

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 12, 2020

The regular meeting of the Council for the City of Covington was held electronically on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. from 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 Rev. Doug Williams. Because members were participating via Zoom, Mayor Sibold dispensed of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of Council showed all members present electronically as follows: Mayor Sibold, Vice Mayor David S. Crosier, Councilman William E. (Lance) Carson, Jr., Councilman Raymond C. Hunter, and Councilman S. Allan Tucker.

City Manager: Krystal Onaitis

City Attorney: Mark Popovich

As the meeting was conducted electronically via Zoom, Mayor Thomas Sibold read a statement declaring that due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus health emergency and pursuant to Chapter 1283 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly, Council would convene electronically for this meeting to transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue the operations of the City.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizen comments were submitted to the City Clerk for reading.

CORRECTION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mr. Carson, seconded by Mr. Tucker, Council voted to approve the following minutes as presented: Called Meeting of December 1, 2020; Work Session of December 1, 2020; and the Regular Meeting of December 8, 2020.

APPOINTMENTS

Vice Mayor Crosier made a motion to appoint Mayor Sibold as the primary representative to the Chief Local Elected Officials, with City Manager Krystal Onaitis as the secondary representative, and they were elected by a consent vote.

REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER

1. Recycling: Ms. Onaitis and Thomas Smals are working on the recycling survey, and she plans to release it by the end of the week.

2. Economic Development: In a meeting on Monday, January 11, the Economic Development Authority voted to have a joint meeting with the Industrial Development Corporation in February concerning site development and creating a pad-ready site with joint revenue-sharing funds.

3. Main Street Revitalization Project: Mayor Sibold, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Teresa Hammond, and Ms. Onaitis plan to meet with consultants biweekly with a goal of encouraging urban dwellers who work remotely to relocate in the area.

4. Jackson Street Project (CID Grant): She will be meeting with CHA representatives this week to review engineering and design report. The first public hearing is planned for February.

5. CARES Utility Grant Relief: This program, administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, is in place. She had emailed Council another DHCD program providing assistance to landlords in paying tenants' rent. However, because the guidelines require the locality to have a population of 200,000, she asked if Council would like to write a letter of support to Senator Creigh Deeds and Delegate Terry Austin asking them to amend that bill to include rural areas. After discussion, Council agreed by consensus to ask other localities in the area to join in this endeavor. Ms. Onaitis will draft the letter and contact the other localities, as well as adding Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner and Representative Morgan Griffith, the Virginia Association of Counties, and the Virginia Municipal League.

6. Rayon Bridge: She submitted a State of Good Repair Application to VDOT for the project on Friday, Jan. 8, and forwarded information to the transportation lobbyists at Hutton, Lytton. She also has a meeting with AECOM tomorrow to review funding options.

7. Joint Services: She and Alleghany County Administrator Jon Lanford continue to work on the Joint Services agreement and are working on a formal financial agreement for joint funding.

8. COVID: The Alleghany Highlands Task Force sent out a press release today outlining risk factors, vaccination plans, and resources available. She spoke with Lori Barber of Lewis Gale-Alleghany, who reported the ICU at the hospital reopened Jan. 4 and the medical/surgical unit is equipped with telemetry and other services to better serve more in-depth medical needs. A smaller group of local government officials, school board superintendents, representatives from LGA, and Covington Public Safety officials to discuss operations, vaccines, and access to care. Mayor Sibold urged Council to remind their constituents of the guidelines to quarantine if needed, wear face coverings, and practice social distancing.

9. Holiday Schedule: She asked members to consider adding more holidays to employees' schedules, which may include Election Day and Juneteenth, which the state and some localities in the Roanoke Valley are currently adding. She also asked about a floating holiday for employees to take at will. Mayor Sibold asked the cost of adding these, and Ms. Onaitis was unsure, adding to many longtime employees actually accrue more vacation time than they schedule and take off, so both FICA and PTO dollars stay in the fund. Mayor Sibold asked members to send their opinions to her, and they will discuss this next month.

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS

Ordinances and Resolutions:

On a motion from Vice Mayor Crosier and seconded by Mr. Tucker, members voted 5-0 to adopt Resolution R-21-01 regarding DARE contributions of \$250.00 to the Covington Police Department with this tally: Mayor Sibold-For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson-For; Mr. Hunter-For; Mr. Tucker-For.

Resolution R-21-02 regarding Shop with a Cop contributions of \$2,000.00 to the Covington Police Department was passed unanimously on a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker. Mayor Sibold, Vice Mayor Crosier, Mr. Carson, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Tucker all voted For.

Members also voted unanimously to approve Resolution R-21-03 regarding CARES Fund for COVID-19 Utility Customer Relief in the amount of \$21,747.76: Mayor Sibold-For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson-For; Mr. Hunter-For; Mr. Tucker-For.

For Resolution R-21-05 amending the resolution authorizing the consolidation of Alleghany County and the City of Covington School Districts, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to approve. Motion carried 4 to 1: Mayor Sibold, For; Vice Mayor Crosier, For; Mr. Carson, Against; Mr. Hunter, For; Mr. Tucker, For.


Vice Mayor Crosier made a motion to adopt Resolution R-21-06 authorizing the City Manager to revise and adopt personnel policies under certain conditions, and Mr. Carson seconded. The resolution passed unanimously with the following vote: Mayor Sibold-For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson-For; Mr. Hunter-For; Mr. Tucker-For.

Regarding Ordinance O-21-01 to amend the Workforce Investment Area III Chief Local Officials (CLEO) Charter Agreement, Council voted 5-0 to approve the amendment on a motion from Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker: Mayor Sibold-For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson-For; Mr. Hunter-For; Mr. Tucker-For.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Sibold reminded Council that two additional meetings have been scheduled for this month. A Joint Meeting with the Planning Commission for a Public Hearing for a Special Use Permit will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 19, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. Property owners may participate as panelists, and the public will be allowed to participate by sending letters and emails to the City Clerk. A Called Meeting involving a charter amendment with a vote after a Public Hearing on Tuesday, Jan. 26, at 6:30 p.m.; and the public may participate by sending letters and emails to the City Clerk.

With no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion from Vice Mayor Crosier and seconded by Mr. Tucker.



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