

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2016
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Pro Tem Alvin Payton, Jr. called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Sandra Tooley, Robert Yost, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Mayor John Gayle and City Attorney George Talley were absent. The invocation was given by Pastor Mark Brady, Anchor Faith Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

Consideration of the July, 2016 Employees of the Month Award (Lt. Jeff Talley, Sgt. Wade Briggs, and Firefighter Brandon Matheny, Valdosta Fire Department).

Fire Chief Freddie Broome stated that Jeff Talley began his employment with the Fire Department in January, 2000 and presently holds the position of Lieutenant. Lt. Talley manages the daily operations at the company level, supervises up to three employees, and leads emergency incidents. Wade Briggs began his employment with the Fire Department in October, 2006 and presently holds the position of Sergeant. Sgt. Briggs is responsible for driving a fire apparatus to and from emergency incidents and providing fire, rescue, and hazmat services. Brandon Matheny began his employment with the Fire Department in November, 2009 and presently holds the position of Firefighter. Firefighter Matheny is responsible for responding to emergency incidents and providing fire, rescue, and hazmat services. In early May of this year, Fire and EMS units were dispatched to Lowe's Home Improvement regarding a patient in possible cardiac arrest. On arrival with EMS, it was determined that the patient was pulseless. Lt. Talley, Sgt. Briggs, and Firefighter Matheny quickly assisted EMS with advanced life support and CPR resulting in the patient having a return of spontaneous circulation and breathing on scene. The late FDNY Chief, Edward F. Croker, once said, "I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a Fireman. The position may, in the eyes of some, appear to be a lowly one, but we who know the work which the Fireman has to do believe that his is a noble calling. Our proudest moment is to save lives." For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Lt. Jeff Talley, Sgt. Wade Briggs, and Firefighter Brandon Matheny as Employees of the Month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the June 23, 2016 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2016-15, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the Animal Control Ordinance. (Second Reading)

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that this is the Second Reading for the Animal Control Ordinance. The current City Ordinance addresses treatment, security, licensing, and enforcement of animal control activities inside the City Limits of Valdosta. In the past, Lowndes County Animal Control and Valdosta Police Officers have been charged with enforcing this Ordinance inside the City Limits. Recently the Lowndes County Commission adopted a revised Ordinance pertaining to animals. Due to the fact Lowndes County Animal Control is partly responsible for the enforcement of both County and City Ordinances pertaining to animals, the City has made revisions to the Animal Control Ordinance in order to be consistent with the adopted County Ordinance. One of the minor changes includes prohibiting the sale of animals on roadsides and parking lots. All of the City's animal cases would go through the Environmental Court and Hansell Watt, Prosecutor for Environmental Court, has reviewed the Ordinance and approved the changes.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2016-15, an Ordinance to amend the Animal Control Ordinance, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-9, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR A DOWNTOWN REVOLVING LOAN FUND (DDRLF) WITH THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (DCA) FOR THE REHABILITATION OF 312 AND 314 NORTH PATTERSON STREET

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the filing of an application for a Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the rehabilitation of 312 and 314 North Patterson Street.

Ellen Hill, Main Street Manager, stated that this Project involves the renovation of 312 and 314 North Patterson Street. This is one building with storefronts on North Patterson Street and Magnolia Street. The building is currently not being utilized and has been that way for a number of years. Renovation of this building will add to the revitalization of northern gateway into Downtown Valdosta. This Project is designed to save a historic building and provide key steps for the continued renaissance of Downtown Valdosta. The building is 64 years old and is approximately 9,100 square feet. The planned Project includes renovation and conversion of the building, which was originally Lovett's Food Store, into offices that will be used by purchaser, Three Fourteen, LLC and its affiliate, TISHCO Group as Corporate Headquarters. It is the intent of the owner to maintain as much historical preservation both inside and outside as feasible. Currently, the building is owned by Three Fourteen, LLC. The building is a historic structure and recognized as a resource in the Valdosta Commercial Historic District as listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The total investment is estimated to be \$650,000 with a total DDRLF request of \$250,000. The Project will bring an estimated 27 jobs to the Downtown area. The Project will include renovation of floors, ceilings, windows, roof, doors, and walls. Upon completion, the building will contain approximately 30 offices, a kitchen/break room, training rooms, restrooms, and conference rooms. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will have the only lien on the Project. The assets of the Project will be owned by the lien holders and the Project owners upon completion. As stipulated in the DDRLF funding information, this Project would be awarded to the City of Valdosta who will then enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Central Valdosta Development Authority (CVDA), a constitutionally created authority in Georgia. The ultimate sub-recipient of the DDRLF will be Three Fourteen, LLC. Ellen Hill, Main Street Manager, recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the filing of an application for a Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the rehabilitation of 312 and 314 North Patterson Street.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Resolution No. 2016-9, a Resolution authorizing the filing of an application for a Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the rehabilitation of 312 and 314 North Patterson Street, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-10, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR A DOWNTOWN REVOLVING LOAN FUND (DDRLF) WITH THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (DCA) FOR THE REHABILITATION OF 202 AND 204 NORTH PATTERSON STREET

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the filing of an application for a Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the rehabilitation of 202 and 204 North Patterson Street.

Ellen Hill, Main Street Manager, stated that this Project involves the renovation of 202 and 204 North Patterson Street. The Project is designed to bring new life to a historic building and provide key steps for the continued renaissance of Downtown Valdosta. The building was built circa 1900 and is approximately 10,800 square feet. The planned Project includes renovation of the building into commercial (office and retail) space. It is the intent of the owner to maintain as much historical preservation both inside and outside as feasible. The property was purchased by Kun-Young Chiu in 2015. The building is a historic structure, and recognized as a resource in

the Valdosta Commercial Historic District, as listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The total investment is estimated to be \$750,000 and the Project will bring approximately 15 jobs to the Downtown area. The equity in the building will be funded by Kun-Young Chiu in the amount of \$500,000. There will be no permanent financing by a bank. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will have the only lien on the Project. The assets of the Project will be owned by the lien holders and the Project owners upon completion. As stipulated in the DDRLF funding information, this Project would be awarded to the City of Valdosta who will then enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Central Valdosta Development Authority (CVDA), a constitutionally created authority in Georgia. The ultimate sub-recipient of the DDRLF will be Kun-Young Chiu. Ellen Hill, Main Street Manager, recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the filing of an application for a Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the rehabilitation of 202 and 204 North Patterson Street.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to enact Resolution No. 2016-10, a Resolution authorizing the filing of an application for a Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the rehabilitation of 202 and 204 North Patterson Street, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to approve a Quit Claim Deed for Dorothy Suzette Martin.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that when the property for the City of Valdosta's new Wastewater Treatment Plant was rezoned from Agriculture to the current zoning (M-2), the County required that a 10 foot high, 30 foot wide landscape berm be constructed on the northern property line as a buffer for the adjacent property. The property line is almost 1800 feet long so construction of the berm would be expensive (approximately \$150,000 or more) and an ongoing maintenance burden. Construction of the berm would also require removal a healthy stand of hardwood trees. Lovell Engineering approached the County on behalf of the City to discuss a variance to the berm requirement in exchange for designating an undisturbed buffer along the property line. The County agreed that it made sense to leave the trees as a natural buffer; however, the County did require that the City get concurrence from the adjacent property owner, Mrs. Dorothy Suzette Martin. Jeff Lovell, Lovell Engineering, met with Ms. Martin at the site last year and it was discovered that the property line actually runs through an old silo and shelter that was used on the Martin property in years past as part of the farming operation. Mrs. Martin agreed that if the City were to quit claim enough property to allow the silo and shelter to be on their property, in return she would concur with the request to allow the undisturbed buffer in lieu of the berm construction. Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, and Larry Hanson, City Manager, were in agreement with Mrs. Martin's request. The County has granted the variance so the last step is get the property quit claimed to Mrs. Martin. The City Attorney's office has reviewed this and prepared the documents. Larry Hanson, City Manager, recommended that Council approve a Quit Claim Deed for Dorothy Suzette Martin.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve a Quit Claim Deed for Dorothy Suzette Martin.

Consideration of a letter from the City of Valdosta to formally transmit the draft 2016 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review and comment.

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that the Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan is a shared long-range planning document for Lowndes County and all five of its cities. The current Plan was adopted in 2006 and has since undergone periodic amendments. State law requires that we complete a full update of the Comprehensive Plan every ten years. Beginning in January, 2016, the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (GLPC) and Staff Planners of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) have been hosting a series of public workshops to discuss and revise various portions of the Comprehensive Plan. This included the incorporation of community goals and policies from the 2014 "Common Community Vision" process with the goals and policies of the current Comprehensive Plan. It has also included the incorporation of elements from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Long-Range Transportation Plan, the City's HUD Consolidated Plan for housing, as well as other local master plans and community planning efforts. We are now about 3/4 of the way

through our Plan Update process and conducted all of the community workshops and two of the three required public hearings. The draft of the revised/updated Comprehensive Plan is now ready for transmittal to the State and Regional Planning Office for review and comment. The current draft can be viewed on the SGRC website. In accordance with State law, each of our six local governments must formally transmit the draft (via letter) to the SGRC and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review and comment. Lowndes County approved their transmittal on June 28, 2016 and the Cities of Hahira, Lake Park, and Valdosta will consider theirs this week, followed by the Cities of Remerton and Dasher later in July. Once the SGRC receives all six transmittals, they will in turn transmit the draft to DCA for their review. The DCA process will take approximately 30 days (until sometime in late August). The draft is still open to changes and local input. Once DCA has completed their review, the draft will then be finalized in accordance with DCA comments and the local input. Depending on the magnitude of changes based on the DCA comments, the GLPC will review the revised final draft at either their August or September meeting. They will then make a formal recommendation on the Plan adoption. Each local government will then individually adopt the Comprehensive Plan at their regular Council meeting in either September or early October. The final deadline for completing all of this is October 31, 2016. Matt Martin recommended that Council approve a letter from the City of Valdosta to formally transmit the draft 2016 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan Update to the SGRC and DCA for review and comment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve a letter from the City of Valdosta to formally transmit the draft 2016 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan Update to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review and comment.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of a request to approve an Agreement with Hannah Solar for a Solar Project at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that several years ago the City of Valdosta partnered with Hannah Solar through the Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority to have a solar array at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant. As is often the case, innovation was ahead of regulation and at the time it was the City's goal to find a way to use solar to help power our Treatment Plant in order to save on electrical costs which is one of the major costs of these Plants. At that time, it was not allowed under the Public Service Commission regulations so the City entered into a Land Lease Agreement with Hannah Solar where they are paying us an annual land lease payment of \$18,750 for 20 years. The agreement has two, five-year options for renewals and rent escalations over the life of the Agreement. A solar array basically consists of panels and there is very little cost in operating them. Most of the panels have a 20-year warranty so we would expect to have a manufacturer's warranty for the normal life of the panels. The maintenance of the panels is not significant and depends upon the area where they are constructed or arrayed and whether or not you get a lot of dust, leaves, or other air particles. The City could maintain the solar panels or Hannah Solar offers a Service and Maintenance Contract for either five or ten years with the lower price offered in the ten-year Contract. The regulations have now changed and the City has been working with Hannah Solar and Georgia Power through a competitive process to be selected for a solar site where the City would allow Hannah Solar to use some of our excess property for placement of solar panels at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant. The City would agree to lease Hannah Solar 2.5 acres of land for them to build a solar array by which they would sell power on the grid to Georgia Power; however, 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 50 kilowatts (kW) 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. The solar array would save the City approximately \$9,000 per year and 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 deadline for placement of these panels at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant of August 12, 2016. This would be the first of three steps that the City and Hannah Solar plan to bring to the Council. The next proposal will be for solar panels at the new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant which would bring another megawatt. The third step would be to place solar panels at the old Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant and Hannah Solar would go through the same process. If Hannah

Solar is successful in obtaining approval for all three proposals, the City could end up with 50 kW at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant and 150 kW at the Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plants for a total of 200 kW of renewable, sustainable energy supporting not only the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant but also the new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Councilman Carroll stated that this is yet another step in the process that our City has taken, and in many respects, a leadership role hand-in-hand with Hannah Solar. We can all be proud of this as we look to the future and take advantage of these opportunities to lower the cost of operating the Wastewater Treatment Plants. It is ultimately the citizens who pay this bill and it lowers the cost to them.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve an Agreement with Hannah Solar for a Solar Project at the Mud Creek Water Treatment Plant.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated a Press Release was sent out today regarding the fourth and final phase of the Smoke Testing Program which will begin on July 11, 2016. It will take approximately 18-20 weeks to complete depending upon the weather. There are 300 miles in the collection system and we have already completed three phases of 60 miles in each phase. We are now combining two years into one so Phase 4 will be 120 miles of sewer lines that will be smoke-tested to find any deficiencies or any sources of inflow and infiltration. City Staff will be placing notifications on doors to advise residents of the smoke testing in their area, and we will also be sending out information to the public so that citizens will know what to expect.

The Main Street Program was recently reaccredited by the National Main Street Association and this is the 32nd consecutive year they have received this award. This is quite an honor and a landmark. In the last 18 months alone we have had none new businesses locate in Downtown Valdosta creating approximately 60 jobs and over \$5 million in private investment. There are a lot of positive things going on in Downtown Valdosta.

Farm Days will be held on Saturday, July 9, 2016 in the Downtown area and Restaurant Week will be coming up on July 18-22, 2016 to spotlight the great places to dine.

The City is currently advertising for ten slots that are open on Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees. These slots are for the Central Valdosta Development Authority, the Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority, the Valdosta Tree Commission, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Valdosta-Lowndes County Construction Board of Appeals. Citizens are encouraged to apply.

The Mayor and Council took a tour last week of the homes that have been repaired by the Southern Hospitality Group Workcamp. There were over 200 young people in Valdosta from all over the country helping us with housing needs in our community. There were 19 homes that had minor repairs and painting at no cost to local elderly and disabled homeowners. Since the program started ten years ago they have repaired 301 homes in our City which has a value of approximately \$2 million in economic investment. It is a partnership through the Group Workcamp, Valdosta City Schools, Lowe's Distribution Center, Wild Adventures, and many others who help to make this a reality. There will be a presentation at the August 11th City Council and some of the homeowners will be in attendance to express their feelings about the Workcamp.

An orientation for the Great Promise Partnership was held on Wednesday, July 6, 2016. This Program will provide up to two years of employment, job training, and income to low income, at-risk high students. This is an incentive and a reward for them to stay in school and finish their education. City of Valdosta Departments participating in this Program are as follows: Engineering, Planning & Zoning, Inspections, Permits, Finance, Main Street, Public Information, and Human Resources. This is an exciting opportunity for the students and we anticipate that it will be a great success. Valdosta will be one of the first municipalities in the State of Georgia to participate in this Program.

The City will hold a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Force Main Project on Tuesday, July 12, 2016, at 8:00 a.m. This is a culmination of a number of years of

hard work and effort to get to this point. There are several agencies that want to write this up as a Model Project for other communities to learn how to deal with a disaster and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and then find a way to get a Project done through a creative design build. These Projects were completed on time and within budget and will serve the City for the next 50 years. This will be a momentous occasion and Council is encouraged to attend.

The Fire Department will hold a Promotion Ceremony on Friday, July 15, 2016, at 12:00 p.m. at the Parks and Recreation facility located at 1901 North Forrest Street. Fire Chief Freddie Broome will be recognizing two new recruits and four new Firefighters who will be promoted to Sergeant, six Sergeants who are being promoted to Lieutenants, one Lieutenant who is being promoted to Special Operations Captain, and one Firefighter who will be promoted to Sr. Community Educator.

The Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) Annual Conference was held recently in Savannah and the City of Valdosta was very active and involved in many of their sessions. Our City was used as an example for others by using creative ways to obtain grants and loans. GMA is also a great way for us to learn about other communities and the things that they are doing.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers inquired about the annual Sales Tax numbers. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we received the numbers today and it was down approximately \$60,000 over the same month last year. Unfortunately, we are still running between 2-5% depending on the month and much of this is attributed to on-line sales. Councilman Vickers stated that he thought it would get worse. Larry Hanson stated that he has been told to expect Congress to take a vote on a Marketplace Fairness Act before the end of the year. The State of Georgia had to pass a streamline sales tax so now the problem is getting the Federal government to authorize States to collect sales tax on those that do not have a physical presence in Georgia. Senator Johnny Isakson and Congressman Austin Scott are both in support and they feel that there will be enough favorable votes on this issue.

Councilman Yost thanked the Staff for all their hard work on the new Withlacoochee Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Force Main Project. This will take care of the City's needs for many years to come. Also, he had a telephone call from a gentleman this week who wanted to discuss the Hospital Authority and a VA Hospital. It was his recommendation that Smith-Northview Hospital become a VA Hospital. It would bring in many people from Valdosta and the surrounding communities who have those needs but have to travel to Lake City and other places for VA services. Councilman Yost stated that until he gets action and knows that we are headed in the right direction with our own hospital, it is very important that the current members (Johnny Langdale, Greg Powell, Sam Allen, and Tim Dame) who represent the City and City Council on the Hospital Authority resign and let someone else come in and work ethically and morally to do the right thing for this community. It has not been done, it is not being done, and it needs to be done.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that she was excited about having so many young people in our area yesterday and today. Greater Mt. Carmel Church, under the leadership of Pastor David Northcutt, had the 44th National Youth Convention at the Valdosta State University Student Center. There were over 800 youth plus adults in attendance and today there were 400 youth in Scott Park. They are using Drury Inn and will be going to Wild Adventures. This is great for our community and the City's economy.

Mayor Pro Tem Payton stated that GMA is a very good training tool and he attended numerous meetings and training sessions in Savannah. There was one session entitled "Money, Money, Money, Money, Money" which got his attention and Larry Hanson, City Manager, was on the panel because Valdosta has done an excellent job with grants and loans. Council is encouraged to take advantage of some of the additional training and policy meetings.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Edgar Robinson, 921 Lausanne Drive, stated that in 2012 the City resurfaced the road and put asphalt in the gutters so now the drainage is very poor on Lausanne Drive and Ponderosa. He has called and inquired about it but he has never received an answer. Larry Hanson, City Manager, asked Pat Collins, City Engineer, to get the contact

information from Mr. Robinson. Mr. Robinson also stated that the speed limit signs are wrong. They do not have speed limit signs on the left side of the road. Larry Hanson stated that by Ordinance, the speed limit in residential neighborhoods is 30 miles per hour. There are speed bumps along Ponderosa and the Police Department and Engineering Department do not feel that there will be a lot of speeding because of the bumps; therefore, the need for speed limit signs was not apparent. Mr. Robinson stated that the speed bumps have been there for 15 years and they are worn out.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Payton entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the July 7, 2016 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:13 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, July 21, 2016.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta