

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MAY 24, 2018
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

OPENING CEREMONIES

Mayor John Gayle 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, Sandra Tooley, Eric Howard, Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. The invocation was given by Pastor Ricardo Velmas, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Mark Barber, City Manager, introduced the new Human Resources Director, Catherine Nita, and the new Public Information Officer, Ashlyn Becton.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF THE 2018 VALDOSTA HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

James Horton, Special Projects/Historic Preservation Planner, stated that May of each year is National Historic Preservation Month and this year's theme is "This Place Matters" which is a campaign for showcasing one's favorite historic building. The City of Valdosta is celebrating with the 10th Annual Historic Preservation Awards. These awards are given to a select few who have gone above and beyond to rehabilitate and preserve a particular contributing historic building or construct a new building which blends well with the historic character of the District. The categories for the awards are: (1) Outstanding Achievement for large rehabilitation projects, (2) Distinguished Merit for smaller rehabilitation projects, (3) Stewardship for long term preservation and care of a historic building, and (4) Excellence in Compatible New Construction for new construction that blends well with the historic character of the District. There is also the Harold Bennett Lifetime Achievement Award for a Valdostan who has preserved buildings or promoted the Historic Preservation Movement in Valdosta in an outstanding way over a long period of time. These awards provide positive reinforcement to the Historic District Design Review process, promote goodwill within our community and acknowledge the hard work and monetary re-investment back into the community's building stock. Mayor John Gayle, Celine Gladwin, Chairman of the Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission, and James Horton, City of Valdosta Historic Preservation Planner and Special Projects Coordinator, presented the following awards:

The Outstanding Achievement Award was presented to Tish Johnson, TISHCO for renovation of a building located at 314 North Patterson Street. The building was built in the 1950's as a grocery store and later served as a variety of retail stores and offices until it sat vacant for a number of years. Situated back from the street, this unassuming building was situated behind some large trees and was not really noticeable to the passersby. Ms. Johnson discovered the building and could see great potential for a new office space for her company. She transformed the interior into sheik office spaces while showcasing the historic features and finishes and rehabilitated the exterior all while preserving its form and character making this building shine for Valdosta. She beautified the outdoor spaces with a brick and iron fence surrounding a heavily landscaped courtyard. The project was funded through a local bank and the Downtown Redevelopment Incentive Program.

The Distinguished Merit Award was presented to Dr. Alex Alvarez and Derek Allen of CAADTA, LLC, for renovation of a home located at 1505 Slater Street. The home was designed by Lloyd Greer and constructed for the Stump family in 1924. The home was expanded by Mr. Greer in the 1930's and again in the 1950's by architect Conner Thompson. In the 1990's, the home was expanded with several poor quality additions which destroyed the historic character of the original design as the home was divided in four apartments to be rented to college students. In 2017, Dr. Alvarez and Mr. Allen purchased the house and began the rehabilitation by removing the non-historic additions and returning the home to its former Colonial Revival design that Lloyd Greer intended. The project was completed with private funds from CAADTA and is now a single-family home again.

The Stewardship Award was presented to the Pentecostal House of Prayer located at 315 East Central Avenue. The Church is a wooden church building at that was originally constructed for the Valdosta Baptist Church in 1867. It is Valdosta's oldest remaining religious structure and was purchased by the Pentecostal House

of Prayer congregation in 1994. It has been loved and cared for by the group ever since. The building retains its original design with its rectangular shape and tall central tower and large stained glass windows. Recently the congregation repaired the stained glass windows and protected them with the installation of storm windows. The exterior was also just given a fresh coat of white paint which makes it gleam with beauty in the sunshine under the oak trees. The congregation also owns and beautifully maintains the Queen Anne Dukes Autry home adjacent to the building.

The Excellence in Compatible New Construction Award was presented to Whitehead Hardware, a division of Miller Hardware, for renovation of property located at 104 South Lee Street. Miller Hardware had its beginnings at Strickland-Tillman Hardware in 1912. Eight years later in 1920, Strickland bought out Tillman and by 1933 Roy Whitehead bought the company and re-named it Whitehead Hardware. The store was originally located at 204 South Ashley Street. In 1972, Miller Hardware bought Whitehead Hardware and eventually moved it to its current location at 104 South Lee Street where it is today. Needing more retail floor space, the Millers decided to build a new showroom for Whitehead in 2017. The Project was designed by IPG Architecture and its design was approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The new building is constructed of red brick and has arched windows and a tower-like front entrance. Its scale, setting, design, and materials fit neatly into the historic character of Downtown Valdosta.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 10, 2018 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of a request to approve a Contract for Misdemeanor Probation Services for the City of Valdosta Municipal Court.

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that the City of Valdosta currently has probation services provided by CSRA Probation Services and their contract will expire on June 30, 2018. A Request for Proposal was sent out to several vendors and the only response that was received was submitted by Professional Probation Service (PPS)/Georgia Probation Management, Inc. (GPM). PPS was founded by Clay Cox who has more than 30 years of experience in offender management in both public and private sectors. PPS/GPM will take an active interest in the defendant's success as evidenced by their high collection/success rate. They are strong believers in accountability and job search assistance is always provided to the defendant. Their goal is to reduce recidivism and provide the probationer with a path out of the judicial system. They will be able to monitor the offenders closely and provide rehabilitative services. Their system allows more time for officers to spend with each defendant which results in a reduction of recidivism. The Probation Officers are provided with an integrated case management application, Probation Tracker™, and each Probation Officer will have a "Start of Day" screen. This, in concert with oversight from management, assures that no case will go more than 24 hours out of compliance without notification going directly to the Probation Officer. Their system can also easily download payment information to the Clerk's accounting system thus taking away the time it takes for Staff to key in payments. They also offer ACH payments which will transfer any money collected for the Court to the Clerk's office instantaneously. Mark Barber recommended that Council approve a Contract with Georgia Probation Management, Inc. (GPM) for Misdemeanor Probation Services for the City of Valdosta Municipal Court.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve a Contract with Georgia Probation Management, Inc. (GPM) for Misdemeanor Probation Services for the City of Valdosta Municipal Court.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Alma Williams, 2609 Rolling Road, stated that she wanted to give the Mayor and Council an update on Project Hope. It is going very well and they have a new facility located at 2415 Giddens Drive. They have

approximately 135 children enrolled in the Program this summer and 45% of those enrolled are teens who need a job. The majority of these children come from single parent, low income homes. The Program will begin June 4, 2018 and they are planning to partner with the Police Citizens Youth Academy as well as spend three days at Camp Tygart learning leadership skills and enjoying fishing and swimming activities. Ms. Williams stated that they are looking for volunteers to help do some work on the new building and invited the Mayor and Council to come out and help as well. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to when they would start working on the building. Ms. Williams stated that they would start next week. Councilman Vickers inquired as to how many volunteers they had because in the beginning she had stated that had over 100 volunteers. Ms. Williams stated that people started out excited about the Program but a lot of them have backed off. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to the transportation they will use for the trip to Camp Tygart. Ms. Williams stated that she would charter a bus. Councilman Howard inquired as to how many jobs she had asked for in the City. Ms. Williams stated that they started out with 10 but got 20 jobs. They have a lot of very talented children with a 4.0 GPA who want to work. Ms. Williams asked for Council's continued support of the Program.

George Boston Rhynes, 5004 Oak Drive, stated that he met with Chris Hamilton, President and CEO of the James H. Rainwater Conference Center, and he found it difficult to believe that Mr. Hamilton was the best qualified person for that job. He stated that there are many people who are concerned about blacks not being in management positions at the Conference Center. Mayor Gayle stated that an outside firm was selected to conduct the search for the most highly qualified candidates for that position and the woman who was in charge of that search was black herself.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that there is a tropical storm heading our way and we are expecting four to five inches of rain within the next couple of days. We have crews working to take necessary precautions to prepare for the storm.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Carroll thanked the Mayor and Council for all of their thoughts and prayers during the recent loss of his mother.

Councilman Vickers thanked the Mayor and Councilman Slaughter for their leadership on the Regional TSPLOST. Also, there were some problems with the Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority in the past and he inquired as to whether it got worked out. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that they are waiting on comments from the County. Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that it is a joint Agreement and another Attorney is reviewing it. He will contact the Attorney to find out what the status is on the Agreement. Councilman Vickers inquired as to when the Youth Diversion Program would be implemented. Chief Childress stated that they are currently working with the Boys & Girls Club, Project Hope, Police Citizens Youth Academy, and with Councilman Howard on a youth basketball league. Their intent is to occupy their time and prevent problems from occurring. Councilman Vickers stated that they are trying to change their behavior by getting them involved in other activities and have them interact with the Police Officers. Chief Childress stated that diversion means you are diverting them before or even after they get into trouble. Councilman Vickers stated that Rachael Bradley of Southside Recreation would also be a good person to partner with. Chief Childress stated that we are not having the same problems with the youth like we did last year. Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that Pastor Kelly Barcol would also be a good person to work with.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody asked Mayor Gayle to provide Council with an update on the Regional TSPLOST. Mayor Gayle stated that it passed in our region but it did not pass in Lowndes County by approximately 1,300 votes. The 1% sales tax will go into effect on October 1, 2018. When the money starts being collected, it will take a while for the big Projects to be completed; however, the Georgia Department of Transportation is required by law to do all of the Projects that were on the list. Mayor Gayle stated that he was thankful for the smaller counties in getting it passed because he felt obligated to help them get some of their Projects completed. Waycross and Ware County will have a 2% sales tax implemented. Mayor Gayle stated that the tax is the fairest there is. Councilman Vickers stated that we need to work on the Projects that are shovel-ready.

Mayor Gayle stated that all of the Projects have been approved and there will be no delay in getting started. Mark Barber, City Manager, stated that Ashlyn Becton, Public Information Officers will put something on the website for frequently asked questions. Councilman Vickers stated that we need to get ready for next year because we could lose SPLOST. Mayor Gayle stated that there is confusion between SPLOST and TSPLOST. SPLOST is for Capital Projects. Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to whether we could provide the citizens with a handout. Councilman Gibbs suggested that we put something on the website homepage. Councilman Vickers inquired about the TSPLOST Discretionary Fund. Mayor Gayle stated that we would get 25% of discretionary funds to use for Projects not on the list. Councilman Vickers stated that we need to decide about the public transportation issue. Mayor Gayle stated that they need to either vote for it or not instead of kicking it down the road. Councilwoman Tooley stated that she would like for the City Manager to do a video on the Regional TSPLOST and then air it on Metro Channel 17. Mayor Gayle stated that Lowndes County had the lowest voter turnout with 13.4% and he was disappointed in that number because a lot of people who did not vote may have been in favor of it.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the May 24, 2018 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:19 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, June 7, 2018.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta