

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2019**  
**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, Sandra Tooley, Eric Howard, Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Councilman Ben Norton was absent. The invocation was given by Pastor William Morgan, Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the January 24, 2019 were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE RENAMING OR THE CLOSING OF PUBLIC STREETS AND ALLEYS (FIRST READING)**

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the requirements and procedures for the renaming or the closing of public streets and alleys. (First Reading)

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that this is a proposed Amendment to the Ordinance for the renaming or closing of public streets and alleys. Council previously voted to place a six-month Moratorium on renaming streets and during that time, City Staff has reviewed the Ordinance in order to clear up some ambiguities and discrepancies. One of the major issues was with the language in the old Ordinance. It stated that residents had to retain 60% of property owners and/or residents abutting the public street. The words “and/or” and “residents” were left up to interpretation. In the proposed Ordinance, it now states that 60% of property owners or a verifiable resident can sign the petition. A verifiable resident is a tenant or renter whose name is on the lease. This will come in handy when the City Engineering Staff gets the petition back and they are trying to confirm the names. We have Lease Agreements for tenants in our City Utility system so it will make it easier and faster to verify the names. The second change will be a mandatory meeting with the City Engineering Staff when citizens are thinking about renaming a street. The importance of that meeting is to ensure that the applicant truly understands the process from beginning to end. It will also allow the Engineering Staff to look at it and offer some suggestions that may be helpful. The applicants will also leave the meeting with the appropriate petition. There will also be a reimbursable fee for costs that the City incurs for changes to signage as well as the labor associated with it and the advertising costs that the City bears for a public notice in the Valdosta Daily Times. It will not be due at that time but we want them to be aware of everything that can happen during this process. One of the things that Council discussed at the Work Session was for a definition for the word “parcel” to be added and it now states that a parcel is a tract or plot of land. We also added some completion dates for the petition drive so once the applicant leaves the meeting they will have 90 days to return the petition with signatures. Another change is that once the applicant feels they have got the required signatures and it is turned into the Engineering Staff, the Staff will have 15 calendar days to confirm, verify, and check the completeness of the petition. At this point in time when the applicant returns the signatures, the City Staff will not do any verifying or checking until the fee is paid. As far as advertising, the current Ordinance says that we will place three ads in the newspaper for public notice and we have now reduced it down to two ads. We have also added that the Mayor and Council shall only review the renaming of streets twice per calendar year which is what many other communities are doing. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether Council would only consider street renaming only two times a year. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that was correct. By the time they go through the entire process that would fill that year up. Councilman Vickers stated that they have never done that before and in the last 30 years they have only had approximately 7 streets up for renaming. Mark Barber stated that they had nine streets. Councilman Vickers stated that he did not see a need in doing that. Mark Barber stated that it does not have to be a part of this Ordinance. Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that it refers to a specific street which is how he interprets it. If it is one particular street then you will not

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE REQUIREMENTS AND  
PROCEDURES FOR THE RENAMING OR THE CLOSING  
OF PUBLIC STREETS AND ALLEYS (CON'T)**

**02/07/19 CONTINUED**

consider it but twice a year. Mark Barber stated that was not correct and that it was two street renamings per calendar year. Councilman Vickers stated they have never done that before. Mark Barber stated that they were trying to introduce something new that most of the other cities were doing and it could be taken out of the Ordinance prior to the Second Reading. Councilman Vickers stated that he also had some concerns about the cost and he would like to know the amount of money they are talking about. Mark Barber stated that the reason they did not put a fixed cost in here is because it would change every time and they did not want to have to bring that Ordinance back to the Council. The applicant will know the estimated cost and, currently, the estimated cost for a street sign and pole is \$85. The advertising will be approximately \$30-\$40. There are other costs that could be put in there that the City will bear but those were things that were readily identifiable. Mark Barber stated that he went back to Section B of the Ordinance because Councilman Gibbs and Councilwoman Tooley wanted more detail about what was meant by parcel and multi-family units. He added that each abutting parcel of land shall be allowed one signature per parcel. These parcels may represent single-family structures and multi-family structures such as town homes, duplexes, condominiums, and apartment complexes. It can be commercial structures or vacant parcels of land as well. There is one signature per parcel for each of those. That is important because they are trying to start with a good base that everyone could agree to. The number of residents is not known for sure but the one thing they can run through the Tax Commissioner's Office is the parcels on the corridor or street that is being petitioned for renaming. The applicant will know where he is starting from and what 60% of that number will be. Another change is in the Advertisement Section of the Ordinance where it was added that after the advertisement requirements have been met, the proposed street renaming will be placed upon the Mayor and Council Meeting Agenda for approval or denial. They wanted to make it clear that once the applicant has gone through the process of obtaining signatures, meeting with the Engineering Department Staff, confirming signatures, and then going through the public notice, then it will be placed on the Council Agenda for a final say. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to when these changes would go into effect. Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that these changes would go into effect after the Second Reading on February 21, 2019. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to how these changes would affect the street renamings that are currently in effect. Mark Barber stated that he told the group who has petitioned to rename Forrest Street that because the Moratorium went to March 6, 2019, that he would allow them until that time to get the remaining signatures. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether there were any other streets to be renamed. Mark Barber stated that there will be some who were waiting for the Moratorium to end. Councilman Gibbs inquired as to whether the applicant would be required to pay if the petition to rename a street is not approved. Mark Barber stated that if the group goes through the process and Council denies the request then we would refund their total reimbursement because the largest part of the cost would be for the pole and sign. All we would be reimbursing would be for the advertising cost which is the least amount. Mayor Gayle stated that the City Attorney has brought to his attention that this says the Mayor and Council shall only consider requests for the changing of a specific street or alley no more than twice a year. The way that reads is that if someone wants to change the name of Central Avenue and it was turned down then they could bring it back again. Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that they could bring more. Mayor Gayle stated that if there were three or four street names they could bring all of those before the Council during a calendar year. Mark Barber stated that was incorrect but this may be taken out of the Ordinance by the Second Reading. Mayor Gayle stated that they need to make sure that is clear. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether this would come before Council as a Public Hearing to ensure citizens have an opportunity to comment. Mark Barber stated that was correct and they would have an opportunity to speak. We will have to advertise twice within a ten day period of the Public Hearing. Mayor Gayle stated that no action would need to be taken on these changes as this is the First Reading and Council will vote at the Second Reading on February 21, 2019.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-4, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE GEORGIA  
MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES BENEFIT SYSTEM (GMEBS) MASTER DEFINED BENEFIT  
RETIREMENT PLAN**

Consideration of a Resolution to approve an Amendment to the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Master Defined Benefit Retirement Plan.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that during the September 28, 2018 Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS), they amended the GMEBS Master Defined Benefit

Retirement Plan Document to incorporate provisions recommended by the GMBES actuary. The Amendment requires that the interest rate for Section 12.06 of the Master Plan be the same as the investment return assumption used in the funding Policy that was amended on December 8, 2017. Section 12.06 of the GMBES Master Defined Benefit Retirement Plan Document establishes the factors used to determine actuarial equivalency of retirement benefits other than the single life annuity and to recalculate benefits in the event of a re-retirement. This Amendment changes the interest rate from 7.75% to 7.5%. Mark Barber, City Manager, recommended that Council approve the Resolution to approve an Amendment to the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Master Defined Benefit Retirement Plan.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the Resolution No. 2019-4, a Resolution to approve an Amendment to the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Master Defined Benefit Retirement Plan, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2019-5, A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE FILING OF A GRANT APPLICATION WITH THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION FOR RE-SURVEYING THE VALDOSTA LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Consideration of a Resolution of Support for the filing of a Grant Application with Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division for re-surveying the Valdosta Local Historic District.

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission along with the City of Valdosta Historic Preservation Planner of the Planning and Zoning Department are working together to submit a grant application to re-survey the historic resources in the Valdosta Local Historic District that are 40 years old and older. The purpose of the proposal is to meet Certified Local Government requirements, planning purposes, Historic Preservation Commission decision making, and to update the Georgia Natural and Historic Resources GIS Database (GNAHRGIS) - Georgia's electronic database of historic resource survey information. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources is offering matching Grants for re-survey of historic resources through the Georgia Historic Preservation Division to financially assist local governments to accomplish this task. The City of Valdosta placed \$30,000 in the FY 2019 Budget to be used as a match for the Grant. A Consultant will be hired to individually survey approximately 1,139 eligible resources in the Local Historic District at a cost of \$51,255. The City of Valdosta will be applying to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for a Survey and Planning Grant for Certified Local Governments in the amount of \$21,255. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor John Gayle to submit the application to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division for consideration and have the budgeted monies available to be used as a match for the Federal Grant. Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, recommended that Council approve the Resolution of Support for filing the Grant Application with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division for re-surveying the Valdosta Local Historic District.

Councilman Howard inquired as to who would determine what is historic and if it has any historic value. Matt Martin stated that there are several different things that will be looked at which is part of the inventory process. The Consultant who will be doing the survey work is an expert in historic preservation and would look at all of the criteria to determine if it is a contributing resource or not. The State looks at some of the criteria as part of their own database and we would feed our data into that. Ultimately, it falls to our local Historic Preservation Commission. If there is a development proposal before them, they are given the inventory data and they have an opportunity to look at it further to make a determination. Part of their determination is the impact that the development or redevelopment may or may not have to a resource or neighborhood. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as about the funding. Matt Martin stated that it is matching funds and we are proposing to leverage up to \$30,000 for the first year which has the potential to give us \$45,000 from the Federal government through the State. The State of Georgia gets a certain amount of money from the Federal government for this annual cycle and it depends on what other communities are submitting for the same Grant and how much competition we are up against. We will not know until May, 2019. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether it would come before Council to approve the Contract. Matt Martin stated that the Resolution is authorizing the Mayor to enter into the Contract on behalf of the City. Councilman Vickers inquired about the Consultant they will be hiring. Matt Martin stated that they would go through a Request for Proposal and a selection process for that. There are no rules for

that and they just get to choose. They can add Council's approval but that has not been done in the past. Councilman Vickers inquired about the historical things they identify those properties that are outside of the boundaries. Matt Martin stated that they look at the same criteria for those properties as if they were inside the boundary. The ones outside of the boundary will not be as historic or old as the ones inside the Historic District. For example, there were some neighborhoods that were built in the 1950's that were not considered historic many years ago; however, now they are more than 50 years old so they would fall into the definition. They will at least take a look at them but may not want to consider them historic. We will not know how to address that until they see what is in that area. Mayor Gayle inquired about houses that are in the Overlay District. Matt Martin stated that the Historic District is an Overlay District so year one will be to concentrate on the Historic District that is already established and to update the data that is there because there have been some changes over the past 10-15 years. In the second year, they will look at the National Registry Districts which have already been identified to meet National Registry criteria. Some of those are just outside the local Historic District boundary. The third year will be the area in between where you get into some of the neighborhoods that are 50 years old that were not considered before because they were not old enough. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to where the money for the Grant was coming from. Matt Martin stated that it was Federal government money passed through the State of Georgia. This will be a competitive Grant Application process with a 60/40 leverage. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to where the matching funds would come from. Matt Martin stated that it would come from the City's Budget which was approved as a capital item in the current year Budget. Councilwoman Tooley stated that since it involves taxpayer money she felt like the Council should have some say so in it rather than just giving it to the Mayor because they represent the taxpayers. Councilman Carroll stated that Council had their say when they approved the Budget. Mayor Gayle stated that he was elected to represent them. Councilman Gibbs stated that all they were doing was approving to apply for the Grant and inquired as to whether we get 60 or 40. Matt Martin stated that we are promising to leverage up to \$30,000 of our own money to get \$45,000 of their money for a total of \$75,000 which is the maximum. Councilman Vickers stated that he would like for Council to have some conversation about the vendor when they get to that point.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilman Carroll to approve the request as presented. Councilman Vickers seconded the motion. The motion was adopted (5-1) with Councilwoman Tooley voting in opposition to approve Resolution No. 2019-5, a Resolution of Support for the filing of a Grant Application with Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division for re-surveying the Valdosta Local Historic District, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

## **BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES**

Consideration of a request to approve payment to the Davenport Group, Inc. for a virtualized server system for the Valdosta Police Department.

Interim Police Chief Leslie Manahan stated that in 2018, the Police Department was approved to move to a virtualized server system for multiple applications operated by the Police Department personnel. This virtualized server system will provide off-site backup and redundancy for the applications utilized by the Police Department. In the budget for FY19, the Police Department was approved \$110,000 for this Project. The approved provider was the Davenport Group, Incorporated. In 2018, the Davenport Group was initially paid \$54,887.50, which was half of the agreed expense. The second payment of \$41,137.50 was due upon delivery of all necessary hardware to complete this Project. The Police Department has since received the required hardware. The Davenport Group is requesting the second payment of \$41,137.50. In addition to the second payment, the Davenport Group will request a third and final payment of \$13,750 upon completion of the Project. Chief Manahan recommended that Council approve payment to the Davenport Group, Inc. for a virtualized server system for the Valdosta Police Department.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve payment to the Davenport Group, Inc. for a virtualized server system for the Valdosta Police Department.

## **BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

Consideration of an appointment to the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Central Valdosta Development Authority/Downtown Development Authority has a member, Angela Crance, whose term expired on December 31, 2018. Ms. Crance did not express an interest in being re-appointed. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by the Mayor and Council. The only applicant to apply was Dustin Van Fleet, owner of Funk Living.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to appoint Dustin Van Fleet to the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to appoint Dustin Van Fleet to the Central Valdosta Development Authority/ Downtown Development Authority to serve a term of two years.

Consideration of appointments to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee has three members, Franchesca Griffin, Karla Walker, and Bill Donaldson, whose terms will expire on February 24, 2019. Ms. Griffin, Ms. Walker, and Mr. Donaldson have not expressed an interest in being reappointed. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants are as follows: (1) Donnell Davis, Jr. - Assistant Director of Financial Aid (Valdosta State University), and (2) Thomas McIntyre, Sr. - Senior Help Desk Technician (Barnes Healthcare).

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to appoint Donnell Davis, Jr. and Thomas McIntyre, Sr. to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to appoint to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Citizens Advisory Committee to serve a term of four years.

Consideration of an appointment to the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board has a member, Thomas Daughtrey, who resigned due to personal reasons. His term will expire on June 30, 2021. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants are as follows: (1) Kelisa Brown - Family Consultant (Elksaidmore, Inc.), (2) Leslee Lampert - Teacher (Valdosta City Schools), (3) Melody Martinez - Consumer Electronics (Best Buy), and (4) Victoria O'Steen - Office Manager (Video Management Services).

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for an appointment to the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to appoint Melody Martinez to the Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board to serve a term of three years.

Consideration of appointments to the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission.

Mayor Gayle stated that the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission has two members, Sally Querin and Laura Yale, whose terms will expire on February 13, 2019. Ms. Querin and Ms. Yale have both expressed an interest in being reappointed. These appointments were advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants are as follows: (1) Sally Querin - Self Employed (Retired Landscape Architect), and (2) Laura Yale - Designer (Studio 8 Design Architects).

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for an appointment to the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to appoint Sally Querin and Laura Yale to the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission to serve a term of three years.

### **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Tyler Tucker, 2502-B Jerry Jones Drive, thanked Council for their support and dedication to the City of Valdosta. Their advocacy for the City of Valdosta at the Service Delivery Strategy Meeting was visible and much appreciated. They were asked difficult questions and they included every City in Lowndes County in the discussion, and most of all, they stood strong and remained diplomatic in their negotiations. Mayor Gayle has a fine Council. In addition, he thanked the City Manager for backing the Council and providing historical evidence which supported the City's proposal for this Agreement. As a Valdosta State University student from small town Fitzgerald, Georgia, they have showed him the importance of true cooperation within local government and the values instilled in overall teamwork to reach agreements and progress our City's development. He also thanked the Council for their continued support of Valdosta State University and its internal community. Over the past two years, he has been blessed to meet with many of the Council Members and have the opportunity to forge relationships with them. Mr. Tucker stated that he looked forward to seeing how we progress our City in the near future.

Bessie and Robert Ferguson, 925 Ponderosa Drive, stated that they spoke to their City Council representative about a concrete company located behind their home. They start their business about 4:00 a.m. every day and it is very annoying. Mayor Gayle stated that they would look into that.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the Bird Supper will be held on Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at The Depot in Atlanta. Arbor Week will be held February 11-15, 2019 and there are several events planned throughout the week.

City Government 101 still has a few slots available and citizens are encouraged to apply.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Makers Market will be held on April 13, 2019 in the Downtown area. Vendors will be selling crafts and vintage items. This is a spin-off of the Farmers Market.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Vickers stated that several years ago there was a problem with Scruggs Concrete on River Street where they were regrinding asphalt early in the morning. There were several complaints and the City Manager addressed it through the Noise Ordinance. A lot of times these businesses are willing to work with you on things if you bring it to their attention.

Councilman Carroll stated that he wanted to thank the Lowndes County Commissioners for setting up the Service Delivery Strategy Meeting on February 4, 2019 at the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority to discuss the issues. He was very proud to see all of Valdosta's City Council Members in attendance and contributing to the discussion. We need to do that more often.

Councilman Howard stated that there was a nice write-up on Lisa Straughter and her new shelter for homeless women. She is getting ready to open the shelter and she has done a great job.

Councilman Gibbs stated that there will be a Ribbon Cutting Event on March 2, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at Freedom Park to celebrate the \$6 million investment for the four baseball fields that can be converted into softball fields and the Miracle League field which is a \$1.6 million investment for adults and children with disabilities. We

are the only one in the United States with the capability of a field of our size that can accommodate basketball, soccer, baseball, and track on it. This will bring a lot of recognition to our community.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody thanked the Department Heads for helping her with the citizen complaints that she had this week. We have some great Departments Heads who are willing to help out our citizens.

**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 February 7, 2019 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:21 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, February 21, 2019.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta