

**MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2022**  
**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 Wayne Hughes, Abundant Life Church of God, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**READING OF THE 2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS**

Reading of the 2021 Municipal Election Results.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that results of the 2021 General Municipal Election held on November 2, 2021 have been certified by the Lowndes County Board of Elections. The results for the Valdosta City Council are as follows: (1) Valdosta City Council District 2 - Sandra Tooley (Incumbent) received 320 votes, (2) Valdosta City Council District 4 - Eric Howard (Incumbent) received 444 votes, and (3) Valdosta City Council District 6 - Andy Gibbs (Incumbent) received 420 votes.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the reading of the results of the 2021 Municipal Election.

**OATHS OF OFFICE FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS 2, 4, AND 6**

The Honorable Ellen S. Golden, Judge of State Court, administered the Oath of Office for Councilwoman Sandra Tooley (District 2). The Honorable Detria Carter Powell, Judge of Probate Court, administered the Oath of Office for Councilman Eric Howard (District 4). The Honorable Gregory A. Voyles, Judge of Superior Court, Southern Judicial District, administered the Oath of Office for Councilman Andy Gibbs (District 6). Copies of the Oaths of Office are on record in the permanent file of the January 6, 2022 Regular Meeting of the governing body.

**ELECTION ON MAYOR PRO TEM**

Mayor Matheson entertained nominations from Council for the office of Mayor Pro Tem. Councilman Howard placed into consideration the name of Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody. There being no other nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations. Councilwoman Miller-Cody was appointed to serve as Mayor Pro Tem by acclamation.

The Honorable Detria Carter Powell, Judge of Probate Court, administered the Oath of Office for Mayor Pro Tem to Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody. A copy of the Oath of Office is on record in the permanent file of the January 6, 2022 Regular Meeting of the governing body.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Special Presentation of the Valdosta State University Social Media Awards.

Ashlyn Johnson, Public Information Officer, stated that students from Valdosta State University’s Social Media Class, led by their professor Dr. David Nelson, have enjoyed a partnership with the City of Valdosta’s Public Information Office (PIO) for eight years. This partnership has led to creative academic assignments and viable ideas for the City to implement. These assignments not only serve as educational projects for the students, but also provide “real life” work experience. During the Fall, 2021 semester, the Valdosta State University (VSU) Social Media students were paired with the PIO Office as well as the Valdosta Police and Fire Departments. They were tasked with providing insightful ideas for reaching citizens who use social media as their primary source of

communication, and also offering innovative suggestions for revamping the Public Safety social media pages. The students visited the PIO Staff early in the semester to learn more about the Police Department's and the Fire Department's current social media platforms and how PIO Staff would like to receive more engagement. They then worked in their groups to develop realistic social media plans that also became a large part of their class grade. The Public Information Staff and both Police Chief Leslie Manahan and Fire Chief Brian Boutwell judged the presentations. The winning group, which was comprised of Stephanie Leas, Rodney McSwain, James Hulsey, and Victoria Voorhees, was selected for their presentation of a Social Media Proposal that highlighted ways to better engage with the community. Their winning presentation features ways to brand identity, safety and prevention campaigns, and recruitment campaigns. The group also addressed the idea of using the social media outlets to incorporate a video Q&A to help engage and connect with community members. This continued partnership with VSU demonstrates the City's constant efforts to provide applicable experiences to the local VSU students, as well as our commitment to engage them in their local government. The Mayor and Council congratulated the winners and thanked the students for their creative efforts and contributions to our community.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the December 9, 2021 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

### **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2022-1, A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE LOWNDES COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE**

Consideration of a Resolution to adopt the Lowndes County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

Jeff Brammer, Special Projects/Historic Preservation Planner, stated that this is the official Plan update to the Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Plan, as approved by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which took effect in February of 2017 and expires in February of 2022. The purpose of the Plan is to provide an overview of the hazards that may impact Lowndes County and the Cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta, and to outline the community's plans to mitigate potential loss of life and damages to property and the economy which could occur with these events. Hazard Mitigation Plans need to be updated and re-submitted for FEMA approval every five years to maintain eligibility. A current and adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan makes communities eligible to receive certain financial assistance, including State and Federal Funding and Grants for mitigation and recovery projects. In August of 2020, officials and citizens in Lowndes County and the Cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta began the research, planning, and public involvement process for updating the existing Plan. Authority for the development of this Plan update was given by the Lowndes County Commission through its execution of the Grantee-Subgrantee Agreement for the Lowndes County Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Planning Project, and by the Cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta, which are located within Lowndes County, through their participation in the planning project. The Plan update focuses on ten natural hazards chosen by the stakeholders that may affect and cause damage to Lowndes County and the Cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta. The natural hazards are: (1) Flood, (2) High Wind, (3) Lightning, (4) Wildfire, (5) Extreme Heat/Cold, (6) Drought, (7) Sinkholes, (8) Dam Failure, (9) Hail, and (10) Public Health Emergency. In October of 2021, the Plan update was submitted to GEMA and FEMA for approval. In December of 2021, GEMA and FEMA approved the Plan update, effective February, 2022 through February, 2027. A Resolution has been prepared for the adoption of the Lowndes County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Jeff Brammer, Special Projects/Historic Preservation Planner, recommended that Council approve the Resolution to adopt the Lowndes County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2022-1, a Resolution to adopt the Lowndes County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2022-2, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND  
THE GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY  
(GEFA) LOAN FOR THE INSTALLATION OF THE AUTOMATIC  
METERING INFRASTRUCTURE (AMI) SYSTEM**

**01/06/22 CONTINUED**

Consideration of a Resolution to amend the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) Loan for the installation of the Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City signed an \$8.5 million Loan Agreement with the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) on September 28, 2020 designated as Loan No. DW2020004. The purpose of the Note was to finance the installation of Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI) for the City's water system. The terms of the Note called for all disbursements under the Note to be made by December 31, 2021. The Project will not be completed by this date, so GEFA has agreed to extend the deadline to make the final draw against the Note until April 1, 2023. The GEFA documents, as well as the legal opinion from the City Attorney, are required to formally amend the Note and allow the City the additional time needed to complete installation and make the final draw. A Resolution for approval by the Governing Body to amend the Note has also been prepared. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve the Resolution to amend the GEFA Note.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2022-2, a Resolution to amend the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) Loan for the installation of the Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

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

Consideration of bids for one Chevrolet Tahoe for the Valdosta Police Department (Bid No. 13-21-22).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Valdosta Police Department needs to replace an existing vehicle in their fleet (Line Item # R-1630 - SUV) due to maintenance cost, age, and serviceability. The vehicle will be used throughout the Department for recruitment, community policing, Crime Lab, and other duties as required. There is \$40,000 in the Mayor and Council approved Motor Pool Budget for this Fiscal Year for this particular purchase. Sealed bids were received on December 28, 2021. The low bid was submitted by Brannen Motor Company in the amount of \$39,800. The bid was sent to several vendors, was posted on the City's website, and advertised in the Valdosta Daily Times as the Ordinance requires. Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Brannen Motor Company in the amount of \$39,800 for one Chevrolet Tahoe for the Valdosta Police Department.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Brannen Motor Company in the amount of \$39,800 for one Chevrolet Tahoe for the Valdosta Police Department.

Consideration of bids for water treatment chemicals for the Utilities Department (Bid No. 12-21-22).

Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, stated that the contract for water treatment chemicals is due to expire on December 31, 2021. These chemicals are used at the Wasterwater and drinking Water Treatment Plants every day. This bid is for one year with an option to renew for two additional one-year periods. Using the annual contract provides for more stable pricing with better service and delivery. The bid will be awarded to multiple vendors because no one vendor can provide all of the products. Each company typically specializes in only one or two products as a general rule. The chemical market, like all others, is going through the same effects with inflation and availability. Some products are billed by gallon, hundred cubic feet, pounds, and tons. Sealed bids were received on December 29, 2021 with the following results: (1) Caustic Soda - Univar Solutions – the new price is \$2.5357 and the old price was \$1.9539, (2) Sulfuric Acid - Southern States – the new price is \$224.80 and the old price was \$150, (3) Hydrofluosilic Acid - Hawkins, Inc. – the new price is \$3.25 and the old price was \$2.41, (4) Oxygen - AirGas USA – the new price is \$.8590 and the old price was \$.6950, (5) Salt - Colonial Group – the new price is \$145 and the old price was \$141, (6) F-35 Phosphate – Hawkins, Inc. – the new price is \$8.75 and the old price is \$6.25, (7) 12.5% Bleach - Allied Universal – the new price is \$1.49 and the old price was \$.77, (8) Sodium

Bisulfite 38% - Allied Universal – the new price is \$2.17 and the old price was \$1.79. Greg Brown, Purchasing Agent, recommended that Council approve the bids for water treatment chemicals for the Utilities Department.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the following bids for water treatment chemicals for the Utilities Department: (1) Caustic Soda - Univar Solutions –\$2.5357, (2) Sulfuric Acid - Southern States – \$224.80 (3) Hydrofluosilic Acid - Hawkins, Inc. – \$3.25, (4) Oxygen - AirGas USA – \$.8590, (5) Salt - Colonial Group –\$145, (6) F-35 Phosphate – Hawkins, Inc. – \$8.75, (7) 12.5% Bleach - Allied Universal – \$1.49, (8) Sodium Bisulfite 38% - Allied Universal – \$2.17.

Consideration of a request to purchase a Total Station Mapping System for the Valdosta Police Department Traffic Unit.

Police Chief Leslie Manahan stated that the Valdosta Police Department Traffic Unit investigates all traffic accidents in the City Limits which result in a fatality or serious injury. Part of the investigation involves precise reconstruction of the accident scene. In order to reconstruct these scenes, the Traffic Unit must use a computerized mapping system to take precise measurements in timely and efficient manner. The current mapping system used by the Traffic Unit is almost 15 years old. The software is also outdated and no longer supported by the Police Department's computer systems, so it is not reliable. Because of the system being outdated, it takes more Officers and several more hours to map out a scene, which is not efficient. In times when the mapping system will just not work, the Police Officers have to reach out to Georgia State Patrol for assistance and it can take days before the scene can be mapped. This delay affects the investigation. Unfortunately for 2021, our Traffic Unit investigated 12 fatality and 6 serious injury accidents that had to be reconstructed. The Police Department has obtained three quotes for the Total Station Mapping System. The first quote is from Georgia Surveyors Exchange in the amount of \$27,757. The second is from Capital Surveying in the amount of \$32,900. The third is from Leica in the amount of \$28,181.24. This equipment is in the current approved Fiscal Year Budget (Item CP-22.21) as a Capital Expense in the amount of \$28,000. Police Chief Leslie Manahan recommended that Council approve the purchase of the Total Station Mapping System from Georgia Surveyors Exchange in the amount of \$27,757, which includes delivery, programming, and training and it comes in under the budgeted amount.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the purchase of the Total Station Mapping System from Georgia Surveyors Exchange in the amount of \$27,757, which includes delivery, programming, and training and it comes in under the budgeted amount for the Valdosta Police Department Traffic Unit.

## **LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS**

Consideration of a request to modify the street name of Dr. Willie Houseal Drive to Willie Houseal Drive.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that on December 9, 2021, the Mayor and City Council approved changing the name of Continental Drive to Dr. Willie Houseal Drive. During the public hearing, the renaming Petition was considered and a citizen spoke in support of the Petition. The renaming of the street was adopted and approved by Council with a final vote of 6 to 1. On December 17, 2021, Dr. Willie Houseal wrote a letter addressed to the Mayor, City Council Members, and the City Manager requesting to delete “Dr.” from the previously approved name of “Dr. Willie Houseal Drive,” thus modifying the name to, “Willie Houseal Drive.” Given that street name changes are made and approved by Council, this request requires another vote by City Council. After discussion with the City Attorney Tim Tanner, it was decided that it would not be necessary to run another public notice in the Valdosta Daily Times as required by the Ordinance for renaming streets. Thus, the request by Dr. Houseal for modification of the street name is being brought before Council for consideration. Pat Collins, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the request for the modification to the street name.

**A MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request to modify the street name of Dr. Willie Houseal Drive to Willie Houseal Drive.

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

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. In May of 2018, the Southern Georgia region overwhelmingly passed a Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. Under State Policy, the minimum match from local jurisdictions who pass this tax is 10%, and in this case, the City of Valdosta. Our 2022 formula-based allotment is \$640,566.11 and, therefore, our required 10% match is \$64,056.61. Consequently, the minimum total required to be spent in 2022 is \$704,622.72. The City of Valdosta maintains 323 miles of streets. Infrastructure Management Systems (IMS) completed a comprehensive report on the needs of the City in 2021. The chief goal of the City is to use the LMIG Program to resurface roads in poor condition and to extend the life of roads that are in better condition. Streets have heretofore been selected without knowledge of the underlying conditions. The recommended street list was prepared by IMS in conjunction with the Engineering Department. The recommended list resurfaces 5.24 miles total and is estimated to cost approximately \$1,000,000. This final list must be submitted to GDOT and received prior to February 1, 2022. While it is not a GDOT requirement to have City Council's approval of the submitted list, it is the City's customary practice to get the City Council's approval and buy-in before the final list is submitted 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 2022 LMIG resurfacing program.

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

Consideration of a request to amend the current City of Valdosta Fiscal Year Budget for the hiring of a part time Executive Director for the Valdosta/Lowndes County Land Bank Authority.

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion to amend the current City of Valdosta Fiscal Year Budget for the hiring of a part time Executive Director for the Valdosta/Lowndes County Land Bank Authority. There was no motion so the request dies. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether that meant they were not going to talk about it. Mayor Matheson stated that it was postponed and they are all with Councilwoman Tooley on this.

## **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Gracie Bacon, 708 Holly Drive, stated that she has been before Council many times. The situation on Holly Drive gets worse every day. When she left her neighborhood this afternoon, there were cars on flatbeds. They have cut down the trees in the back yard next door to her house and all the hedges are gone. There are more and more cars and more traffic on Holly Drive. This is not going to cost Valdosta \$30,000 or \$400,000 and since she is a taxpayer, some of those dollars are her dollars. She should get better than what she is getting. No one is doing anything. The street is being destroyed by one person. They are not having church, missionary meetings, or family reunions. All of those people are not extended relatives. There are three houses with many cars and there is no way that a person without an income can afford that many tags and insurance. You do not have to worry about going into the back yard or going into her house because all you have to do is to sit in the front yard and you can see anything you want to see. Nothing is hidden. He has been slapped on the wrist and did not do anything. He is not a taxpayer; however, she is and she cannot do anything she wants. They would put her in jail. When the Police come to his house, it is all high-fives, elbow bumps, laughing, and talking. When they stand in front of her house, she does not get that treatment so she wonders why. She is a law-abiding citizen but he gets the smiles and laughter from the Police.

## **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the last day for citizens to dispose of their Christmas trees is January 7, 2022. The trees will go through the recycling process and be turned into mulch for citizens in our community to use. City residents can drop off their trees at Mathis Auditorium or place them on the street for pick-up.

The Strategic Initiatives Summit is coming up in March and tomorrow is the deadline for Council topics to be submitted.

Councilman Howard inquired as to whether they are any closer with an Ordinance that they talked about that may possibly help. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that they will have a section in the Strategic Initiatives Summit which will look into that. There are three or four Ordinances that will be presented and that will be one of them.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired about the Covid numbers in our area. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that as far as the City employees go, we have some Departments that are pretty much shut down because the majority of the employees have tested positive. Today was the first day that we have not had a positive test with a City employee, spouse, or child. Covid has been rampant in the Fire Department and now the Public Works Department is starting to see some effects as well.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Matheson stated that the caseload is at 33 at South Georgia Medical Center and they are not just from the City of Valdosta but the surrounding area as well. Dr. Kathleen Tomey will have a press conference tomorrow and announce that the spike is about to happen on the Omicron variant. It should rapidly decline after that.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody thanked the Council for electing her as Mayor Pro Tem. She is all about learning and being a team player.

### 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 6, 2022 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:18 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, January 20, 2022.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta