

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

Mayor 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 James Wright. The invocation was given by Pastor Scotty Williams, Legacy Youth Pastor, New Covenant Church, and immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Consideration of the April 2015, Employee of the Month Award (Greg Brown, Purchasing Department).

Greg Brown began his employment July of 1995, as the Purchasing Agent, the position he currently holds.

As the Purchasing Agent, Greg selects products for purchase by obtaining price quotes, reviews bid proposals, negotiates certain contracts within budgetary limitations, presents bid items for consideration at council meetings and maintains all procurement records. In addition, with Greg's initiative, he began placing City surplus items on GovDeals.com, making the City hundreds of thousands of dollars. Several months ago, employee Aaron Strickland came upon a disabled citizen in City Hall seeking a permit. Aaron noticed the gentleman was ill and after inquiring was informed that he had Parkinson's. Realizing that the illness was beginning to flare up, Aaron called on Greg for assistance. They assisted the gentleman to the basement and across the street to the Permit Office. After the citizen received his permit, Greg and Aaron realized he was in no shape to drive and decided to drive him home. The gentleman was very grateful for their help as they ensured that he made it inside his home safe and sound. Greg stepped up and went far above and beyond to help a citizen. In addition, recently, both custodians at City Hall were out of work due to medical reasons. Greg took it upon himself to complete the trash routes in City Hall and the Annex. Greg performed these duties for several weeks to ensure this housekeeping duty was completed. With the hard work and excellent service by Greg, the city buildings never missed being serviced.

For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominates Greg Brown as Employee of the Month.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 19, 2015 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-6, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend 4 chapters of the City's Land Development Regulations (LDR) as it pertains to Chapter 106 Definitions, Chapter 214 Standards Applying to All Districts, Chapter 218 Use Regulations, and Chapter 238 Historic Preservation (File No. VA-2015-02). The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their March regular meeting and recommended approval. (8-0 vote).

Matt Martin, Zoning Administrator, stated that the item on the agenda from the Planning Commission proposes amendments to the City's Land Development Regulations (LDR). The City of Valdosta is requesting to amend four (4) different Chapters of the City's Land Development Regulations (LDR) as it pertains to Chapter 106 Definitions, Chapter 214 Standards Applying to All Districts, Chapter 218 Use Regulations, and Chapter 238 Historic Preservation. These amendments are divided into 3 "groups" which represent 3 different categories. Group number 1 addresses Historic Preservation; that is to realign or rearrange the submittal for process for appeals to certificate of appropriateness whereby appeals will be submitted directly to staff in my office rather than to the City Clerk. Group number 2 deals with adjustments to the residential minimum buildings setbacks strictly in the rear yard. Group number 3 requests the addition of two new line items to the Use Table; one for Microbrewery and one for Brewpub and that those use definitions be added to the definitions chapter. The Planning Commission

reviewed this at their March Regular Meeting and found these amendments consistent with our Comprehensive Plan recommend approval.

Councilman Carroll stated that the item was a Public Hearing item. Mayor Gayle asked if there were citizens who would like to speak on the request. No one spoke in favor or opposition of the request. Mayor Gayle asked Council for a motion to approve all three items at one time or a motion to approve them individually.

A **MOTION** by Carroll, seconded by Councilman Yost, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the items as presented and enact Ordinance No. 2015-6, an ordinance to amend four chapters of the City's Land Development Regulations as it pertains to Chapter 106 - Definitions, Chapter 214 - Standards Applying to All Districts, Chapter 218- Use regulations, and Chapter 238 - Historic Preservation, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a Request for Two Change Orders for the Force Main Project.

Henry Hicks, Director of Utilities stated that this item was a request for two change orders. Change Order number one is the remainder of items from the Value Engineering Process that the Utilities Department and Parsons Engineering negotiated with Garney Construction. There are 19 items listed, some are deductions, some additions, and some are at no cost. This Change Order results in a net decrease in the contract amount by \$2,931.00. Change Order No. 2 is associated with the relocation of a cell tower that was in the way of the force main. Three different options were discussed and evaluated and ultimately the best option and most economical option was to relocate the communication and power cables. This is also the safest and least time consuming of the options considered. The work on this Change Order would be split into 4 different sections with Georgia Power and AT&T installing new cable; Garney would perform the work on the new conduits and Tower Cable would perform the fiber optics work. The total amount for Change Order No. 2 is \$77,549.54.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request for two Changer Orders for the Force Main Project.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that this week is National Community Development Week and there have been a number of activities scheduled this week starting with a proclamation signing Mayor Gayle on Monday designating this week as Community Develop Week. Other activities on Monday consisted of a tour for interested citizens to tour CDBG projects and a workshop - Knowing Your Fair Housing Rights that was repeated on Tuesday. On Wednesday staff teamed up with the VSU Small Business Development Center and offered a free, Small Business 101, workshop for small business owners. Today a Home Buyer Education 101 workshop was offered. As you can see, Mayor and Council, there were numerous activities going on this week to try and help educate the citizens in the community.

Mr. Hanson informed Council that the first class of City Government 101 was held this past Monday. We had a full class and have started a waiting list with five signed up for next year. It was a very successful event and will continue for six consecutive Mondays. I believe this coming Monday's class, Court and Public Safety, will be held at Municipal Court. We invite all of you to come out, break bread with the class members, and participate in any or all classes that might be convenient for you.

Mr. Hanson stated that the Citizen's Police Academy is in full session and has been going on for three weeks. It is a successful program that continues to be well received. I also wanted to remind you that on this Saturday the City will again host the Electronic Recycling Program. The event will take place in the parking lot of Mathis Auditorium from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. Last year at two events held in the spring and fall, over 30,000 pounds was collected and since the program started in 2000, we have saved over 535,000 pounds or 268 tons of electronic products from entering landfills. That is a very positive thing.

Mr. Hanson also made Council aware that the mosquito spraying program started on Wednesday of this week. It typically takes about eight days to cover the city depending on wind and weather. We only have one operator who starts in the afternoons about 5:30 or 6:00, so you'll now be hearing and seeing that in the afternoons. We've also put Larvicide tablets in all retention ponds owned by the City.

Mr. Hanson stated that about a month or so ago Council viewed a video produced by Michael of Channel 17 showcasing the fire department's technology enhancement which featured Lt. Thibodeau demonstrating how iPads have improved the service provided to our citizens and helped improve the overall quality of work produced by the department. GMA picked up the story and wrote an article that was published in Georgia Cities Magazine. We have now been contacted by another city that is interested in what we're doing and is sending representatives from their fire department to look at and evaluate our technology implementation to see if it would be beneficial for them to replicate what we're doing. That is another positive thing for our city. Adding to that, our own Chief Broome will be representing us on Saturday night in the Dancing with the Stars Competition. For any of you interested in attending we still have a few tickets left; I'm sure Chief Broome will appreciate the support.

Mr. Hanson stated that the dedication for Minnie Martin Drive is scheduled for Saturday. Staff is working hard to ensure that everything looks well. I believe Engineering will be putting the signs up on tomorrow morning and placing a bag over them until the dedication ceremony. We welcome all of you to attend. A very nice heartwarming press release detailing many of the things Ms. Martin has done for and in our community was sent out earlier this week.

Mr. Hanson made Council aware that Mathis Auditorium received some cosmetic improvements such as painting, upgrades on the bathrooms, roof improvements and reupholstering of furniture. There are still a few things left to complete but everything looks good and is working well at the auditorium at this time.

Mr. Hanson showed Council a picture of the City's newly completed gateway located on North Valdosta Road. As you may recall, the City applied for a grant with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) called a gateway grant, so this gateway was primarily grant funded. GDOT requires those funds to be used on a state route which limited where we were able to place the gateway; last year we collectively chose North Valdosta Road. This is the first of about ten gateways that will use this package as we wanted to design something that could be replicated in other places. Looking at the picture you might notice that there are a variety of flowers, bushes, and plants which actually totaled 142 in all used at this location. We have received quite a few compliments on the gateway; in fact yesterday we had people stopping and taking pictures next to the sign. Our goal was for people to have a good feeling entering and leaving our city. Staff is already looking at other locations and I believe the next highest priority location will be Madison Highway or South Patterson as we are trying to take care of the major entrances into the city first. I hope you are pleased with the first sign; this was a suggestion by Mayor Gayle and a goal of Mayor and Council. Most importantly that sign was completed by our own Stormwater Division who built that sign in-house to save money. Lastly, there will be a small dedication ceremony at the site on Arbor Day, so look for some information on that sometime soon.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers asked about Mathis Auditorium and whether the renovations included the replacement of tables and chairs in the Multi-Purpose Room. Mr. Richard Hardy, Director of Public responded that the tables and chairs had not been replaced yet but that item was on the agenda.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Ms. Gracie Bacon of 708 Holly Drive stated that the junk yards in her neighborhood have worsened since the last time she spoke at the City Council meeting. Junk has been removed from 701 and taken to 709 and 711. 701 is empty at this time because the resident died. The home has been cleaned and material has been placed on the street in front of the home and has turned into a community junk pile because citizens are bringing their junk and placing it on the pile; it continues to increase. Also, my neighbor moved all of his vehicles and junk to 709 and 711 Holly so the situation has definitely worsened and I would like to know what I can do as a citizen since you guys are not doing anything.

Mayor Gayle asked Ms. Bacon to speak with Police Chief Brian Childress as he has information regarding her concern and he took the initiative to become involved last time she attended a council meeting.

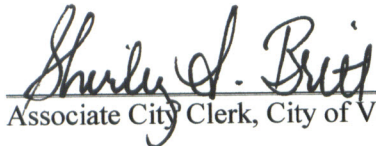
Mr. Hanson stated that he was aware of the trash pile and that the previous owner was cited but passed away. Another neighbor was cleaning out the property and has also been cited for the illegal trash pile. We are now in the process of scheduling a cleanup but that was something a private citizen did and has been cited for; staff is working to address the issue.

Ms. Bacon asked if anyone was looking at the junk yards at 709 and 711. Mayor Gayle answered yes and stated that the City was looking into the issue.

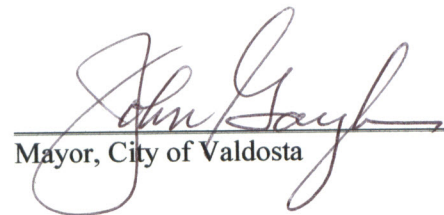
ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the April 9, 2015, meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 5:54 pm to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, April 23, 2015.



Associate City Clerk, City of Valdosta



Mayor, City of Valdosta