

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 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, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Vivian Miller-Cody, Eric Howard, and Andy Gibbs. The invocation was given by Pastor Mark Brady, Anchor Faith Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 5, 2021 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCE TO DEANNEX 310 ACRES FROM THE CITY OF VALDOSTA DENIED

Consideration of an Ordinance to deannex 310 acres from the City of Valdosta as requested by Uvalde Land Company (File No. VA-2021-16). The property is the City portion of the Cherry Creek Wetlands Mitigation Bank property which is located between the Withlacoochee River and the Cherry Creek residential neighborhoods. The Planning Commission reviewed this request at their July 26, 2021 Regular Meeting and recommended denial (6-3 Vote). This request was tabled at the August 5, 2021 Regular Council Meeting until the August 19, 2021 Regular Council Meeting.

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that this request to deannex 310 acres from the City of Valdosta to Lowndes County was tabled two weeks ago. This is like an annexation in reverse. The difference is that the City Council makes the final decision either way. There was standing room only at the Planning Commission Meeting and many of those people were here two weeks ago. The Planning Commission recommended that the request be denied by a vote of 6-3. Nothing has changed regarding the aspects of this case in two weeks, and there has been no further meaningful contact with the applicant during that time.

Mayor Matheson stated that there will be no Public Hearing tonight on this Agenda Item since it was held at the August 5, 2021 Regular Council Meeting. Mayor Matheson turned this over to Council for action.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Carroll to deny this request based on the facts as we understand them and that the applicant has the ability to seek approval for hunting on this land while still residing in the City Limits and to also seek burn permits to deal with underbrush issues in connection with the City. None of the reasons given warrant the deannexation of this property, especially when you consider that there are a host of homeowners whose homes abut this property. They are citizens of the City of Valdosta and they deserve to have their voices heard by their representatives. Councilman Gibbs seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted (7-0) to deny the deannexation of 310 acres from the City of Valdosta as requested by Uvalde Land Company.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-22, AN ORDINANCE FOR FILM PRODUCTION IN THE CITY OF VALDOSTA (SECOND READING)

Consideration of an Ordinance for Film Production in the City of Valdosta. (Second Reading)

Ashlyn Johnson, Public Information Officer, stated that this is the Second Reading of the Film Production Ordinance which will help us facilitate commercial movie productions as well as television productions that shoot here in Valdosta. We have had a lot of successful films in the past years and coming off the heels of the Bandit

film, we were able to collaborate with them and talk about a process that would work here in our community for permitting and to address any concerns that the citizens of our community might have. It would also help the film production people maintain their schedule as well. Ashlyn Johnson, Public Information Officer, recommended that Council approve the Ordinance for Film Production in the City of Valdosta.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2021-22, an Ordinance for Film Production in the City of Valdosta, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-23, AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE 2021 MILLAGE RATE FOR THE CITY OF VALDOSTA

Consideration of an Ordinance to establish the 2021 Millage Rate for the City of Valdosta.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that as we discussed at the Work Session on Tuesday, we are recommending the rollback rate of 7.796. The information the City received from the Lowndes County Tax Commissioners Office shows an overall increase in the City's net tax digest of \$39,496,680 or 2.66% and we usually need approximately 2.5%. The rollback rate as computed should fund the FY22 Budget. The difference between last year's millage rate of 7.974 and the computed rollback of 7.796 would produce approximately a \$2.50 difference for a \$50,000 piece of property that qualified for the Homestead Exemption, \$6.00 for \$100,000 piece of property, and \$16.74 for a \$250,000 piece of property.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Gibbs to approve the rollback rate. Councilman Howard seconded the motion. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether they need to phrase the motion differently to include the Downtown as well as the City School System. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that they do need to break it down to include the 16.318 mills set by the Valdosta City School System and 5 additional mills for property located in the Central Valdosta Development area. Councilman Gibbs stated that he would rephrase the motion to approve the Ordinance to adopt the new tax millage rate of 7.796, 5 additional mills for property located in the Central Valdosta Development area, and 16.318 mills set by the Valdosta City School System. Councilman Howard was in agreement. The motion unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2021-23, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

AN ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE VALDOSTA CITIZENS ENGAGEMENT BOARD (FIRST READING)

Consideration of an Ordinance to establish the Valdosta Citizens Engagement Board. (First Reading)

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that this is the First Reading of the Ordinance to establish the Valdosta Citizens Engagement Board. Since this is a new Ordinance, there will be two Readings. Council will have time to discuss this at the next Work Session and at the Council Meeting on September 9, 2021 before any action is taken. This is the First Reading so no action will be taken on it tonight.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for two Rear Loader Refuse Trucks for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 01-21-22).

Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, stated that the Residential Garbage Division of the Public Works Department needs to replace two, 2008 side loader Lodal residential garbage trucks due to age and serviceability (Line Item #25-19 and Line Item #25-20). The existing trucks are used to service our residential sanitation customers throughout the City. The new trucks are Council-approved items for the funding source. Sealed bids were received on August 12, 2021 and the low bid was submitted by Container Systems in the amount of \$559,016; however, this bid did not meet specifications due to the following: (1) the hopper width was too small, (2) the seal height was too low, (3) the tailgate height was wrong, (4) the cylinders were sized too small. (5) the normal operating pressure was too high, (6) the tailgate lift cylinders were not double acting, and (7) the slide

panels cylinders were too small. The bid submitted by Solid Waste Applied Technologies in the amount of \$632,782 did meet all of the specifications. When this equipment was budgeted for in January of 2021, steel prices were down and it approved for \$610,000; however, steel prices have increased exponentially over the past two years driving the price up resulting in an over Budget price. The City attempts to lock the pricing in for an additional year; however, due to the unstable cost of steel, no vendor would agree to do that for this bid. Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, recommended that Council approve the bid that met all of the specifications submitted by Solid Waste Applied Technologies in the amount of \$632,782 and allow the Public Works Department to proceed with the purchase. Councilman Vickers inquired as to what the funding source was for this purchase. Richard Hardy stated that it would come out of SPLOST VIII funds.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the bid meeting specifications submitted by Solid Waste Applied Technologies in the amount of \$632,782 for two Rear Loader Refuse Trucks for the Public Works Department.

Consideration of bids for a Front End Loader Refuse Truck for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 02-21-22).

Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, stated that the Public Works Department needs to purchase a new front loader dumpster garbage truck due to the age of the existing truck and serviceability. The truck is used for running a commercial route for emptying dumpsters throughout the City. The new vehicle will replace Line Item #27-10 which is a 2004 model. This is in the Council-approved Budget for this Fiscal Year. Sealed bids were received on August 12, 2021 with the low bid submitted by Performance Peterbilt in the amount of \$293,765. Several other vendors did not respond to the invitation to bid. The last truck the City purchased like this was \$257,237 which was two years ago. The price increase is due to the increase in the price of steel. The Budget pricing was estimated in January of 2021 for the FY 22 Budget. The price of steel has continued to rise during the six-month period resulting in the higher price and creating an over Budget price. Richard Hardy, Deputy City Manager of Operations, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Performance Peterbilt in the amount of \$293,765 and allow the Public Works Department to proceed with the purchase. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether these trucks would be sold as surplus. Richard Hardy stated that the trucks would be sold on Gov Deals.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Performance Peterbilt in the amount of \$293,765 for a Front End Loader Refuse Truck for the Public Works Department.

Consideration of a request to approve a Contract for Professional Services to assist the City of Valdosta with compliance of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Consent Order.

David Frost, Utilities Director, stated that as part of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Consent Order (Order) which was issued in August of 2020, there were 19 conditions related to the sewer collection system that were identified as needing to be satisfied. Over the past several months, Barge Design Solutions has supported the City of Valdosta in response to the Order, including developing a hydraulic sewer model, an Inflow and Infiltration (I & I) Action Plan, and beginning flow monitoring in the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant sewer basin. The I/I Action Plan outlined a progression of tasks to satisfy the Consent Order requirements, including a complete sewer system assessment which must be completed by August of 2022. This proposal is for Barge to continue to assist the City of Valdosta in taking the necessary steps to meet the August, 2022 deadline. Though the Consent Order support will be needed through December of 2022, this specific Task Order includes continued services from August 20, 2021 through November 1, 2021. Barge Design Solutions will plan, manage, and execute the work according to the I/I Action Plan schedule. Tasks will include project management, administrative support, sewer flow monitoring data analysis, meter maintenance, training, and sewer assessment program management, including scheduling and performing manhole inspections. Barge initially submitted a proposal to provide Consent Order Program Support through December, 2022 for a not-to-exceed amount of \$1,659,570; however, the Utilities Staff believe that there are potential cost saving options to be negotiated with Barge. Because of the time constraints of the EPD Consent Order, the Utilities Department requested a revised proposal for services through November 1, 2021 in an amount not-to-exceed amount of \$109,620. David Frost,

Utilities Director recommended that Council approve a Contract with Barge Design Solutions in the amount of \$109,620 for Professional Services to assist the City of Valdosta with compliance of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Consent Order. Councilman Vickers inquired as to where the funding would come from. David Frost stated that the funding would come from User Fees.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve a Contract with Barge Design Solutions in the amount of \$109,620 for Professional Services to assist the City of Valdosta with compliance of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Consent Order.

Consideration of an Agreement for Engineering Services for the construction and replacement of the Main Switchgear at the Valdosta Water Treatment Plant.

David Frost, Utilities Director, stated that on June 24, 2021, the Valdosta City Council awarded the Project to replace the outdated switchgear at the Water Treatment Plant to Cook Industrial Electric Co., Inc. The new switchgear will allow electrical power to transfer automatically and uninterrupted while removing the need for Water Treatment Plant personnel to do so manually. The work to be performed includes the demolition of the existing switchgear, the construction of the new automatic switchgear, and all necessary electrical work and coordination with Georgia Power. The City contracted with CDM Smith, Inc. to provide professional engineering services that included developing the contract documents, project specifications, design plans, and general coordination. The Switchgear at the Water Treatment Plant is approximately 30 years and was installed at the Water Treatment Plant when it was built. This original Switchgear is outdated and it is very difficult to get replacement parts for any repairs. Given the complexity of the Switchgear Replacement Project and the critical need for continuous Water Treatment Plant operations, the Utilities Department determined that the Project would require project quality management, inspections, and engineering services during construction from a third party. Staff requested a proposal from the Engineer of record, CDM, for those services. On July 27, 2021, CDM Smith, Inc. submitted a proposal for \$177,680. Because CDM Smith, Inc. provided all engineering services during the design and bid phase of the Project, the Utilities Department personnel determined they are the most logical and best option to continue engineering services through the Project's construction phase. David Frost, Utilities Director, recommended that Council approve an Agreement with CDM Smith, Inc. in the amount of \$177,680 for Engineering Services for the construction and replacement of the Main Switchgear at the Valdosta Water Treatment Plant.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve an Agreement with CDM Smith, Inc. in the amount of \$177,680 for Engineering Services for the construction and replacement of the Main Switchgear at the Valdosta Water Treatment Plant.

Consideration of bids for Phase II of the Vallotton Park Land Improvements Project.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that Vallotton Park is a popular park located in a residential community on the east side of the City of Valdosta off Woodlawn Drive. The park is used by organized sports associated with the Valdosta Lowndes Parks and Recreation Authority (VLPR) and local residents. Earlier this year, the wooded areas around the park were thinned for both aesthetic and safety reasons. Phase II of the Project will remove additional trees and increase usable area within the park by providing additional passive-enjoyment space beneath the existing tree canopy. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held on July 8, 2021. The City received bids for Phase II of Vallotton Park on July 20, 2021 with the low bid submitted by 1st Choice Lawn Services in the amount of \$82,500 for burning the debris onsite and not hauling off trees/stumps. The Fire Department will allow for the burning of debris on-site with proper permits. Pat Collins, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by 1st Choice Lawn Services in the amount of \$82,500 for Phase II of the Vallotton Park Land Improvements Project. Councilman Howard inquired as to whether the residents in that area are aware of the burning. Pat Collins stated that there would be fans on site and this is allowed to be done under State laws for clearing of trees and brush; however, they have not met with the local residents.

A MOTION was made by Councilwoman Tooley to approve the low bid not to exceed \$82,500 that was submitted by 1st Choice Lawn Services for Phase II of the Vallotton Park Land Improvements Project. Councilwoman Miller-Cody seconded the motion. The motion was adopted (6-1) with Councilman Howard voting in opposition.

Consideration of a request to purchase 17 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Cylinders, 4 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, and 10 Masks for Georgia Search and Rescue Task Force 2.

Fire Chief Brian Boutwell stated that the City of Valdosta Fire Department currently hosts the truck and equipment assigned to Georgia Search and Rescue (GSAR) Task Force 2. Part of the equipment cache is Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) used to supply breathable air to Rescuers in Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmospheres. The current SCBA's are 2008 edition. Newer editions have been updated with more safety restrictions that our current SCBA's do not have. Due to the newer standards, GEMA has approved for the GSAR budget replace the current cache of SCBA's. The City of Valdosta receives an annual Grant through Homeland Security that is solely used to maintain GSAR equipment. The SCOTT SCBA was selected by members of the Rescue Team. The purchase of SCOTT SCBA's will make the transition to new SCBA's seamless due to the fact that we are currently using SCOTT. The Fire Department is requesting permission to proceed with the purchase of 4 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA), 17 cylinders, and 10 masks to allow total interoperability with our SCBA inventory under State Contract (Georgia State Safety and Lab Contract 99999-SPD- SPD0000156) at \$39,754.00. The SCBA's are in compliance with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards and mandates for all our first responders. Chief Boutwell recommended that Council approve the purchase of 4 SCBA's, 17 cylinders, and 10 masks under State Contract in the amount of \$39,754.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the purchase of 4 SCBA's, 17 cylinders, and 10 masks under State Contract in the amount of \$39,754 for Georgia Search and Rescue Task Force 2.

Consideration of a request to increase funding for construction of the City of Valdosta Downtown Amphitheater.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that on February 21, 2021, a bid proposal was sent out to begin work on the Amphitheater on Lee Street. At that point in time, we were not in the same materials market that we are today when it went out. There was only a conceptual drawing to give us an idea of what type of funding we would need. This drawing was also done free of charge by the University of Georgia students. The preliminary concept that was sent out to bid did not include a restroom facility or the fencing around the total perimeter of the proposed Amphitheater Park. When we got the bid back in, it was \$1,263,460 but without restrooms and fencing. Steel prices have increased 215% and this Amphitheater cannot be built without the steel products. We met with the Contractor last week to look at the pricing and to add in the restrooms and fence. In order to get the Amphitheater completed, we are looking at an amount not to exceed \$2,995,983. As the Project progresses, we will try to cut as much as we can but if we do then it will not be the quality Amphitheater Park that we have really been counting on and what our citizens have been waiting for. A combination of an increase in pricing and adding the restrooms and fencing has increased the cost considerably. Even the plywood has increased in price as well as the metal benches which have almost tripled in price.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that Staff is recommending a contingency in the amount of \$20,000 which would be set aside to cover any future increases in steel pricing and inquired as to what would happen if we need money for something else. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that they were trying to make sure they had enough money in case steel prices go up again because he did not want to have to come back before Council and ask for more money. Councilwoman Tooley stated that she thought it should be for any other items that come through and not just for steel. Mark Barber stated that they are hoping that will be it. It is difficult to ask for additional funding and if first conceptual drawing had everything on it then gap would have been much closer than what it is today.

Councilman Vickers inquired as to where the funding would come from. Mark Barber stated that it would come from SPLOST VIII. They will continue to look for grants and other things that will help us along the way. The only thing that did not increase in price is the light-up Splash Pad for children which was \$72,000. The Georgia Municipal Association has a grant for \$75,000 and he is going to try to get that covered 100%. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether they would be using any Federal Funds. Mark Barber stated that from a preliminary reading of the American Rescue Plan Act, he felt that some of this might qualify, especially the restroom facility which will be state-of-the-art touchless equipment to prevent the spread of disease. They are still

waiting on the final ruling though. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether there would be any sitting areas. Mark Barber stated that there would be some sitting areas. The entrance will be on Lee Street and there will be three openings to enter the park. There will be an archway for the center entrance. There will be benches and landscaping throughout the Park and the Central Avenue end is more of a passive area where you could sit to eat your lunch or read a book. There will also be a spot to put up the City's Christmas Tree each year. The Amphitheater area is more open where people can bring their chairs and enjoy concerts and shows. There will also be lighting all throughout the area. Councilman Norton inquired about the area behind the Amphitheater and whether that was the loading and unloading area. Mark Barber stated that was correct. The Church has put up an 8-foot vinyl fence and we will join their fence with a white vinyl fence. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to when they would start work on the Amphitheater. Mark Barber stated that if it is approved tonight, they are ready to begin work. Councilman Vickers inquired as to how much money they need to include in the motion. Mark Barber stated that the motion state that it should not to exceed \$2,995,983 and then if it is Council's preference, to include the \$20,000 as a contingency for anything else that the market is volatile. Mayor Matheson stated that it was actually \$2,975,983 and with the \$20,000 the total would be \$2,995,983. Mark Barber stated that was correct. Councilman Vickers inquired about the \$20,000 and if it was included in that. Mark Barber stated that the total with the \$20,000 would be \$2,995,983 but for the motion they need to break it out apart so it is clear that \$20,000 is contingency and that the not-to-exceed price is \$2,995,983 which makes it clearer for the Minutes.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Tooley, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the not-to-exceed cost submitted by Artesian Contractors in the amount of \$2,975,983 plus the \$20,000 contingency fee for steel price increases, if needed, for a total of \$2,995,983 for the Downtown Amphitheater.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Sally Turner Querin, 1120 North Lakeshore Drive, thanked the Council for listening to the citizens of Valdosta and voting to deny the request to deannex the 310 acres. She believes that this is an important piece of property that Council needs to continue to monitor the land use for the following reasons: (1) This land rests above 1 of the 19 principle aquifers in the United States which is called the Floridan Aquifer. It supplies drinking water to ten million people in the southeast United States. The quality of this water is considered among the best in the nation. This water is important to the economics of Georgia and our community because it plays a critical role in areas of agriculture, recreation, and human consumption. (2) The absence of an upper confining layer of rock as protection and the presence of karst features such as sink holes make the Aquifer vulnerable to contamination from human activities. Any alteration of groundwater flow can change the geo-chemical conditions, chemical makeup of the water, and increase groundwater vulnerability to contamination. (3) Dropping water levels from overuse means wells for agriculture and rural businesses must be deeper and more costly. Almost all of the property is in a high-risk flood zone and it should remain undisturbed and continue to play a passive role until it plays a critical active role as flood abatement. Ms. Querin asked that Council keep an eye on the property because it is a very important piece of property. There are aquifers drying up across the United States. Also, there is a new product called compressed pine which is as strong as steel. It is being used in construction in different places across the United States, and she suggested that since it is made of pine then maybe the Langdale's could get involved.

Sementha Mathews, Executive Director of the Turner Center for the Arts, 4069 Conway Circle, congratulated the Mayor and Council on the Amphitheater Park. It is exciting to get out and do some community events. Also, she provided Council with a copy of the Strategic Plan for the Turner Center. They have accomplished many things over the past years and they have set new goals for the next five years. The Turner Center Board Members and the Staff are doing a fantastic job for our community. They are now launching the SCORE Concert Series which is a Classical Music Appreciation Program. There are four concerts coming up and Council is invited to attend. They received a grant through the National Endowment for the Arts and had a local match to bring theses Classical performers to Valdosta. They are also bringing every fifth-grade student in the Valdosta City School System to see these performers so that they can experience Classical music. They will then be able to choose between the Strings Program or the Band Program when they get to the sixth grade. They have also started a Young Writers League and this year that had a contest called "The Art of Writing Contest" with the theme "Living United." The purpose of starting this was so that children can express themselves and engage in civic conversation. They had some really fantastic essays and they have produced a little booklet with the winning essays.

J. D. Rice, 501 Knob Hill Drive, stated that this will be his last time addressing Council in regard to renaming the Senior Citizens Center after Ms. Ruth K. Council. He thanked the City Manager for corresponding with him on the events that occurred this past Tuesday night at the Work Session. He is a little perplexed as to the meaning of what was stated. In the E-mail, Mr. Barber said that Council discussed this at the Work Session and made the decision not to amend the current Policy. J. D. Rice stated that he, along with the other 100 people who signed the Petition to have the building named after Ms. Council, was not asking for the Policy to be amended. He was just asking Council to follow their own Policy and be consistent. There have been other streets and facilities named after people who were living. The first one that he knows of was Dexter Sharper who had the street in front of his house changed to Sharper Circle. Ms. Council also had a street named for her. County Commissioner Minnie Martin had a street named for her, and former President Barack Obama had a street renamed for him. Of those that are mentioned, Ms. Martin is no longer with us, but she was alive when the renaming was done. He was not sure whether Ms. Mildred Hunter was alive when the Mildred Hunter Center was named for her but it is not unprecedented for a request to name a facility after someone who is still alive. The Policy does say that Council may rename a facility for historic purposes and he feels that there is nothing more historic than to give honor to Ms. Council who was the first person of color to be elected to the Valdosta City Council along with the other accolades that she received not only from the State of Georgia as an Educator but as a citizen of our City. She helped to start the Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Committee which is a historic event in itself in Valdosta. He would like to have closure behind this and asked Council to please reconsider this request and move forward with renaming the Senior Citizens Center after Ms. Council.

Ronnie Pierce, 823 Vallotton Drive, stated that he purchased his home approximately 15 years ago and 80% of the people who lived on that street were white. Fifteen years later, the table has turned. Now it is approximately 80% black. He takes pride in his street and his City. He uses the City app to report violations quite often, especially with the houses around him. One of his major complaints is trash cans that are left on the street after the trash has been picked up. Another complaint is overgrown grass. He has discovered that his street has become a blighted area. He would not call it a slum but it is a blighted area. He counted the number of houses from Stillwater Drive coming down Vallotton Drive to Troup Street and there are 60 houses. He also did a survey and went from house to house to find out how many of those people were homeowners and renters. It turned out to be approximately 60% of those people are renters. The problem that he is having is that people do not have the proper equipment to take care of their lawn so it gets overgrown. It hurts him to see the lawns in such bad shape. He would like for the City to consider having a law or something where that the owner of the property can increase the rent and have the grass cut on a regular basis. It is really getting out of control.

Marie Young, 507 West Adair Street, stated that she lives on the corner of Third Avenue and Adair Street between York Street and Adair Street. When the water passes the Stop sign on York Street approximately 30 feet, it turns and comes through her yard in the front and back. This has been going on for so long that it has washed down to the clay. In the back yard, the sand has washed into the road and there is nothing but roots. She had someone put the sand back in the yard but the other night, the sand washed back into the road. The water in the front yard comes to her door so she had a guy put some cement there in order for her to get out the door. She called the City and asked if they could help her. The City came out and put some rocks down three times and the rocks have washed down the road with the sand. Ms. Young asked for Council's help with her with the problem.

Nelita Menafee, also known as Creation Divine, HYPE, Inc., 98 Garden Drive, stated that she feels that they share a common interest in promoting the well being of young lives. It is their sincere desire to promote youth and provide an opportunity for them to utilize and display their artistic and athletic talents. You are forward thinkers who are looking toward the future and making decisions today that will positively impact tomorrow. She would like to invite Council to partner with HYPE, Inc. as a City sponsor. HYPE is a grassroots non-profit organization in Valdosta and their mission is to promote the well-being of young lives. Their objective is to enlighten and enrich their character. They accomplish this through instruction in the arts, sports, mentoring, education, and youth leadership development. There are currently four Programs that HYPE has implemented to manage the activities and the events that they provide which are HYPE Arts, HYPE Sports, Kids Night Out, and Saturday Night HYPE. They are in the process of launching an all-City Youth Orchestra and Performing Arts Program. They have currently leased a facility that is 7,200 square feet that will serve as a centralized location for most, if not all, of their Programs. They would like to purchase vehicles that will be used to assist parents in transporting youth to and from the Programs. They would also like to offer full scholarships to the youth whose

parents have financial limitations. The City's sponsorship will contribute directly to that. She would like to know if there is funding available that the City has received from Federal or State agencies that would assist a Program such as HYPE to move forward and accomplish their goals. Ms. Divine stated that she was here today to see what they need to do if there is funding, what the process is, and how would they find out more information about money and finances in the City to promote and help with performing arts.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that there will be a 9-11 Memorial Ceremony on Friday, September 10, 2021 at 10:15 a.m. at the historic Courthouse to pay tribute to those who lost their lives during the attacks on September 11. Moody Air Force Base will also participate with a fly-over after the ceremony. It will be live-streamed on Facebook and everyone is encouraged to attend and to wear a mask and socially distance themselves.

On Saturday, September 11, 2021, the Valdosta Fire Department will be hosting a 5-K Run that will start at 7:59 a.m. which was the time that the first plane was taken over on September 11. There will be a brief wreath-laying ceremony on the fire trucks before the Awards Ceremony begins and that will be held in the McKey Street parking lot across from City Hall.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Matheson stated that there is a Food Truck Crawl tonight in the Downtown area. There are approximately 12 vendors participating and citizens are encouraged to attend. Also, there will be a COVID-19 Drive-thru Vaccine Clinic next Saturday at the Union Cathedral Church on Hill Avenue. Citizens are encouraged to get vaccinated. Lastly, Angela Hobby, who has worked for many years at Wiregrass Technical College, will be retiring and they are having a Retirement Party at Georgia Beer Company tonight so please stop by and thank her for her great service to the community.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that there is another COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic tomorrow that Mr. Dove is hosting.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that the citizens on South Lee Street were very thankful to the Engineering Department and all those who were involved in getting the sidewalk. They have asked what they can do to show their appreciation to the City because this is something they have been asking for. She told them that they could write a card or letter, but she wanted everyone to know how thankful they are for the sidewalk.

Councilman Gibbs stated that the Miracle League for kickball and baseball will start on September 14, 2021 at Freedom Park. If there are citizens who would like to volunteer or if they know someone with a disability who would like to participate, they can give him a call. Registration is \$35 for eight weeks (four weeks of kickball and four weeks of baseball).

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the August 19, 2021 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:34 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, September 9, 2021.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta