

**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 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, Ben Norton, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Pastor Andre Newsome, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Mayor Matheson recognized George Page, Executive Director of the Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks and Recreation Authority and former Valdosta Fire Chief J. D. Rice.

**AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, introduced Justin Elliott of Mauldin & Jenkins who will present their findings on the City's activities for the year.

Justin Elliott stated that he wanted to speak about the 2022 Audit of the City's financial statements. The audit was performed in accordance with Governmental Accounting Auditing Standards or GASBY. The City of Valdosta had an unmodified opinion which is a clean opinion and is the highest level of assurance that they can give the City as an external Auditor. When they conduct an audit, they are also required to do two more audits. One is a Yellow Book Report and one is a Single Audit Report. The Yellow Book Report is where they look at the internal controls in compliance with State law. They had no issues with that. The Single Audit Report is required if you have over \$750,000 of Federal expenditures. The City had approximately \$9 million of Federal expenditures. There were a couple of major programs and there was an unmodified opinion which is good. Mr. Elliott thanked Chuck Dinkins and his Staff for doing a great job. The General Fund accounts for the majority of the revenues and expenditures. The City had \$18 million in assets and \$2.5 million of that was in cash. That is good because that is what you want to see. The liabilities were approximately \$5 million so there was a Fund Balance equity of \$13 million. The revenues were approximately \$40 million and expenditures of \$37 million so there was \$2 million in net income. The majority of the revenues come from property taxes, insurance premium taxes, and sales tax. If the doors closed tomorrow, the City would basically be able to fund 125 days. With a June 30<sup>th</sup> year end, you want that because the major source of revenues comes in November and December with the property taxes. The Enterprise Funds (water and sewer) accounts for the majority of the operations. There was approximately \$213 million in assets and \$207 million of that was capital assets. The net position is \$151 million which is our equity. Compared to the assets, that is great. The Operating Revenues on the Income Statement was \$22 million and Operating Expenses of \$18 million with a net income of \$4.5 million. That also includes some transfers out to help other funds out. Overall, the Funds are very healthy and had a good Fund Balance. From an operational standpoint, the City of Valdosta is healthy. There were no issues with independence, no disagreements with management, and no uncorrected audits/statements. The audit was a great success.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the Special Called Meetings of April 21, 2023 and April 27, 2023 and the Regular Meeting of May 25, 2023 were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Mayor Matheson stated that Agenda Item (f) would be advanced to the first Agenda Item under Public Hearings and entertained a motion to table the Request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to table Agenda Item (f) - Consideration of an Ordinance to grant Planned Development Approval for a non-conventional Single-Family Residential development on 2.20 acres as requested by Machouse Investments LLC (File No. VA-2023-09).

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that in accordance with Georgia Code 36-81-3, each local government shall adopt and operate under an annual balanced budget for the General Fund, each Special Revenue Fund, and each Debt Service Fund in use by the local government. The annual balanced Budget shall be adopted by Ordinance or Resolution. A Budget Ordinance is balanced when the sum of estimated revenues and appropriated fund balances is equal to appropriations. Nothing contained in the above-mentioned Code precludes a local government from adopting a Budget for any funds used by the local government other than those specified in paragraph one. These funds include Enterprise Funds, Internal Service Funds, and Permanent funds. The Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed City of Valdosta Budget has been reviewed and discussed at previous meetings, and a Public Hearing has been conducted to afford citizens the opportunity to make comments on funding levels. The proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget does include a 5% utility rate increase based upon the water rate analysis and sufficiency study adopted by Mayor and Council. The General Fund Budget presented is balanced with no anticipated millage rate increase. The proposed Budget also includes a 3% cost of living adjustment for career employees effective July 1, 2023. The City's medical clinic continues to be funded in this proposed Budget, with no increase in employee contributions for any City benefit offered. The consolidated proposed Budget (uses) decreased \$2.2 million when compared to Fiscal Year 2023. There are increases in personnel due to new positions and the 3% COLA that are partially offset by smaller cuts across the City. Richard Hardy, City Manager, recommended that Council approve an Ordinance to adopt the City of Valdosta's Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2023-13, an Ordinance for the City of Valdosta's Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Budget, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2023-14, AN ORDINANCE FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CUP) FOR A TATTOO PARLOR/STUDIO BUSINESS IN AN OFFICE-PROFESSIONAL (O-P) ZONING DISTRICT**

Consideration of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Tattoo Parlor/Studio Business in an Office-Professional (O-P) Zoning District as requested by Anthony Tong (File No. CU-2023-02). The property is located at 307 East Jane Street. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their May 22, 2023 Regular Meeting and recommended approval with four conditions (5-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Anthony Tong is requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Tattoo Parlor/Studio in an Office-Professional (O-P) Zoning District. The property consists of 0.33 acres located at 307 East Jane Street which is along the south side of the street approximately 300 feet east of Williams Street and 500 feet west of North Ashley Street. This is the same property that was rezoned from R-P to O-P by City Council on April 6, 2023 at the request of this same applicant. The property contains a small vacant office building (2,034 square feet) with small front and rear yard parking areas. The applicant is proposing to expand his existing Urban Ink Tattoo Parlor from its current location at 1507 North Ashley Street to become a tenant in this second location in order to be closer to Valdosta State University. This proposed use requires a CUP in O-P Zoning (which is why the applicant requested the rezoning to O-P, in order to make the proposed use eligible for consideration). The applicant is currently not proposing any exterior changes to the building. The property is located within a Transitional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan. As discussed with the recent Rezoning request for this property, the surrounding land use pattern is dominated by a mixture of both residential and professional office type uses; however, in terms of overall character, this area still has a strong residential feel to it in terms of older homes that have been converted to offices but keeping their residential style, the urban tree canopy, and narrow streets with light traffic. Because of these factors, Staff was opposed to the rezoning to O-P; however, since the O-P Zoning has now been approved by City Council, the attention now turns to that of CUP criteria and overall compatibility of the proposed use with its surroundings. Staff recognizes that the limited size of the existing building (2,034 square feet) will go a long way in limiting the potential magnitude of the facility but they believe there should be some additional limitations to aid in the compatibility with the surrounding R-P development pattern. Included in these are limitations on the hours of operation, as well as signage being restricted to a primarily R-P standard. Staff found the request consistent with

the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria and recommended approval subject to the following conditions: (1) Approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only, for a Tattoo Parlor/Studio business in O-P Zoning, and for the existing building only with no building expansions greater than 100 square feet cumulative. This shall be a single tenant/business occupancy with no other tenants/businesses allowed on the premises. (2) Hours of operation shall be limited to within the hours of 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. daily. (3) Signage shall be in strict accordance with O-P requirements without Variance. No signs shall be internally lit. There shall be no directional signs, nor any temporary signs nor attention-getting devices of any kind. (4) Conditional Use approval shall expire one year from the date of approval if no City business license has been obtained by that date. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their May 22, 2023 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Conditional Use Review Criteria, and recommended approval subject to the following amended conditions (5-0 vote): (1) Approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only, for a Tattoo Parlor/Studio business in O-P Zoning, and for the existing building only with no building expansions greater than 100 square feet cumulative. This shall be a single tenant/business occupancy with no other tenants/businesses allowed on the premises. (2) Hours of operation shall be limited to within the hours of 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. daily. (3) Signage shall be in strict accordance with O-P requirements without Variance. No signs shall be internally lit. There shall be no directional signs, nor any temporary signs nor attention-getting devices of any kind. (4) Conditional Use approval shall expire one year from the date of approval if no City business license has been obtained by that date.

Councilman Howard inquired as to whether the applicant had any objection to the revised hours of operation of 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. There is a store and a restaurant at the end of the street and they do not close at 8:00 p.m. Matt Martin stated that Staff had recommended a more narrow set of hours and it was the applicant who requested these hours.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

Madison Reed, 308 East Jane Street, spoke in opposition to the request. Ms. Reed stated that she and her husband own the property directly across the street which is a residential duplex. They bought the property a year ago and put a lot of money into making it more beautiful and to benefit the area. That area itself has a lot of potential and they feel like the Tattoo Shop does not really benefit the area. This is a very residential neighborhood and if everyone continues to renovate the houses, it will benefit the area and the City. There are also small children who live in the area and she would not want that kind of clientele around her baby. She is also concerned about all the traffic and they do not want people coming in and out all hours of the night. They put a lot of money and time in that house and they do not want it to go to waste if the area goes down. She does not have anything against the business itself but that is just not the right area for it.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilwoman Tooley to approve the request for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a Tattoo Parlor/Studio Business in an Office-Professional (O-P) Zoning District for property located at 307 East Jane Street as requested by Anthony Tong with the following four conditions: (1) Approval shall be granted in the name of the applicant only, for a Tattoo Parlor/Studio business in O-P Zoning, and for the existing building only with no building expansions greater than 100 square feet cumulative. This shall be a single tenant/business occupancy with no other tenants/businesses allowed on the premises. (2) Hours of operation shall be limited to within the hours of 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. daily. (3) Signage shall be in strict accordance with O-P requirements without Variance. No signs shall be internally lit. There shall be no directional signs, nor any temporary signs nor attention-getting devices of any kind. (4) Conditional Use approval shall expire one year from the date of approval if no City business license has been obtained by that date. The motion was seconded by Councilman Howard. The motion was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2023-14, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 2023-15, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE 0.81 ACRES FROM OFFICE-PROFESSIONAL (O-P) TO COMMUNITY-COMMERCIAL (C-C)**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.81 acres from Office-Professional (O-P) to Community-Commercial (C-C) as requested by Jack Langdale (File No. VA-2023-06). The property is located at 106 West Northside Drive. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their May 22, 2023 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (5-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Jack Langdale, on behalf of the property owner (The Credit Shelter Trust via Estate of Dr. Jerry Purvis) is requesting to rezone 0.81 acres from Office-Professional (O-P) to Community-Commercial (C-C) Zoning. The property is located at 106 West Northside Drive which is along the north side of the street approximately half-way between North Oak Street and North Patterson Street. The property contains an existing professional office building (2,788 square feet) and it is being proposed for occupancy as an off-site expansion of Valdosta Animal Hospital which is located at 111 East Northside Drive. There are currently no physical changes to the site being proposed. The property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of C-C Zoning. The property is also located within the Urban Commercial Corridor Overlay District (UCCOD). The surrounding zoning patterns in the area are dominated by mostly C-C Zoning in this area between North Oak and North Patterson Street, with R-P Zoning for some of the medical offices across the street. To the east across North Patterson there is mostly C-H Zoning which is reflective of a more intensive commercial area. To the west of the intersection with North Oak Street, there is R-P and O-P Zoning, with Residential Zoning farther westward. The surrounding land use pattern generally mimics the zoning pattern and consists of mainly light commercial and professional office type uses. All of this reflects an apparent graduated scale of intensity across these three different blocks of Northside Drive; however, another defining characteristic is the roadway itself which is a four-lane Minor Arterial with center turn lane in the portion in front of the subject property and running eastward. The Commercial Zoning pattern here coincides with increased traffic counts; therefore, allowing the possible conversion of this property to a commercial use is consistent with all of these patterns of the area, and likely facilitate the logical reuse of this property after it has been sitting vacant for more than 13 years. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommend approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their May 22, 2023 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (5-0 Vote).

Jack Langdale, 701 North Patterson Street, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Langdale stated that he represented the Purvis family who owns the building. Dr. Purvis operated his practice there for some time. The property has been on the market for quite a while. Dr. Kyle Harrell operates his Veterinary practice approximately 600 feet down the road and he has outgrown his building. He would like to see patients there and at the current location. He does not intend to have any outdoor boarding but will just use the exam rooms the way they have been used except it will be for pets instead of people.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2023-15, an Ordinance to rezone 0.81 acres from Office-Professional (O-P) to Community-Commercial (C-C) for property located at 106 West Northside Drive as requested by Jack Langdale, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 2023-16, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE A TOTAL OF 34.91 ACRES FROM HIGHWAY-COMMERCIAL TO COMMUNITY-COMMERCIAL (C-C)**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone a total of 34.91 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H) to Community-Commercial (C-C) as requested by Jack Langdale (File No. VA-2023-07). The property is located at 2101 West Hill Avenue. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their May 22, 2023 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (5-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Jack Langdale, on behalf of the property owners (Longleaf Property Management of Valdosta, Inc. - Val D'Aosta Company), is requesting to rezone three parcels totaling 34.91 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H) to Community-Commercial (C-C). The property is located at 2101 West Hill Avenue which is at the southwest corner of Exit 16 along I-75. The eastern parcel (11.57 acres) currently contains an existing restaurant (Austin's) and a former hotel site (Kinderlou Inn). The small central parcel (1.00 acre) contains an abandoned gasoline station. The western parcel (22.34 acres) is currently vacant. The property owners are proposing to completely redevelop the entire property, and they are contemplating a mixed-use development pattern. The property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of C-C Zoning. Although it

excludes some of the more intensive commercial uses (such as truck stops, auto body shops and mini-warehouses), C-C Zoning offers a wider range of potential uses than is allowed under C-H without sacrificing any of the mainstream commercial uses often associated with a fully commercial development. The owners are considering a possible mixed-use overall Master Plan for the entire property and might be submitting a Planned Development proposal for consideration later this year. Approval of C-C Zoning gives them the ability to consider the maximum range of logical uses for this property. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommend approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their May 22, 2023 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (5-0 Vote).

Jack Langdale, 701 North Patterson Street, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Langdale stated that he was here on behalf of the landowners. They would like to redevelop the site and the primary reason for the rezoning is that they would like the multi-family element to go along with some of the already approved uses in C-H. Austin's Restaurant has been there for a long time and will not be leaving. They hope to have it relocated in the new building on the site.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** by Councilman McIntyre, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2023-16, an Ordinance to rezone a total of 34.91 acres from Highway-Commercial (C-H) to Community-Commercial (C-C) for property located at 2101 West Hill Avenue as requested by Jack Langdale, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

**ORDINANCE NO. 2023-17, AN ORDINANCE TO REZONE TO REZONE 0.97 ACRES FROM SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (R-10) TO HIGHWAY-COMMERCIAL (C-H)**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 0.97 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Highway-Commercial (C-H) as requested by Jason Parker (File No. VA-2023-08). The property is located at 1511 Harmon Drive. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their May 22, 2023 Regular Meeting and recommended approval (5-0 Vote).

Matt Martin, Planning Director, stated that Jason Parker is requesting to rezone 0.97 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Highway-Commercial (C-H). The property is located at 1511 Harmon Drive which is along the south side of the street approximately 300 feet east of North St. Augustine Road. The property is currently vacant and the applicant currently has this property and the adjacent C-H property at 1513 Harmon Drive under contract for purchase. The applicant is proposing to combine these properties and redevelop both of them together as a car wash facility facing North St. Augustine Road. The property is located within a Community Activity Center (CAC) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of C-H Zoning. The property is located in the transitional area between the established commercial corridor along North St. Augustine Road and a residential area behind it. As such, the surrounding zoning patterns in the area are dominated by mostly C-H Zoning along the commercial corridor and R-10 Zoning for the residential area. The surrounding land uses follow the same general pattern; however, the redevelopment trends in the area have been for a slow expansion of the commercial development (such as the recently constructed Candlewood Suites hotel and the Hog-n-Bones restaurant to the north) as well as conversion of some of the Single-Family Residential properties to Multi-Family apartments. The applicant's proposal is to expand the commercial corridor one lot deeper into the old neighborhood, to the same depth as the existing institutional use (Church) to the south which is also likely to become commercially zoned at some point. Although this inward expansion might be slightly ahead of the ideal transition timeline, it should be deemed compatible in terms of the long-term redevelopment trends of the area. Staff found the request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended approval. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their May 22, 2023 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (5-0 Vote).

Councilman Howard stated that his concern is with the number of car washes that have been popping up and inquired as to whether they could put some stipulations to make sure it is secure so that no one can just go in there and live if the business closes. Matt Martin stated that what is before Council is not a specific approval for a

carwash but a zoning change. One thing that we could pass on as a request to Staff is that when it comes through Plan Review, the facility could be secured at night. The automated part of it will have doors like the other carwashes in town but the self-serve bays may be a different story. Lighting would probably go a long way to deter some of that but that is something Staff can look at during the Plan Review process.

Jason Parker, 4900 Knights-Ferry Road, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Parker stated that he was the applicant and would be glad to answer any questions that Council may have.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

**A MOTION** was made by Councilman McIntyre to approve the request to rezone 0.97 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-10) to Highway-Commercial (C-H) for property located at 1511 Harmon Drive as requested by Jason Parker. Councilman Gibbs seconded the motion. The motion was adopted (6-1) with Councilman Howard voting in opposition to enact Ordinance No. 2023-17, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIV.

## **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2023-6, A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE GEORGIA MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES BENEFIT SYSTEM**

Consideration of a Resolution to approve an Amendment to the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Master Defined Benefit Retirement Plan.

Jennie Boyer, Human Resources Administrator, stated that during the December 2, 2022 Meeting, the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) adopted Amendment No. 4 to the GMEBS Master Defined Benefit Retirement Plan Document to incorporate provisions for reduction factor up to 15 years before normal retirement and to address situations in which an adopting employer amends its plan in a way that could require participants who have previously accrued benefits to begin making employee contributions to ensure that previously accrued benefits will not be affected. The Amendment requires GMEBS employers with individually designed plans to separately adopt any Amendments that are made to the Master Plan. The City of Valdosta does have an individually designed plan; therefore, the City must adopt the attached Resolution approving the Plan Amendments. There is no change in the City's plan structure in regard to payments, benefits, or calculations. The required amendments are necessary to meet Internal Revenue Service mandates for these types of pension plans. Jennie Boyer, Human Resources Administrator, recommended that Council adopt the Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System setting forth amendments to the Master Plan in order to meet Internal Revenue Service regulations.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve Resolution No. 2023-6, a Resolution to approve an Amendment to the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System (GMEBS) Master Defined Benefit Retirement Plan, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VII.

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2023-7, A RESOLUTION FOR CIVILITY FOR THE CITY OF VALDOSTA**

Consideration of a Resolution for Civility for the City of Valdosta.

Catherine Ammons, Assistant City Manager, stated that as City leaders, we should advocate for organizational policies setting expectations for respectful interaction and civil engagement. The first step is for local leaders to model civility in all their interactions, to do their best to not respond in-kind to personal insults, to voice support for colleagues who have been the targets of rude or disruptive behavior, and to actively listen to each other and to constituents during deliberations to understand everyone's perspective. Civility does not mean unity. There will always be policy disagreements, but that is the democratic process. If local conversations can be framed with the understanding that everyone is trying to be their best selves and do what they believe is best for their community, then perhaps that will create an environment for civility. Civility in society, and certainly in our civic life, is a serious and growing concern. By modeling and practicing civility, City leaders set an expectation that

vigorous debate and vetting of ideas can be respectful and productive, leading to better engagement and outcomes for all. Catherine Ammons recommended that Council adopt the Civility Resolution and pledge to become a City of Civility.

Councilman Gibbs stated that the Resolution for Civility was rolled out by the Georgia Municipal Association last year for all cities. Catherine Ammons stated that there have been 75 cities in the last two months who have adopted the Resolution. They are hopeful that all cities will adopt it. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether the Resolution was City-specific. Catherine Ammons stated that it is a general Resolution but the City that adopts it will sign it. If Council adopts the Resolution tonight, the City of Valdosta will be recognized at the Georgia Municipal Association Convention in Savannah in a couple of weeks. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to who will ensure that it is followed. Catherine Ammons stated that it would be up to the Mayor to ensure that everyone acts in a civil and respectful manner. Everyone should treat others the way that they want to be treated.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve Resolution No. 2023-7, a Resolution for Civility for the City of Valdosta, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VII.

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

Consideration of a request to approve improvements to the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant.

Bradley Eyre, Director of Utilities, stated that the City's Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant has undergone a number of expansions and improvements since the construction of the original Wastewater Plant in 1977. The Mud Creek Superintendents and the Utilities Department has identified a list of items grouped for an improvement Project as follows: (1) Ten of the underground yard piping plug valves near clarifiers No. 3 & 4 and aeration tanks No. 3 & 4 from 1977 and 1986 have become inoperable and need to be replaced. (2) The splitter box/effluent piping from the aeration tank to clarifier No. 3 has an unknown obstruction that will need to be removed and possible structure and yard piping modifications. (3) An addition to the belt-press conveyor system is needed to properly distribute pressed sludge within the 20 yard containers used to remove processed waste to the landfill. (4) The sludge storage facility is in need of a process area for emptying the VacCon (vacuum) truck waste. The Utilities Department has selected Turnipseed Engineers (on the City approved engineering consultants list) for engineering and oversight for these improvements. At the Utilities Department request, Turnipseed Engineers has provided a cost proposal for consulting and design fees estimated at \$65,250 (a portion of the fee is based on 8.5% of the actual construction costs). Bradley Eyre, Director of Utilities, recommended that Council approve the cost proposal for consulting and design fees submitted by Turnipseed Engineers in the amount of \$65,250.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the cost proposal for consulting and design fees submitted by Turnipseed Engineers in the amount of \$65,250 for improvements to the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant.

Consideration of bids for resurfacing of streets in the City of Valdosta through the SPLOST VIII funding.

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that the City performs annual major maintenance on our 323 miles of streets through contracting road resurfacing and repair work. Funding for this work is from both the City's SPLOST VIII and a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG). LMIG funding for 2023 is \$659,061.12 with a minimum local match requirement of 10% (\$65,906.11). In recent years, the City has matched 100%+ of the LMIG funding in order to better repair and maintain our local road system. Approximately five miles of streets were identified which need significant repairs; these road selections were circulated to Council for review and approval in January 2023. The Road Maintenance Project scope was refined based on that approved list and the final scope of work was advertised both in the local newspaper and on the City's website. Two bids were received and opened at 10:00 a.m., on May 16, 2023. The bids were considered both responsive and responsible bids. The low bid was submitted by Reames and Son Construction Company, Inc. with a total base bid amount of \$2,381,568.50. Adding 10% contingency (\$238,156.85) for unknown field conditions would bring the total Project cost to \$2,619,725.35. This cost is significantly above the anticipated budget for the Project. Reducing the scope to only the work on the asphalt pavement areas and removing other road

repair items would reduce the Project cost to \$1,772,152.00 through modification of the base bid. Adding 10% contingency (\$177,215.20) for unknown field conditions would bring the total Project cost to \$1,949,367.20. This is the cost to perform the bare minimum scope of work on the selected road segments. Any Project cost overages which exceed the approved budget amount would be pulled from future road maintenance funding for this SPLOST cycle. The City currently has approximately \$2,000,000.00 remaining to be utilized for the purpose of matching funds for roadway maintenance through the end of FY2025. Approval of the reduced bid amount plus contingency of \$1,949,367.20 will leave \$709,693.92 remaining to be utilized for the purpose of matching funds for road maintenance through the end of this SPLOST cycle. Approval of the base bid amount plus contingency of \$2,619,725.35 will leave \$39,335.77 remaining to be utilized for the purpose of matching funds for road maintenance through the end of this SPLOST cycle. This remaining amount would not sufficiently fund the projected minimum match amounts through FY2025. As such, Staff cannot responsibly recommend this course of action. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the reduction of the scope of the Project to work only on the asphalt pavement and approve a modified bid submitted by Reames and Son Construction Company, Inc. in the amount of \$1,772,152.00 plus a 10% contingency of \$177,215.20 for a total Project Cost of \$1,949,367.20.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the modified bid submitted by Reames and Son Construction Company, Inc. in the amount of \$1,772,152.00 plus a 10% contingency of \$177,215.20 for a total Project Cost of \$1,949,367.20 for resurfacing streets in the City of Valdosta through the SPLOST VIII funding.

Consideration of a request to approve an Amendment to the Master Terms and Conditions for the Via Transit Service.

Anthony Musgrove, Public Works Administrator, stated that on March 17, 2021, the Mayor and Council approved a contract with River North Transit, LLC, a subsidiary of Via Transportation (New York, NY) to provide transit services to the City of Valdosta. Valdosta on Demand (VOD) launched on April 27, 2021, with an option to renew the agreement for three (3) additional one-year terms and this one being the last year. Since the launch, the demand for service has exceeded the capability of the vehicle fleet and the contracted hours. Currently Valdosta on-Demand is providing an average of 400 rides daily with a demand in the upwards of 500. In order to contend with the demand for service, an increase in contracted driver hours are required. The City was approved for FTA 5307 Grant and congressionally-directed spending to fund the transit program for FY24. The City's match is included in the proposed FY24 Budget. The attached Amendment outlines Fee for Vehicle hours with the total contract value to not exceed \$1,993,204 for the third renewal term commencing effective date from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. Anthony Musgrove, Public Works Administrator, recommended that Council approve the Contract Amendment No. 3 with Via for public transit services.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the Contract Amendment No. 3 with Via for public transit services.

## CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Wendelin Hodges, 1416 Willie Houseal Drive (formerly known as Continental Drive), stated that she has a problem with her mail not being delivered the way it should be. Everything that comes to her house is going back to the sender. She has tried to get in touch with the Postmaster in Valdosta but she is having a roadblock. She speaks to the Supervisors at the Post Office and they keep telling her that they do not know what is going on. They are talking to people in Atlanta who say that the approval has been made; however, her mail continues to go back to the sender. She has even had some mail from the City that was returned back to the City. This has been going on since November of 2022. This has been happening to other residents on the street but they will not come forward. Also, her credit card mail is going back to the sender and now they are cancelling her account. Her bank statements are not coming either. Ms. Hodges asked Council's consideration in helping her get this resolved and get a meeting with the Postmaster.

J. D. Rice, 501 Knob Hill Drive, stated that he wanted to brag on the City of Valdosta. He thanked City Manager Richard Hardy on behalf of the American Veterans (Amvets) along with Brandie Dame, Main Street Director, Steven Jolly, Mathis Auditorium Coordinator, Demarcus Marshall, Facilities Manager, Police Chief



Leslie Manahan, Commander Robert Renfroe, Commander Bobbi McGraw, and Fire Chief Brian Boutwell. They hosted their very first Music Festival at the new Unity Park Amphitheater a couple of weeks ago in recognition of Memorial Day. Most of them realize that Memorial Day was set aside to honor those who died for our freedom by fighting for this country. They wanted to do something different than just the traditional ceremony that they always do so they had a free Music Festival. It was a tremendous success. It could not have happened had not the City Manager and the employees of the City of Valdosta stepped up and asked what they could do to make it work. He wanted to publicly thank everyone for a job well done.

Dr. Brad Bergstrom, 2101 Michael Terrace, stated that he stood at this podium 23 years ago with many others to encourage the Council to pass an important revision to the Tree and Landscape Ordinance which they did. This Ordinance, as revised and strengthened, is an important underpinning for Valdosta to continue to be accepted as a Tree City USA. The important goals and principles of the Ordinance are best summarized by statements in the Ordinance itself. Section 62-91 and Section 62-92 are as follows: "Preservation of specimen and canopy trees shall be given special consideration in the preparation of site development plans. It is the desire of the City to preserve all existing trees wherever possible in development. Specimen trees are trees which warrant special consideration and encouragement for preservation. Specimen trees may be designate for preservation because of rarity, aesthetic value, historical value, botanical importance, importance to overall community planning, or size." He wanted to urge Council, in any future decisions under your purview, to consider that tendencies of some Developers may be to maximize profit by minimizing trees which runs counter to these principals as stated in the Ordinance and to steer Developers back toward these foundational principals of our Tree City.

A citizen came forward to give a shout out to the Valdosta Fire Department and First Responders. She was attending her grandson's graduation on May 26, 2023 at Lowndes High School and at the end of the event she passed out as they were leaving. The Fire Department were the First Responders called the ambulance. They played a very important role in saving her life. She could hear people talking but she didn't know who they were but she knew they were the First Responders. She called and tried to find out who they were and she received a call back this morning. The name of the First Responder was Chief Tyler Shoemaker and she wanted to thank him personally.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Richard Hardy, City Manager, recognized Councilwoman Sandra Tooley who received the Community Change Maker Social Justice Award this past Saturday.

On Saturday, June 10, 2023, there will be a Maker's Market at the historic Courthouse Square from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. On Monday, June 12, 2023, the City's Photo Contest Opening will be held at the Turner Center for the Arts at 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. On Wednesday, June 14, 2023, the Goodwill Youth Tour luncheon will be at 11:30 a.m. in the City Hall Annex Multi-Purpose Room. On Friday, June 16, 2023, there will be a Juneteenth Celebration at 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Unity Park.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mayor Matheson stated that this weekend, Kenny Moore will host a Football Camp at Lowndes High School and he will be honored with a joint Proclamation from the City of Valdosta and Lowndes County declaring it "Kenny Moore Day." There will also be a Single Fathers Conference at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday at Austin's and he will be giving the Welcome. Also, he went with the Chamber of Commerce and several other community leaders to Washington, D.C. this week to meet with Legislators and share our concerns and needs for our community.

Councilwoman Tooley stated that she is always looking at things going on in the community and she wanted to thank the Engineering Department for a job well done on Lee Street. Also, the City Engineer gave a good explanation about the street resurfacing and adjusting the costs in doing things. She would like for him to come up with an idea to help the older areas.

Councilman Howard inquired as to whether the City could help with some of the youth camps going on. We need to keep these young people off the streets and if we could help promote it on the website that would be great.

Councilman Carroll thanked Amy Hall and Carolyn Sampson-Burgess for their work on the Budget. He also commended the City Manager, the Assistant City Manager, and the Department Heads for their efforts in putting the Budget together. It is a tough job and a lot of work and having been through 16 years of Budget Hearings during his time in office, he just wanted to applaud everyone.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody thanked the Council for their support in getting the Fry Street Sidewalk Project completed. She also thanked the Engineering Department for their work on this Project. The senior citizens also say thank you because it is a job well done.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the June 8, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:35 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, June 22, 2023.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta