

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 2021
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Scott James Matheson called the regular meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph “Sonny” Vickers, Sandra Tooley, Ben Norton, Tim Carroll, Eric Howard Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Councilman Tim Carroll, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 7, 2021 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to approve street selections for the Georgia Department of Transportation 2021 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG).

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) assists Cities and Counties by awarding funds for resurfacing as well as other local transportation-related improvements via their Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) Program. LMIG awards are formula-based and proportionate to a combination of a local jurisdiction’s population and centerline street mileage. Historically, the City uses LMIG funding to finance the maintenance and resurfacing of its roadways. In May of 2018, the Southern Georgia region overwhelmingly passed a Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (T-SPLOST). The minimum LMIG match from local jurisdictions who passed this tax, such as Valdosta, dropped from a 30% match to a 10% match. The formula-based LMIG allotment from GDOT is based on population and 323 centerline miles of streets and is \$581,151.58 for 2021. Our required 10% match is \$58,115.16. Consequently, the minimum total required to be spent in 2021 is \$639,266.74. Programmed in the City’s 2021 LMIG Budget is a total of \$1,280,100.00 which includes the 2021 LMIG award. In February of 2019, the City contracted with Infrastructure Management Systems (IMS) to analyze the pavement and underlying base conditions of the City’s entire roadway network. Using sophisticated testing equipment and software, IMS recommended and ranked every roadway with a specific surface treatment to be applied to extend the life of the roadway. This approach saves money by extending the pavement life and prolonging the need for major reconstruction. The 2021 Street List is based on the IMS prioritization in conjunction with the Engineering Department’s review. The recommended list resurfaces 4.50 miles total and is estimated to cost \$993,395.00 to \$1,192,074.00. This final list must be submitted to GDOT and received by GDOT prior to February 1, 2021. While it is not a GDOT requirement to have the City Council’s approval of the submitted list, it is our customary practice to seek City Council’s approval prior to transmitting the final list to GDOT. Pat Collins, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the street segments identified in the list and shown on the map for submittal to GDOT for the 2021 LMIG resurfacing program.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the street selections for the Georgia Department of Transportation 2021 Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG).

Consideration of a request to approve a proposal for Phase 1 of the Mud Creek Sewer System for the purchase, installation, and monitoring of a Sanitary Sewer Flow Monitoring System.

Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, stated that as part of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Consent Order (Order) issued in August of 2020, there were 19 requirements related to the sewer collection system that were identified as needing to be satisfied. Two of the conditions require the City to install a Sanitary Sewer Flow Monitoring System and develop a Sewer Assessment Program that provides a continual analysis of sewer infrastructure. One of the conditions also requires continuous updating and calibrating of the sewer system’s hydraulic flow model. Key to all Sewer Assessment Programs and flow modeling are flow monitors and the data

they provide. The Utilities Department will use the flow monitors data to identify priority problematic areas for rehabilitation and storm and groundwater inflow and infiltration (I&I) as required under the Order. For assistance with satisfying the Consent Order's special conditions, the City contracted with Barge Design Solutions to develop an updated hydraulic sewer model and an Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Action Plan. To initiate the data collection required to update the flow model, Barge solicited three quotes from flow monitoring vendors. ADS Environmental Services, CSL Services, and HACH submitted a proposal to install, maintain, and monitor a Flow Monitoring System for the Mud Creek sewer system (Phase 1). Phase 2 includes the Withlacoochee system and would be initiated as a separate Project in January of 2022. The cost to complete Phase 1 is \$212,564, which includes the purchase of 15 flow monitors, their installation and maintenance, data transfer, and removal for four months of flow monitoring. The City will own the equipment and utilize it for continual analysis of the sewer system to include Phase 2 monitoring. Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, recommended that Council approve the proposal submitted by Barge Design Solutions in the amount of \$212,564 for Phase 1 of the Mud Creek Sewer System for the purchase, installation, and monitoring of a Sanitary Sewer Flow Monitoring System.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the proposal submitted by Barge Design Solutions in the amount of \$212,564 for Phase 1 of the Mud Creek Sewer System for the purchase, installation, and monitoring of a Sanitary Sewer Flow Monitoring System.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-1, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN A GRANT APPLICATION FROM THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (FAA) FOR SMALL COMMUNITY AIR SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to approve a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign a Grant Application from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for Small Community Air Service Development.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority has met with several airlines about establishing air service to and from Valdosta. American Airlines has expressed interest in establishing service to their hub in Charlotte, North Carolina, and they will submit a Letter of Intent as part of the Grant Application. The amount requested from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is \$1,246,933. The Grant requires a 10% local match (\$124,693) that cannot be Airport Funds. With past Airport Grants, it is usually an 80% Federal funding, the State will have a 15%, and there is a local 5% match. That is not the case with this Grant. The Airport intends to waive terminal rent and landing fees for one year as an in-kind contribution valued at \$101,858. The remaining will come from organizations and businesses in our community. The Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce and other businesses have already submitted letters of support for additional air service. The deadline for submitting the Grant Application is January 26, 2021. The Consultant has informed the Airport that there is \$13 million total available for the Grants for the country and not to expect to hear any results until Summer of 2021. Service would start most likely sometime in 2022. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor Scott James Matheson to sign the Grant Application in order to process the documents. Mark Barber, City Manager, recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign the FAA Grant Application to establish Small Community Air Service Development.

Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether the businesses have committed to the in-kind contribution or will the City have to pay it. Mark Barber stated that just like any other FAA Grant, the City never had to chip in any money. The City is just the administrator for the Grant. With this Grant, there will be no State funding of 15% and it will be a 10% in-kind match by the Airport Authority. It cannot be cash and it has to be in-kind. Councilwoman Tooley stated that she read somewhere in the Resolution that they intend to and it did not say they had committed to doing that. She was wondering how the City would be involved financially because we do not have any extra money. Mark Barber stated that the language in the Resolution comes from the FAA and if the word "intend" presents a problem then we can make a minor change. Mayor Matheson stated that they have asked people like him for in-kind marketing dollars and if he could make \$20,000 in marketing to announce their arrival

then that counts for that total. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether he was talking about American Airlines when he said mention their arrival. Also, she has been to several Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) classes and we were trying to get Grant money. They said that Valdosta is not considered a small community and we could not get the Grant funding because we were over 20,000 in population. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to how Valdosta can ask for a Grant for a small community when we are not considered a small community. Mark Barber stated that there are so many Grants out there and all of them have their own stipulations. For example, a USDA Grant considers Valdosta too large of a community to participate in those type of things. It just depends on what the Grant and the organization requires. It is not a one size fits all in the Grants world. We would love to participate in some of the USDA Grants, but we have outgrown that. Valdosta is too small for some Grants and we are in the middle ground a lot of times. For this Grant Program, we are considered a small community.

Councilman Vickers inquired as to what the Airport Authority has to do to prepare for American Airlines and if it would be different from what we already have. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that it will give us another leg of transportation to the Charlotte, North Carolina area. Part of what this Grant will be for is to get the lobby area set up for check-in at the Airport. The majority of it is for marketing and advertising to get people there. As far as the runways go, there is nothing that will have to be done to them. Part of the Project cost is called a "Minimum Revenue Guarantee" which is approximately \$900,000. If American Airlines does not bring in \$945,000, they will make sure that the Airport Authority gets \$945,000. This will be a win-win for our community and the Airport Authority. Councilman Vickers inquired as to how this would affect Delta. Mark Barber stated that when you get new things coming in and you get competition, then sometimes it can be very productive. Mayor Matheson stated that Jim Galloway, Executive Director of the Valdosta Regional Airport, got to go to a showcase where he tried to get four different carriers and to also have Delta do an Orlando hop. They have some runway rehabilitation going on and the service for American Airlines would not start until January, 2022. Councilman Vickers stated that they have been trying to make improvements over the years. Councilwoman Tooley stated that she thought this was good too because she spoke with Jim Galloway once when they were trying to get some competition for Delta. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether the purpose of this Grant was for American Airlines to start building to bring an airline here. Mark Barber stated that the purpose of this Grant is for the Airport to do what is necessary to get another airline into the terminal. It will reimburse the Airport for whatever costs that may incur to get American Airlines here. Councilwoman Tooley stated that she was confused because she remembers talking with him and they were trying to see what it could take for us to get our Airport out there. We got another new tower, we got one of the largest airways, and we even got some other property so we could attract an airline. They were saying how Delta was fighting and there was really not much more they could do to the Airport to attract other airlines. Mark Barber stated that it is a lot of money but for what we are getting for the value, approximately \$950,000 of that is Revenue Minimum Guarantee so the other remainder would be for the things they need to get done to have the terminal situated for another airline. The \$945,000 is guaranteed income that we are going to get from this Grant if they don't reach it themselves. Councilwoman Tooley stated that the City does not have to pay any money. Mark Barber stated that we never do, and this is the same requirement. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to what would happen if it falls through. Mark Barber stated that American Airlines will not be here, and we will still have Delta like we have had for years. Councilman Norton inquired as to what the target date would be. Mark Barber stated that it will be 2022. There is only \$13 million and we are not guaranteed that we will be getting the Grant. We are just trying to get our name in the pot. Councilman Carroll stated that according to the report, we will not know anything until July, 2021. Councilwoman Tooley stated that this just does not look right. Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that what you are saying is that we are applying to get the money. Mark Barber stated that we are applying on behalf of the Airport because we are the fiduciary body for the Airport Authority so we have to apply for these funds. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether this Resolution and how it is written up is the verbiage from FAA. Mark Barber stated that we get all of our information from Jim Galloway and he will follow up with that. Councilman Carroll stated that this is the City. Mark Barber stated that it is a City Resolution, but Jim Galloway and City Clerk Teresa Bolden work the language which comes through the FAA. They cannot proceed unless they have this Resolution. Councilwoman Tooley stated that she understood but when she looked at it and compared it to other Resolutions it looked different. Mark Barber stated that part of that is due to the funding structure which is much different than what a normal FAA Grant would look like. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether the City Attorney looks at the Resolutions before they are turned over. Mark Barber stated that he gets the Agenda Packet just like the Council does.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Gibbs to approve a Resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign the Grant Application from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for Small Community Air Service Development. Councilman Norton seconded the motion. The motion was adopted (6-1) with Councilwoman Tooley voting in opposition to enact Resolution No. 2021-1, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that we received an E-mail from Victoria Futch regarding vaping stores. Last year did a Moratorium on liquor stores and vaping. With vaping, we were going to follow the lead of the State of Georgia; however, when the Coronavirus hit, the Legislature was in and out and they never really came down to any final agreement about vaping shops. We are still under the Moratorium for both vaping and liquor stores. Council approved that and until they decide to lift the Moratoriums it will remain in effect. Ms. Futch is wanting to open a new vaping store in Valdosta. Councilman Vickers inquired as to where Ms. Futch wanted to open a new vaping store. Mark Barber stated that she has a store in Tifton and now she wants to open a new vaping store here. Council put a Moratorium in effect that does not allow for anyone to add to the inventory of vaping facilities. We will be bringing this back before Council, but it has really not been an issue at this point in time.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that there will be some smaller clean-ups in neighborhoods and on January 25-29, 2021, they will be cleaning up North Forrest Street, Leon Street, and Cypress Street. The City Marshals will be placing door hangers in the area to let citizens know about the clean-up.

On February 1, 2021, we will begin our “Love Downtown” Campaign and Main Street will be encouraging citizens to visit the Downtown shops and restaurants. For every \$25 spent, a citizen will be entered into a drawing of \$200 in Downtown dollars.

Dr. William Grow and Courtney Sheeley from the South Health District did a great job in presenting information on COVID-19 vaccinations to the Mayor and Council at the Special Called Meeting on January 13, 2021. The problem right now is that they have more appointments than they have vaccine; however, they are hopeful that they will receive more vaccine so that they can open the appointment process back up. The drive-thru vaccination at the Civic Center was working very well; however, they need more vaccine to continue that. Councilman Norton stated that he heard that Johnson & Johnson will be releasing a vaccine next month which will be a single injection vaccine that does not have to be kept at refrigerated temperatures. Mark Barber stated that Dr. Grow did mention that they are looking at that but there is nothing definite. Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that at the GMA virtual class that she attended, they announced that if we do not start getting the vaccinations in the State of Georgia that when the products do come in we will lose it because they will send it to other states who can use. Our people are really not coming out enough to receive the vaccinations. Mark Barber stated that was correct. We have people in community coming out in droves, but the State of Georgia does not so what the State is getting is limited. That means that we will get a limited supply. We want it here but they are shipping it to those states that are showing more use.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that Earnest Wright, a Public Works employee, passed away from COVID-19. They are tentatively planning a service on Saturday, January 23, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at Scott & Roberts Mortuary.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers stated that we need to encourage our community to wear a mask. He wears his mask for your protection, and he needs for you to wear your mask for his protection. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that we are continually pushing that out on our social media pages.

Mayor Matheson stated that he wanted to compliment both the Lowndes County government and the City of Valdosta for the work being done on future parks located in the Downtown area. Councilwoman Tooley

inquired as to where those are located. Mayor Matheson stated that the City's pocket park is across from City Hall and the County is working on the old Griner lot right now.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that she will be getting her vaccination on January 27, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. at South Georgia Medical Center. They will be taking her picture and live-streaming it. She is doing it so that citizens in her District can see that she is the first partaker. In order to present something, you have to show that you are a part of it.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the January 21, 2021 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:06 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, February 11, 2021.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta