

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2023
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 9, 2023 are forthcoming.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing for on-site solidification of non-hazardous waste by Georgia Petroleum. No action will be taken.

Richard Hardy, Interim City Manager, stated that Georgia Petroleum has requested the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to allow it to solidify non-hazardous waste on-site for future disposal. Currently, the local landfill does the solidification for Georgia Petroleum. Georgia Petroleum plans to do the solidification on-site. The process calls for a Public Hearing for public comment to be held in accordance with Georgia Solid Waste Management Rule 391-3-4-.03(4) which provides: (4) The governing authority of the county or municipality will hold a public hearing not less than two weeks prior to the issuance of any permit, except for a private industry disposal facility, and notice of such hearing shall be posted at the proposed site and advertised in a newspaper of general circulation serving the county or counties in which the proposed activity will be conducted, at least thirty (30) days prior to such hearing. A typed copy of the hearing transcript shall be submitted to the Division.

Jason Crosby, General Manager of Georgia Petroleum, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Crosby stated that part of the process with the Georgia EPD is to attend a Public Hearing in the beginning of the permitting process and at the end. Through a snail's pace, they have reached the end of that process with the Georgia EPD. They are going to solidify non-hazardous waste only and they currently do this at the landfill. This just gives them independence and the ability to continue grow here in Valdosta and Lowndes County and control their destiny.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Mayor Matheson stated that no action is required to be taken by the City.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-7, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S PURCHASING POLICY FOR ALLOWANCE OF THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) PROCUREMENT POLICY WHEN EXPENDING 4307 GRANT FUNDS

Ordinance to amend the City of Valdosta's Purchasing Policy for allowance of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Procurement Policy when expending 5307 Grant Funds.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the purchasing procedures at the City of Valdosta are governed by the City's Purchasing Ordinance and a detailed Purchasing Policy. This Policy sets purchasing procedures based on the nature and amount of the purchase in question. It was last updated on June 11, 2020. The City is the recipient of 5307 Transit Grant funds and, therefore, needs to ensure that specialized requirements for purchasing related to this Grant are satisfied in its Policy. The last amendment to this policy updated the City's

policy to comply with current requirements. These requirements have been updated by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). This necessitates a corresponding update to the City's policy. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administers 5307 Grants. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) receives these and passes them through to the cities and counties in the State that provide transit service to urbanized areas. The FTA has certain requirements for purchasing that the City needs to adhere to for expending 5307 Federal dollars. The proposed FTA Addendum, which has changed, will change as FTA updates its Policy. An Amendment to the Ordinance will allow the City to append GDOT's model FTA Procurement Policy to the existing Purchasing Policy while retaining current practices for non-Federal dollars. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve an Ordinance to amend the Purchasing Policy

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2023-7, an Ordinance to amend the City of Valdosta's Purchasing Policy for allowance of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Procurement Policy when expending 5307 Grant Funds, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of a request for payment of invoices for emergency sewer main repairs on North Oak Street near One-Mile Branch Creek.

Bradley Eyre, Director of Utilities, stated that on July 20, 2022 the City Utilities Department was informed of a developing sinkhole adjacent to an existing sanitary manhole on North Oak Street near the Valdosta State University (VSU) Campus. After further inspection by Utilities Central Lines crews, it was determined that the existing 24" Reinforced Concrete Pipe (RCP) sanitary sewer main had failed/collapsed and had caused the sinkhole. Utility contractors were contacted to provide assistance to make emergency repairs and RPI Underground Utility Contractors were released to begin making necessary repairs. RPI Underground Utility Contractors were hired to restore sewer flows with an emergency by-pass pump operation at One-Mile Branch Creek at North Oak Street. After cleaning and inspection of the sewer main when the bypass was in operation, it was determined a portion of the existing sewer main could be rehabbed and was re-lined. The remaining portion of the sewer main trunk line repair required a realignment with new pipe and manholes with significant repairs to North Oak Street. For this section of sewer replacement, the Utilities Department obtained Mr. Bill Kent with Innovate Engineering to survey and prepare engineering drawings. The emergency repair work was completed by the Contractor on February 15, 2023 and they delivered an invoice for construction activities in the amount of \$1,304,061.27. Innovate Engineering also provided an invoice for engineering and surveying work in the amount of \$7,405. This emergency repair was necessary due to the deterioration of the existing RCP sewer main which was installed in the 1950's. The City Utilities Department appreciates the immediate action and resources of the Contractor and Engineer for the necessary emergency repairs. Bradley Eyre, Director of Utilities, recommended that Council approve the payment to RPI Underground Utility Contractors in the amount of \$1,304,061.27 and to Innovate Engineering in the amount of \$7,405 for these emergency repairs and associated engineering/survey work.

Councilman Gibbs stated that he knew we have the camera system and video and different ways that we can look at the pipes to detect where the lines are at; however, he inquired as to whether there was any way that we could go back and look at other areas that had pipes put in during the 1950's. That way we could go ahead and find these issues so we are not paying an extra \$3,000 or \$4,000 out of pocket because of emergency repairs. Bradley Eyre, Director of Utilities, stated that we have done that in a lot of the smaller sewer mains around town. When you are dealing with a large one that is 24 inches or 36 inches, then you have to bypass the flow because it is flowing full most of the time. Once that is done, then you can run the camera. We have known for some time that the 24-inch RCP needed to be replaced. They just had other emergencies/issues. They also know that the other repair that we are currently in the middle of on Knights Creek has ductile iron that was installed in the 1970's that needs to be replaced. Councilman Gibbs inquired as to how many more they are aware of like this. Bradley Eyre stated that those two trunk lines are the main ones, but they may have some other trunk lines feeding the Mud Creek Sewer Treatment Plant that we need to assess. Councilman Gibbs inquired as to whether it would be more cost efficient to do the bypass and go ahead and fix these things versus the cost of the emergency repairs. Bradley Eyre stated that it is and they have identified the repair for this particular line. They have spent approximately \$2,000,000 in the last 18 months so the rest of the way to the Remer Lift Station has been identified as a

\$10,000,000 Project. They have that in the SPLOST planning and it has been moved up along with the Knights Creek Project. It is cheaper than chasing emergency repairs down the line. Councilman Gibbs inquired as to whether they had a plan in place. Bradley Eyre stated that they do have a plan in place. They have these Projects identified in part of the CMOM Program. They currently have GEFA funding identified to pay for these Projects which will be coming out in the Budget shortly. Mayor Matheson stated that it is also in our Congressional ask for expenses. Councilman Gibbs stated that he knows they are doing a good job in identifying them; however, he just wanted to make sure that we go ahead and work on the issues instead of waiting.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to how long the warranty is on this. Bradley Eyre stated that it is a one-year warranty; however, the manholes and pipe will last for many years into the future. A portion of this was relined or slip-lined and the other portion is new but it is expensive to do it this way. They are recommending that they take the whole Project and redo the entire line which will save money in the long run and produce a better product as well.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that she thought they had already discussed this before and inquired as to whether this was on the list and we just never go to it. Bradley Eyre stated that it was on the list and was scheduled for FY25. They have moved it up because we have a Consent Order and we replied to the Consent Order with the Consultant after they did the analysis and video inspection of all of the sewer system. In some of the smaller lines where they know they have I&I problems, they are targeted for slip-lining. That was the first stage which was going to be FY24, but they changed the priority because of the current emergency repairs that we have had.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was adopted (7-0) to approve the request for payment of invoices as it pertains to both RPI Underground in the amount of \$1,304,061.27 and Innovate Engineering in the amount of \$7,405.00 for emergency sewer main repairs on North Oak Street near One-Mile Branch Creek.

Consideration of a request to approve a Utility Easement with Georgia Power for the new Pickleball Courts at McKey Park.

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that there are new Pickleball Courts currently being constructed at McKey Park and new electrical services are required. Georgia Power is requesting that the City of Valdosta dedicate an electrical power easement for the installation of the new electrical service line to the Pickleball Court area. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the Utility Easement Agreement with Georgia Power and receive the electrical services.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve a Utility Easement with Georgia Power for the new Pickleball Courts at McKey Park.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to approve the proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2023.

Anetra Riley, Neighborhood Development & Community Protection Manager, stated that each year, as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement community with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), we are required to create an Annual Action Plan. In the Annual Action Plan, we are to complete two tasks: (1) outline proposed activities, and (2) the funding amounts associated with each proposed activity for the upcoming program year. This year, our Annual Action Plan is due to HUD by May 15, 2023 or we forfeit the Grant funding allocations for the upcoming year. In a letter dated February 27, 2023, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) advised the City of Valdosta of their FY2023 Grant allocation for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The City of Valdosta is scheduled to receive **\$630,163** as its FY2023 Grant allocation, which is **\$16,932** less than the FY2022 allocation of \$647,095. Listed below are the proposed activities for the 2023 program year: (1) Program Administration - \$126,032.00, (2) Single Unit Residential - \$422,631.00, (3) GPP - \$50,000.00, (4) Back to School - \$10,000.00, (5) Small Business Ed - \$20,000.00, and (6) NAA - \$1,500.00. The proposed activities above will be presented to citizens at Public

Hearings that will be held on March 31, 2023 and April 6, 2023 and there will be a period of public comment for the proposed spending until April 30, 2023. This is the fourth year of the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan for Valdosta. The FY23 Annual Action Plan will be completed and submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by May 15, 2023. Anetra Riley, Neighborhood Development & Community Protection Manager, recommended that Council approve the proposed CDBG allocation.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2023 in the amount of \$630,163.

Consideration of a request to approve the revised American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) proposed Projects and allocation amounts.

Richard Hardy, Interim City Manager, stated that the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFR), a Part of the American Rescue Plan, delivered \$350 billion to State, Local, and Tribal Governments across the Country to support their response to and recovery from the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The City of Valdosta received a total allocation of \$16,254,692 from this Program. The City has expended a total of \$6,669,558.26 of these funds with 9,585,133.74 remaining. Council discussed this Grant at the prior Retreat and provided guidance on the use of these funds. In the intervening time, priorities have shifted and a new allocation is recommended as follows: (1) Griffin Avenue Housing Project - \$ 3,300,000, (2) City of Valdosta (Facilities, Technology, etc.) \$ 1,300,000, (3) AARPA Project Manager - \$ 250,000, (4) Land Bank Funding (4 Years for Executive Director) - \$ 120,000, (5) Land Bank Authority Seed Funding - \$ 250,000, (6) Purchase of Properties on South Patterson & Surrounding Parcels - \$ 1,300,000, (7) Small Business Development - \$ 2,008,442, (8) Valdosta On-Demand - \$ 500,000, (9) Neighborhood Rehabs - Housing Rehab (Paint, Weatherization, etc.) - \$ 800,000, (10) Mildred Hunter Center (Lighting & Court Replacement) - \$ 245,000, (11) Non-Profit Allocation - \$ 955,000, (12) Premium Pay to Employees - \$ 3,214,584, (13) Savannah Avenue Train Project - \$ 3,214,584, (14) Second Harvest assistance/Subsidize purchase of an ambulance for EMS - \$ 1,000,000 \$ 250,000. The new allocation represents an increase of \$1,008,442 to the Small Business Program, an increase of \$500,000 to the Weatherization Program, a new allocation of \$250,000 to subsidize the purchase of a new ambulance for EMS, and a new allocation of \$1,000,000 for the Second Harvest Food Bank. These changes are funded by a reduction in the Savannah Avenue Train Project of \$2,738,334 and the use of \$20,108 in previously unallocated funds. Richard Hardy, Interim City Manager, recommended that Council approve the proposed revision to ARPA Projects and allocations.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the proposed revision to ARPA Projects and allocations.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Mary Moye, 620 Monroe Street, stated that she has lived there for 53 years. Today, on behalf of the Monroe Street homeowners, they oppose the apartment complex that is being built on West Street. They wish that it could be a house or houses built for someone to become the owner of instead of duplex apartments. They would like for Council to take that into consideration.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Richard Hardy, Interim City Manager, stated that Public Works is providing free mosquito pellets for citizens who reside within the City Limits. They may pick them up at the Public Works Department between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

On Friday, March 24, 2023, the Valdosta Fire Department will host an Engine Push-in Ceremony at 9:30 a.m. at Fire Station 1 for their newest Fire Engine. Citizens are encouraged to attend.

On Saturday, March 25, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., the Engineering Department will host a Spring Cleaning Litter Clean Up. It will be held at the intersection of Two Mile Branch and Berkley Drive. This is a

collaborative effort between WWALS and the City of Valdosta. Also, the Great American Cookoff will be held for the First Responders from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Seasons Miller Hardware. Last year, the Valdosta Police Department won the competition and the bragging rights. Proceeds will go to the local Boys and Girls Club.

City Government 101 will begin on Monday, April 10, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The graduation will be held on Monday, May 15, 2023.

The Bluesberry Festival will begin on Friday, April 14, 2023 at Unity Park from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and on Saturday, April 15, 2023 from noon to 10:00 p.m.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Matheson stated that tomorrow at 10:30 a.m., there will be a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the North Lowndes Sports Complex. It will be open to the public and refreshments will be served. This Sports Complex will benefit all of the citizens of Lowndes County and Valdosta. Also, on March 31, 2023 through April 1, 2023, the Mayor and Council will hold the Strategic Initiatives Summit at The Woman's Building. This will be open to the public.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that she represents the City of Valdosta on the Southern Georgia Regional Council and she attended a meeting today in Waycross. At this time, we have completed the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS). We applaud the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County for a job well done.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the March 23, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 5:55 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, April 6, 2023.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta