

**MEETING MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 03, 2026**

The Council for the City of Covington held a work session on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 6:30 PM in the Council Chambers of City Hall, located at 333 West Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

Mayor Fred F. Forbes III called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and asked City Clerk Amber Berberette to call the roll. The following members of Council were present: Councilman David B. Goff, Councilwoman Susan S. Wolfe, Vice Mayor Raymond C. Hunter, and Mayor Fred F. Forbes III. Also in attendance was City Attorney Mark Popovich. Councilwoman Susan S. Crowder, absent.

Mayor Forbes reviewed the agenda for the meeting. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Mayor Forbes and seconded by Vice Mayor Hunter. The motion carried with all members voting "aye."

Mayor Forbes invited the City of Covington's Building and Zoning Administrator, Eric Tyree, to discuss a request to vacate portions of public right-of-way near the former Rivermont School property. Mr. Tyree explained that the request was submitted by the Industrial Development Authority (IDA). The request involves several undeveloped alleys, an undeveloped portion of Sycamore Street, and an undeveloped section of Pocahontas Street. Vacating these areas would allow them to be incorporated into the Rivermont School property, providing additional space to support redevelopment of the site.

Also present was David Oliver, President of Oliver Distributing and a member of the IDA Board. Mr. Oliver stated that the project is important to helping provide additional housing opportunities for residents of the City of Covington.

Mr. Tyree requested Council's authorization to begin the process of vacating the public right-of-way associated with the Rivermont School Development Project. Mayor Forbes made a motion to proceed with the request. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Hunter and carried with all members voting "aye."

City Manager Allen Dressler stated that the City has high hopes the Rivermont project will begin in the near future.

There were no citizen comments.

Mayor Forbes then presented several items for inclusion on the agenda for the regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 10, 2026. A motion to approve the placement of the following items on the upcoming agenda was made by Mayor Forbes and seconded by Vice Mayor Hunter. The motion carried with all members voting "aye."

- Resolution R-26-04: VDOT Sidewalk Grant for Route 220 (Pine Street to Beech Street)
- Resolution R-26-05: Appropriating FY 2025-2026 funds totaling \$43,740.34 for contingency and Downtown Economic Development Projects
- Resolution R-26-06: Rescinding participation in the TAP/BSCI Land Bank following prior notice
- Reappointment of Mr. Howard Gene Wood to the Industrial Development Authority Board
- Approval of the January 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

City Manager Allen Dressler then presented his report. He began by thanking the Public Works crews for their efforts in preparing the City's streets for recent winter weather and for their rapid response in clearing snow from public streets. Public Works staff and City contractors worked continuously for approximately 24 hours over the weekend to ensure streets were cleared by Monday morning.

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Mr. Dressler also commended staff at the Wastewater and Water Treatment Plants for their work during the snow and ice conditions.

He reported that the City is working closely with the Office of Drinking Water (ODW) and the Virginia Department of Health regarding concerns about frozen pipes throughout the area. The Pocahontas Reservoir, the City's primary water storage facility, is currently being monitored. Residents are encouraged to remain mindful of water usage as a drought watch advisory in Northern Virginia could potentially impact the region.

Mr. Dressler also provided updates on several infrastructure and development projects:

- Two engineering crews are currently working on the Rayon Bridge project, which is projected to be completed by November 5, 2027.
- Two engineering firms are assisting the City with grant-funded projects, including stormwater improvements and sewer improvements.
- Olde Town Covington has been working with the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce to prepare for Restaurant Week, which will feature several restaurants throughout the Alleghany Highlands.
- A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, 2026, with an engineering and architectural firm to discuss plans for a building on Maple Avenue.
- City representatives will attend an upcoming grant meeting in Abingdon, Virginia, with the goal of pursuing funding opportunities through the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Mr. Dressler also reported that the City recently received \$6.3 million through a Community Flood Preparedness grant. These funds will be used for improvements to the Chestnut Street and Monroe Street underpasses and were awarded through the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Additional transportation and infrastructure funding has been secured through the Virginia Department of Transportation, including:

- Hawthorne Street Bridge Preservation Project – approximately \$1 million
- Rayon Bridge Project – approximately \$14 million
- Alleghany Avenue Sidewalk Project – approximately \$1 million
- Sewer Infrastructure Project – approximately \$6 million

Mr. Dressler also noted that Drew Moore with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has expressed enthusiasm about working with the City and commended the cooperation between City agencies and engineering firms.

The Rivermont redevelopment project is estimated to be a \$17 million investment.

Chief Smith has also been actively pursuing grant opportunities to obtain additional resources for the Covington Police Department.

Mr. Dressler concluded his report by highlighting two upcoming community events:

- The Covington Volunteer Fire Department's 124th Annual Banquet and Meeting, scheduled for Saturday, March 7, 2026, at the department's main station.
- The Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner, scheduled for Saturday, March 14, 2026, at the Omni Homestead.

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There was no new business to consider.

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With no further business to come before Council, Mayor Forbes made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Wolfe and carried with all members voting "aye."

The meeting was adjourned.

  
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FRED F. FORBES III., MAYOR

ATTEST:  
  
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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:  
AMBER N. BERBERETTE, CITY CLERK