

**City of Valdosta Land Bank Authority**  
**Monthly Meeting – Minutes**  
**Wednesday, November 18, 2015 9:00 a.m.**

City of Valdosta – City Hall Annex, Multi-Purpose Room

**Members Present:** Councilman Robert Yost, Commissioner Joyce E. Evans, Burk Sherwood, Frank Morman

**Others Present:** William (Billy) Steinberg, Vanassa Flucas and Sarah Lowe

**Guest:** Councilwoman Sandra Tooley

The Meeting was called to order by Mr. Frank Morman at 9:07 a.m. Brief introduction of newer Neighborhood Development Staff (Sarah Lowe) to Mr. Morman as he was out at the last meeting. Also welcomed to the meeting was guest Councilwoman Sandra Tooley.

Mr. Morman asked all to review minutes from the September 16 meeting.

Mr. Morman turned meeting over to Ms. Flucas to discuss the Land Bank Budget/Expenses. Ms. Flucas shared that at the last meeting, we had discussed where we were in terms of the Land Bank finances. Handouts had already been distributed to Committee attendees at the beginning of the meeting. These handouts displayed Land Bank expenses. Ms. Flucas further discussed each expense type and stated that the Land Bank is operating around \$5,000 to \$6,000 per year. One of the costs is associated with the upkeep of the five (5) parcels we are currently maintaining.

Commissioner Evans asked who was maintaining the property. Ms. Flucas answered, we are currently using one of the VSEB program members, Alex Wright, AJW Lawn care who is the most reasonable cost.

Ms. Flucas updated the Committee on the City of Valdosta's website changes. The City is moving to a new website. The Land Bank page is going to fall under Neighborhood Development. Ms. Flucas shared some of the vision for this page but feedback is needed from the Land Bank Authority members on what they would like to have present on the page. Councilman Yost would like to see a listing of our land bank inventory and also a way to track how many visit our site. Ms. Flucas wants this page to always stay updated. Councilman Yost also suggested having a place on the page for a form to allow individuals to inquire about donating property or parcels of land and/or for there to be instructions and information on where they can obtain properties currently maintained by the Land Bank. Mr. Morman had one concern that this page would need to stay updated. Ms. Flucas clarified that any events or important information coming up will be added to this page.

Update on Authority Changes – 2012 Georgia Land Bank Act discussed. Ms. Flucas informed that she and Mr. Steinberg presented the changes to the City Council and the County Commissioners both of which approved the change to the 2012 model, allowing for additional appointments. One (1) from City, one (1) from County and one (1) that the Land Bank Authority would collectively decide to appoint. Mr. Morman asked if there was clarification on where these appointments would be from. Ms. Flucas said the consensus would be to move on making all the changes first, and then open it up for discussion on appointments. Commissioner Evans shared concern on behalf of county's involvement. There are many county commissioners not fully aware of what the Land Bank is, its purpose and how it would impact or involve the county. Ms. Flucas welcomed the opportunity to go meet and discuss in more details the Land Bank, and its' purpose. Councilman Yost suggested that if we had a packet available to any new councilmember and commissioner, this could be an additional tool given during the new members' orientation. He further suggested to consider the idea of having a counter point person to come from the county as another staff representative to attend the meetings and have this information for all county inquiries. Morman asked for clarification on the number of member increase and when this will become effective. Ms. Flucas confirmed the number to be three (3) and that once the committee is ready to move forward with the selection process we can do so. The Committee needs to decide if the appointment will run on a calendar year beginning January 1, or if it will follow the Fiscal Year beginning July 1. Sherwood asked how these new members are appointed. Ms. Flucas answered: For the City, City Mayor and Council, have an application process that selections must go through. They vote through open session. Not sure of the county level, but it is believed to be similar. Commissioner Evans, confirmed that the process is similar and explained the process, applicants appointed through commissioners then through county manager. Mr. Sherwood asked how the board is to select the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) seat. Ms. Flucas stated the current committee members can bring

forth names/individuals of interest. Committee will then need to come to a consensus on the final decision. Mr. Morman proposed we set the start date to coincide with the Fiscal Year starting on July 1. Mr. Sherwood would like to see these new applicants early, to allow for a pre-evaluation to determine if the applicant would be a good fit. Councilman Yost agreed that the July 1 start date would be the best. He explained that as the City, advertisement of the opening will go into the paper, person will apply, those applicants will be presented to the Land Bank Authority. This is not a quick process that by moving to July 1 this should allow for enough time to complete the selections. Mr. Morman reconfirmed moving towards a July 1 start date for the new members. Councilman Yost further suggested that as we decide on the new members, we may want to consider the third person be from one of the surrounding cities whom could offer new and different perspective.

Soffiner/Griffin Properties discussed. Mr. Steinberg addressed the committee that we have a deed ready for the four properties that will be coming to the Land Bank. These properties are being donated to the land bank in exchange for the release of city liens. Ms. Flucas interjected that this is the beginning, that we may be able to obtain more properties from this group. The majority of these properties are clustered together and if we can continue to get these clustered together, it would allow for a bigger project. One of the projects shared already was for Senior Center, or another big project that can bring up this area.

Morman questioned how this group obtained these properties. Steinberg confirm that this was all due to an inheritance.

Morman brought up questions of other properties that were bought up by non-local individuals in this same area, whom believed there was potential profit. However, these same properties are now being left to decline. Ms. Flucas addressed this concern, stating that her office is working closely with the City Marshals and other programs to help eliminate the blight. One Program for example was the bulk trash day we had. We are staying on top of these issues.

Update on Parcels given by Mr. Steinberg. Mr. Steinberg briefly reminded the committee had been given permission to perform more thorough research on two properties brought forth to the Land Bank at last meeting.

204 Walnut: Mr. Steinberg recommended that the Land Bank stay clear of this property. There were too many issues and liens.

508 Hampton: This property had no concerns and the deed was free and clear. One note was that the property dimensions were small.

Evans questioned what the benefit would be. Ms. Flucas, explained what can be done and that it would be up to the Land Bank to decide what would be in the best interest.

Morman, suggested that in the past we have at times offered these lots to the adjacent property owner (if the parcel was too small for other purpose), so that it could be absorbed quickly and placed back on tax role. Ms. Flucas said she can look in to the surrounding land to see what may be good options.

There were no additional items on the agenda. Mr. Steinberg recognized that we had not formally approved the minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Sherwood to approve the minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Minutes were approved.

Mr. Morman moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Councilman Yost. The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 am.