

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION
March 4, 2025**

Council for the City of Covington held a work session on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, followed by a called meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 W. Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

Mayor William E. Carson, Jr. called the meeting to order with the following members present: Mayor William E. Carson, Jr.; Vice Mayor Fred F. Forbes; Councilwoman Susan S. Crowder; Councilman Raymond C. Hunter; Councilwoman Susan S. Wolfe. Also present were City Manager, Allen Dressler and City Attorney, Mark Popovich.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Forbes motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with “aye” votes.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Citizen Tim Green (speaking on behalf of citizens from all districts) spoke on the community’s concerns for the safety of the water that is being provided by the City of Covington. Due to recent violations, notices were sent out to City of Covington residents. Mr. Green stated that these violations may seem small to us, but to the citizens, they are large. Mr. Green advised that the City of Covington needs to send out more communication to assure their water safety, but he has assured each citizen who reaches out to him that the violations are minor and that they are safe.

Mr. Dressler thanked Mr. Green for speaking. Mr. Dressler informed everyone that, in reference to the violations, the work had been completed at the Pocahontas Reservoir. However, the report violation occurred due to missing the submission deadline for the report on the Pocahontas Reservoir, to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Office of Drinking Water (ODW). Mr. Dressler assured everyone that the water was safe to use and consume. The letters about the violations are not supposed to cause concern. However, the violation notices are requirements from VDH and ODW as a means to inform citizens. Mr. Dressler stated that the City of Covington and the Department of Finance have put out a bid for inspecting six water tanks. A contractor has been selected and will start on July 1st, 2025. Water tanks will require an annual inspection. Mr. Dressler thanked Mr. Green for speaking and for his 37-year tenure as a former Water Treatment Plant Operator.

REPORT OF CITY MANAGER

Mr. Dressler thanked the citizens and the media for attending.

Mr. Dressler said that, unfortunately, he would have to use a more somber note. Linda Brown, the former supervisor for Central Accounting, has passed away. Mrs. Brown had assisted many managers on City budgets for over 40 years and was a dear friend to all.

Mark Weiss had also passed away; he was an important part of Covington High School sports for many years. Mr. Dressler spoke about recently attending the VLGMA conference. He advised everyone that one of the speakers was from New York City and mentioned that NYC had just upgraded 64 parks.

The Covington Fire Department recently had its 123rd banquet to celebrate the achievements of its members. They memorized Mike Griffith. The Fire Chief and President of the Covington Fire Department had presented David Crosier with the Jesser Award. The Jesser Award recognizes members who provide outstanding membership services.

Mr. Dressler informed the Council about a “person in distress call” that ended in a good resolution thanks to the actions taken by Covington City Police Officers Allman and Wickline. Mr. Dressler expressed his gratitude and appreciation for all of Covington City’s 911 Dispatchers, First Responders, Police, and EMS.

There have been some recent investments in the City of Covington. The former Wendy’s building will be getting a new tenant. The Former Applebee’s will also have a new tenant. Columbia Gas will be investing in a space at the Jamison Commerce Center.

The Main Street program destination sign will be going up soon. This program will allow grant funding opportunities in the future.

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Mid City Mall will have a new sidewalk and many other new upgrades.

The new field house at Casey Field will be completed soon.

Mr. Dressler had met with David Bryant, the Finance Director, and the departments about rough drafts for budgets. There has been positive open communication to work together for what is best for the City of Covington's citizens.

Mr. Hunter asked Mr. Dressler if the new sidewalk at Mid City Mall would be handicapped accessible. Mr. Dressler stated that the entire sidewalk would be handicapped accessible. The new parking area will include attractive landscaping and bike racks.

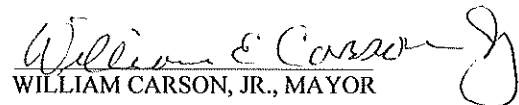
Mr. Carson asked if the City of Covington would be installing chargers for electric vehicles. Mr. Dressler advised that the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce has received a grant to install electric chargers in and around Alleghany County, VA.

NEW BUSINESS

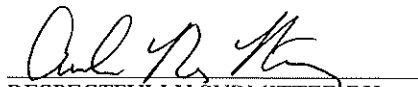
There was no new business.

With no further business Council moved to a closed session for the purpose of a consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to probable litigation. Where such consultations or briefings in open meetings would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the City Council related to recent events at the Covington Middle School pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia (1950, as amended).

Council came out of Closed session and adjourned the meeting with "aye" votes.


WILLIAM CARSON, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:


RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY
AMBER N. NICELY, CITY CLERK