

MINUTES

CALLED MEETING

DECEMBER 1, 2020                      6 p.m.

A called meeting of the Council for the City of Covington was held on Tuesday, December 1, 2020, at 6 p.m., telecommunicated electronically 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. with all members present electronically as follows: Mayor Sibold, Vice Mayor David S. Crosier, Councilman William E. Carson, Jr., Councilman Raymond C. Hunter, and Councilman S. Allan Tucker.

City Manager: Krystal Onaitis

City Attorney: Mark Popovich

The meeting was held 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 called meeting to transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue the operations of the City.

The purpose of the meeting was to consider recommendations from City Attorney Mark Popovich concerning two proposed ordinances and a resolution. Concerning proposed ordinance O-20-16 to Amend and Reenact Chapter 42, Taxation, Mr. Popovich explained that the current ordinance needed reorganizing and numbering due to disjunction between sections. In particular, he called attention to Section 42-2, Refund of taxes erroneously assessed, where he added a clause stating a refund exceeding \$2,500 may only be issued after certification of the city attorney. He also focused on Section 42-45 and 42-45c concerning tax relief for the aged and disabled, asking members to consider if the amount of taxes exempted should be increased from the current \$150.00 and if the total combined income of the dwelling owners should be increased from the \$35,000 now in place. Attorney Popovich removed any mention of specific fees and referenced the Uniform Fee Schedule for costs. He also asked members to consider if a provision should be added to adjust the net combined financial worth, which shall not exceed \$80,000. He felt a more accurate number may be adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W).

Mayor Sibold expressed an interest in changing Section 42-2b, Refund of taxes erroneously assessed, stating that the ten percent interest annually on overpayment of taxes was far too high, noting that it had cost the City a large amount of money in the past. After Council discussed the potential fiscal impact of lowering the interest to five percent, Mr. Popovich recommended meeting with the Commissioner of Revenue and Finance Director before making any final decisions. He also recommended this proposed ordinance be placed on the agenda for the December 8 meeting pending a fiscal impact statement, stating it could be tabled if there wasn't time to generate the financial statement.

Proposed Ordinance O-20-17 to Amend and Reenact Certain Sections of Chapter 19, Stormwater, Mr. Popovich stated the only changes involved removing specific fees and referred

to the Uniform Fee Schedule. Council agreed by consensus on a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier and a second by Mr. Tucker to place both proposals on the regular meeting agenda.

A Resolution to Extend the Deadlines for Certain Tax Payments, Deadlines, and Applications (R-20-36) was in response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and City Hall being closed to the public. Council agreed in a unanimous vote on a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to these terms:

- to extend the payment date for personal and real property taxes from December 5, 2020, to January 5, 2021;
- to extend the deadline for applying for tax relief for the elderly and disabled from February 2020 to April 2021;
- to extend the due date for the personal property book from April 7, 2021, to May 15, 2021.

The vote showed Mayor Sibold: For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson: For; Mr. Hunter: For; and Mr. Tucker: For.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca W. Scott, City Clerk