

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2015
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, Alvin Payton, Jr., Sandra Tooley, Robert Yost, and James Wright. Tim Tanner, Attorney with Coleman-Talley, LLC, filled in for George Talley, City Attorney, who was absent. The invocation was given by Pastor Leroy Butler, Woodlawn Forrest Church of Christ, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Mayor John Gayle also recognized members of the Leadership Lowndes Class who were in attendance at the Council Meeting.

AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH AWARD

Consideration of the September, 2015 Employee of the Month Award (Jeremiah Hicks and Tom Pierce, Public Works Department).

Richard Hardy, Public Works Director, stated that Jeremiah Hicks began his employment with the Public Works Department in May, 2014 as a Refuse Driver and was promoted to Heavy Equipment Operator in November, 2014 which is the position he currently holds. Jeremiah operates a street sweeper which is used to maintain appearance and cleanliness of City streets and to remove residue produced by curb and gutter crews. He also performs maintenance on equipment which includes changing gutter brooms and belly brooms. Tom Pierce began his employment with the Public Works Department in January, 2015 as a Refuse Collection Driver which is the position he currently holds. Tom is responsible for driving the side-loader truck along a residential route, performing minor truck maintenance, maintaining radio contact with the dispatcher, and transporting refuse to the landfill. In early April of this year, Jeremiah and Tom were on their collection route when they noticed a fire in the engine compartment of their truck. Acting quickly, they called 911 and then grabbed two fire extinguishers to put the flames. Upon the arrival of the Valdosta Fire Department, Jeremiah and Tom had the fire completely out. Through their actions in this incident, they saved the City of Valdosta the cost of a new garbage truck. For these reasons and many others, the Employee Relations Committee nominated Jeremiah Hicks and Tom Pierce as Employees of the Month.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF THE CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING AWARD

Special Presentation of the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

Mark Barber, Assistant City Manager, stated that the City of Valdosta Finance Department received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. The attainment of this Award represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management because the majority of the governments have outside firms preparing their financials while the City of Valdosta does this in-house. Mark Barber recognized the following employees of the Finance Department and thanked them for their hard work and a job well done: Michael Turner (Accountant), Cynthia Hill (Accountant), Chuck Dinkins (Finance Director), Starr Page (Sr. Accounting Clerk), Carla Gandy (Finance Technician), and Sandra Watley (Sr. Accounting Clerk). This is the 29th consecutive year that the City has achieved the significant Award. Also, an Award of Financial Reporting Achievement has been awarded to L. Mark Barber, Assistant City Manager, for preparation of the City of Valdosta's CAFR. The CAFR was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the Program including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and to motivate potential user groups to read

the CAFR. GFOA is a non-profit professional association serving approximately 17,000 government finance professional with offices in Chicago, Illinois, and Washington, D.C.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the August 20, 2015 Regular Meeting were approved by unanimous consent (7-0) of the Council.

PUBLIC HEARINGS**ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS DENIED**

Consideration of an Ordinance to rezone 1.08 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Office-Professional (O-P) as requested by Janis Patterson (File No. VA-2015-11). The property is located at 2417 North Oak Street. The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission reviewed this request at their August Regular Meeting and recommended approval (6-2 vote).

Matt Martin, Planning & Zoning Administrator, stated that Ms. Janis Patterson is requesting to rezone 1.08 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Office-Professional (O-P). The property is located at 2417 North Oak Street, which is along the east side of the road about 150 feet north of Gornto Road. The property is currently developed as a two-story, single-family residence (2,297 square feet) and the applicant is proposing to market the property for professional office development. The property is located within a Transitional Neighborhood (TN) Character Area on the Future Development Map of the Comprehensive Plan which allows the possibility of O-P zoning. With the exception of the properties immediately to the south, all of the properties along the east side of this portion of North Oak Street have long been zoned and developed as Single-Family Residential. The properties immediately to the south are remnant parcels from the City's extension of Gornto Road through to North Patterson Street in 2013, and these properties were rezoned by the City last year in anticipation of office development along this new Gornto Road frontage (these properties having lost their residential character by virtue of the new roadway). The properties along the west side of this portion of North Oak Street have all been rezoned to O-P over the course of the past 25 years with the most recent being in 2010 at the southeast corner of Gornto Road and North Oak Street (Dr. Futch's property). In each case, all of these have been contentious land use decisions and have been regarded by Staff as unwarranted encroachments into a Single-Family Residential area. Staff supported the 2014 request for O-P only because those properties identified with a non-residential character associated with the new Gornto Road extension (four lanes, institutional character). Staff does not recognize quite the same character with North Oak Street (two lanes, mostly residential character). The proposed conceptual site plan is simply to demonstrate how the property might be developed under O-P guidelines while retaining the existing structure, and it is not an actual proposed development plan for a specific use of the property. With some minor modifications to accommodate a required separation between buffer yards and pavement areas, the site plan will fully meet all O-P requirements. It depicts the existing structure (2,297 square feet) plus a new office building (1,976 square feet) in the rear yard for a total building area of 4,273 square feet. If developed as medical offices, it would require a minimum of 20 parking spaces and these are shown in the concept plan; however, the plan also shows a lot of extra space, mainly in the front of the property which could be developed with additional professional offices and parking. A good comparison here would be the aforementioned property of Dr. Futch which consists of a very similar size (1.12 acres) and it is developed with 5,746 square feet of medical office space (34% more). With the past decisions to rezone each of these nearby properties to O-P, Staff recognizes a compelling argument in favor of rezoning this property as well based on the notion that the land use pattern for this segment of North Oak Street has changed to that which is dominated by professional offices; however, Staff still recognizes this overall area of North Oak Street as a primarily residential corridor and very much a part of the Single-Family Residential neighborhoods nearby (beyond the five developed O-P properties). Staff is opposed to further encroachment of non-residential development into these Residential areas particularly along the east side of North Oak Street. Staff found the request inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP) and recommended denial. The Planning Commission reviewed this at their August 31, 2015 meeting, found it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the Standards for the Exercise of Zoning Power (SFEZP), and recommended approval (6-2 vote). Additional rationale for the motion included precedence of previous rezonings

to O-P in the area, location in a Transitional Neighborhood character area, and the proposal not encroaching into the established Single-Family Residential neighborhood from Victory Drive northward.

Carroll Sherwood, Attorney, spoke in favor of the request. Mr. Sherwood stated that he represented the applicant, Janis Patterson. At the Planning Commission Meeting, they pointed out that this property is within the Transition Zone. It is not in the Residential Zone per the City map. One of the most telling things about the application and the difference between the other rezoning requests is that there has been absolutely no objection to this request. Brian Almand and his wife live immediately north of the property on Victory Drive and their property does not front on Oak Street. There is a long-standing, substantial natural barrier between this lot and the Almand's home. Mr. Almand has indicated that he supports the request. Mr. Sherwood stated that the fact that no objection has been made tends to tell him that approving the application will not change the nature of the neighborhood. This property not only has O-P zoning to the south and west, but if you go one lot back behind this lot you have Blanton and Griffin Insurance on the Ashley Street side which is zoned O-P. The other thing that is important to note is that the single family lots that front on Oak Street beyond Victory Drive going north are all rental properties which is the nature of the neighborhood. The owner-occupied properties either face McKey Park or they are on Woodrow Wilson. Based on the fact that this property is in the Transition Zone, it will not change the character of the neighborhood one bit. Mr. Sherwood asked Council's consideration in approving the request.

Ken Klanicki, 2208 Jerry Jones, spoke in opposition to the request. Mr. Klanicki stated that he has lived here since 1973 and he uses North Oak Street to get to the south or north end of town; however, in the afternoon the traffic from the college going north is oppressive. Approximately three years ago, there was a lot of controversy when the southwest parcel on Oak Street was converted from Residential Zoning to O-P. The Medical Specialist who moved into the property did not do well and there were many days when there was not one car in his parking lot. After two years he sold the property and the Dermatologist who moved in there is doing well. That is still a Residential neighborhood and North Oak Street is still the main egress to go to the north end of town. The road from Bemiss Road to Gornto Road has been one of the best road plans that has been made in Valdosta. It is a wonderful through-way and if anyone is going to put a professional office on the north or south side of that through-way then he did not see how that could ease any of the traffic problems. On the corner of Gornto Road and North Oak Street, there is a medical clinic that has been very successful and then slightly north of that is another clinic that has been successful. There are many medical offices north of there but it seems that we are going to compromise an excellent egress from Bemiss Road to Gornto Road by making this area into an office complex. Mr. Klanicki urged Council to reject the request.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Yost to deny the request to rezone 1.08 acres from Single-Family Residential (R-15) to Office-Professional (O-P) as requested by Janis Patterson. Councilman Wright seconded the motion. Councilman Yost inquired as to who purchased the property from the City on Woodrow Wilson and Oak Street. Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that Lacie Guy purchased the property. Councilman Yost stated that if he had known at the time that the property that the City owned would possibly lead to O-P Zoning for the rest of Oak Street he would have voted no. We helped to get the ball rolling by doing this. He regrets that now but he did so based on the fact that whoever purchased the City property would build something that faced Woodrow Wilson. If this Council decides to vote to rezone the property next door then that property could be purchased and they could place something on that property that the City previously owned facing Oak Street and that would be their right. He did not have a problem with that if that is what Council decides; however, this is his District and he loses the battles quite often in protecting his District. That is why he is here tonight and that is to protect his District. As soon as this is rezoned the rest of the properties will come before Council eventually. That is how it happens and that is reality. It is the history of this Council to not stop that but to allow it to happen. Councilman Yost asked Council to vote with him to deny the request to protect the neighborhood. This is a neighborhood that has stayed a neighborhood despite the O-P zoning across the street that he was against back then and it has spread. People said that it would not go further once the Doctor's office was placed on the corner but that was not the truth because things have continued to spread. He knows the applicant and she has a very good family. They are friends but he has to look out for the entire District and not just one family in the District. This application should be denied. Councilman Yost stated that he knew it is a tough time and people are up for re-election; however, it cannot hurt you to say you are protecting a neighborhood. Councilman Yost asked for Council's support and consideration in denying the request. Larry Hanson stated that the City had to acquire the property for the road and in that case the

lot had an existing house on it and the City had to buy the entire lot so we ended up with excess property. The reason the City did that was because whatever is developed on that property will face Woodrow Wilson. Woodrow Wilson is more of an O-P environment and it was not logical to think that someone would purchase the property and put a house on it. This is a very short block. Councilman Yost stated that he understood that and voted for in favor of it with that being the case; however, he truly believes now that it will spur the rest of the property to go. The motion was unanimously adopted (5-2) to deny the request with Councilwoman Tooley and Councilman Carroll voting in opposition.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-19, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S RADAR PERMIT

Consideration of an Ordinance to amend the City of Valdosta's Radar Permit.

Pat Collins, City Engineer, stated that the Georgia Department of Public Safety issues Radar Permits to law enforcement agencies so that speed detection devices can be used to enforce the posted speed limit. It is a requirement in order to run radar on City streets. The Police and Engineering Departments compiled a list of revisions to the City's current Radar Permit in March, 2015 for the use of speed detection devices. The current revision is the addition of a new school system, Scintilla Charter Academy which is located at 2171 East Park Avenue. Per Georgia Code, the City applies to the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT) Office of Traffic Operations for Permit changes or renewals. After approval at the local level, the Ordinance is submitted to the Georgia Department of Public Safety. Pat Collins recommended that Council approve the Ordinance to amend the City of Valdosta's Radar Permit.

A MOTION by Councilman Payton, seconded by Councilman Norton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Ordinance No. 2015-19, an Ordinance to amend the City of Valdosta's Radar Permit, the complete text of which will be found in Ordinance Book XIII.

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-9, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION TO PROCEED WITH THE AIRLINE APRON EXPANSION CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AT THE VALDOSTA REGIONAL AIRPORT

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to approve a Resolution authorizing acceptance of a Grant Agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to proceed with the Airline Apron Expansion Construction Project at the Valdosta Regional Airport.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority desires to proceed with the construction of the Airline Apron Expansion Project at the Valdosta Regional Airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will provide funds for 90% of the Project, the State will provide 5% as funds are available, and the remaining 5% that is stipulated to come from the City of Valdosta will actually come from the Airport's Passenger Facility Charge Program from which they collect approximately \$12,000 per month. This Project is expected to begin in October, 2015 and will run through mid-2016. The FAA is preparing a Grant Agreement which is expected to not exceed \$3,500,000 for the Project. Once received, the Agreement must be executed and returned to the FAA extremely quickly or the funds will be reassigned. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor John Gayle to accept the Grant Agreement upon receipt in order to expedite processing the documents. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing Mayor John Gayle to accept the Grant Agreement in order to proceed with the Airline Apron Expansion Construction Project at the Valdosta Regional Airport.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2015-9, a Resolution authorizing acceptance of a Grant Agreement with the Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA) to proceed with the Airline Apron Expansion Construction Project at the Valdosta Regional Airport, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-10, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF A CONTRACT WITH THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO PROCEED WITH THE AIRLINE APRON EXPANSION CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AT THE VALDOSTA REGIONAL AIRPORT

Consideration of a request from the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority to approve a Resolution authorizing acceptance of a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to proceed with the Airline Apron Expansion Construction Project at the Valdosta Regional Airport.

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority desires to proceed with construction of the Airline Apron Expansion Project at the Valdosta Regional Airport. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will fund 90%, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) will fund 5% as funds are available, and the remaining 5% that is stipulated to come from the City of Valdosta will actually come from the Airport's Passenger Facility Charge Program from which they collect approximately \$12,000 per month. The Project is expected to begin with a Notice to Proceed (anticipated October, 2015) and will run through mid-2016. GDOT is preparing a contract which is expected to not exceed \$185,000 for the Project. Once received, the Agreement must be executed and returned to GDOT extremely quickly or the funds will be reassigned. A Resolution has been prepared authorizing Mayor John Gayle to accept the contract upon receipt in order to expedite processing the documents. Larry Hanson recommended that Council approve the Resolution authorizing the Mayor to accept the GDOT contract upon receipt in order to expedite processing the documents.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Payton, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to enact Resolution No. 2015-10, a Resolution authorizing acceptance of a Contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to proceed with the Airline Apron Expansion Construction Project at the Valdosta Regional Airport, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book V.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of an Amendment to the Agreement for the design of a replacement sewer main discharging into the new Remer Pump Station.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that Parsons is the Design Engineer for the Force Main Project and has utilized Lovell Engineering for the design of the gravity and force main segments of this Project. Parsons was also the low bidder for the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) mandated Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) as part of the December, 2013 Consent Order. The purpose of the SEP is to allow us to identify areas for potential overflows as well as inflow and infiltration of storm or ground water into the sewer system using the Withlacoochee sewer collection system model. The draft of the SEP Report is currently being finalized. During the preliminary review of modeling results, Parsons identified two high priority locations feeding into the new Remer Pump Station. Both of these existing large diameter sewer mains are undersized and pose a bottleneck causing sewage flows to backup into the system during high flow periods. One of these sewer mains, an aerial section, was in the original scope of work for replacement and oversizing in the Force Main Project; however, it was removed during value engineering discussions to reduce the overall Project costs. A Change Order to Garney Construction to put this section back into the Project will be forthcoming. The second large diameter sewer main needing to be oversized is adjacent to the aerial main but it is entirely underground. Because this was not part of the original scope, the design for its replacement was never contemplated. As a result, to replace this main with the larger diameter main necessary to prevent the likelihood of future overflows, the design must be completed before bid documents can be finalized. It will then be advertised and bids taken to do this work. There is sufficient funding in the contingency portion of the GEFA Loan for the Force Main Project to cover this expense, and GEFA will approve this Change Order if Council authorizes the work. This design work will be done through Lovell Engineering as was the work for the Force Main Project work. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve Amendment No. 8 to the Agreement allowing Parsons to design the replacement underground sewer main in the amount of \$45,000. Councilman Vickers inquired if the \$45,000 was for the design. Henry Hicks stated that was correct. Mayor Gayle stated that we are asking for permission to allow Parsons to proceed with the design since

they are already on the job. If it is put out for bid then it would take six to eight months for this process and will put us behind schedule on the Project. Larry Hanson stated that we would get prices from Lane, Garney, and other local contractors that could do the work but this is just for the design right now. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether it could be bid out. Henry Hicks stated that if we did bid this out for the design services then it would take longer and it could be three months out before we even get a bid. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether \$45,000 has been allocated for this and whether the price could be lower. Henry Hicks stated that this is the request for Council to approve tonight. Councilwoman Tooley stated that even though it may take more time it may be less cost and it could be worth it. Larry Hanson stated that they were only talking about design tonight and not construction. To put it out for bid would bring GEFA into it because they have only approved these contractors. We are using GEFA money so we would then have to go back to GEFA and amend the loan. Councilman Carroll stated that if we were to put it out to bid it would delay this Project and we have teams working right now so we need to keep going. Henry Hicks stated that this would not have any effect on the Force Main Project or the new Water Treatment Plant Project.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Vickers to approve Amendment No. 8 to the Agreement allowing Parsons to design the replacement underground sewer main discharging into the new Remer Pump Station in the amount of \$45,000. The motion was seconded by Councilman Carroll. The motion was adopted (5-1-1) with Councilwoman Tooley voting in opposition and Councilman Yost abstaining.

Consideration of bids for Phase 3 of the Lift Station Rehabilitation/Replacement Project.

Henry Hicks, Utilities Director, stated that the Utilities Department initiated the first Phase of its annual Lift Station Rehabilitation/Replacement Program in 2010. Upon the completion of that work in 2012, Phase 2 rehab was designed and a contract was awarded. Lift stations listed for Phase 2 included the Rogers Street, Lakeland, Hyde Park, and East Wind. These were all completed in 2014. This year, the Phase 3 contract for rehabilitation includes four lift stations (Boys and Girls Club, Dillard's, South Forty, and the Foodbank). Two additional lift stations are being upgraded under the Force Main Project (VCI and LS 94). Phase 4 design will be bid out later this year and will encompass the last four lift stations to be upgraded under this program. The Utilities Department began this lift station replacement/rehabilitation program to upgrade those stations in the worst condition first (oldest and most deteriorated) to prevent an eventual failure leading to potentially major sewer spills. The Georgia Department of Environmental Protection recognized the importance of this Program and included it as part of their Consent Order with the City of Valdosta. The Utilities Department advertised for bids on June 26, 2015. A mandatory Pre-bid Meeting was held on July 30, 2015 with four contractors attending (Standard, Radney, JWA, and Morgan Contracting). Bids were received from only two contractors on August 27, 2015. The lowest responsive and responsible bidder was Radney Plumbing at \$961,642 and the second bid was received from Standard Contractors in the amount of \$994,536. Henry Hicks recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$ 961,642 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for Phase 3 of the Lift Station Rehabilitation/Replacement Project.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Wright, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Radney Plumbing in the amount of \$ 961,642 plus a 10% contingency to handle any unforeseen circumstances for Phase 3 of the Lift Station Rehabilitation/Replacement Project.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to declare two vehicles from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property.

Police Chief Brian Childress stated that the City of Valdosta Police Department has two Ford Crown Victoria Police Sedans which the Department desires to declare as surplus property. Each patrol vehicle's age is either 10 years or older or has high mileage and needs to be replaced and removed from service. In the past, dead lined Police vehicles are often sold by government entities to other organizations who may continue to use those vehicles, either in a non-law enforcement capacity or in smaller jurisdictions where the demand on those Police vehicles are not as high. The Department requests these vehicles be approved for surplus. The District Attorney's

Office of the Southern Judicial Circuit and the City of Morven has contacted the City and have expressed an interest in purchasing one vehicle each for use at their respective government organizations. Chief Childress recommended that Council approve the request to declare two vehicles from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property and sell to the District Attorney's Office and the City of Morven for \$10 each.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to approve the request to declare two vehicles from the Valdosta Police Department as surplus property and sell to the District Attorney's Office and the City of Morven for \$10 each.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Larry Hanson, City Manager, stated that we are currently advertising for several slots on Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees. The Parks and Recreation Authority has one slot to fill the unexpired term of Charles White. The deadline to apply for that slot is September 30, 2015 and the appointment will be made at the October 8, 2015 Council Meeting. Other slots that we are advertising for include the Central Valdosta Development Authority, the Housing Authority, the Development Authority, the Tree Commission, the Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference Center & Tourism Authority, and the Valdosta-Lowndes County Construction Board of Adjustments & Appeals. Applications for these slots will be taken until October 28, 2015 with appointments to be made at the November 5, 2015 Council Meeting.

The Citizens Fire Academy is in the second week and it has been very successful. Also, the deadline to apply for the Police Academy is September 27, 2015. Both of these are great citizen involvement programs.

We have been using social media more and Sementha Mathews, Public Information Officer, recently sent out something on Labor Day regarding some job openings at the City. Within one day there were 1,700 hits from citizens looking a job opportunities.

There will be a 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony tomorrow at 8:45 a.m. at Fire Station No. 1. This is a very special event and Council members are encouraged to attend.

A Press Release has been sent out this week regarding the Manhole Rehabilitation Project on Bemiss Road and Oak Street; however, there was more information that shows the progress that is being made with the City's sewer system. We have now mapped over 5,700 manholes out of 6,400 and inspected over 3,000 of them. We have also replaced over 110 manholes. We have now smoke tested 180 miles of our collection system out of 300 miles and have 120 miles left to do next year. Through the smoke testing, there have been 254 defects found underground and many of them have been repaired. We have also replaced 11,000 linear feet (over two miles) of sewer pipes using the cured-in-place pipe lining rather than digging up and replacing sewer lines. We have now rehabbed 7 of 15 lift stations and have one contract coming up next year. Also, the new Wastewater Treatment Plant is 16 months ahead of schedule and the Force Main Project is 5 months ahead of schedule. Both of these will come on line early next year.

A tour of the Utilities Projects has been scheduled for the Mayor and Council for Friday, September 18, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. The media has also been invited to attend. These are active construction sites and the Mayor and Council will be able to view the progress that has been made on the Force Main Project, the pump station at Remer Lane, and the new Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The City Beat Newsletter has been sent out and it contains a lot of important information. The LED Lighting Project with Georgia Power is continuing and it is being well received.

Last night the Regional Deep South Solid Waste Management Authority approved an Option exercise with Veolia. The City had an old unlined landfill on Wetherington Lane that was closed 10 years ago. The City was required by State Law to monitor it for 30 years which was a great cost to the City. Some years ago, through a cooperative effort between the City, Veolia, Langdale, and the Deep South Solid Waste Management Authority, Veolia came to us and wanted to purchase the landfill in order to allow them to have a larger footprint of the landfill. This was agreed to in 2010. It has taken a number of years to get this done and Veolia will begin

removing all of the garbage in the landfill which will cost them \$6 million. There is 2.25 million cubic yards of trash in the landfill. By removing this garbage they can expand the landfill and have 45 million cubic yards of space. This will give Lowndes County and surrounding counties another 50 years of capacity to use the landfill at low tipping fees. This is a great project and a win for everyone.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Yost thanked the Council for voting to protect the neighborhood on Oak Street tonight.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Elsie Napier, 2319 Corey Drive, stated that she has been working with a faith-based, non-profit organization called T.E.A.C.H. which serves the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the less fortunate in our community. About 11 years ago they went to South Lee Street and offered to purchase a 96-year old house, the Hudson House, to use for their ministry. The crime was so bad in that area that the furniture was chained to the floor. The property across the street was condemned and there was a lot of work to do on the house. They restored it and turned it into an outreach center. Since 2004, they have fed over 500 people a month. They do meals-on-wheels for the sick and the elderly and they have a clothes closet. About eight years ago, most of the people they served were addicted to drugs so they decided to help give them a hand up. These people were in rehabilitation but did not have a place to go while they were trying to clean themselves up so they decided to build a refuge center. They have worked hard to get finances to acquire a loan to construct a 16-bed facility.

Clarence Leroy Pickett, 1109 Ponderosa Drive, stated that he works at the car wash on the corner of Central Avenue and Lee Street and makes \$5.00 a car. He has two children and three grandchildren and he needs some help. It is very hard and he is almost homeless.

David Adams, 2826 Arrow Leaf Drive, Pastor of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church located at 505 East Force Street, stated that he, Pastor Jimmy Boyd, and Frank Mathis have formed a group to address the drug problems here in Valdosta. There will be sponsoring an informational lunch meeting on September 22, 2015 at 12:00 p.m. at Christian Love Church located at 526 Griffin Avenue. There are a lot of new designer drugs that have come out in south Florida and these drugs are making their way to Valdosta. They wanted to educate citizens with information on these drugs. They would like to formulate a plan to educate the citizens and be proactive instead of reactive. They are also planning to hold meetings at various community centers and churches in the City. They will have a skit that shows the effects of the different drugs and then they will share information with the citizens. Drugs play a large part in the crimes that are committed in the City and they want to be a model City to show the nation that we can beat this battle but we have to do it collectively.

Joan Allen, 1111 West Magnolia Street, stated that she is part of the T.E.A.C.H. outreach ministry and they are in need of some funding. They need Council to visit their facility to see what they have done. When they had an Open House no one showed up. They have had men in the neighborhood who sleep on the front porch at night because they have nowhere to live. They now have a 16-bed facility but they need some help with funding. When grants come up they would like to be notified. Ms. Allen invited the Mayor and Council to tour the facility.

Linda Battle, District 3 resident, stated that she has been compiling research about her genealogy, America, and Valdosta for more than ten years. These topics have been the reason for her attendance at the Council Meetings and the Police Academy. She wanted an understanding of the operations and the people who operate our government, law enforcement, and the judicial system. She did not want to just read or hear about it but wanted face-to-face interaction because it speaks volumes. This is the last phase of her research. The knowledge she has ascertained has been a learning experience and an eye opener. The last time she was at the podium and talked about liberty and justice it was a mixture of her research. A copy of her research has been requested by Donald Davis of the Historical Society but she has not decided how to present it. Her point is that you should not fear her and she does not want to pose a threat to anyone or appear confrontational; however, she would like to address her observance of constant snickering and funny faces made of regular attendees whenever Councilwoman Sandra Tooley asks questions. It is immature and inappropriate behavior for this forum and should not be tolerated. She is representing the people of her District and she is a person of integrity and maturity. She also presents herself in a

professional manner. The first sign of an educated person is that he or she asks more questions than he or she delivers answers. We should never get to the point where we are ashamed to ask anybody for information. An ignorant person will always be ignorant if he or she fears that by asking for information he or she will display ignorance.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion to adjourn the regular Council meeting and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the September 10, 2015, meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:59 p.m. and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate.

Mayor Gayle reconvened the regular City Council meeting at 7:17 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of real estate in the Executive Session and no action was taken.

Mayor Gayle entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Norton, seconded by Councilman Vickers, was unanimously adopted (7-0) to adjourn the September 10, 2015 Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 7:17 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, September 24, 2015.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta