



REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL

5:30 PM Thursday, May 5, 2016
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

MINUTES

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, Robert Yost, Sandra Tooley, Vivian Miller-Cody, Councilman Alvin Payton, and Councilman Ben Norton. The invocation was given by Pastor William Holliman, New Life Ministries Youth Pastor, immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Special Recognition of 2015-16 Valdosta Youth Council Members

Under the direction of Mayor John Gayle and his appointed advisory board, the 14-member Valdosta Youth Council (VYC) have successfully completed their inaugural 2015-2016 council year with a variety of accomplishments, meeting all expectations for their first year. The VYC was created for youth to build leadership skills and learn about civic responsibility, to gain a better understanding of municipal government, and to prepare youth for a lifetime of public and community service.

Throughout the 2015-16 school year, VYC members embraced their mission and accomplished the following:

- Gained an understanding and appreciation of municipal government by meeting monthly with a variety of city leaders.
- Established an anti-bullying campaign, partnering with a local author and the Valdosta Police Department to plan an anti-bullying event in the public schools for October 2016 (National Anti-Bullying Month).
- Oversaw the 2016 “If I Were Mayor” Essay Contest (which is no longer hosted by the Georgia Municipal Association).
- Collectively completed more than 112 community service hours—a minimum of 8 hours each.
- Won 1st place in the category of “Best Group Tree Hug” in the Valdosta Tree Commission’s Hug A Tree Photo Contest.
- Participated in the Valdosta Christmas Tree Lighting and other city-sponsored events.
- Established the Teen Talk show on Metro 17 with the assistance of Metro 17’s Marcus McConico, to discuss issues being addressed each month at VYC meetings.
- Established a VYC Facebook page for local youth to follow the work of the VYC, to be informed on youth issues, and to discover ways to be engaged in their local government.
- Ten of the 14 VYC members have made commitments to continue on the council for the 2016-2017 school year!

The members of the inaugural VYC are Amelia Barnett, Rachel Carter, Drew Correll, Dante’ Echols, Matthew Hall, Charlesie Hammond, Jalith Harding, Makayla Jackson, Keria Jones, Erin Kelly, Zion Leggett, Abbi Long, Tay Ramsey and Christy Williams.

The appointed members of the VYC Advisory Board are Councilman Ben Norton, City Clerk Teresa Bolden, Valdosta Middle School Educator Lynn Orenstein, J.L. Newbern Middle School Guidance Counselor Jennifer Williams, and Public Information Officer Sementa Mathews.

Mayor Gayle acknowledged the Youth Advisory Members that were in attendance, presented them with a certificate and Mayor's Coin, and thanked them for their excellent representation of the City.

Consideration of the May 2016, Employee of the Month Award (Ronald Shoemake, Robert Mercer, and Lloyd Cummings - Fire Department)

Ronald Shoemake began his employment with the Fire Department October of 2004, and presently holds the position of Lieutenant. Lt. Shoemake is responsible for managing the daily operations at the company level. He oversees two to three employees and is responsible for supervising during emergency incidents.

Robert Mercer began his employment with the Fire Department June of 2005, and presently holds the position of Sergeant. Sgt. Mercer is responsible for operating fire service apparatus and also manages engine companies in the absence of the Lieutenant.

Lloyd Cummings began his employment with the Fire Department September of 2012, and presently holds the position of Firefighter. FF Cummings is responsible for responding to emergency incidents and providing fire, rescue, medical, haz-mat and special rescue services.

On January 30th of this year, Fire Engine Company 6 was dispatched to a medical event call at the Lowndes High School gym during a sporting event. Upon arrival, Lt. Shoemake, Sgt. Mercer and FF Cummings found EMS working on a patient that had suffered cardiac arrest. These three men jumped right in and began assisting EMS with the school's AED. Witnesses on scene had nothing but high praises and comments to the professionalism and remarkable teamwork exhibited by Lt. Shoemake, Sgt. Mercer and FF Cummings.

The "VFD Way" is what makes this department unique and describes expectations for positive and constructive interaction. Lt. Shoemake, Sgt. Mercer, and FF Cummings all care about the well-being of our organization because it serves the common good of the members and our customers - the public.

For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominates Lt. Ronald Shoemake, Sgt. Robert Mercer, and FF Lloyd Cummings as Employees of the Month for May 2016.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from of the April 21, 2016, Regular Meeting were approved by acclamation.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the sale of surplus real estate located at 107 North Troupe Street.

Mark Barber, Assistant City Manager, stated staff is asking for Council's support on a resolution to sale property located at 107 North Troupe Street. If you call a few months back you were asked to declare several pieces of property owned by the City as surplus. Although all of the properties were advertised for bid, the property located 107 North Troupe Street was the only one that received interest. This property is directly across from the Valdosta Daily Times and was advertised at a minimum bid of \$5,000. Staff recommends approval of the bid received in the amount of \$5001.00 and authorization for the sale of the property by resolution.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Carrol was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2016-6, a Resolution authorizing the sale of surplus real estate, the complete text of which can be found in Book V.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request for a Letter of Support for a DCA Affordable Housing Renovation Project.

Vanassa Flucas, Neighborhood Development Manager, stated that Omni America, LLC, a Privately Held Provider of Real Estate Development, Construction, and Property Management Company who is seeking a letter of support for Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for the renovation of Brittany Woods and Park Chase Apartments located within the City of Valdosta.

If approved this project will be funded through low income tax credit grants that are available through DCA; however Omni America, LLC is required to receive a letter of support from the governing body where the renovation project is located. Mayor Gayle asked Ms. Flucas if she would be providing him with a draft letter for his signature. Ms. Flucas stated that a sample letter of support from GICH was included in the agenda packet.

A **MOTION** from Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Payton was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve a letter of support for Omni America LLC.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

All appointments to the various Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committee Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council.

Mayor Gayle reminded Council of his statement at Tuesday's work session regarding the upcoming negotiations of HB 489 and the Service Delivery Strategy with the County and other local cities. It is normal procedure for one other elected official to serve with Mr. Hanson and me during the negotiations. Councilman Vickers made a motion to appoint Councilman Carroll stating that Councilman Carroll has been a part of these type of negotiations and would be an excellent representative. The **MOTION** was seconded by Councilman Alvin Payton and adopted unanimously by members of council.

Mayor Gayle made Councilman Carroll aware that the next scheduled Service Delivery Strategy meeting would held on Monday, May 16, 2016, at 2:30 p.m. in the Lowndes County Judicial Complex.

Consideration of appointments to the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Board (KLVB) has two openings. Board Member Moly Ferrier Roan's term will expire at the end of June. Ms. Roan has expressed an interest in being reappointed. KLVB is also seeking to fill a position left open earlier this year when Board Member Lindsay Ray resigned. Mayor Gayle opened the floor for nominations. Councilman Norton placed into consideration the name of Molly Roan. There being no other nominations; Council voted to appoint Ms. Roan by a (7-0) vote.

The second position was opened for nominations. Councilwoman Tooley put in the name of Audrey King for consideration. There being no other nominations, Council voted to appoint Ms. King by a (7-0) vote.

Consideration of appointments to the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) has three members whose terms expire on June 1, 2016. The positions are listed as follows: 1) Position #1 - LVAC Professional Artist (City), 2) Position #2 - LVAC Board Member (City) and 3) Position #3 Community-at-Large.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to appoint Pam Scruggs, a professional artist, who qualified for Position #1.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Council Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to appoint Pam Scruggs to serve a term as the LVAC Professional Artist on the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to appoint Steve Lahr, retired educator, for Position #2 - LVAC Board Member.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to appoint Steve Lahr to serve a term as the LVAC Board Member on the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Mayor Gayle opened the floor for nominations for Position #3 - Community-at-Large. Councilman Carroll placed the name of Carol Hartley-Oliver in for consideration. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations and entertained a motion to appoint Carol Hartley-Oliver.

A MOTION by Council Carroll, seconded by Council Norton was unanimously adopted (7-0) to appoint Carol Hartley-Oliver to serve a term as the Community-at-Large member on the Public Art Advisory Committee.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority.

Mayor Gayle stated that current Board Member Stan Rome filled an unexpired term on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority. Mr. Rome's term will expire on June 30, 2016 and he has expressed an interest in being reappointed. We also have three other applicants for consideration; Miguel Vincente, Monica Wright, and Tim Coombs.

Mayor Gayle asked for nominations. Councilman Carroll placed the name of Stan Rome in for consideration. There being no other nominations, Mayor Gayle closed nominations and entertained a motion to appoint Stan Rome to serve another term on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted to appoint Stan Rome to serve a three year term on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority.

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority.

Mayor Gayle stated back in 2015, the Land Bank Authority asked for an expansion which opened up another position for a board member on the Authority. This is one of the board positions that will be appointed by the Mayor. Barry Broome and Councilwoman Sandra Tooley both submitted applications for consideration. After careful consideration Mayor Gayle appointed Councilwoman Sandra Tooley to serve as a board member on the Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority.

Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta Housing Authority.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Valdosta Housing Authority has two open positions. The first open position is to fill the unexpired term of Chairman Robert Jenkins and the second open position is a residential appointment currently held by Ms. DeShonda Jenkins. Mayor Gayle appointed Mr. Frank Morman, Jr., Retired USAF, to fill the unexpired term of Chairman Robert Jenkins and reappointed DeShonda Jenkins to serve as the Residential Board Member.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, Assistant City Manager, briefly reviewed the South GA Coalition Job Fair to include a handout showing the statistics received from the event.

Some of you participated in the trip to Savannah last Saturday. This will give you an idea of what we're looking to do in Valdosta in the future and the direction we would like to head.

Finally, we are getting close to completing the budget and will hopefully have some dates to submit to you soon for our budget hearings.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Robert Yost presented copy of a letter to Council that he stated outlined concerns at South Georgia Medical Center. Councilman Yost also reviewed a list of compiled information from individuals whom he stated did not wish to be identified. These individuals have spoken to me regarding the hospital and given me their thoughts. This information should help those Council Members who say they have no knowledge of wrong doings at the hospital. Councilman Yost stated that the information he presented should be sufficient enough to request the immediate resignation of Hospital Authority members appointed by the City. Furthermore, the hospital attorney and CEO should also be fired immediately. This information has been shared because everyone should be as knowledgeable as possible when approached by constituents and asked about this issue, and why Council has not reacted. Councilman Yost stated that in the letter shared with Council, he is actually criticized for withdrawing an open records request filed earlier this year and submitted to the Hospital Authority. This request was withdrawn because two members of the Hospital Authority promised to provide me with the requested information if my request was withdrawn; however, the information was never provided to me because Authority Members do not have access to the documentation that was requested. Councilman Yost stated that he would be happy to try and answer questions and wanted to state for the record that the information presented did not come from him but from people who work every day at the hospital and are afraid to speak publicly about their concerns.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Ms. Barbara Burleigh, 2605 Lowndes Drive, Valdosta, GA stated she was concerned about vandalism and trespassers on her property. Ms. Burleigh stated that she has resided at the same residence

for 35 years but is now afraid and is reaching out to Council for assistance because of a stalker. The police has been dispatched to my home on several occasions but the issue has not been resolved. Ms. Burleigh stated that she knows who the stalker is and has had a surveillance system put in. This gentleman will come and tap on my window late at night and it scares me. Ms. Burleigh stated that she has is out of options and appealed to Council for help.

Mayor Gayle replied that he would ensure that the proper authorities reached out to Ms. Burleigh. Chief Brian Childress was in attendance and stated that he would speak with Ms. Burleigh and try to provide some assistance.

Mr. Ken Klanicky, 2300 North Patterson, Valdosta, Georgia, shared his concerns about a story printed in the Valdosta Daily Times regarding the placement of a storage building in the Fairview District in downtown Valdosta. Mr. Klanicky stated that he did not have all of the facts but he dismayed at the prospect of a self-storage building in downtown. He further stated that he would be gathering facts, keeping an open mind, and listening to comments. Mr. Klanicky stated that he planned to be in attendance when the issue is presented to Council and is astounded that consideration of a storage building was even being considered for downtown. Mr. Klanicky thanked Council for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the May 5, 2016, Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:08 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, May 19, 2016.

Associate City Clerk

Mayor, City of Valdosta