

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE VALDOSTA CITY COUNCIL
5:30 P.M., THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025
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, Tim Carroll, and Vivian Miller-Cody. Councilman Thomas McIntyre and Councilman Nick Harden were absent. 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 Regular Meetings held on December 19, 2024 and January 9, 2025 were approved by unanimous consent (5-0 Vote).

BIDS, CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, AND EXPENDITURES

Consideration of bids for a new Bucket Truck for the Engineering Department (Bid No. 18-24-25).

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that the Engineering Department needs a new Bucket Truck. The truck will be used primarily for signal light maintenance and then also assist with special events and holiday preparations. This new vehicle will replace a 22 year old Bucket Truck. This is a Council-approved Budget item for the current year Budget. Sealed bids were received on January 7, 2025 with the low bid submitted by Alan Jay Fleet Sales in the amount of \$158,590. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the low bid submitted by Alan Jay Fleet Sales in the amount of \$158,590.

A MOTION by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Alan Jay Fleet Sales in the amount of \$158,590 for a new Bucket Truck for the Engineering Department.

Consideration of bids for a new Crew Cab Service Truck for the Engineering Department (Bid No. 16-24-25).

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that the Stormwater Division of the Engineering Department needs a new Crew Cab Service Truck. The truck will be used to transport workers, equipment, and a full day of supplies to work locations around the City. This new vehicle will replace a 30 year old school bus. This is a Council-approved Budget item for the current year Budget. Sealed bids were received on January 7, 2025 with the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Phil Brannen Ford in the amount of \$74,616. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the bid meeting specifications submitted by Phil Brannen Ford in the amount of \$74,616.

A MOTION by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Carroll, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the low bid meeting specifications submitted by Phil Brannen Ford in the amount of \$74,616 for a new Crew Cab Service Truck for the Engineering Department.

Consideration of bids for two new Tahoe SUV's for the Valdosta Fire Department (Bid No. 15-24-25).

Fire Chief Brian Boutwell stated that the Fire Prevention Division of the Fire Department needs two new Tahoe SUV's to replace two vehicles with increasing maintenance costs, age, and high mileage. Vehicles being replaced are a 19 year old Ford Expedition and a 22 year old Ford F-350 Pickup Truck. This is a Council-approved Budget item for the current year Budget. Sealed bids were received on January 7, 2025 with the low bid submitted by Cass Burch in the amount of \$54,587 for each vehicle for a total of \$109,174. Fire Chief Brian Boutwell recommended that Council approve the bid submitted by Cass Burch in the amount of \$109,174.

A **MOTION** by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the low bid submitted by Cass Burch in the amount of \$109,174 for two new Tahoe SUV's for the Valdosta Fire Department.

Consideration of bids for rehabilitation of the #4 High Service Pump at the Guest Road Water Treatment Plant.

Jason Barnes, Utilities Director, stated that the #4 High Service Pump is one of six high service pumps that provide drinking water to the City. The pump is a vertical turbine pump and was originally installed in 1992. The pump was originally rated to flow 6 million gallons a day. The pump is 25 feet in length and contains multiple bearings and impellers on the shaft. The pump is powered by a 300-horsepower electric motor. This Project is to bring the #4 High Service Pump back into original pumping rates. In 2024, the Operations Staff at the Guest Road Water Treatment Plant noticed that the pump had lost efficiency. From 2024 to the present, the pump has declined and is now only pumping at half its original capacity. One sealed bid was received on November 24, 2024 and it was submitted by Rowe Well Drilling in the amount of \$134,000. Jason Barnes, Utilities Director, recommended that Council approve the bid submitted by Rowe Well Drilling in the amount of \$134,000.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilwoman Miller-Cody, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the bid submitted by Rowe Well Drilling in the amount of \$134,000 for rehabilitation of the #4 High Service Pump at the Guest Road Water Treatment Plant.

Consideration of a Proposal to amend the Belt Filter Press Design Services at the Withlacoochee Water Pollution Control Plant.

Jason Barnes, Utilities Director, stated that the City of Valdosta provides wastewater treatment at its Withlacoochee Water Pollution Control Plant which is sized for a capacity of 12 million gallons per day (MGD). As part of its treatment processes, the facility owns and operates a dewatering and biosolids handling process consisting of a 27,000-gallon waste activated sludge (WAS) holding tank, three (3) progressive cavity pumps, a 1-meter gravity belt thickener (GBT), a 2-meter belt filter press (BFP), and associated polymer feed systems to facilitate dewatering and removal of biosolids from the wastewater. The work to be performed is to demolish and replace the existing BFP and associated polymer feed system. Given the complexity of the replacement Project and potential impacts to operations, the Utilities Department determined that Project quality management, design, and bidding assistance services would be required from a third party. The contracted Engineer of record, CDM Smith, has been providing services in accordance with the original task authorization dated August 14, 2024. In the process of executing the design, CDM Smith has identified design modifications that are necessary but were not previously scoped. These include necessary electrical and mechanical design modifications as follows: (1) to the existing dewatering building ventilation fans to comply with National Fire Protection Association code, (2) to replace the existing BFP wash water booster pump to meet the new BFP wash water booster pump requirements for flow and pressure, and (3) a change in the basis of design for an innovative approach to the expansion of the BFP drainage basin that is expected to reduce demolition and construction efforts but results in additional design effort. The proposed amendment provides for the additional scope items described above. Jason Barnes, Utilities Director, recommended that Council approve the amended Proposal submitted by CDM Smith, Inc. in the amount of \$18,645.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the amended Proposal submitted by CDM Smith, Inc. in the amount of \$18,645 for the Belt Filter Press Design Services at the Withlacoochee Water Pollution Control Plant.

Consideration of a request to purchase new Motorola Portable Radios for the Valdosta Police Department.

Police Chief Leslie Manahan stated that the Valdosta Police Department is reliant on portable radios for communication. This is the method that our Police Officers use to communicate with the Lowndes County E911 dispatcher, other department personnel, and other local law enforcement agencies. The current portable radios that are used by the Valdosta Police Department are the Motorola APX6000 series, which are approximately 13 years old. The radios are dated and no longer under warranty. Within the next year, these radios will be obsolete due to

the inability to find replacement parts. Portable radios are the life line for our Police Officers who rely on them to be operational at all times and they need to have the best equipment available. The purchase of these ten (10) Motorola APX Next radios, which are the newest generation, will allow our Staff to evaluate this radio. Motorola is a sole source provider for this radio. This radio meets the specifications mandated by the Lowndes County E911 Center, requiring all radios to be Time Division Multiplication Algorithm (TDMA) enabled. Police Chief Leslie Manahan recommended that Council approve the purchase of ten (10) Motorola APX Next radios in the amount of \$89,537.90.

A MOTION by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the purchase of ten new Motorola Portable Radios in the amount of \$89,537.90 for the Valdosta Police Department.

Consideration of an Amendment to the VIA Transit Services Contract for the City of Valdosta.

Larry Ogden, Public Works Director, stated that on March 17, 2021, the Mayor and Council approved a Contract with River North Transit, LLC, a subsidiary of VIA Transportation (New York, NY), to provide transit services to the City of Valdosta. Valdosta on Demand (VOD) was launched on April 27, 2021 with an option to renew the Agreement for three (3) additional one-year terms and this one being the last year. The City of Valdosta is currently in the process of finalizing our VIA Renewal Contract. The Contract has been reviewed by our City Attorney and is currently being reviewed by VIA. Once VIA has reviewed and provided any comments or revisions, the Contract will be sent to GDOT for final approval. However, it appears unlikely that the new Contract will be completed and reviewed by GDOT before our current extension expires on January 31, 2025. We have requested a one month extension from VIA. This extension also includes the option to extend for an additional month if necessary. The City was approved for FTA 5307 Grant and congressionally- directed spending to fund the Transit Program for FY24. The City's match is included in the proposed FY24 Budget. The attached Amendment to the Contract to extend the Term of the Agreement by a further period of one month starting on the Effective Date and ending on February 28, 2025 (inclusive) with the option to further extend on mutual agreement of the Parties by a period of one month. Larry Ogden, Public Works Director, recommended that Council approve the Contract Extension with VIA for public transit services.

A MOTION by Councilman Howard, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the Amendment to the VIA Transit Services Contract for the City of Valdosta.

Consideration of a Professional Design Services Agreement for repairs to the Sugar Creek streambank and sanitary sewer.

Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, stated that during inspections of City utility infrastructure following the 2024 storm events, City Staff discovered sections of compromised sewer mains along Sugar Creek. This area requires prompt repair. A conceptual layout has been completed by the City Engineering Staff that will repair current problems and make improvements in layout to better protect City sewer mains from stormwater impacts in the future. The next step is design and a professional Engineering Consultant is required for this work. On an annual basis, the City Engineering Department has developed a list of qualified professional services firms through solicitation of Statements of Qualification for designs of water distribution, sanitary sewer, wastewater collection and treatment, storm water, sidewalk construction, street revisions, transportation studies, land surveying and other miscellaneous tasks. The firms in the library can provide professional services to the City when need arises and the firm is available and qualified. Lovell Engineering Associates (LEA) is in our 2024/2025 library and is qualified to perform this scope of design services. The LEA Design Services Proposal is attached and totals \$133,000. The work includes surveying, railroad permitting, and design as needed to prepare construction plans and documents for the construction of the necessary emergency sewer system repairs. Upon Council approval, the Design Consultant will be engaged, and upon completion of their work, the Construction Project will be advertised for competitive bidding. Those bids will be presented to Council for consideration to complete this water and sewer Utility Extension Project. Ben O'Dowd, City Engineer, recommended that Council approve the LEA Design Services Contract Agreement in the amount of \$133,000.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to approve the LEA Professional Design Services Agreement in the amount of \$133,000 for repairs to the Sugar Creek streambank and sanitary sewer.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AUTHORITIES, AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Consideration of an appointment to the Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority.

Mayor Matheson stated that the Valdosta-Lowndes Airport Authority had a member, Michael Bourgoïn, who resigned due to health issues. Unfortunately, Mr. Bourgoïn passed away on December 26, 2024. Mr. Bourgoïn’s term will expire on May 25, 2025. The Airport Authority had asked if an appointment could be made by the Mayor and Council to fill the unexpired term in order for them to have a quorum at their meetings. This appointment was advertised according to the Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Advisory Committees Policy that was adopted by Mayor and Council. The applicants were Massimo Pistelli (Retired) and Paul W. Hamilton (Attorney at Law, Hamilton Trust Estate & Elder Law).

Mayor Matheson entertained nominations. Councilman Gibbs placed the name of Paul Hamilton for consideration. There being no other nominations, Mayor Matheson closed nominations.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Gibbs, seconded by Councilman Howard, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to appoint Paul Hamilton to the Valdosta-Lowndes Airport Authority to fill the unexpired term of Michael Bourgoïn.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens to be heard.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Richard Hardy, City Manager, stated that on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, the Annual Bird Supper will be held at 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at The Depot in Atlanta. Tickets are still available through the City Clerk’s Office or Customer Service at the Lowndes County Office. On Friday, February 7, 2025, Main Street will host First Friday in Downtown Valdosta from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. On Saturday, February 15, 2025, the Love Where You Live Clean-up will be held at 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The meeting location is 1701 Barack Obama Boulevard. The clean-up area will be Ricardo Street from Barack Obama to Claudia Circle. On Saturday, February 22, 2025, the Southern Georgia Black Chamber Inaugural Black History Month Parade will be held at noon. Participants will meet at the Pinevale Elementary School located at 930 Lake Park Road.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no Council comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Matheson entertained a motion for adjournment.

A **MOTION** by Councilman Carroll, seconded by Councilman Gibbs, was unanimously adopted (5-0) to adjourn the January 28, 2025 Special Called Meeting of the Valdosta City Council at 6:07 p.m. to meet again in Regular Session on Thursday, February 6, 2025.

City Clerk, City of Valdosta

Mayor, City of Valdosta