

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 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: Thomas McIntyre, Eric Howard, Sandra Tooley, Tim Carroll, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Councilman Andy Gibbs was absent and Councilman Nick Harden arrived late at 5:43 p.m. The invocation was given by Councilman Tim Carroll, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Special Called Meeting held on October 16, 2024 are forthcoming.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE FOR SCHEDULING THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S WATER RATES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026, 2027, AND 2028 (FIRST READING)

Consideration of an Ordinance for scheduling the City of Valdosta's water rates for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028. (First Reading)

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City of Valdosta's water and wastewater system is need of significant repairs, improvements, and expansion. The City has experienced significant growth and needs to upgrade the system to meet the needs of the future. The City has planned a number of large projects that will meet this need and plans to utilize revenue bonds to finance them. These projects will position the City to meet the needs of an expanding customer base and serve industrial customers that will need specialized sewer treatment needs. The City will need to issue revenue bonds to finance the needed improvements to its water and wastewater system. The current rate structure is adequate to cover existing operating expenses and routine capital needs but will not provide adequate revenue to service the anticipated bond issue. In order to provide adequate revenues to service the new debt, the City will need to raise its utility rates over the next three years. The City routinely raises its rates 5% per annum to offset inflationary pressures on the system's cost of operation but will need an additional 3% per annum for the next two years to fund anticipated debt service. The attached Ordinance provides for these increases for the next three fiscal years. The rates for FY 26 and FY 27 will increase 8% (5% + 3%) while FY 28 will increase the usual 5%. The City typically adopts its rate increases annually in conjunction with the budget but the three-year Ordinance will provide confirmation to potential bond buyers the City's commitment to its financing plan. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that this is the First Reading so no action will need to be taken.

ORDINANCE FOR SCHEDULING THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S WASTEWATER RATES FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026, 2027, AND 2028 (FIRST READING)

Consideration of an Ordinance for scheduling the City of Valdosta's wastewater rates for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028. (First Reading)

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City of Valdosta's water and wastewater system is need of significant repairs, improvements, and expansion. The City has experienced significant growth and needs to upgrade the system to meet the needs of the future. The City has planned a number of large projects that will meet this need and plans to utilize revenue bonds to finance them. These projects will position the City to meet the needs of an expanding customer base and serve industrial customers that will need specialized sewer treatment needs. The City will need to issue revenue bonds to finance the needed improvements to its water and wastewater system. The current rate structure is adequate to cover existing operating expenses and routine capital needs but will not provide adequate revenue to service the anticipated bond issue. In order to provide adequate revenues to service the new debt, the City will need to raise its utility rates over the next three years. The City routinely raises its rates 5% per annum to offset inflationary pressures on the system's cost of operation but will need an additional 3% per annum for the next two years to fund anticipated debt service. The attached ordinance provides for these increases

**ORDINANCE FOR SCHEDULING THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S
WASTEWATER RATES (FIRST READING)**

10/24/24 CONTINUED

for the next three fiscal years. The rates for FY 26 and FY 27 will increase 8% (5% + 3%) while FY 28 will increase the usual 5%. The City typically adopts its rate increases annually in conjunction with the budget but the three-year Ordinance will provide confirmation to potential bond buyers the City's commitment to its financing plan. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that this is the First Reading so no action will need to be taken.

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-16, THE SECOND SUPPLEMENTAL BOND RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF REVENUE BONDS FOR IMPROVEMENTS AND EXPANSION OF THE CITY OF VALDOSTA'S WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEM

Consideration of the Second Supplemental Bond Resolution authorizing the issuance of revenue bonds for improvements and expansion of the City of Valdosta's water and wastewater system.

Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, stated that the City of Valdosta's water and wastewater system is need of significant improvements and expansion and requires financing for these Projects. The City has evaluated the options for financing and has determined that revenue bonds payable from the revenues of the system are the best alternative. The City passed a Master Bond Resolution in conjunction with the issuance of the 2020 revenue bonds which provides for the issuance of additional bonds under certain circumstances. In order to issue new revenue bonds, it is necessary for the Mayor and Council to declare its official intent to reimburse certain expenditures from proceeds of the Series 2024 Bonds and to authorize the Mayor, City Manager, Finance Director, City Attorney, and other officials to take such actions relating to the 2024 Projects as shall be necessary to develop and proceed with a plan of financing for the same and take such actions as necessary for the issuance and delivery of the Series 2024 Bonds. The attached Resolution declares this intent and amends the 2020 Master Resolution to allow for the issuance of the revenue bonds with the parameters outlined. It also allows for the City Attorney to proceed with the validation of the bonds prior to sale. The bond authorization is limited as follows: (1) An amount not to exceed \$75,000,000.00, (2) A stated rate not to exceed 6.000%, (3) A final maturity no later than October 1, 2064, and (4) A maximum annual debt service of \$5,500,000.00. These are the limits on the issue. The actual issue may have smaller values in any or all of the above parameters. This Resolution does not authorize the sale of any bonds and does not incur debt on behalf of the City. A separate Resolution will be presented at a future City Council Meeting for that purpose. Chuck Dinkins, Finance Director, recommended that Council approve the Second Supplemental Bond Resolution authorizing the issuance of revenue bonds for improvements and expansion of the City of Valdosta's water and wastewater system.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to enact Resolution No. 2024-16, the Second Supplemental Bond Resolution authorizing the issuance of revenue bonds for improvements and expansion of the City of Valdosta's water and wastewater system, the complete text of which will be found in Resolution Book VII.

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of an Agreement for Governmental Affairs Representation for the City of Valdosta.

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that Coleman Talley Strategies, LLC (CTS) serves as a Governmental Affairs Consultant for the City of Valdosta and provides representation for municipalities, authorities, and counties in the State of Georgia. The overall scope of their work is to collaborate in the development of governmental affairs strategies for the State of Georgia and for the Georgia Congressional Delegation. John Crawford is the Principal Consultant at Coleman Talley Strategies, LLC (CTS) and manages the delivery of all services to the City of Valdosta. Mr. Crawford is a recognized government affairs professional with more than 21 years of experience. He is a skilled relationship builder with a track record of delivering results. Staff of Coleman Talley Strategies, LLC consists of the following: Penny Spencer, Administrative Assistant Government Affairs, with over 21 years of experience in State public policy and government relations, ethics compliance with State, local public officials/employees, and private entities, tracking legislation, preparation of organizational and information documents, database management, and client billing. Gabrielle Metts, Marketing Professional, with nine (9) years of experience in digital marketing, digital design, event planning, and client relations. Coleman Talley Strategies,

LLC continues to build relationships with key legislative and executive leadership, and they will work with the City of Valdosta to implement a public policy agenda and communicate directly with members of the General Assembly, The Honorable Governor Brian Kemp and his Staff, and various State agencies and others as appropriate to advocate for policies that best serve the City of Valdosta. Coleman Talley Strategies, LLC will develop a well-planned strategy to educate and influence the opinions of government leaders. The proposed monthly fee will be \$4,000 (see attached Agreement). The term of the Agreement will run from November 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 and either party may terminate the Agreement without cause by a 30-day notice. Richard Hardy, City Manager, recommended that Council approve the Agreement with Coleman Talley Strategies, LLC.

A MOTION was made by Councilman Howard to approve the Agreement with Coleman Talley Strategies, LLC for Governmental Affairs Representation for the City of Valdosta. The motion was seconded by Councilman Carroll. The motion was adopted (4-1) with Councilwoman Tooley voting in opposition.

LOCAL FUNDING AND REQUESTS

Consideration of a request to upgrade the lighting at the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant.

Jason Barnes, Utilities Director, stated that the existing non-LED light fixtures at the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant are no longer made and it is difficult to replace the fixtures with the same part. Replacement to new LED fixtures will lower the utility cost, improve financial savings due to being replaced less often, and provide a brighter and safer work area. The light fixtures are approximately 15 years old and outdated. We would like to replace all of the 72 light fixtures and one broken light pole at the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant. Cowart Electric, which is on the City of Valdosta’s approved Contractor list, submitted a proposal in the amount of \$71,251 for the purchase of new LED light fixtures and the replacement of one light pole at the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant. Jason Barnes, Utilities Director, recommended that Council approve the request and have Cowart Electric upgrade the lighting and replace one light pole in the amount of \$71,251 at the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman McIntyre, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the request and have Cowart Electric upgrade the lighting and replace one light pole in the amount of \$71,251 at the Mud Creek Water Pollution Control Plant.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that on Friday, October 25, 2024, there will be a movie night at Unity Park with Hocus Pocus being shown. There will also be a Witches Night Out Event in Downtown Valdosta. On Saturday, October 26, 2024, the Levi Strauss 25th Anniversary Celebration will take place at the Unity Park Amphitheater. On Thursday, October 31, 2024, the City will host Festi-Fall at Unity Park. This event is free to the community and there will be candy and games for all ages.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Matheson stated that Octoberfest will kick off at Georgia Beer tonight and will run for four consecutive days. On Saturday, there will be Artoberfest beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Turner Center Arts Park, and the Symphony Orchestra will be performing on Saturday night. They will have a spooky theme and attendees are encouraged to dress up in Halloween costumes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing potential litigation and personnel.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to enter into Executive Session at 5:43 p.m. for the purpose of discussing potential litigation and personnel.

Councilman Harden arrived late at 5:43 p.m.

Mayor Matheson reconvened the Regular Meeting at 6:21 p.m. and stated that there was discussion of potential litigation and personnel in Executive Session and no action will need to be taken.

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (6-0) to adjourn the October 24, 2024 Regular Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:22 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, November 7, 2024.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta