received over \$15,000 in contributions. The Georgia Theater Company presented them with a check for \$6,500. The Shop with a Firefighter was held on Tuesday, December 12, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. at the Wal-Mart located on Inner Perimeter Road. All donations to both of these programs are greatly appreciated.

One of the City's firefighters recently had a fire at his apartment and the Fire Department is having a fundraiser to help him and his family get back on their feet. He suffered an injury to his hand during the fire and since we depend on him every day it is time for us to give something back to him.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Banquet will be held on January 6, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers stated that he has learned some things from serving on the Council with Councilman Payton and Councilman Yost and he appreciated their support. He has always told Councilman Payton that he would like to see them volunteer on some of these Boards and Commissions because they can bring a lot. Councilman Vickers thanked them for serving.

Councilman Carroll stated that he will soon be the second most senior member of this body since Councilman Payton and Councilman Yost will be leaving and he did want to say a couple of words. Councilman Payton and Councilman Yost were both in office when he was first elected and he has learned a great deal from each one of them. They have done a lot of good work together and a lot of heavy lifting. There have been a lot of tough issues that they have sweated the votes but they knew they had to make them. Both of them have been excellent in contributing to the quality and the volume of work they were able to accomplish during the past ten years. Councilman Carroll thanked them for their service and stated that they will be missed.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that she has enjoyed working with both Councilman Payton and Councilman Yost and has learned a lot from them. They have both been an inspiration to her. She always loved her conversations with Councilman Payton because he would not let her go with one little quick answer. She hopes to see each of them continue in some kind of way in the political field.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody thanked Councilman Payton and Councilman Yost for their service and she appreciated all of their support.

Councilman Yost stated that the next time Council votes on trailers just remember that trailers belong in trailer parks.

Councilman Payton stated that this is a bitter sweet moment and his last Council comment but he is confident that the Councilman-Elect Eric Howard will represent District 4 and the City of Valdosta very well. God bless each and every one of you and the City of Valdosta.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to adjourn the regular Council meeting and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the December 14, 2017 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:25 p.m. and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the regular City Council meeting at 7:40 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of real estate in the Executive Session and no action would need to be taken.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the December 14, 2017 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:40 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, January 11, 2018.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta