

December 12, 2023

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 12, 2023**

Council for the City of Covington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 W. Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

Mayor Thomas H. Sibold, Jr. called the meeting to order with the following members present: Mayor Sibold; Vice Mayor David S. Crosier; Councilman William E. (Lance) Carson, Jr.; Councilman Fred F. Forbes; Councilman Raymond C. Hunter. Also present were City Manager Allen Dressler and City Attorney Mark Popovich.

The invocation was given by Pastor Pete Moor followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Crosier motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Carson. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

Public Hearings

Mr. Sibold called the first public hearing to order.

1) Covington City Council held a public hearing pursuant to Sections 15.2-1427 (D), 15.2-2006, and 15.2-1800 of the Code of Virginia (1950, as amended) to consider an intent to vacate the right-of-way and disposition of public property with regards to a boundary adjustment survey for the Mcallister Memorial Presbyterian Church located at 900 N. Alleghany Avenue, Mcallister Addition, Covington, Virginia.

Mr. Dressler encouraged Council to approve this request, as the property serves no use to the city of Covington.

Mr. Van Walker, Mcallister Memorial Presbyterian Church representative, advised Council that the church had several young children attending every Sunday. The church would like to develop the alleyway into a playground for the children.

There was no one opposed to this request.

Mr. Crosier motioned to have Mr. Popovich draw up an ordinance for this request, seconded by Mr. Carson. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

2) Covington City Council held a public hearing pursuant to Sections 15.2-1427 (D), 15.2-2006, and 15.2-1800 of the Code of Virginia (1950, as amended) to consider an intent to vacate the right-of-way and disposition of public property with regards to a boundary adjustment survey for Amy L. Warren (Wills) and the City of Covington, Mcallister Addition #3, Covington, Virginia.

Amy Warren, 702 N. Greenbrier Ave, thanked Mr. Dressler for his help.

There were no individuals opposed to this request.

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Mr. Crosier motioned to have Mr. Popovich draw up an ordinance for this request, seconded by Mr. Carson. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

3) Covington City Council held a public hearing pursuant to Section 15.2-1800 of the Code of Virginia (1950, as amended) to consider a lease agreement for the city's public/private partnership at the former Nettleton Property.

Mr. Dressler stated that, on behalf of the City of Covington, a request for qualification had been received from Jimmy Hogendobler, there was a conversation with Virginia Tech. He said that we need to look more towards technology, and that hydroponics is a unique way of growing herbs and vegetables. His vision for the old Nettleton property is innovation and retail, and he is excited to be moving forward with the project.

Jimmy Hogendobler, executive, explained that Hamilton Roots will bring the hydroponics, Charlie Wiley from Wiley's Garden Center will provide the gardens, and Jimmy will provide the technology. He stated that they are economic development zone and there are several grants available.

Kathy Downey, 109 E. Oak Street, Covington, spoke in approval of the project. She thinks it is amazing that the city is supporting the garden center, and it pleases her to see that Council is grabbing onto technology of the future. When she asked Jimmy what his vision was, he stated that his vision was to provide whatever the school needed for its students. Mrs. Downey said that the stem program used hands on problem solving skills which we desperately need for the future. She stated concern with regards to the lease and the city's decision to hold onto the property as city property. She advised that Governor Youngkin supports controlled environmental agriculture. She requested not to compete with the city with regards to her vision of aquaponics. She went on to inquire if she would be able to review the lease agreement to go over the details of the agreement. Mr. Dressler advised her that she would be able to look over the lease. He went on to say that all utilities would be under the City of Covington and assured Mrs. Downey that the city operates in the best interest of the City of Covington. Mrs. Downey said she was proud of the city for moving forward.

No one spoke against the lease agreement.

Mr. Crosier made a motion to approve the lease agreement for the former Nettleton property, seconded by Mr. Hunter. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments

Consent Agenda

Mr. Crosier motioned to approve the minutes from the work session held on November 7, 2023 and the regular meeting held on November 14, 2023, seconded by Mr. Carson. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

City Manager's Report

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Shawn Wright, VFW Post Commander #1033, spoke with regards to a Vietnam Memorial known as "The Wall that Heals" coming to the Jackson River Sports Complex from October 1-October 6th, 2024. She said that it honors those who sacrificed in Vietnam. She said that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund allows local veterans and family to experience the wall. There is a 53 foot trailer that opens with exhibits built into its sides. It is 375 feet in length and 7.5 feet high at the tallest point. There will be name rubbings and a digital display of hometown heroes. Motorcycles (Patriot Guard) and the police will lead the procession when the display enters Covington on October 1, 2024.

Maple Avenue

Phases one, two, and three are completed.

Riverside parking lot is cleaned up and painted.

The Twinkling Trail at the Jackson River Sports Complex has been a huge hit.

Mr. Dressler said he is proud of the holiday lights throughout the city.

Landfill

The landfill project is moving forward with four more years of burying refuse and then the city will change over to a transfer station.

Water Treatment Plant

There are several issues being addressed at the Water Treatment Plant.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Department of Environmental Quality-8 million dollars spent on the EQ Basin Project; A 6 million dollar grant was secured for corrections at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Casey Field

There have been improvements with the stadium and the parking lot. They are working on locker rooms now.

They had a wonderful football season and are looking forward to spring sports.

Columbia Gas

The city's relationship with Columbia Gas continues to be good.

New Businesses

Mr. Dressler complimented Terri McClung for her work with the new businesses in the area.

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410 Main Street

Mr. Dressler said it was amazing what Dave and Gray have put into the project and the vision they have for Covington.

Pine Street

The pad for winter road salt has been poured, and they are hoping to complete the dome in January.

Nettleton Property

The project at the former Nettleton property is moving along.

Maple Avenue

Public Works has expanded along Maple Avenue, and some buildings and fencing may be added.

Mid-City Mall Parking Lot

There are plans to make improvements to the Mid-City Mall parking lot to make it more friendly and inviting.

All Inclusive Playground

They are hoping to start working on an all- inclusive playground at Fort Young Park by the end of December.

New Vehicles

There have been some new vehicles purchased for Public Works, Developmental Services, the Police Department, as well as a new backhoe for the city.

Mr. Dressler advised they had good success with their hiring this year and is confident the future of Covington is in good hands.

Resolutions

R-23-36-Mr. Crosier motioned to approve Resolution R-23-36 (Schools Fund), seconded by Mr. Hunter. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

R-23-37-Mr. Crosier motioned to approve Resolution R-23-37 (Parks and Recreation Litter Grant), seconded by Mr. Hunter. The roll call votes were as follows; Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

R-23-38-Mr. Crosier motioned to approve Resolution R-23-38(Shop with a Cop Donation from Ingevity), seconded by Mr. Hunter. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

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Appointments

1) CEDS Committee (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy)-Mr. Crosier motioned to appoint Gray Lane, seconded by Mr. Carson. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

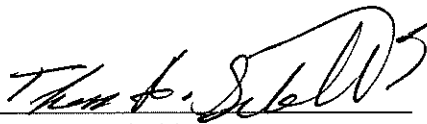
2) Planning Commission-Mr. Crosier motioned for C.W. Smith to be appointed to the Planning Commission, seconded by Mr. Carson. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for, Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

New Business

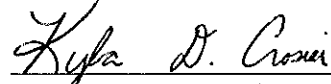
Mayor Sibold inquired about the stoplight not working properly on Alleghany Avenue. Mr. Dressler advised that there was a pecking order to get the light fixed, and that the people responsible for breaking it would also be responsible for paying to have it fixed.

Mr. Crosier inquired about an RV that had been sitting on Jackson Street, and said that he had received complaints from citizens with regards to it being parked there so long. Chief Chris Smith assured Mr. Crosier that the police were working on the issue.

With no further business to come before Council, Mr. Crosier motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.


Thomas H. Sibold, Jr., Mayor

Attest:


Kyla D. Crosier, City Clerk