

**MINUTES**  
**MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL**  
**5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025**  
**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: Thomas McIntyre, Eric Howard, Sandra Tooley, Andy Gibbs, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Councilmen Tim Carroll and Nick Harden were absent. The invocation was given by Pastor Vickie Randolph, House of Faith, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the June 5, 2025 Regular Meeting and the June 16, 2025 Special Called Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (5-0). The July 8, 2025 Rescheduled Regular Meeting Minutes are forthcoming.

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025-8, A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CITY OF MILTON IN THE CHANG V. CITY OF MILTON LITIGATION THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN AN AMICUS BRIEF**

Consideration of a Resolution supporting the City of Milton in the Chang v. City of Milton Litigation through participation in an Amicus Brief.

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that Peyton Jamison, Mayor of the City of Milton, has requested that numerous municipalities and local governments join in an Amicus Brief supporting the City's position in the Chang v. City of Milton litigation. As many of you know, on June 24, 2025, the Supreme Court of Georgia granted the City's petition for certiorari, agreeing to hear the case. This litigation stems from a \$35 million+ damages award against the City of Milton related to the presence of a masonry planter located along the shoulder of a city roadway. Prior to the unfortunate collision at issue, the planter had existed within the City's right-of-way for decades without incident. The City has been and remains concerned that, without assistance from the Supreme Court, a rule of law may develop in Georgia where benign fixed objects along the shoulder become sources of tremendous liability exposure. That is why an unprecedented number of Georgia cities (58 cities in the Amicus Brief alone) joined in a multi-city Amicus asking the Supreme Court to take the case. Through their combined efforts, the Supreme Court has agreed to do that. The City of Milton, along with the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and numerous other local governments desire to demonstrate that the rule of law set forth by the Court of Appeals is detrimental to local governments and to the State of Georgia as a whole. Richard Hardy, City Manager, recommended that Council approve the Resolution supporting the City of Milton's position in the Chang v. City of Milton litigation.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to enact Resolution No. 2025-8, a Resolution supporting the City of Milton in the Chang v. City of Milton Litigation through participation in an Amicus Brief, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VII.

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

Consideration of a request to purchase a Mobile Column Apparatus Lift System for the Valdosta Fire Department Maintenance Division.

Fire Chief Brian Boutwell stated that the goal of the Valdosta Fire Department for many years has been to identify and reduce the risks our members face daily. A risk involving the health and wellness of our maintenance team has recently been identified and a solution for risk reduction has been provided. Currently our team of two utilizes floor creepers to work on and under our fire apparatus. Utilizing floor creepers to access the bottom of the engines and ladder trucks is time consuming and causes long-term physical wellness concerns. The purchase of an Apparatus Lift System will enable our maintenance members to lift the trucks off the floor and work under the truck by walking under it instead of lying on a creeper. The system will save time and prevent future injuries. The Fire Department was approved funding in the current year Budget to purchase the Apparatus Lift System. The Fire Department Maintenance Division researched different systems and discovered that the ARI-HETRA Lift System

utilizes a lifting mechanism that is not reliant on hydraulic pressure. Their ball bearing and screw design uses a rotational motion to lift, reducing maintenance and safety risks. The lack of reliance on hydraulic seals and fittings eliminates the risk of catastrophic failure. The Fire Department would like to request the purchase of this Apparatus Lift System through cooperative purchasing on a Sourcewell Contract (013020-ARP) in the amount of \$85,821.03. The Purchasing Ordinance allows this type of purchase, and the pricing offered in the Contract is both competitive and fair in the opinion of the Fire Department. ARI-HETRA provides a five-year warranty on the system with the first year including labor. Fire Chief Brian Boutwell recommended that Council approve the purchase of the Apparatus Lift System from ARI-HETRA in the amount of \$85,821.03 utilizing the Sourcewell Contract (013020-ARP).

**A MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the purchase of a Mobile Column Apparatus Lift System from ARI-HETRA in the amount of \$85,821.03 utilizing the Sourcewell Contract (013020-ARP) for the Valdosta Fire Department Maintenance Division.

## LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to approve the revised SPLOST IX Proposed Projects List.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that SPLOST is a voter approved tax on sales within the County. The proceeds are divided among the County and its subdivisions. SPLOST is limited to five years or six years with tiered Projects or Intergovernmental Agreements. The Referendum providing the tax must specify what Projects the proceeds will fund. The ballot language will generally provide broad categories such as street maintenance. The tax is collected at the point of sale and remitted to the State which distributes the proceeds. The City will account for the tax in a separate fund which will pay for eligible Projects until exhausted. Projects must be capital in nature such as buildings, parks, land improvements, infrastructure, road work, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and debt repayment. Attached is a list of the proposed SPLOST IX Projects for the City of Valdosta. This list must be approved by the Mayor and Council and submitted to Lowndes County prior to July 25, 2025. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve the proposed revised SPLOST IX Projects for the City of Valdosta.

Councilwoman Miller-Cody inquired as to whether the repair of sidewalks and roadways would be included and would that be listed by Council District. Chuck Dinkins stated that there would be some increases across the board on the existing Projects and where we have additional funds for those categories, we can identify additional Projects. Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that Ora Lee West and Hudson Docket have sidewalks that have been in need of repair since she has been on Council. There are a lot of senior citizens and children who live and play in that area. Chuck Dinkins stated that the Engineering Department would come up with a list of sidewalks that would fall within the funding and Council would be approving the language for that. Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that the Referendum would identify the amount of funding that is allocated to the specific areas and then Engineering will provide a list of those areas that need repair. Council will then approve and make recommendations.

Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to who decided the amounts to be allocated. Chuck Dinkins inquired as to whether she was talking about the category Projects. Councilwoman Tooley stated that was correct. Chuck Dinkins stated that these original amounts were based on the prior vote of Council. When Lowndes County put out their first estimate, Council voted on the allocations for these same categories. When they revised their estimates, the total went up 21% and the categories went up approximately 20% or 21% each. Council is voting on what will go on the Ballot and the citizens will vote on this at the next Election.

**A MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman McIntyre, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the revised SPLOST IX Proposed Projects List.

## CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that the Back-to-School Community Block Party will take place on Saturday, July 26, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Unity Park. The Valdosta Fire Department will host Camp Blaza on July 28-30, 2025 for girls ages 13-18. This all-day camp aims to combine hands-on learning with fun experiences. Camp Blaza underscores the Fire Department's commitment to empowering young women and encourage interest in careers in public safety and firefighting. The Valdosta Police Department will host National Night Out on Tuesday, August 5, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Valdosta Police Station located at 500 North Toombs Street. National Night Out is all about building strong Police-Community partnerships and promoting safety, unity, and trust in our neighborhoods. The Main Street's Makers Market will take place on Saturday, August 9, 2025 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse in Downtown Valdosta. Farmers, growers, artisans, and producers from across South Georgia and North Florida are invited to showcase their talents and products at this event.

### COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no Council comments.

### ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilwoman Tooley, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the July 24, 2025 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 5:54 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, August 7, 2025.

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City Clerk, City of Valdosta

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Mayor, City of Valdosta