

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024
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: Eric Howard, Sandra Tooley, Andy Gibbs, and Tim Carroll. Councilman Thomas McIntyre, Councilman Nick Harden, and Councilwoman Vivian Miller-Cody were absent. The invocation was given by Reverend J. D. Martin, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Regular Meeting held on March 7, 2024 were approved by unanimous consent (4-0) of the Council.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-5, A RESOLUTION FOR THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS FOR THE VALDOSTA CITY SCHOOLS

Consideration of a Resolution for the issuance of Bonds for the Valdosta City Schools.

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that the Valdosta City Schools is proceeding with the issuance of City of Valdosta School System General Obligation Bonds Series 2024A in the aggregate amount of \$7,375,000.00 and City of Valdosta School System General Obligation Bonds Series 2024B in the aggregate principal amount of \$21,930,000.00. The Valdosta City Schools has requested we adopt the attached Resolution required for these bond issuances. As stated in the memo (see attachment) from the School System's Bond Counsel: "Although the Resolution we have submitted to the Mayor and Council provides for the assessment and collection of an annual tax in an amount sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the debt, reference is made to other sources which are expected to be available for such purpose, i.e., ESPLOST. It is not anticipated that a tax will need to be levied to pay principal of and interest on the Series 2024 Bonds, but to comply with Georgia law, the School System must provide for the assessment and collection of such tax. This is consistent with established Georgia case law. See Sewell v. City of Tallapoosa, 145 Ga. 19 (7) (1916)." Richard Hardy, City Manager, asked Council's consideration in approving the Resolution for the issuance of Bonds for the Valdosta City Schools.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to enact Resolution No. 2024-5, a Resolution for the issuance of Bonds for the Valdosta City Schools, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VII.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Mayor Matheson stated that if there was no objection from Council, Agenda Items 4(a) through 4(e) would be considered under a Consent Agenda. Councilman Howard asked that Agenda Item 4(e) be removed from the Consent Agenda so that it could be presented individually. There were no objections from Council.

Teffany Edwards, Purchasing Agent, stated that all of the items up for bid were approved by Council in the current year Budget and asked Council's consideration in following the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent if all of the following bids were accepted at one time: (1) Item 4(a) Consideration of bids for a 2024 Crew Cab 3500 Series Truck for the Public Works Department (Bid No. 20-23-24) - the low bid was submitted by Cass Burch in the amount of \$44,877, (2) Item 4(b) Consideration of bids for a 2024 Regular Cab F-350 Service Truck for the Utilities Department (Bid No. 21-23-24) - the low bid was submitted by Brannen Ford in the amount of \$62,394, (3) Item 4(c) Consideration of bids for a 2024 Crew Cab F-350 Service Truck for the Engineering Department (Bid No. 25-23-24) - the low bid was submitted by Brannen Ford in the amount of \$65,090, and (4) Item 4(d) Consideration of bids for a 2024 Crew Cab F-350 Series Truck for the Fire Department (Bid No. 24-23-24) - the low bid was submitted by Langdale Ford in the amount of \$62,050.73.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to follow the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent and approve the low bids under a Consent Agenda for Agenda Items 4(a) through 4(d).

Consideration of bids for three Crew Cab 1500 Series Trucks for several City Departments (Bid No. 22-23-24).

Teffany Edwards, Purchasing Agent, stated that the Finance Department (Meter Reading), the Community Protection Division, and the Engineering Department all need to purchase a new Crew Cab 1500 Series Trucks due to the age and serviceability of their existing trucks. The trucks are used with completing the daily work responsibilities of each Department. The new vehicles will replace Line Item #1031 which is a 2001 Ford E-150 Van, Item #1618 is a 2006 Chevy 1500 Truck, and Item #1532 is a 2004 Ford F-150. This purchase is in the Council-approved Budget for the current Fiscal Year. Three sealed bids were received on March 5, 2024 with the low bid submitted by Cass Burch in the amount of \$127,161. Teffany Edwards, Purchasing Agent, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Cass Burch in the amount of \$127,161 and allow the Departments to proceed with the purchase.

Councilman Howard stated that they had some discussion several months ago about some smaller vehicles for Meter Reading and he inquired as to why they were requesting Crew Cab F-150 vehicles. Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that for most of these vehicles, we are transporting individuals and their equipment so there would be more than one or two people in the vehicle.

Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether these older vehicles are giving us a lot of problems. She understood that due to the age we would want to replace them with more reliable vehicles but she wondered if we were having problems. Richard Hardy stated that we have a solid Fleet Maintenance Manager and the vehicles are maintained very well. They go through periodic inspections; however, most of these vehicles are over 20 years old. We want to make sure that they are reliable and can get workers and equipment to the job sites every day. Councilwoman Tooley inquired as to whether there was any consideration about purchasing refurbished vehicles. Richard Hardy stated that we have purchased refurbished vehicles in the past but we have found that they do have some problems. We do not get the warranty that we get with new vehicles. These new vehicles we are purchasing are the bottom line vehicles and they do not have the electric seats or all of the gadgets that other models do.

Councilman Carroll stated that this would be something to address during the Budget approval process because these were all in the Budget when it was adopted. Richard Hardy stated that it would be his recommendation to stay away from refurbished vehicles.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Cass Burch in the amount of \$127,161 and allow the Departments to proceed with the purchase of three Crew Cab 1500 Series Trucks.

Consideration of bids for a 2024 Boom Mower for the Engineering Department (Bid No. 19-23-24).

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that the Engineering Department needs to purchase a new Boom Mower with mower, grapple, and ditch bucket attachments due to the age, serviceability, and single function capability of an existing Boom Mower. The new Boom Mower with its enhanced capabilities will be used for maintaining vegetation growth, sediment removal, and debris extraction along stormwater ditches and retention ponds throughout the City. The new vehicle will replace Line Item #4607 which is a 2000 model Boom Mower. This purchase is in the Council-approved Budget for the current Fiscal Year. Two sealed bids were received on February 27, 2024 with the low bid submitted by Reynolds Warren in the amount of \$245,160.34. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Reynolds Warren in the amount of \$245,160.34 for a 2024 Boom Mower for the Engineering Department.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Reynolds Warren in the amount of \$245,160.34 for the purchase of a 2024 Boom Mower for the Engineering Department.

Consideration of bids for the Old Clyattville Road Widening Improvements Project.

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that in August of 2020, the City entered into a Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Project Agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Through this Agreement, the City selected to locally deliver the design and construction for three projects including the Old Clyattville Road Widening Improvements. This Street Widening Project extends from Gil Harbin Industrial Blvd. to the bridge at Mud Creek (City Limits). The TIA Total Project Budget was established at \$6,217,514. Design by a Consultant, right-of-way acquisition by City Staff, and State and Federal permitting were completed in January, 2024 for total costs of approximately \$500,000 (invoices to date equaled \$484,010). The Construction Project was advertised in February, 2023 on the City's website, in the local newspaper, and on the Georgia Procurement Registry website. The pre-bid meeting was held on February 27, 2024 with five contractors attending. Bids were opened March 7, 2024 at 2:00 p.m. with two bids received. The low bid is considered both responsive and responsible and was submitted by Reames and Son Construction with a total \$5,289,080.85. Using available Project funding for an 8% contingency (\$423,126.47) for unknown field conditions would bring the total Project construction cost to \$5,712,207.32. This cost is within the remaining Budget of the Project. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve low bid submitted by Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$5,289,080.85 with an 8% contingency of \$423,126.47 for a total Project Construction Cost of \$5,712,207.32.

A MOTION by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilwoman Tooley, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$5,289,080.85 with an 8% contingency of \$423,126.47 for a total Project Construction Cost of \$5,712,207.32 for the Old Clyattville Road Widening Improvements Project.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request for payment of emergency repairs to a gravity sewer main on River Street.

Jason Barnes, Assistant Utilities Director, stated that on July 17, 2023, James Warren & Associates (JWA) was contacted to mobilize, establish, and maintain the by-pass for the gravity sewer main on River Street that had been compromised and severed due to the flooding and the erosion of the creek bank. After a lengthy permitting process with the Environmental Protection Division (EPD), the City was authorized to repair the sewer main. JWA submitted three options for the repair of the main, at which time the City elected to go with Option 2 which included digging up and replacing the existing main, housing it inside an 18" steel casing for protection, and protecting the casing with #3 rip rap stone, along with restoring the creek bank back to its original position before the erosion that caused the damage to occur. The emergency bypass was concluded on October 9, 2023 at which time the authorized emergency repair work began. During the completion of the work, bypass pumping was maintained until October 25, 2023 until the gravity sewer was returned to normal service. The Project was completed on October 27, 2023. The scope of work which has been completed so far can be generally described as follows: (1) Install and operate emergency bypass from 7/17/23 to 10/9/23. (2) Replacing the existing main, housing it inside an 18" steel casing for protection, and protecting the casing with #3 rip rap stone, along with restoring the creek bank back to its original position before the erosion that caused the damage to occur. Jason Barnes, Assistant Utilities Director, recommended that Council approve payment to James Warren & Associates (JWA) in the amount of \$263,521.80 for emergency repairs to a gravity sewer main on River Street.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Council Carroll, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve payment to James Warren & Associates (JWA) in the amount of \$263,521.80 for emergency repairs to a gravity sewer main on River Street.

Consideration of a request to approve the proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 using 75% of the 2023 allocation.

Anetra Riley, Neighborhood Development & Community Protection Manager, stated that Each year, as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement community with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), we are required to create an Annual Action Plan. In the Annual Action Plan, we are to complete two tasks: (1) outline proposed activities, and (2) the funding amounts associated with each proposed activity for the upcoming program year. This year, our Annual Action Plan is due to HUD by May 15, 2024 or we

forfeit the Grant funding allocations for the upcoming year. The allocations for 2024 have not been released as the government has approved the funding for HUD recently. To ensure that we meet HUD's guidelines and regulations, we are presenting proposed activities using 75% of the allocation from 2023 Annual Action Plan, which was \$630,163. The proposed activities for the 2024 program year are as follows: (1) Program Administration - \$94,524, (2) Housing - \$308,098, (3) Public Service - \$60,000, and (4) Economic Development - \$10,000. The total allocation is \$472,622. The proposed activities above will be presented to citizens at Public Hearings that will be held on March 29, 2024 and at a later date when the City receives the allocation amount. This is the fifth year of the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan for Valdosta. The FY24 Annual Action Plan will be completed and submitted to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by May 15, 2024 unless and extension is granted by HUD. Anetra Riley, Neighborhood Development & Community Protection Manager, recommended that Council approve the proposed CDBG allocation.

A MOTION by Councilwoman Tooley, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to approve the request for the proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 using 75% of the 2023 allocation.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Rev. J. D. Martin, Citizens Against Violence Ministry, stated that he represented their Board of Directors and the Soul Patrol. He is very concerned about crime in our area. He distributed a packet to the Council that addressed some of their concerns. Rev. Martin stated that we can win if we work together. He does not play to lose but plays to win. If you want to join him in winning, then get on board.

Victor Marshall, 1744 Jimmy Carter Drive, stated that he has had a big increase in his water bill. He would like to know why. His increase was \$30 but he has talked to other people where it was as much as \$120 in one month.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that there will be a Community Road Cleanup on March 23, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. starting at 1101 North Ashley Street. The area to be cleaned is East Mary Street from North Ashley to North Troup Street. There will be Paint in the Park on April 13, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Unity Park, On April 19-20, 2024, the 2nd Annual Bluesberry Festival will take place at Unity Park. Georgia Cities Week will be held April 21-27, 2024 and there will be a lot of events going on during that week.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no Council comments

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Council Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (4-0) to adjourn the March 21, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:44 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, April 11, 2024.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta