

Rivermont School into a diversified housing unit for seniors, singles, couples, and new family rental units. His company's vision includes 49 units: nine 1-bedroom units and 28 2-bedroom units in the old school; and new construction of a two-story building with twelve 2- and 3-bedroom units for families. Additional amenities include a playground, picnic area, exercise room, computer room with free Wi-Fi, and a large community room for social functions. Stiltner said Landmark, a 37-year-old small family company of 150 employees, focuses on supporting small towns and rural areas by revitalizing old buildings, particularly schools, with historic preservation in nine states, primarily Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

The long-term plan is to apply for a Virginia Housing Develop Authority Grant, state and federal housing tax credits, historic credits, private equity, and permanent bank financing for the \$10 million plus project. Housing applications are due by the end of March, and the Virginia Housing Board's final rankings will be announced in May. Stiltner anticipates securing funding and transferring ownership by mid-2022, with a ribbon cutting by the third quarter of 2023. If the March deadline is not met, the project timeline will move forward significantly. He emphasized the benefits include additional needed housing; relieving the City of maintenance of Rivermont; removal of the blighted area; combined direct and indirect contributions estimated at \$9 million to the area; and two full-time jobs added.

REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER

1. Recycling: Ms. Onaitis reported the recycling survey closed on Saturday, Feb. 6 after a three-week run. She will provide a breakdown of percentages at the next meeting.
2. Joint Services: A meeting between representatives of Covington, Alleghany, and Rockbridge counties concerning issues with inmate housing will occur on Feb. 22.
3. COVID: Overall, numbers for the Alleghany Health District are mostly trending downward, showing the number of cases have declined for the past 24 days, with positivity tests at 10.1 percent, decreasing for the last 35 days. Other decreases were showing in outbreaks, healthcare workers' cases, emergency department visits, and ICU hospitalizations. Vaccination rates are good, with 30,768 doses administered, showing approximately 17 percent of the population already vaccinated and 4.167 percent of the population fully protected. However, the number of hospital beds occupied has increased.

Mr. Hunter asked about cases at the local jail, and Ms. Onaitis said there was an uptick about two weeks ago, but medical staff was present daily and inmates are tested upon their arrival. Mr. Hunter also asked if the black community was being overlooked in vaccinations. Ms. Onaitis explained people had to register on the Virginia Department of Health website and then be contacted by a VDH email to participate in clinics. Vice Mayor Crosier offered that many elderly and poor people did not have access to computers and internet and it was difficult to call and schedule appointments, but there are no easy solutions as the public library is currently closed to the public.

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS

On a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier and a second by Mr. Hunter, members agreed with an aye vote to extend the Community Services Board's Performance Contract Extension Agreement until June 30, 2021.

Ordinances and Resolutions:

Concerning the Uncodified Ordinance UO-21-02, Mayor Sibold explained this was in response to difficulties in collecting water and tax payments in a timely manner while City Hall was closed for the pandemic for nearly three months, leading to some citizens accruing late charges despite their belief they had paid in a timely manner. City Attorney Popovich stated this was occurring elsewhere and encouraged Council to move forward quickly to form the Finance Committee set forth in the ordinance and request that the Treasurer provide a quarterly report of receipts, expenditures, and statement of account. Mr. Popovich said the Finance Committee should be comprised of at least one, preferably two, Council members and must be held in public meetings in a public forum such as Council chambers in order to allow transparency and access to citizens. Citizens could not comment but could view monthly meetings. On a motion from Vice Mayor Crosier and seconded by Mr. Carson, members voted 5-0 to adopt the ordinance with this tally: Mayor Sibold-For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson-For; Mr. Hunter-For; Mr. Tucker-For.

Resolution R-21-07 regarding additional funding from VDOT Street and Highway Maintenance Fund in the amount of \$87,197.53 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-21-08 regarding a refund from the Utility Fund, State Reimbursement of Water and Wastewater Project Costs for the Durant Road Bluff Project in the amount of \$67,533.53 showed this vote: Mayor Sibold-For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson-For; Mr. Hunter-For; Mr. Tucker-For.

For Resolution R-21-09 regarding acceptance of grant funds and commitment of City funds for the Maple Avenue Streetscape, Phase II, in the amount of \$295,354.00, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Hunter, to approve. Motion carried 5 to 0: Mayor Sibold, For; Vice Mayor Crosier, For; Mr. Carson, For; Mr. Hunter, For; Mr. Tucker, For.

Regarding Resolution R-21-11 Authorizing Tax Relief for Rivermont School, Ms. Onaitis stated that the resolution wasn't needed at this time and she would bring it back when necessary, so Council agreed by consensus to table that resolution on a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker.

Vice Mayor Crosier made a motion to adopt Resolution R-21-12 designating a Revitalization Area for Rivermont School, and Mr. Tucker 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.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

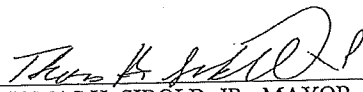
CLOSED SESSION

Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, members agreed by consensus to hold a closed session pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act Sec. 2.2-3711 A(3) of the Code of Virginia 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 and 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.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

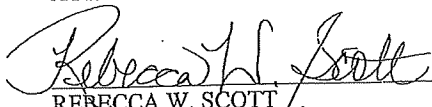
After returning from Closed Session, Vice Mayor Crosier made a motion to move for certification pursuant to Section 2.2-3711~~2~~ of the Code of Virginia, that the City Council, to the best of each member's knowledge, heard, discussed or considered only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by the Freedom of Information Act in the closed meeting of this date, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the City Council of the City of Covington. Mr. Tucker made the second, and members agreed with an aye vote.

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

