

MINUTES
CALLED MEETING
JUNE 1, 2021, 6 p.m.

A called meeting of the Council for the City of Covington was held on Tuesday, June 1, 2021, at 6 p.m. Because of construction in Council Chambers, the meeting was held in Curfman Hall at Covington High School, 606 S. Lexington Avenue, Covington, Virginia.

Mayor Thomas H. Sibold, Jr. called the City Council meeting to order with the following members present: 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

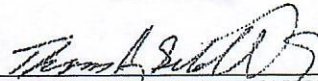
The purpose of the Called Meeting was to conduct interviews for the Covington City School Board. Mayor Sibold emphasized to each candidate that this was only a one-year appointment due to consolidation of schools but each was welcome to seek reappointment next year. He explained that each councilman would take turns asking the same two questions of the three candidates.

Lee Roe was the first candidate. He stated he was a lifetime resident of Covington and had family members serving in the school system and grandchildren who attend City schools. He wants a good system for children, people of the town, and employees, including maintaining financial compensation with good benefits in the consolidated school system. He emphasized his business and financial experience in two business endeavors, his job, and as volunteer captain of the Westrock Rescue Squad. He feels Math SOLs is a weak area in Covington City Schools, and he would like to see better training, including technical skills at Jackson River Technical Center, and work ethics for students. He praised teachers and staff for their dedication and academic strengths and for the good pay scales in the system. He was candid in saying he didn't know much about project-based learning but it seemed positive for small schools.

Marie Fitzpatrick, the second candidate, said she became interested in the position after serving as a substitute and volunteering on the Alleghany Foundation as she saw the need for students to become independent and self-confident in the work force. She wants to provide a level playing field in school readiness for children first enrolling and feels merging skills will build a stronger system. Areas needing improvement were remediation in light of the current political climate, racial inequality, and the COVID pandemic; focusing on socialization skills, diversity, equitable treatment, and inclusion. She believes her previous 32-year work experience will help with budgeting, developing long-term plans, and negotiating. She feels the system's strengths are small class size, dedicated teachers, and individualized attention for students with special needs, and she supports project-based learning for students who need hands-on learning, especially at JRTC.

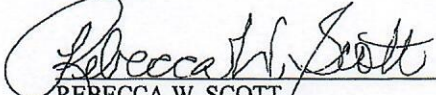
Jerry (Jay) Woodson was the final candidate, focusing on the need to redirect negative "attitudes and hearts" of many people in the area that "almost feels like defeatism." Woodson stated he was a positive and enthusiastic person who wanted to focus on long-term goals and avoid short-sighted financial decisions for the consolidated system. He is unhappy with state mandates without proper funding and issues he termed "rewriting history." While he currently lives in the City, his children chose to stay in the county schools after moving here, so he has a vested interest in both systems and feels it will take several years to resolve the issues that will occur with the merged system. He remains optimistic about the need to work together and feels the strength of the Covington system lies in the closeness of teachers with students, which he said is irreplaceable and can't be bought. He has concerns about project-based learning, stating his son experienced it at Alleghany High School and found the intent was good but difficult to implement. He feels that overachievers tend to do the bulk of the work to the detriment of other students but teamwork is essential for students to learn about everyday life.

With no further business to come before Council, members adjourned on a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, 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