

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 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 Wayne Hughes, Abundant Life Church of God, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the February 8, 2018 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

REQUEST TO CHANGE THE STREET NAME OF JULIA DRIVE TO LIBRARY DRIVE

Consideration of a request to change the street name of Julia Drive to Library Drive.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City of Valdosta has a procedure by Ordinance for the petitioning and consideration of closing or changing the name of any public street or alley. On November 22, 2017, the City received a petition from Mr. Miguel Vicente, Regional Director, South Georgia Regional Library System, requesting the consideration of a name change for Julia Drive to Library Drive. As required, letters were sent out to the Julia Drive parcel owners. There were also three advertisements of a Public Hearing which were published in the local newspaper at least ten days prior to the Public Meeting. Currently, there exists only one parcel with an address on Julia Drive which is the South Georgia Regional Library located at 2906 Julia Drive. All other neighboring parcels abutting Julia Drive have addresses assigned to other streets; thus, this sole address (2906 Julia Drive) constitutes 100% of the property owners or residents of the street and is the only required signature necessary to petition for the change. The petition was also mailed to eight parcels that abut Julia Drive but are assigned addresses to other streets in an effort to get notification out even though that was not a necessary requirement of the procedure to change a street name. Only one reply was received as a result of this mailing and the property owner at 2901 Callaway Circle was in favor of the change. Mayor John Gayle did receive a telephone call from someone who objected to the renaming of the street. Pat Collins stated that there is also a 90-day period after the passage of a street name change for it to become effective; however, in the past, the 90-day delay has been waived by the City Council when notification has been provided to the Post Office, Emergency 911 Center, utility providers, and multiple property owners. Since only one parcel has a legal address on this street, the 90-day time period to allow posted street numbers, stationary, magazine subscriptions, billing and return addresses, mailboxes, and drivers licenses to be changed could be waived. Consequently, if the 90-day waiver is approved, the City will notify Emergency 911 and first responders in regards to the street name change. Pat Collins stated that street name changes are done administratively a lot of times due to conflicting, confusing, or duplicate names, names that may sound the same, and in some cases to help find a location more easily. In this case, by changing the street name from Julia Drive to Library Drive, a lot of people would realize that this is where the Library is located. Frequent name changes are not practiced or encouraged but are routinely made by most governing jurisdictions and there is a procedure in place for the general public to petition. Council is under no obligation to approve such a request but is obligated to consider both the merits and the consequences of the name change.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

Kathryn Williams, 606 Ledge Dale Circle, spoke in opposition to the request. Ms. Williams stated that she represented the Schroer family and all of her cousins were in attendance tonight. All of their parents are now deceased. They brought a picture of their grandmother, Julia Schroer, to show the Mayor and Council. They have all agreed that they do not want the name changed from Julia Drive. Julia, who was born in 1888, was their grandmother and she passed away on November 30, 1960. She was one of the most influential people in their lives

**REQUEST TO CHANGE THE STREET NAME
OF JULIA DRIVE TO LIBRARY DRIVE (CON'T)**

02/22/18 CONTINUED

and taught them so much about honesty and hard work above all else. They were a farming family here in Valdosta and Julia married Pop Schroer when she came over from Germany. They established a wonderful life here in Lowndes County and lived their whole life here. They raised their children here. When her grandparents passed away, they had four farms which were left to each of their children. Ms. Williams stated that her mother was Gertrude and she was Julia's only daughter. She always said that she was the one who grew up with a silver spoon in her mouth because she was the baby. All of their Uncles worked on the farm and they had a great respect and love for Julia. To most people, the name Julia probably does not mean that much; however, to them she is part of their heritage and their heart. They really do not want to see the Julia Drive street name to disappear. The Schroer Estate did ask the City to put that road in for them and at the time the City was not able to do it so the Schroer Estate actually paid to have Julia Drive put in. The children of the Schroer Estate paid for the water and sewer, the curbing and gutter, the base, the paving, the storm drains, the surveying, and the engineering that was done so that the road could be put in. They do not want the financial cost of the street to be the issue and it is not really the issue for them. The only reason that it was mentioned was so Council could know that they paid for the street and they would like for the name to remain Julia Drive.

Councilman Carroll stated that he may be a little biased because his wife has a street named after her in the community. Her grandfather developed an area off of Bemiss Road and named a street after all of his granddaughters. He had a feeling that if someone came in and wanted to change the name of the street that was named after his wife she would not be very happy about that. He does not have an issue with changing the street name to Library Drive; however, this will not make or break the Library to have the name changed. It is important though to Julia's family that the street name remains Julia Drive.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Carroll to deny the request to change the street name of Julia Drive to Library Drive. Councilman Norton seconded the motion. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to why they named it after their grandmother. Ginger Paulk stated that the area where Julia Drive is located was one of the family farms. The motion was adopted (6-0-1) with Councilman Howard abstaining.

REQUEST TO CLOSE AN ALLEY LOCATED BETWEEN LAMAR STREET AND PEEPLES STREET

Consideration of a request to close an alley located between Lamar Street and Peeples Street.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the City has received a request from New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, which is located between West Gordon Street and Monroe Street, to close a 20 foot unopened alley which runs in an east and west direction between Lamar Street and Peeples Street. This request was made so that the title to the property could be cleared up to make better use of the Church property for construction. The City properly advertised for a Public Hearing on February 3, 2018, February 9, 2018, and February 10, 2018. All of the City Departments, as well as public utilities, have been contacted and have no objections to the closure. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the request to close the alley located between Lamar Street and Peeples Street. Councilman Vickers inquired about 10 feet of the alley going to one property owner and 10 feet going to the other side. Pat Collins stated that was correct and they were aware of that. Councilman Vickers stated that in order for them to get a deed they would have to pay for drawing up a deed for the property. Pat Collins stated that was correct. Councilman Howard inquired as to who would be responsible for maintaining the property if they did not have a deed drawn up. Pat Collins stated that they are taking this on and they will not have a deed for title purposes. Tim Tanner, City Attorney, stated that in order for them to get title insurance on the property, they would get a copy of the Council Minutes where it is reflected that the City abandoned the 20 foot alley. They could take that and then get a deed drawn up. Assuming that Council votes to abandon the alley, they would then become the owner of a 10 foot share of the alley and they would be responsible for it. Councilman Vickers stated that most of them have encroached in the alley with fences and this is the process that the City goes through to abandon the alley.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Vickers, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve a request to close an alley located between Lamar Street and Peeples Street.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2018-2, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (GDOT) TO RESURFACE STATE ROUTE (SR) 38 FROM FORREST STREET TO THE EAST OF THE VALDOSTA CITY LIMITS AND PERFORM THE REQUIRED UTILITIES ADJUSTMENTS

Consideration of a Resolution authorizing the execution of an Agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to resurface State Route (SR) 38 from Forrest Street to the east of the Valdosta City Limits and perform the required utilities adjustments.

Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, stated that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is proposing to resurface State Route (SR) 38 from Forrest Street to east of the Valdosta City Limits. Following a review of the GDOT plans for the Roadway Project, the Utilities Department surveyed the area and identified 28 manholes and 27 water valve boxes that will require adjustment in preparation for the Project. The work involves lowering the valve boxes and manhole rings prior to milling the road and then raising them back to the designed grade prior to resurfacing. These utilities adjustments are required in accordance with 23 CFR Part 645, Subpart A and O.C.G.A. 32-6-171. With the City responsible for the cost of the work, Staff had two viable alternatives to address the needed adjustments. The first was to advertise for bid a Contract to complete the work in conjunction with the GDOT Roadway Project. Coordinating and scheduling the work would be more costly, complex, and ultimately the City's responsibility. The second was to include the work in the Roadway Contract to be let by the GDOT with the estimate provided by the City. GDOT would be responsible for all Project scheduling and coordination. Performing the work in-house by the Utilities Department is not considered a viable option because of the high level of resources necessary to perform the required work. Due to this and the Project's complexity, it will be beneficial to the City to have the utilities adjustments included in the GDOT Roadway Contract. Cost for the work is estimated to be \$89,019.00. Maximum potential cost to the City will be \$97,920.90. On May 25, 2017, Council approved a Contract Item Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding for the GDOT to proceed with the preliminary engineering and detailed plans for this Project. The Contract Item Agreement (GDOT P.I. No. M005019) sets forth the conditions under which the GDOT agrees to have its Contractor perform the work and that the City will reimburse GDOT for this work. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing the Mayor and the City Clerk to execute the Contract Item Agreement with GDOT. Darryl Muse recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Contract Item Agreement. Councilman Vickers stated that when he read this Agenda Item he was not clear as to where this Project was at and asked that more information regarding the location be included in the future. Darryl Muse stated that they would include a map in the future and outline which section the work would be done on. Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that when they adopted the other GDOT Agreement (P.I. No. M005036) for road construction, we agreed to a Contract that stated the City would pay only 30% of the cost for manhole recovery; however, that was an error because it should have reflected that the City will pay 100% of the cost. Councilwoman Tooley stated that GDOT was already working on a portion of that road near Clay Road and inquired as to where this work would be done. Darryl Muse stated that they will start at Forrest Street and proceed east all the way to the City Limits. Councilwoman Tooley stated that GDOT has already widened a portion of that road. Darryl Muse stated that GDOT has done some work in that area but the places where the City's infrastructure is located has not had any work done.

A **MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2018-2, a Resolution authorizing the execution of an Agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to resurface State Route (SR) 38 from Forrest Street to the east of the Valdosta City Limits and perform the required utilities adjustments, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VI.

Consideration of bids for a Water Tank Cleaning, Painting, and Repair Project.

Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, stated that in December of 2017, due to maintenance and serviceability requirements for its water storage tanks, the Utilities Department advertised for bid a Water Tank Cleaning, Painting, and Repair Project. The facilities identified for the work include the Water Treatment Plant's three potable water ground storage tanks along with five hydrogen sulfide stripper tanks, scrubber tanks, and associated piping. In addition to repairing the concrete and painting the exteriors of the three ground storage tanks, the work scope also includes pressure washing, cleaning, and disinfecting the interior of the tanks. The Project further includes pressure washing the Gornto Road elevated tank. On January 9, 2018, a pre-bid conference was held to review the expectations and requirements of this work as well as do site visits and answer pertinent questions from the prospective bidders. Bids were received on January 25, 2018. Three paint contractors, Quick Painting Group, Southeastern Tank and Tower, and E & D Coating, submitted bids for the Project. Quick Painting Group was the low bidder at \$173,000; however, their bid was removed based on the Company's limited experience with Projects related to potable water storage tanks. Quick Painting Group provided three references. Only one was related to a Water Tank Project which was recently completed for the Orange County Utilities Department (OCUA) in Ocoee, Florida. The Utilities Department Staff requested a reference check from OCUA, but they declined due to policy restrictions. The other two referenced Projects were related to painting houses and painting the interior of a commercial building. Reference checks were not initiated for these two Projects because they were not of a similar work scope. The Utilities Department typically requires bidders to submit up to three references for Projects of similar scope. For this Project, "similar scope" is defined as those Projects that include pressure washing, repairing, painting, cleaning, and disinfecting potable water storage tanks. Experience must be shown for both ground storage and elevated storage tanks. Given potential safety and water quality issues, water tank maintenance and cleaning must be accomplished per American Water Works Association (AWWA) standards and other industry requirements. Contractors must be well versed and experienced in these standards to safely and successfully perform the work. Based on their limited experience with Projects of this scope, Quick Painting Group is not recommended for this Project. Southeastern Tank and Tower was the second lowest bidder at \$187,500. Southeastern Tank and Tower has extensive experience and a consistent record of reliable performance with painting, repairing, and cleaning of both elevated and ground storage tanks. Darryl Muse recommended that Council approve the second lowest bid submitted by Southeastern Tank and Tower in the amount of \$187,500 for the painting, repairing, and cleaning of both elevated and ground storage tanks plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances. Councilman Carroll inquired as to whether this was coming out of SPLOST funds or User Fees. Darryl Muse stated that this would come from User Fees. Councilman Vickers stated that the tank is 50 feet up in the air and inquired as to whether they would be painting the outside and the inside. Darryl Muse stated that they will paint on the outside and then inspect, disinfect, and repair on the inside if necessary. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether they would be doing two tanks. Darryl Muse stated that they would be doing the two ground storage tanks that are at the Water Treatment Plant itself and some ancillary equipment. Councilman Vickers inquired as to how the price compared to what we have paid in the past. Darryl Muse stated that he did not research what we have paid in the past because it was very different. The last time we had the elevated tanks painted and not the ground storage tanks. Councilman Vickers inquired about the capacity of the ground storage tanks. Darryl Muse stated that the capacity is approximately 4.5 million gallons (approximately 2.2 million gallons each) at the Guest Road Water Treatment Plant.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the second lowest bid submitted by Southeastern Tank and Tower in the amount of \$187,500 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for the Water Tank Cleaning, Painting, and Repair Project.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Naomi Johnson, 1406 Lake Park Road, stated that there is a house across the street from her at 1405 Lake Park Road that has bushes that have grown up so high that you cannot see the front door or the side windows. It is an eyesore and she is afraid to come home at night because someone could be living in there. Snakes could also be living in there. This house has been vacant for several years. Ms. Johnson stated that she would like to have someone cut down all those bushes around it. Mayor Gayle stated that we just passed an Ordinance that covers this type of neglect and we will have one of the City Marshals check it out. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether that property belongs to another Johnson family. Ms. Johnson stated that she has been told that but she has not

been living in that neighborhood very long. There has only been one person who lived there that kept up with trimming the bushes and nobody is keeping up with it now. Mayor Gayle stated that Councilwoman Miller-Cody informed him that they are in Probate Court right now to answer why they have not been keeping up that property. Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that was what she has been told.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that the information on TSPLOST is now on the City's website for educational purposes for the public. We are beginning to get a lot of questions about TSPLOST and it is not our position to be for or against but only to present the facts of TSPLOST. The information on the website will be very helpful as we get these questions.

Mark Barber, Interim City Manager, stated that the Mayor and Council will travel to Albany, Georgia on March 2, 2018 to view their public transit system. An itinerary will be sent out next week. Mayor Dorothy Hubbard and City Manager Sharon Subadan have both been very gracious and he has also been in contact with David Hamilton who is their Public Transit Director. He has gone through the general areas and if Council has specific questions they will need to send them in so that Mr. Hamilton will be prepared to address those questions. He has not heard back from the City of Gainesville, Florida yet but he was thinking that they may need to go into another direction. Albany and Gainesville have had public transit for 40 plus years and maybe they need to look at some other community who has started within the past 10-12 years. Some of that information may be more relevant to us than someone who has been in the business for 40 years. Councilman Vickers inquired as to whether there were any suggestions. Mark Barber stated that he had a few in mind; however, he was still doing some checking. Councilman Vickers stated that the main reason he picked Albany was because Mayor Hubbard was visiting here in Valdosta and he had a conversation with her. He would like to see where their funding comes from.

The City of Valdosta recently held activities for Arbor Week and Engineering Week and the Valdosta Daily Times did a great job in covering the activities.

Sementa Mathews, Public Information Officer, wrote an article recently for the Georgia Municipal Association's newspaper and we were the feature for this month. We have had a lot of requests for presentations and Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, did a presentation today for the Southern Georgia Regional Commission with approximately 65 people in attendance.

The Strategic Initiative Summit will be held on March 16-17, 2018 at the Lenox River Ranch in Lenox, Georgia and all the items for discussion by the Mayor and Council have now been received.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Miller-Cody stated that the mother of the previous Mayor Pro Tem, Alvin Payton, Jr., passed away yesterday. Also, Darryl Muse, Utilities Director, did a great job on the presentation that he gave at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council Meeting in Pearson today. He represented the City of Valdosta very well.

Mayor Gayle stated that he wanted to give an update on the TSPLOST. Last week, the Executive Committee finalized the list and the Regional Roundtable voted and approved the Projects that were on the list. The Region will now vote on the one cent increase in sales tax on May 22, 2018. The Region received \$300 million in Projects and the State kicked in another \$112 million so we have approximately \$412 million of Projects that will be done in this Region. For Valdosta, we received \$68 million in Projects and we will also get 25% of the Discretionary Funds which would give us another \$6.3 million. If this passes, the Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) matching funds will be reduced from 30% to 10% so this would be another \$1.1 million in savings. This would give Valdosta \$75.4 million. Lowndes County received \$74 million in Projects and their 25% Discretionary Funds will amount to \$11 million. Their savings in LMIG funds amount to \$2.1 million. The total amount for the City and for Lowndes County is \$162.5 million in Projects. The Council approved the City's Project list last year which included Country Club Drive, widening the St. Augustine Road overpass, the air traffic control tower, widening of Old Clyattville Road, St. Augustine Road at Norman Drive, South Patterson Street at Griffin Avenue, Forrest Street, Baytree Road at Gornto Road, and St. Augustine Road and Gornto Road. All of

these Projects are classified as needs and not wants. Mayor Gayle stated that he was on the radio this morning discussing TSPLOST and will continue to do that. A lot of people say they are not in favor of Valdosta and Lowndes County collecting tax money to pay for roads and things; however, people from other Counties bring their tax money into Lowndes County and approximately 52% of our tax money comes from outside of Lowndes County. The other thing to realize is that these people come in here and pay ESPLOST. They furnish money for our schools and they do not get one dime out of that. They also help us to reduce our property taxes through LOST and the rollback of property taxes. We need to remember these things when people start talking about a Regional concept. Councilman Vickers inquired as to how much discretion they would have to do other Projects. Mayor Gayle stated that our part of that would be \$6.3 million as long as it is transportation. It can be things like transit, sidewalks, and street resurfacing. We do not have to have State approval for those.

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 February 22, 2018 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:14 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, March 8, 2018.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta