

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 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., and Vivian Miller-Cody. Councilman Robert Yost arrived late at 5:35 p.m. and Councilwoman Sandra Tooley was absent. The invocation was given by Dr. Robby Foster, Northside Baptist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Special Presentation for the winners of the "If I Were Mayor" Essay Contest.

Mayor Gayle stated that cities across the State will be celebrating Georgia Cities Week on April 23-29, 2017 with activities that highlight the programs and services that enhance the quality of life for their citizens. In Valdosta, we will have ten activities for citizens to participate in during the week, such as Customer Service Day, Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Ribbon Cutting, Job Shadow Day, and the Employee Appreciation Luncheon as well as the Great American Clean Up and Trash Amnesty Day on Saturday, April 22, 2017. One of the most popular activities during Georgia Cities Week is the "If I Were Mayor" Essay Contest for 6th graders. This Essay Contest challenges 6th grade students in our community to use their grade-level writing skills and civic knowledge to express in 350 words or less what they would do if they had the top elected position in the City. Over the years, the City has received some incredible and thought-provoking work from our local students and this year's winners are no exception. The City received over 80 essays this year and we appreciate the great efforts of all the participants. Mayor Gayle asked the following winners of this year's Essay Contest to come forward and read their essays aloud: 3rd Place Winner - Kailin Willoughby of Highland Christian Academy, 2nd Place Winner - Isabel McLoughlin of Valdosta Middle School, and 1st Place Winner - Nile Monds of Highland Christian Academy. Mayor Gayle presented each winner with a Certificate and a Mayor's coin.

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 service 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-level or mid-level officers/supervisors to jump-start professional development early on in their career. It 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 February 14, 2017, Fire Chief Freddie Broome was notified that Lieutenant Bennie Kennedy had successfully completed the Managing Officer Program and the required Capstone Project. Lieutenant Kennedy is one of the first in the State to complete the Managing Officer Program. Fire Chief Broome recognized Lieutenant Kennedy for his great accomplishment of completing the Managing Officer Program.

Lieutenant Bennie Kennedy stated that it was an honor to be the first graduate from Valdosta for the first Managing Officer Program. As part of the Program, they had the privilege of designing a challenge coin and a pen and he presented them to Fire Chief Broome.

Mayor Gayle recognized members of the Lowndes Youth Leadership League who were in attendance at the Council Meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 6, 2017 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

RESOLUTION NO. 2017-4, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION WITH THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the filing of an application with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) to become a Registered Agency for accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI).

Fire Chief Broome stated that accreditation is a comprehensive self-assessment and quality improvement model that enables organizations to examine past, current, and future service levels and internal performance and compare them to current research and industry best practices. This process leads to a more efficient and effective emergency service organization. The Center for Public Safety Excellence's (CPSE) Accreditation Program, administered by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) allows fire and emergency service agencies to compare their performance to: (1) Determine community risk and safety needs and develop community-specific Standards of Cover, (2) Evaluate the performance of the Department, and (3) Establish a method for achieving continuous organizational improvement. Chief Broome stated that there is a fee of \$570 to apply but if they submit an application to become an Applicant Agency within a year it will go towards that fee. Local government executives face increasing pressure to "do more with less" and justify their expenditures by demonstrating a direct link to improved or expanded services. Particularly for emergency services, local officials need criteria to assess professional performance and efficiency. The CFAI accreditation process provides a well-defined, internationally-recognized benchmark system to measure the quality of fire and emergency services. Every fire organization, whether volunteer, combination, career, federal, or private, can use the accreditation model in setting goals, crafting strategic and action plans, and continuously evaluating and improving services provided to the public. The Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) comprehensive self-assessment process promotes excellence and encourages quality improvement by enabling fire and EMS agencies to: (1) Assure colleagues and the public that they have definite missions and objectives that are appropriate for the jurisdictions they serve, (2) Provide a detailed evaluation of the services they provide to the community, (3) Identify areas of strength and weakness within the Department, (4) Create methods or systems for addressing deficiencies while building organizational success, (5) Encourage professional growth for both the Department and its personnel, (6) Provide a forum for the communication of organizational priorities, (7) Foster national recognition by colleagues and the public, and (8) Create a mechanism for developing strategic and program action plans. The self-assessment process demands the largest portion of time to achieve accreditation. Although there is a substantial commitment of time and resources, Fire Departments nationwide have realized the value of the self-assessment process and the accreditation model because they are documenting policies and procedures which should already be in place. The accreditation process results in the development of planning documents, including short-term action and long-term strategic plans, which are important tools in the budgeting process and a basis for justifying Departmental programs and services. Accreditation has the potential to dramatically improve a Department, its services, and its vision for the future. The process of achieving accreditation includes four steps or levels: Step 1. Becoming a Registered Agency - Any fire or rescue agency may become a Registered Agency. This status allows a Department to be involved with the Accreditation process at a low cost for three years. Registered Agencies gain access to the CFAI network, receive the CPSE monthly newsletter, and obtain a copy of the latest edition of the Fire & Emergency Service Self-Assessment manual, the resource on which self-assessment and accreditation is based. This is the time for an agency to send its Fire Chief and Accreditation Manager to the CFAI basic workshop training. Step 2. Becoming an Applicant Agency - Agencies that are ready to make the commitment to accreditation use the Applicant Agency Status Form to notify the CFAI Program Manager and submit the appropriate fee. The Agency then receives an Applicant Agency packet of the materials needed to proceed. While holding this status (18 months for Career Agencies and 24 months for Volunteer Agencies), an Applicant Agency is assigned a volunteer mentor via the CFAI SharePoint website to serve as a resource. A SharePoint site is created for the Agency so the mentor can review document drafts and offer feedback and advice. Step 3. Becoming a Candidate for Accreditation - Following the self-assessment process (including the community risk analysis, standards of cover, and strategic planning components), a Candidate Agency's completed documents are uploaded to the CPSE SharePoint site for peer review. When the Candidate Agency's documents are approved, an on-site peer assessment is conducted. The Peer Assessment Team submits a final report on its recommendation for accreditation to the Agency and the Commission. Step 4. Achieving Accreditation - The Commission hears the candidacy report from the Peer Assessment Team leader in the presence of the Candidate Agency's representatives during the Commission's spring or fall meeting. At this point, the Commission grants, denies, or defers accreditation. Accreditation is valid for five years. There are currently 234 accredited Fire/Rescue Agencies in the world. The following Fire/Rescue

Departments are accredited in Georgia: (1) Cobb County Fire & Emergency Services, (2) Columbus Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services, (3) Covington Fire Department, (4) Atlanta Fire Rescue Department, (5) Savannah Fire & Rescue Department, and (6) Moody AFB Fire Emergency Services. A Resolution to authorize the filing of the application to become a Registered Agency will need to be approved by Council. Chief Broome stated that they have already assembled a team and they are ready to move forward. Lt. Bennie Kennedy is the Accreditation Manager and Battalion Chief John Henry and Lt. Ron Mercer are also in the Managing Officer Program. Chief Broome recommended that Council approve the Resolution so that the Valdosta Fire Department can proceed with submitting an application to the CPSE. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether this was similar as to what the Police Department does with CALEA as far as accreditation. Chief Broome stated that the process is a little different but they would receive a National accreditation. This will be a long process. They will start now with Step 1, proceed to Step 2 by January, 2018, and then proceed to Step 3 in 2019 where they would submit all the paperwork and become a candidate for accreditation. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether they would visit the Valdosta Fire Department to examine everything. Chief Broome stated that the process is similar to CALEA and they will have peer accessors who will be onsite to evaluate the Department, the community, and how the local government is structured. After that, the Fire Chief, Accreditation Manager, and the City Manager or the Mayor would have to sit before a Board and present everything to the Commission to get their approval. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the ISO rating would help. Chief Broome stated that it would help because a lot of other Fire Departments who currently have a Class 1 ISO rating used the accreditation process to help them get their ISO. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this process would start with a self-assessment and then there would be a mock accreditation where a team would come in and assist in finding any issues before a final review. It is a challenge and only 1% of 48,000 Fire Departments in the United States ever achieve this. We are already in the 1% that ever achieved an ISO Class 1 rating so this is literally being the best of the best. Larry Hanson stated that he was not sure but was going to verify that there is not a city in Georgia that has a Fire Department and a Police Department that have received accreditation. It would certainly attest to the caliber of people that we know we already have.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Resolution No. 2017-4, a Resolution authorizing the filing of an application with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) to become a Registered Agency for accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for compost grinding for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 27-16-17).

Richard Hardy, Public Works Director, stated that the Public Works Department has a requirement for grinding of the yard trash debris collected daily. The Department collects an average of 50 tons daily from both residential and commercial customers. This service was quoted out in the past to grind a massive accumulation of material. The services performed at this time provided the Public Works Department with the requirements that it would take to maintain the collected material at a manageable level on a recurring basis and the amount of material that they could grind per hour. Now that the Public Works Department has the service requirements and contractor per hour capabilities, the Department can move forward in contracting this service. Sealed bids were received on April 11, 2017 with the low bid submitted by Langdale Forest Products in the amount of \$450.00 per hour. Richard Hardy recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Forest Products in the amount of \$450.00 per hour for a one-year contract with a two-year renewal option and allow the Public Works Department to proceed with compost grinding. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that many years ago all of the yard debris would be taken to an inert landfill where a hole was dug and the debris in the hole and covered up. After a while, this practice was no longer allowed by the Environmental Protection Division because the material decomposed over time and created methane gas which often turned into a fire. When Richard Hardy became the Public Works Director, the City was paying \$20,000 per month to a vendor to come in and chip and mulch the yard debris. By the City moving to this compost grinding and bidding it out, the cost has gone down from \$20,000 per month to about \$20,000 three times a year. This is a significant savings to the citizens of Valdosta and the rate payers of the sanitation system. Mayor Gayle inquired as to how long it would take to grind 50 tons. Richard Hardy stated that the contractor would have to grind at least 60 tons an hour and based on our calculations, they are running approximately 80-90 tons per hour. Councilman Vickers inquired as to what happens after they grind it up. Larry Hanson stated that Richard Hardy has identified some customers and is working to turn it into a revenue stream.

We will also continue to give it away to citizens. Larry Hanson stated that we also asked the vendor to give that price to all the surrounding communities and they have agreed to give the same price to Lakeland, Lanier County, Lowndes County, Berrien County, Nashville, and Echols County. They would never be able to get that kind of price themselves because their volume is too low.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Langdale Forest Products in the amount of \$450.00 per hour for a one-year contract with a two-year renewal option and allow the Public Works Department to proceed with compost grinding.

Consideration of a Master Right-of-Way Agreement with Mobilitie, LLC for Installation of a small tower and other wireless infrastructure.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that over the past year, cities throughout Georgia have been approached by wireless infrastructure companies such as Mobilitie requesting permits to install poles in municipal rights-of-way (ROW) 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 ROW. To assist cities and the industry to negotiate terms that balance protection of the local ROW and the needs of wireless infrastructure companies to locate wireless infrastructure, the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) has developed a comprehensive Master Right-of-Way License Agreement with Mobilitie. The Agreement was developed as a cooperative effort between GMA and senior representatives of Mobilitie in an effort to help facilitate the deployment of wireless infrastructure in Georgia municipalities while recognizing the municipal right to manage access to the ROW. The end result is a template or model agreement that can be tailored to the unique circumstances of each city. Mobilitie, LLC is a private company that provides small cell networks, wireless transport connectivity, Wi-Fi networks, distributed antenna systems, communication towers, and colocation management of third party activity on its tower sites. There is anticipated a 650% increase in the use of mobile data from 2014 through 2018 as America moves towards the use of 5G (or fifth generation) technology. Smart phones generate 41 times more data traffic than the typical basic-feature cell phone. Eighty-four percent (84%) of today's shoppers use their smart phones to help shop in-store. Thirty million (30,000,000) mega-bytes of data are used every five (5) minutes through media streaming. Fifty-six percent (56%) of mobile data is video. Ninety percent (90%) of households use wireless service. The agreement with Mobilitie imposes reasonable safeguards on the placement and maintenance of wireless equipment and facilities in the City's ROW while also addressing reasonable compensation to be paid by Mobilitie for its use of the ROW. Equally important, the License Agreement will provide a level of consistency between license agreements with other Georgia cities, as well as streamline and expedite Mobilitie's access to the ROW. It was also to be used as the standard for other companies as this technology becomes prevalent. Highlights include the following: (1) Requires co-location of communications equipment on existing poles unless Mobilitie provides proof co-location is not possible, (2) 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) Mobilitie agrees to pay an annual license fee to the City of \$500 per site per year for pole attachments to existing poles. For new poles, Mobilitie will pay \$1,350 per site per year with a 3% annual escalator plus \$500 per year for any other carrier that locates on the new Mobilitie pole, (4) Mobilitie will honor executed agreements with cities that are in place if Federal or State laws change to pre-empt local control over permitting or compensation, and (5) Permitting process will be consistent with Georgia Department of Transportation's Utilities Accommodation Policy and Standards Manual (UAM) in addition to requiring Mobilitie to follow local Codes and Ordinances to obtain a permit. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the Master Right-of-Way Agreement with Mobilitie, LLC for installation of a small tower and other wireless infrastructure. Councilman Payton stated that this will be for 25 years. Pat Collins stated that was correct and that this would be in five-year increments. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether we were locked in at \$1,350 for 25 years. Pat Collins stated that we are but it can escalate. Councilman Payton inquired as to whether the 3% (\$40.50) increment increase would be added to the \$1,350 and whether it would grow each year. Larry Hanson stated that was correct.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve a Master Right-of-Way Agreement with Mobilitie, LLC for installation of a small tower and other wireless infrastructure.

Consideration of Easement Agreements with Georgia Power for connection of solar arrays at the old and new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plants.

David Frost, Assistant Utilities Director, stated that the City of Valdosta has been working with Hannah Solar and Georgia Power through a competitive process and was selected for multiple solar panel sites where the City would allow Hannah Solar to use some of our excess property for placement of solar panels at both the old and new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plants in return for a solar array for the City's use and benefit. At the July 7, 2016 Council Meeting, the City agreed to contract with Hannah Solar on a 2.5 acre tract of land for them to build a solar array by which they would sell power on the grid to Georgia Power. Instead of getting land lease payments from Hannah Solar, Hannah would build the City a separate solar array to provide power to the Mud Creek Plant. At the end of six years, Hannah Solar would deed the solar array to the City. Hannah would have all responsibility for construction, set-up, operation, and maintenance for the first six years. The solar array to be built and ultimately deeded to the City would provide 50kW of power, which would provide a portion of the power needed for the Treatment Plant. Using solar power instead of electricity would provide greater savings to the City than a land lease would generate in income. This same concept is now being utilized at the old and new Withlacoochee facilities. The solar array would save the City approximately over \$270,000 over a 30-year period in present day costs. Georgia Power has established a very aggressive installation schedule for Hannah Solar and has a project now underway at the old and new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant sites. Georgia Power needs an easement for the distribution line that will be going into the new solar fields at both the new and old Withlacoochee Treatment Plants. Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, reviewed the easements and Exhibits and based on the map, the easement will encroach over our pipeline. They have multiple poles at these locations on both sides of the pipeline. These lines will be an aerial power line easement which is not an issue, as we cannot grant any easement that crosses the pipeline on the ground. We can allow them to cross our sewer lines with an aerial line easement. David Frost recommended that Council approve Easement Agreements with Georgia Power for connection of solar arrays at the old and new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plants.

A MOTION by Councilman Yost, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve Easement Agreements with Georgia Power for connection of solar arrays at the old and new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plants.

Consideration of bids for the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant outfall emergency repair.

David Frost, Assistant Utilities Director, stated that a Wastewater Treatment Plant outfall is the discharge point of the treated wastewater into a body of water. Terminating at the banks of the Withlacoochee River, the outfall for the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant has been in use since 1979 when the first Withlacoochee Plant was constructed. It has been repaired and reinforced various times since then due to erosion from the river. Over time, the natural flow of any stream, creek, or river will gradually erode its banks especially during major storm events. This natural erosion will eventually washout sections underneath existing outfalls where action must be taken to rebuild the bank and reinforce or replace the outfall. The river and nearby stream have had very high flow rates during storm events and, as a result, significant erosion problems have impacted the Withlacoochee outfall. Because of floods in 2009 and 2013 along with continuing patterns of heavy rain events in recent years, the concrete outfall for the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant has been undermined due to washout from a nearby stream. This was a direct result of ongoing erosion of the stream and river bank where this outfall is located. Following an inspection of the outfall by a local engineering firm, it was determined that the outfall must be repaired and stabilized or it will be a threat to collapse in a major rain event that affects the river. Given its poor condition, location, and the forthcoming rainy season, this work should be expedited and completed as quickly as possible. A request for bids to repair the outfall and stabilize the surrounding stream banks was solicited from three local contractors capable of performing this work. One sole responsive bid was submitted on April 5, 2017 by RPI Underground, Inc. (RPI) in the amount of \$294,360. David Frost recommended that Council approve the bid submitted by RPI Underground, Inc. (RPI) in the amount of \$294,360 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for emergency repair of the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant outfall. Councilman Yost inquired as to whether this repair would fix the problem for quite a while because that is a lot of money. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the river is only half a mile away from the old Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant and once the wastewater is treated, it goes through the outfall, which is a large pipe, all the way to the Withlacoochee River where it is discharged. When the new Wastewater Treatment Plant was built, an outfall was built to connect to the existing outfall because otherwise we would have had to build a half mile

long, large line at several million dollars. It was in the City's best interest financially as well as regulatory because we would have had to go through an entire environmental permitting process to move the outfall. This is at the very end of the outfall where the major river storm events have washed it out underneath. We have had an engineer design it and a contractor spec it so we expect at least a 20-year life. They will be putting a lot of concrete in there to reinforce it so that it will not be subject to the river washing it out in the future. It will also be a challenge just to get the equipment in there to make the repairs and that is why there was only one bidder. David Frost stated that they should be able to start on the repairs in a couple of months depending on the weather.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the bid submitted by RPI Underground, Inc. (RPI) in the amount of \$294,360 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for the emergency repair of the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant outfall.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to declare two vehicles from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property.

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that the City of Valdosta Police Department has two Ford Crown Victoria Police Sedans which the Department desires to declare as surplus property. Each patrol vehicle's age is either 10 years or older or has high mileage and needs to be replaced and removed from service. In the past, dead lined Police vehicles are often sold by government entities to other organizations who may continue to use those vehicles, either in a non-law enforcement capacity or in smaller jurisdictions where the demand on the vehicles is not as high. The District Attorney's Office of the Southern Judicial Circuit and the City of Morven have both contacted the City and expressed an interest in purchasing one vehicle each for use at their respective government organizations. Chief Childress recommended that Council approve the request to declare two vehicles from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property and allow the Southern Judicial Circuit and the City of Morven to purchase the vehicles for \$10 each. Councilman Norton stated that he spoke with a City of Morven Police Officer and because of us allowing the City of Morven to purchase a vehicle it has allowed them to have a patrol car in the past when they did not have one.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the request to declare two vehicles from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property and allow the Southern Judicial Circuit and the City of Morven to purchase the vehicles \$10 each.

Consideration of a request to declare three, old handheld radios from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property.

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that the City of Valdosta Police Department currently has approximately 35 of the 800-MHz Motorola Handheld Radios which were replaced with new P-25 Motorola Radios using SPLOST VII funds. The older radios were initially purchased in 2001 and Motorola recommended the radios be replaced because they will no longer be supported in a few years and parts would not be available. In the past, the City has often sold surplus equipment to other governments and organizations who may continue to use the equipment, either in a law enforcement or non-law enforcement capacity, or in smaller jurisdictions where the demand on the surplus equipment may not be as high. The handheld radios are 16 years old, have some wear and tear to them based on their use, and parts will not be available in three years. The Police Department plans to sell the majority of the handheld radios to recoup some of the initial cost of the radios; however, the City of Morven Police Department is requesting three radios since they do not have sufficient radios for each Officer. Chief Childress recommended that Council approve the request to declare three, old handheld radios from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property and sell to the City of Morven for \$10 each.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the request to declare three, old handheld radios from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property and sell to the City of Morven for \$10 each.

There were no citizens to be heard.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that there was a Job Fair at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center today and it was aimed at helping those who have been incarcerated, paid their dues to society, and are looking for employment. There were 42 businesses and over 500 attendees at this Job Fair which was the brain child of Police Chief Brian Childress. This shows the effort that the City is making to help those in our community who need a job and to give them a hand up. Chief Childress stated that the Georgia Department of Labor brought a film crew from Atlanta because they could not believe this. All of the attendees were glad to have this opportunity. This was a team effort and no one can say that the City of Valdosta is not committed to help people get jobs.

This week was National Community Development Week and there were a lot of activities planned. Next week will be Georgia Cities Week and there are numerous events planned.

City Government 101 is going very well and the fourth session is coming up next Monday night at the City Hall Annex Building with Finance, Human Resources, and Main Street giving presentations. Council is welcome to attend.

The Spring Electronics Recycling Event was held on April 8, 2017 and they collected 17,677 pounds of metal, plastic, glass, computer housing, and peripheral equipment. Since 2006 we have kept 323 tons of electronic waste from going into the landfill.

Job applications for the Fire Department have increased tremendously and the salary increases that Council approved last year have really made a big difference. In 2015, the City had 32 applications for the Fire Department and last year we had 52. This year there has been 84 applications submitted and it is only April. Also, the Police Department is at 100% manning right now. Police Departments all across the State have significant vacancy rates and many are struggling with 30, 50, and 100 vacancies. The Public Works Department is three people away from being at full manning and two are currently in the hiring process. There is a significant benefit to what Council has done and you are seeing it with improved services to help keep our City clean and safe.

Work on the Clay Road Project is continuing and they are resurfacing today. There was a nice article in the Valdosta Daily Times today about the progress that is being made on this Project.

The Engineering Department has done an evaluation on the 71 railroad crossings in the City. The information was entered on a spreadsheet and into the GIS system and each one was given a grade. Approximately 84% of them are in good or fair condition. This gives us a tool to go to the railroad companies with and have them perform maintenance on those that are in poor condition. We will keep this record going forward so as improvements are made we will be able to track and know the age of the improvements. This is a great management tool and will help us to be proactive in evaluating the condition of all these crossings.

Council had a very good TSPLOST Work Session on Tuesday, April 18, 2017 and Pat Collins, City Engineer, and his Staff did a great job in putting together the presentation. There has been a lot of community discussion about it and it has been very well received.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the City ever received the title to the Olympic Park when there was a swap with the railroad. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we did get the title because they would have not released the funds without that exchange. Councilman Vickers also inquired about the Bulk Trash Amnesty Day. Larry Hanson stated that will be held on Saturday, April 22, 2017.

Councilman Yost stated that he wanted to commend the Hospital Authority for being as open as they have been on the hiring of a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), for interviewing people within a decent time period, and for taking to heart what some of us had said about the new CEO needs to live in this community, be a part of

the community, and be active in the community. Councilman Yost stated that they interviewed this week and he liked what he was hearing so far. They have a long way to go but he likes the direction they are heading in.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the April 20, 2016 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:36 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, May 11, 2017.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta