

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor Pro Tem Sandra Tooley called the Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council to order at 5:30 p.m. Council members present were: Joseph “Sonny” Vickers, Tim Carroll, Ben Norton, Eric Howard, Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Mayor John Gayle was absent. The invocation was given by Father Brian LaBurt, St. John Catholic Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that following years of research and feasibility studies, law enforcement leaders in Georgia decided that an advanced Command College Program was desperately needed. In May of 1994, the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP), in partnership with Columbus State University, accepted the challenge in making the establishment and implementation of a Command College a high priority. The 12-week program, which spans two years, is designed to prepare government personnel to be future leaders and/or prepare them for advanced positions. Some of the program courses include fiscal management in public finance, liability reduction, media relations, leadership, and human resources management and development. After completing the 12-week program, students must complete a research project which is reviewed by the Command College. Once all requirements are completed, the student is awarded a Master's Degree in Public Administration. In May of 2018, Commander Leslie Manahan of the Detective Bureau completed all Command College requirements and was awarded a Master's Degree. Chief Childress stated that we are very proud of Commander Manahan for this tremendous accomplishment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the July 19, 2018 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (6-0) of the Council.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of a Contract for the purchase of Plan Review Software for the Inspections Department.

Rick Mefford, Inspections Manager, stated that with the increasing reliance on paperless processes in all areas of business, the City's paper-based plan review process has become outdated. The Inspections Department has been seeking a digital plans review solution for quite some time and they would like to implement a digital plan review process to streamline processes, make record retention more affordable, and improve customer service. Paper-based plan reviews are cumbersome and present significant record retention challenges due to the quantity and size of the documents involved. Given the economical availability of digital record keeping and review, it is desirable to implement a paperless process. The City's ERP software, New World, does not provide a digital plan review solution. Staff made site visits to other City's that utilize a digital process for plan review and found that Sages Networks Inc. was the most compatible with the City's vision for digital reviews. There is a one-time cost of \$37,133 for the initial setup, configuration, integration, training, and Bluebeam review and a monthly cost of \$4,080 for the annual subscription. The Sages software also has other community development functionality for Inspections and Business Licensing should we desire to add these additional functions at a later date. This is a budgeted item in the Inspections fund for FY19. Rick Mefford, Inspections Manager, recommended that Council approve the Contract with Sages Networks Inc. for the purchase of Plan Review Software for the Inspections Department.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to approve the Contract with Sages Networks Inc. for the purchase of Plan Review Software for the Inspections Department.

Artie James, 309 Tomlinson Drive, stated that he has a pond on his property and the City put in drains so now the water is stagnant. The Federal government designated it as wetlands and he cannot do anything with it until he gets the designation removed. He was hoping that the City of Valdosta and the Mayor and Council could put some pressure on them to remove that designation so he could eliminate the problem. Willie Jones from the City of Valdosta's Engineering Department came out and took pictures and Councilman Eric Howard also came out to look at the pond. Mr. James stated that he lives in California and the pond is a hazard to the community because it breeds mosquitoes. He has been trying to get this resolved for the past three years and he would appreciate any assistance that the Council could give him to get the designation removed. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that Willie Jones, from the City of Valdosta's Engineering Department, has been trying to assist Mr. James over the past several months and the problem is that it is owned by the Corps of Engineers. There is a process that Mr. James will have to follow which he has tried to do previously. The City of Valdosta cannot request the Corps of Engineers to do what Mr. James is asking but we can help him maneuver through the process. We will have Willie Jones contact Mr. James next week. Mr. James stated that he has been trying to get this done for the past three years and keeps hitting a brick wall. The pond is a health hazard and he would appreciate it if the City can tell the Corps of Engineers that and maybe they will do something. Mark Barber stated that is why we are going to help Mr. James with the process because we do not have the authority to do that with the Corps of Engineers.

Deanna Lindsey, 2231 Copeland Road, stated that she wanted to talk about Floyd Rose wanting to change the name of Forrest Street to Obama Way. First of all, Mr. Rose has lied about Mr. Forrest. He was a family man converted to Christianity and he repented for what he had done. He apologized to those he felt he had wronged. When he died, nearly one-third of the 10,000 people who came to his funeral service were black. This information was in the Valdosta Daily Times. Mr. Rose is trying to cause strife and friction that is not here. Ms. Lindsey stated that she has black neighbors and she does not see what Mr. Rose is seeing. She sees kindness and it does not matter what color you are. She does not understand why Mr. Rose lies to try and defame a man's character which he has no proof of. They also said that Mr. Forrest came from the KKK but he did not. There is no proof in history that said he did that. It is not the sign that bothers her but it is the message. We are all Americans and God made us red, yellow, black, and white and we are precious in his sight. It is not about color. When we go to be with Jesus we are all one. Mr. Rose talks down on white people and in his articles that are published in the Valdosta Daily Times he literally says "white." If she had done that and said "black", she would be counted as a racist and a mean-spirited person. It is not about color because we are all special in God's sight. We must come to God and ask him to give us love in our hearts for one another. All these name changes will not do anything because it is only Jesus Christ that can change a man's heart.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the Main Street Department held a Taste of Downtown Event on Monday, July 16, 2018 and there were over 150 wrist bands sold for that event. We are continuing with the Downtown Restaurant Week for the next two days and citizens are encouraged to attend.

The second Youth Citizens Police Academy will wrap up tomorrow with a trip to Wild Adventures. This is for the older age group of 14-17 year olds. They were a highly energetic group of young people and they had a great time participating in the Academy.

The Guns versus Hoses Blood Drive will be held next Thursday, July 26, 2018 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the City Hall Annex Building in the Multi-Purpose Room. The Police Officers and Firefighters are heavily recruiting for this competition and it should turn out to be a great event.

The Public Works Department will receive the Georgia Chapter of Small Cities Rural Community Structures Project of the Year Award at the American Public Works Association Conference which will be held on July 26, 2018 on Jekyll Island. We are being given this award for our creativity with the solar array and the things we have done to protect the environment with solar panels.

There are over 900 students signed up for the Back to School Bash that will take place on August 4, 2018 at Drexel Park. Vanassa Flucas and Sarah Lowe of the Neighborhood Development Department have worked extremely hard on this event in order to streamline all of the different organizations that were having Back to

School Supplies Events. They have raised over \$10,000 in private sponsorships for this and it is for any student in the City and County School Systems. There will be a backpack stuffing on August 2-3, 2018 at the City Hall Annex Building in the Multi-Purpose Room.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Vickers stated that there will be two 9-11 ceremonies held in September and it bothers him that the City and County will be having separate events. It does not show unity and it seems like we could combine the events or even rotate it every year. We are one community and that shows division. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that he would work on that for Councilman Vickers.

Councilman Norton stated that a citizen approached him today about the City’s Solid Waste employees and was praising them for their work ethics. Two of the City employees were working this afternoon in the pouring rain lifting mattresses onto the truck to clean the streets. This goes to show the dedication that our City employees have and we need to show our gratitude for their efforts.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that Councilman Gibbs and Councilman Howard were doing a great job at the Mildred Hunter Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Tooley entertained a motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the July 19, 2018 meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:08 p.m. and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

Mayor Pro Tem Tooley reconvened the Regular City Council Meeting at 6:18 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of real estate in the Executive Session and action would need to be taken.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Gibbs to accept the donation of Map 0114D, Parcel 160A which consists of approximately 7.489 acres and Map 0116A, Parcel 253 which consists of approximately 10.25 acres from the Vallotton family. Councilman Howard seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted (6-0).

Mayor Pro Tem Tooley entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the July 19, 2018 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:20 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, August 9, 2018.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta