

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 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, Andy Gibbs, Eric Howard, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Councilman Andy Gibbs, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the February 11, 2021 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of a request to approve an Ingress/Egress Easement Agreement at Five Points.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the City of Valdosta owns 0.76 acres of property located at Five Points behind the Five Points Liquor Store owned by Mr. Gene Seago. The City has declared this property surplus and accepted bids for the purchase of same. Mr. Seago owns the tract to the west of this parcel. His property line is at the edge of this parcel and to the rear corner of the building. Many of his patrons use the drive-thru window which requires them to go around the rear of the store and they are driving on the property that the City would be selling. To ensure the continued uninterrupted use of the drive-thru, an Easement will need to be given. The City of Valdosta no longer needs the property for construction of any City facility or for any other purpose and it is in our best interest to sell the surplus property via sealed bids to the highest bidder. On September 10, 2020, Council approved a Resolution declaring the property as surplus and authorizing the sale of the property by sealed bids. An Ingress/Egress Easement Agreement has been prepared between the City of Valdosta and Gene Seago granting ingress and egress over and across a portion of the surplus property. Mark Barber, City Manager, recommended that Council approve the Ingress/Egress Easement Agreement that has been prepared between the City of Valdosta and Mr. Gene Seago.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve an Ingress/Egress Easement Agreement at Five Points.

Consideration of bids for the sale of surplus property located at Five Points.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that at the September 10, 2020 City Council Meeting, Council approved a Resolution to declare a 0.76-acre parcel located at Five Points behind the Five Points Liquor Store that the City owns as surplus property. Gene Seago owns the tract to the west of this parcel and the property line is right at the edge of this parcel and to the back corner of the Liquor Store. A lot of patrons use the drive-thru window and go around the store. The Resolution also authorized the sale of the parcel to the highest bidder in a sealed bid. After consulting with the City Attorney, the Purchasing Division created a bid and posted it on the City’s website, advertised it in the Valdosta Daily Times, and posted it at City Hall as required by law. One bid was received by the deadline of Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. The bid was submitted by Marie Bennett Properties, LLC, c/o Moore, Clarke, Duvall, & Rogers, P.C. in the amount of \$30,400. The City Attorney has determined that the procedure for the sale of the surplus property meets the requirements for such sale. Mark Barber, City Manager, recommended that Council approve the bid submitted by Marie Bennett Properties, LLC, c/o Moore, Clarke, Duvall, & Rogers, P.C. in the amount of \$30,400 for the sale of the surplus property located at Five Points.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the bid was submitted by Marie Bennett Properties, LLC, c/o Moore, Clarke, Duvall, & Rogers, P.C. in the amount of \$30,400 for the sale of surplus property located at Five Points.

Consideration of bids for a Mini Excavator for the Utilities Department (Bid No. 34-20-21).

Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, stated that the City of Valdosta's Utilities Department has four crews performing water and sewer repairs and new construction throughout the City. Currently, these crews have to share one Mini Excavator. As a result, repairs are delayed and the Department cannot effectively respond to multiple outages or schedule simultaneous projects. If approved, this unit, which includes the appropriate trailer to pull the equipment, will increase Department efficiency and reduce response time to emergencies. This purchase was approved by City Council in the FY 2021 Budget (Line Item VR61 - \$85,000). Sealed bids were received on February 16, 2021. The low bidder, Wallace Trucking, did not meet the following minimum specifications: (1) Dump Height, (2) Max Breakout, (3) Lighting Package, (4) Boom Length, and (5) Fuel Tank Size. The low bid meeting specifications was submitted by Bobcat of Tallahassee in the amount of \$56,639.83. Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, recommended that Council approve the low bid meeting specifications that was submitted by Bobcat of Tallahassee in the amount of \$56,639.83 for the purchase of a Mini Excavator for the Utilities Department.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid meeting specifications that was submitted by Bobcat of Tallahassee in the amount of \$56,639.83 for the purchase of a Mini Excavator for the Utilities Department.

Consideration of bids for the installation of two emergency standby generators for the Gornto Master Lift Station and the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, stated that in April of 2020, the City approved the purchase of two, 1500kW emergency standby generators from Yancey Power Systems for the Gornto Master Lift Station and the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Treatment Plants and Lift Stations rely on a consistent electric power source to function as designed and prevent sewer overflows. Additionally, Action Item 4.b. in the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Consent Order requires the emergency standby equipment to prevent sewer overflows. These two generators will ensure that the Utilities Department can operate the Gornto Lift Station and the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant should they encounter a power outage. Once the assembly of the generators was complete, the Utilities Department contracted with Lovell Engineering to provide engineering, scope of work, and contract administration services to install the two generators. In December of 2020, the City advertised to bid for the generator installations at the Gornto Pump Station and Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. The work will include furnishing and installing all the appurtenances required to make the generators fully operational. The installation and testing of these two generators is in the FY21 Budget and the total amount budgeted was \$415,000 for both. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held on January 13, 2021. One bid was received and publicly opened on January 28, 2021. ATS Electrical Enterprises, Inc. was the sole bidder and submitted a proposal for \$398,725. Following discussions with Staff, Lovell Engineering, and ATS, the contractor presented valuable engineering measures on February 1, 2021 that subtracted \$62,000 from the original bid. The revised amount was \$336,725. The contract will include an additional \$8,000 as an allowance for asphalt repair if required at either of the two locations. Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, recommended that Council approve the bid submitted by ATS Electrical Enterprises, Inc. in the amount \$336,725.00 plus a 10% contingency (\$33,672.50) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a total cost of \$370,397.50 for the installation of two emergency standby generators along with an additional \$8,000 to be reserved as an allowance for asphalt repair if needed.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the bid submitted by ATS Electrical Enterprises, Inc. in the amount \$336,725.00 plus a 10% contingency (\$33,672.50) to handle any unforeseen circumstances for a total cost of \$370,397.50 for the installation of two emergency standby generators at the Gornto Master Lift Station and the Mud Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant along with an additional \$8,000 to be reserved as an allowance for asphalt repair if needed.

Consideration of bids for the City of Valdosta's audit services.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that one of the responsibilities of the Finance Department is to conduct a competitive process for the selection of the City's external independent Auditor. The last procurement process was conducted in 2014. It is a recommended practice that governmental entities enter into multi-year agreements with such firms with a competitive selection process or simply a rotation of audit firms every three to five years. We

believe that the competitive selection process is better suited for the City of Valdosta. The Purchasing Department disseminated 24 requests for proposals, posted the request on the City's website, and in the newspaper. Three submittals were returned. The responses were evaluated by a Committee comprised of Councilman Tim Carroll, City Manager Mark Barber, Deputy City Manager of Administration Catherine Ammons, and Finance Director Chuck Dinkins. The Committee scored attributes such as experience, qualifications, staffing, and pricing. Properly performed audits play a vital role in the public sector by helping to preserve the integrity of the public finance functions and by maintaining citizen's confidence in their elected leaders, and to this point, due diligence was exercised in the final selection of the City of Valdosta's external auditor. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve the recommendation of the Committee and award the external audit bid to Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC for a term of three years beginning 2021 and running through 2023 with a one-year renewable extension for the City of Valdosta's audit services.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the recommendation of the Committee and award the external audit bid to Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC for a term of three years beginning 2021 and running through 2023 with a one year renewable extension for the City of Valdosta's audit services.

Consideration of bids for the purchase of a Grapple Truck for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 32-20-21).

Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, stated that the Sanitation Division of the Public Works Department is adding a vehicle to its fleet. This is a truck with a claw mounted on a boom with a dump trash body and is used for picking up debris. This is a Council-approved item for the FY21 Budget (Residential Trash - Line Item #VR15 - \$160,000) for the funding source. Sealed bids were received on February 16, 2021 with the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Hol-Mac Corp. in the amount of \$162,162. Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, recommended that Council approve the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Hol-Mac Corp. in the amount of \$162,162 for the purchase of a Grapple Truck for the Public Works Department.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Hol-Mac Corp. in the amount of \$162,162 for the purchase of a Grapple Truck for the Public Works Department.

Consideration of bids for a Utility Tractor with a Tri-Deck Mower for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 36-20-21).

Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, stated that the Public Works Department needs to replace an existing tractor (R4220) that is 26 years old. The current tractor has high hours and does not have hydraulic connections to attach the newest pieces of equipment. This is a Council-approved item for the FY21 Budget (Right-of-Way - Line Item #VR17 - \$48,000) for the funding source. Sealed bids were received on February 16, 2021 with the low bid submitted by Ag Pro Tractor in the amount of \$34,450. Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Ag Pro Tractor in the amount of \$34,450 for a Utility Tractor with a Tri-Deck Mower for the Public Works Department.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Ag Pro Tractor in the amount of \$34,450 for a Utility Tractor with a Tri-Deck Mower for the Public Works Department.

Consideration of bids for a Truck with a Vacuum Leaf Collector Dump Body for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 33-20-21).

Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, stated that the Sanitation Division of the Public Works Department is adding a vehicle to its fleet. This is a truck with a vacuum leaf collector dump body and is used to vacuum leaves, litter, and lawn clippings. This is a Council-approved item for the FY21 Budget (Residential Trash - Line Item #VR16 - \$215,000) for the funding source. Sealed bids were received on February 16, 2021 with the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Four Star Freightliner in the amount of \$222,067. Richard Hardy,

Deputy City Manager of Operations, recommended that Council approve the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Four Star Freightliner in the amount of \$222,067 for a Truck with a Vacuum Leaf Collector Dump Body for the Public Works Department.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Four Star Freightliner in the amount of \$222,067 for a Truck with a Vacuum Leaf Collector Dump Body for the Public Works Department and allow the Finance Director to explore financing options for the purchase.

Consideration of bids to for an Air Street Sweeper for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 31-20-21).

Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, stated that the Right-of-Way Division of the Public Works Department needs to replace their current street sweeper due to age and rising maintenance cost. The current street sweeper covers approximately 98 miles per month or approximately 1,180 miles per year. Maintenance problems are affecting production due to more than average mechanical break downs. The current machine is listed as vehicle #5205 and is 23 years old. The new sweeper is needed to provide an acceptable quality of service including timeliness that the citizens of Valdosta, Mayor and Council, and the State of Georgia expect from the City. The sweeper has designated routes including State routes in the City. This is a Council-approved item for the FY21 Budget (Right-of-Way - Line Item #VR19 - \$245,000) for the funding source. Sealed bids were received on February 16, 2021 with the low bid submitted by Four Star Freightliner in the amount of \$232,173. Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, recommended that Council approve the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Four Star Freightliner in the amount of \$232,173 for an Air Street Sweeper for the Public Works Department.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid meeting specifications of Four Star Freightliner in the amount of \$232,173 for an Air Street Sweeper for the Public Works Department.

Consideration of bids for a Mini Motor Grader for the Engineering Department (Bid No. 35-20-21).

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Stormwater Division of the Engineering Department needs to add an additional piece of equipment to assist with their duties. This is a Mini Motor Grader which will provide for accurate grading and leveling for clipping the shoulder of roads as well as other duties such as leveling uneven ground. High shoulders on the side of roads causes drainage problems and possibly flooding on streets. The equipment is versatile and would benefit several Departments throughout the City as well. This Mini Road Grader is in the Council-approved Budget for this Fiscal Year (Line Item #VR24 - \$170,100). Sealed bids were received on February 16, 2021 with the low bid submitted by Reynolds Warrant Equipment in the amount of \$182,400. Staff agreed that the price is in line with the bid price. Pat Collins, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Reynolds Warren Equipment in the amount of \$182,400 for a Mini Motor Grader for the Engineering Department.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Reynolds Warren Equipment in the amount of \$182,400 for a Mini Motor Grader for the Engineering Department.

Consideration of a Lease Agreement for In-Car Computers for the Valdosta Police Department.

Police Chief Leslie Manahan stated that the Valdosta Police Department, like other Law Enforcement Agencies, utilize in-car computers for completing reports and other activities in the field. Those activities include, but are not limited to Police reports, accidents reports, field interviews, computerized traffic citations, in-car camera operations, crime analysis mapping, and communications through computer-aided dispatching with the Lowndes County 911 Center. Over the past six years, in order to address the overall cost of these computers and to maintain functionality, the City of Valdosta has entered into Lease-to Own Agreements with Dell Computers, for Police in-car computers. Because technology is changing and evolving extremely fast, by the time new in-car computers are a few years old, they are already out-of-date and cannot keep up with current technology demands, especially in the

area of public safety. In addition, computers that are installed in vehicles are subject to extreme temperatures, normal vehicle operations, and traffic accidents. In 2019, the Police Department entered into a Lease-to-Own Agreement with Dell, for 55 in-car computers, which is half of the Department's fleet. The Department currently has the remaining part of the fleet that is no longer covered by warranty and the computers are failing. Since they are no longer under warranty, the Police Department must purchase replacement parts and pay for repairs. This new Lease Agreement is for the 55 replacement in-car computers, which is the remaining half of the overall number in the Department's fleet. The new Lease will negate the need to purchase replacement parts or pay for repairs. The Lease Agreement will include a full hardware and accidental damage warranty for a period of three years, with a yearly lease payment of \$40,012.61. Per our Purchasing Ordinance, State contracts are authorized to be utilized for City purchases. Dell is listed on State contract as an authorized vendor. Further, under the same Ordinance, the City has discretion when purchasing information technology equipment to include computers. Since Dell is a vendor the City has utilized for previous purchases, to include in-car computers and workstations, it is recommended that this request be approved. Police Chief Leslie Manahan recommended that Council approve the request to enter into a Lease Agreement with Dell Computers for new -in-car computers for the Police Department, along with the first lease payment of \$40,012.61.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request to enter into a Lease Agreement with Dell Computers for new -in-car computers for the Police Department, along with the first lease payment of \$40,012.61.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to declare 12 Conducted Electrical Weapons (C.E.W.'s) from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property.

Police Chief Leslie Manahan stated that the Valdosta Police Department currently has 12 Conducted Energy Weapons (C.E.W.'s) that were purchased between 2013 and 2015 and are no longer in serviceable working order. Each has a variety of problems that preclude them from being issued to an Officer. These C.E.W.'s are not covered by any warranty, and therefore, they cannot be replaced. Due to the condition of these C.E.W.'s, they cannot be sold back to the vendor AXON for any credit. These C.E.W.'s cannot be sold to the general public. In the past, the City has assisted other governments and organizations, by providing surplus equipment that they may be able to use. The 12 C.E.W.'s can only be destroyed and have no further use or monetary value for the Valdosta Police Department. The Georgia Public Safety Training Center Regional Police Academy in Tifton has requested the 12 broken C.E.W.'s to use during their training classes. These training classes benefit not only Officers from the Valdosta Police Department, but other Officers in our Region. Police Chief Leslie Manahan recommended that Council declare the 12 non-serviceable Conducted Energy Weapons (C.E.W.'s) as surplus property and give them to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center Regional Police Academy in Tifton.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to declare the 12 non-serviceable Conducted Energy Weapons (C.E.W.'s) as surplus property and give them to the Georgia Public Safety Training Center Regional Police Academy in Tifton.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the City of Valdosta Mayor and Council first adopted a Code of Ethics Ordinance in 1995. This Ordinance served as a guide for governing authority and reinforced the basic principle that elected officials are holders of public trust. The Ordinance, which has been amended several times since its creation, has deemed it essential to the proper creation of democratic government that public officials be, and give the appearance of being independent, impartial, and responsible to the people; that governmental decisions and policies be made in the proper channels of the government structure; and that public office not be used for personal gain. On February 15, 2021, an official Ethics Complaint was issued against Mayor Scott James Matheson by Mark Patrick George (Mary Turner Project Coordinator), Dr. Bruce Francis (Concern Clergies of Valdosta), Rev. Darren Neal (NAACP Lowndes Chapter), and Rev. Jimmy Boyd (Valdosta/ Lowndes Community Alliance). The Ethics Complaint was officially delivered by City Clerk Teresa Bolden to Mayor Matheson and to each Council Member electronically on February 16, 2021. Due to the fact that Mayor Matheson is the subject of

the complaint, he was delivered a paper copy of the Ethics Complaint in person by the City Clerk in order to garner his signature for receipt of the document. The next step in the Ethics Complaint process is the formation of an Ethics Board to review the complaint. Listed below is a summary of the establishment of the Ethics Board, the qualifications to serve as a Board Member, and the Board review process: (1) Establishment of Board of Ethics: (a) The City Clerk must notify the City official who is the subject of the inquiry at least seven (7) calendar days after receiving the complaint. (b) Following that notification, a Board of Ethics must be established by Mayor and Council. (c) The Board of Ethics will have three people on it who are all residents of the City of Valdosta. The Mayor will make one appointment to the Board, Council makes an additional appointment, and a third member will be appointed by the two named Board members - that member must be approved by a majority vote from Mayor and Council. (d) The third member appointed by the two named Board members must be a law professional and member of the Georgia Bar. (e) After all members have been appointed, the Ethics Board will select one member to serve as Chair. (2) Qualifications of Ethics Board Members: (a) Must be a City resident for at least a year and remain a resident while serving on the Board, (b) Appointee cannot be a current or employee of the City or previous employee within a one-year period, (c) Appointee cannot have had any interest in any contract or contracting opportunity with the City within a one-year period, (d) Appointee cannot have any previous felony convictions unless the person's civil rights have been restored and ten years have elapsed from the date of completion of the sentence, (e) Must be 21 years of older, (f) Appointee cannot be an elected official, (g) Must be a registered voter in the City of Valdosta, (h) Board members are not paid, (i) Must sign affidavit attesting to the qualifications above. (3) Board Review Process: (a) Upon receipt, the Board will review the complaint. The Board is empowered to dismiss "in writing" if the complaint is found to be unjustified, frivolous or unfounded. (b) The Board will then conduct at least one hearing within 60 calendar days of receiving the complaint. At this time, the Board can collect additional evidence and information regarding the complaint. The Board will also interview witnesses and the subject of the complaint. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to who they will interview. Mark Barber stated that would be up to the Committee. They will set their own rules on who they would like to interview and what documentation they would like to review. (c) Findings of the Board of Ethics will be submitted to the Mayor and Council for action within seven calendar (7) days of the final hearing. Mark Barber stated that if it takes 60 days for the Committee to reach a decision, one of the decisions can be that based on the information they have looked at in their review, there was not enough information to validate an Ethics complaint. They will bring that forth to Council and that will be that. If they find where there has been enough information to substantiate a legitimate Ethics claim after they have gone through the due process, they will bring that forth as well. At that point in time, Council can exercise their disciplinary jurisdiction which means that as a Council, they can publicly reprimand and censor the Mayor. This could be in the form that we do not have the confidence in him being the Mayor right now and we need this or that to happen, or the Council does have the option to request the resignation of the Mayor. Again, Council can request the resignation of the Mayor; however, Council cannot force the resignation of the Mayor. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether there would be any public input on this. Mark Barber stated that there would be no public input. (d) The subject of the complaint can file an application for an appeal in the Superior Court of Lowndes County within 30 days of the Board's decision. It should be noted that the Mayor's selection to the Ethics Board is solely his, so the appointment of this person to the Ethics Board will not be time consuming. The Mayor's individual appointment is not due to the fact that the complaint involves him, but it is a requirement of the Ordinance. The second member of Ethics Board is appointed by the Council. If possible, Council should consider an appointment at the February 25, 2021 Regular Council Meeting and vote on the appointment which would facilitate the advancing of the process. Once the Council appointment is completed, then it will be the Mayor's appointment. After that, the two Ethics Board Members will make the appointment of a third person to the Ethics Board. This Board Member must be of the legal profession and in good standing with the State Bar of Georgia. The third member of the Ethics Board must also be approved by a majority of Council. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that he sent an E-mail last week to the Council and he hoped that there was some discussion among Council to decide who their appointment may be. If not, that is fine, but it is important in order to move this forward. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether the Mayor would make his appointment in the Council Meeting. Mark Barber stated that the Mayor would make his selection in the Council Meeting. Mayor Matheson stated that he would make his selection in open Council.

Mayor Matheson turned it over to Council for discussion of their selection. Councilman Carroll stated that he would like to put forth the nomination of Robert Jefferson. Mayor Matheson asked for any further names to be submitted. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to whether Councilman Carroll could give them some

background on Robert Jefferson. Councilman Carroll stated that Robert Jefferson is a citizen of the City of Valdosta and he lives in his District. He has personally known Robert Jefferson for approximately 25 to 30 years and he is retired Air Force and DOD. He was the Moody Air Force Base Planner out of the CE Squadron, and he retired from the DOD position approximately three or four years ago. He is married and has two daughters. Councilman Vickers inquired as to how long Mr. Jefferson served on the Planning Commission. Councilman Carroll stated that he served approximately 10-12 years on the Planning Commission. There was a period of time where there was always a representative on the Planning Commission from Moody Air Force Base. He was replaced by Anthony Payton who has since rolled off. Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that if they are going to select this person, she felt that the citizens should hear something about him. Councilman Carroll stated that the reason why he nominated Robert Jefferson is because he is a very fair and level-headed man. He is someone that Council can trust to do the job and do it the way people expect it to be done. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether any of the Council Members have served on any Boards with Mr. Jefferson. Mayor Matheson stated that he went before Mr. Jefferson 20 years ago on the Planning & Zoning Board and Mr. Jefferson voted no to a tower that he wanted to erect. It was a 9-1 vote and Mr. Jefferson was the lone dissenting vote. Mayor Matheson stated that he still got the tower built and he felt that Mr. Jefferson's vote was due to his Moody background because they do not like any impediments in the sky. Councilman Vickers stated that he has known Robert Jefferson for years and worked with him in the community. He is a very nice and intelligent man and would try to do the right thing.

Being that there were no other names submitted for consideration, the Council unanimously selected Robert Jefferson to serve on the Ethics Complaint Board (7-0 vote). Mayor Matheson stated that his selection to serve on the Ethics Complaint Board would be Judge Jim Tunison, Jr. Those two members will now meet and select the third person who will be in good standing with the Georgia Bar Association.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that we received one E-mail from a concerned citizen for Citizens to be Heard. Copies have been placed at each Council Members' place for review. Ms. Marisol Rodriguez Parks was the concerned citizen who sent the E-mail to us yesterday.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the we will reopen City facilities on March 1, 2021 and will continue to practice all of the COVID-19 precautions. Masks will be required in all of our buildings. During the last shutdown, our Departments have been equipped with plexiglass shields and we will continue to keep those. COVID-19 was very rampant through the City of Valdosta and depleted some of our Departments at scary rate. Hopefully, we are past that and we feel safe in reopening the facilities to the public.

We had a neighborhood cleanup in the area of North Forrest Street and Melrose Drive from Leone Avenue to Pineview Drive which included Deborah Drive, Sterling Drive, Diane Drive, and Frederick Drive. To date we have collected eight tons of debris. These neighborhood cleanups are very successful.

The Public Works Department sponsored a Scrap Tire Drop-off Event earlier this month and they collected over 700 tires in two days. This is a great way to dispose of the tires and they are recycled into new tires or rubber mulch for playground equipment.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Matheson stated that there was a Retirement Ceremony for Battalion Chief Frank McMillan who had 36 years of service with the City of Valdosta Fire Department. It was a wonderful event and he has helped many people throughout his career.

Councilman Vickers stated that he is concerned about the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine. There is a large group of individuals in our community who do not have computers to go on-line and schedule an appointment. We need to really push the information out and provide them with phone numbers. They cannot be

left behind because for us to get a handle on this thing we are all going to need to get vaccinated. Mayor Matheson that there is no one better than the Department of Public Health on outreach. They do an excellent job and we will be glad to assist them in any way possible.

Councilwoman Tooley thanked all of the Departments and the Public Health Department for doing a wonderful job. The people in her District have been saying things to her about Police Officers patrolling the streets more and employees of the Public Works Department are picking up more stuff to help keep their area clean. She also had some people ask her about what we did for Black History Month. We had a Public Service Announcement about the facts and myths of COVID-19. The City is concerned and is participating.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that she attended the Georgia Municipal Association's virtual training this week and COVID-19 has killed more people than all those who died in World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. We have got to reach out to people and let them know the importance of getting the vaccine. Also, there is a website, MyVaccineGeorgia.com, which provides information on how to register for the vaccine. Albany has plenty of vaccine and they are opening their doors to anyone in the surrounding cities to get a vaccine shot there. Pat Wilson, Economic Commissioner, talked Delta Airlines and the measures they are taking to fly safely. In the U. S., Georgia is at 81% and we have almost 700,000 people so far who have taken the COVID-19 vaccine. She is honored to be a part of the City and the Department Heads are doing an awesome job.

Councilman Gibbs stated that last night, there was a Suicide Prevention Event featuring Kevin Hines and they had a big turnout. Park Avenue United Methodist Church reached out to several people about a week ago and he was one of those people. For them and many others to put this Event together so quickly tells you what a great community we have despite the rhetoric that has been going on lately. There were approximately 1,500 to 2,000 people in attendance. Also, the Miracle League is starting back up and instead of doing baseball they will be doing kickball starting on March 23, 2021. There will also be with Family Fun Day on March 6, 2021 which is a free event and citizens are invited to attend.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the February 25, 2021 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:20 p.m. to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel.

Mayor Matheson reconvened the February 25, 2021 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:47 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of personnel in the Executive Session. We will now present three candidates for Municipal Court Judge position.

Councilman Gibbs stated that the New Municipal Court Judge Committee presented their recommendation for consideration and the three candidates are as follows: (1) Jeremy Baker, (2) Justin Cabral, and (3) Kari Anne Bowden. An appointment will be made at the March 11, 2021 Council Meeting.

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the February 25, 2021 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:49 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, March 11, 2021.