

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 13, 2020

The regular meeting of the Council for the City of Covington was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 W. Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Thomas H. Sibold, Jr. The invocation was given by Pastor Dan Gillette, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of Council showed all members present as follows: Mayor Sibold, Vice Mayor David S. Crosier, Councilman Edmond J. (Eddie Joe) Entsminger, Councilman Raymond C. Hunter and Councilman S. Allan Tucker.

City Manager: Krystal Onaitis

City Attorney: Mark Popovich

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, Council voted to approve the agenda as presented.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Denise Craft of 409 N. Alleghany Avenue spoke concerning an abandoned property next door to her residence at 411 N. Alleghany Avenue. She stated that the house has been abandoned for four years, the grass goes uncut for long periods of time, garbage has attracted rodents, and groundhogs live under the house. She asked Council to help her get the building codes enforced more effectively and quickly because this property is impacting selling her house.

Mayor Sibold deferred to City Manager Krystal Onaitis, who stated that a public service campaign is being launched to Keep Covington Beautiful. Development Services Director Eric Tyree was recently placed in charge of tracking locations where the City has enforced codes to have mowing completed, with the Police Department no longer overseeing this.

CORRECTION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, Council voted to approve the following minutes as presented: Called Meeting of September 1, 2020; Work Session of September 1, 2020; Regular Meeting of September 8, 2020; and the Joint Called Meeting of Covington City Council and Covington School Board on September 10, 2020.

APPOINTMENTS

Two appointments were made to the Planning Commission. Council agreed by aye vote to reappoint Robert Patrick Scruggs to serve, with his appointment to end on October 31, 2024. A second appointment was necessary to fill the unexpired term of the late Carolyn O'Connor, which will end on October 31, 2021. Both Kaitlynn Cook and Steven Wilson had expressed their desire to serve. Mr. Entsminger disclosed that Ms. Cook is his fiancée but he felt he could vote fairly and objectively. Upon roll call vote, Steven Wilson was chosen by a 3-2 vote as follows: Mayor Sibold: Mr. Wilson; Vice Mayor Crosier: Mr. Wilson; Mr. Entsminger: Ms. Cook; Mr. Hunter: Ms. Cook; and Mr. Tucker: Mr. Wilson.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Chris Smith, Covington Police Chief and Director of Public Safety, honored Greg Burton for his retirement after volunteering 31 years in the Covington Rescue Squad. Burton expressed appreciation to Council and volunteer members, as well as his desire to continue recruiting new members despite his retirement.

Director of Finance David Bryant presented the first quarter financial review, highlighting how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted revenues and expenditures. Revenues are below last

year's numbers in almost all categories. However, Bryant showed that because the 2021 fiscal year budget expenditures had been reduced \$490,592, the fund balance had been preserved during the first quarter, with only 16.4 percent of the allocated budget used. Bryant also cautioned that one emergency event could be crippling. His staff will continue to monitor revenues and expenditures and develop projections, and in his quarterly presentations to Council, he will note if adjusting expenditures is necessary. Mayor Sibold praised Mr. Bryant and Ms. Onaitis for foreseeing the economic impact and developing the budget accordingly.

REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER

1. Update regarding economic development: The Allegheny Highlands Economic Development Corporation held a kick-off meeting today with consultants from Hunton, Andrews, Kurth and also the Timmons Group with a focus on retiring two city sites for marketing and on-site readiness. The Brownfield Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency through the EDC will focus on site development.
2. Update regarding the Main Street Historic Revitalization Planning Grant: Head Down Strategies will oversee the project, and the city will collaborate with the Allegheny Foundation and Old Town Covington.
3. Update for Joint Opportunity Fund Grant shared by the city and Allegheny County: Members are still awaiting the final report, which hasn't been finalized because consultants developing it were impacted by the pandemic.
4. Jackson Street Grant Update: The budget has been amended and submitted, with highest priority given to needs for drainage and infrastructure as reported by citizens. The grant application will be resubmitted by October 30.
5. Update on Appalachian Regional Commission Grant for Drone Zone: Grant was resubmitted for review on October 2. Eric Tyree has now been given oversight of the facility and construction management.
6. Discovery Center Update: City continues to process remittances for the nonprofit organization.
7. Update regarding VDOT Smart Scale projects--Maple Avenue Project Phase II: The first block is now complete, and demolition has begun on the second block. Maple Avenue Phase III: The survey portion of the grant has now been completed. The Allegheny Avenue Project: Paving has been completed with a VDOT grant of \$427,000.
8. Carpenter Drive and Ashland Avenue Update: Bids were opened today for repaving. Actual emergency repairs should be completed at the end of this week, which is 1½ weeks ahead of schedule.
9. Updates on Street Paving and Slurry Work: Bids are due on Thursday, Oct. 15.
10. Geophysical testing has been completed on Durant Road in front of Wendy's due to the old landfill there shifting and the road sinking.
11. The permit waiver from the Environmental Protection Agency changing the average daily tonnage at the Peters Mountain Landfill from 51 tons to 75 tons per day has been approved.

Vice Mayor Crosier asked if the Jackson Street Project would include any work on houses, and Ms. Onaitis explained that it only contained funds for drainage and infrastructure, as these were priorities for stakeholders. The Vice Mayor also asked about drainage issues on the Maple Avenue Phase III Project at the intersection of Maple and Riverside. Mayor Sibold clarified that the issues go about 50 feet down Riverside, which Ms. Onaitis said will require City funds.

Mr. Tucker asked for further clarification on the Mallow and Edgemont road issues. Ms. Onaitis explained that because both the Mallow Road and Carpenter Drive repairs will require road closures, these projects can't begin until Carpenter Drive is reopened fully. On Mallow Road, the work on the bluff will require complete closure. No houses are involved, but residents will be inconvenienced by the road closure for 1½ to 2 weeks. The Edgemont project will require the

road to be closed for approximately one week. Mayor Sibold emphasized that Grass Street must not be used as a detour as the road is very narrow there. Ms. Onaitis explained that the Rayon Bridge may have to be opened to truck traffic during this project despite its weight restrictions. Mayor Sibold stated that only one truck can be allowed on the bridge at a time, and she suggested that installing a temporary traffic light may be the easiest and most consistent solution.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, Council voted 5 to 0 to approve Ordinance O-20-10, amending and reenacting certain sections of Chapter 8, Buildings, of the Code of the City of Covington, with voting as follows: Mayor Sibold, For; Vice Mayor Crosier, For; Mr. Entsminger, For; Mr. Hunter, For; Mr. Tucker, For.

Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, Council voted 5 to 0 to approve Ordinance O-20-11, amending and reenacting certain sections of Chapter 46, Utilities, of the Code of the City of Covington: Mayor Sibold, For; Vice Mayor Crosier, For; Mr. Entsminger, For; Mr. Hunter, For; Mr. Tucker, For.

Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, Council voted 5 to 0 to approve Ordinance O-20-12, amending and reenacting certain sections of Chapter 18, Environment, of the Code of the City of Covington, with voting as follows: Mayor Sibold, For; Vice Mayor Crosier, For; Mr. Entsminger, For; Mr. Hunter, For; Mr. Tucker, For.

For Resolution R-20-34 regarding carryover funds from the Wastewater Budget for professional services as part of the Department of Environmental Quality compliance for consent order, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to approve. Motion carried 5 to 0: Mayor Sibold, For; Vice Mayor Crosier, For; Mr. Entsminger, For; Mr. Hunter, For; Mr. Tucker, For.

NEW BUSINESS


Mayor Sibold reminded Council of two Chamber of Commerce ribbon-cuttings this week: one on Wednesday at the Jackson River Sport Complex for the Paper Trail, boat access, and fishing pier; and one on Friday, October 16, for the Jeter-Watson Park. He thanked everybody for their hard work on both projects.

CLOSED SESSION

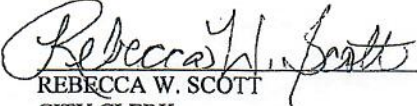
Vice Mayor Crosier made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to convene in closed session pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) of the Code of Virginia for Consultation with legal counsel related to specific legal matters related to potential city liability due to lack of proper amount of city staff; and for a discussion regarding the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in public would adversely affect the bargaining position of the city pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia.

Following the closed session, Council reconvened and voted to certify that only the matters stated were discussed.

No further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned.


THOMAS H. SIBOLD, JR., MAYOR
PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND,
AS SUCH, EX-OFFICIO OFFICER OF THE
CITY OF COVINGTON, VIRGINIA

ATTEST:


REBECCA W. SCOTT
CITY CLERK