

MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
April 12, 2022

A regular session of the Council for the City of Covington was held on Tuesday, April 12, 2022, 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 Sibold, Jr., the invocation was given by Pastor Doug Hollenbeck followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following members were present: Mayor Sibold, Vice Mayor David S. Crosier, Councilman William E. Carson, Jr, and Councilman S. Allan Tucker. Councilman Raymond C. Hunter was absent.
City Manager: Krystal Onaitis City Attorney: Mark Popovich

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of agenda was given by motion from Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, members agreed by consent.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mayor Sibold stated that citizen comments will now be for citizens to address items that are on the agenda. If a citizen has another issue, they are to start with contacting their Council representative within their district. There were no citizen comments.

CORRECTION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

With a motion from Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker the following minutes were approved as presented: Work Session, March 1, 2022; Regular Meeting March 8, 2022; Called Meeting March 14, 2022; and Called Meeting March 21, 2022.

APPOINTMENTS

There were no interested individuals to be appointed as a representative to the Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board. Council will continue to ask to fill this position. This item was tabled.

REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER

Ms. Onaitis asked for Police Chief, Chris Smith to speak and David Bryant, Director of Finance, to give a report.

Chief Smith spoke about National Public Safety Telecommunicators Officers week April 10-16, 2022. He stressed that Communication Officers are a first responder, they are the first POC. They provide assistance for safety in all incidents and situations. They are sometimes the unseen hero and are available at all times and the lifeline to the community.

David Bryant, Jr. gave a summary of revenues, the general fund is maintaining and spoke about expenditures. He stated that utilities have improved, after COVID; solid waste is unchanged; landfill charges are minimal. He will e-mail documents to Council in reference to budget preparations.

Ms. Onaitis reported on:

1. There are apps into VDOT for buffer bike lane from Short Street to the Farmers Market. There would be the opportunity to park and ride.
2. A study for Madison and 220 on how to make turning easier with egress/ingress, sidewalk extensions if widen median would assist.
3. Timmons Group will give a pavement report in an upcoming Council meeting.
4. There is an opportunity with VDOT for Hawthorne Street Bridge work. There was work done years ago that only lasted 5 of the expected 20 years. A rehab would last another 5 years and a replacement would last 50 years.
5. There are conceptional drawings for the Mid-City Mall lot for greenery, gathering space with shade structures. There will be 72 parking spaces. At the Love sign there will be a pocket park on Main Street, it would have a water fountain behind sign, greenery and seating. She hopes to move on this project and see changes next month.

6. There was a public meeting last week for the Pad Ready Site in Low Moor with Covington-Alleghany Industrial Development Authority (IDA). All nearby businesses and property owners where there to ask questions. There was nothing found at the site to stop the plan for redevelopment.
7. Engineering firm Thompson & Litton have found the cost for the EQ Basin project at the Wastewater Plant to be several million over expected. The City is in discussions with Davenport & Company, Municipal Financial Advisors. With VRA there may be options, such as: federal relief, increase years of the loan.
8. The budget is being worked on, a balanced budget is usually presented May 1st however, and the state and others have not given us amounts. It will be asked how to increase revenue or service delivery impacted. There is an excess of \$2.8 million that will need to be cut away.

UNFINISHED/OLD BUSINESS

Mayor Sibold stated that the Hawthorne street bridge deck was an experimental effort of repairs, this was only good for 5 years and is in bad shape.

Area locality representatives for Alleghany County, Clifton Forge, Covington and Iron Gate, were together for signing proclamations for: Crime Victims' awareness week and Better Hearing and Speech month.

On a motion from Mr. Tucker, seconded by Vice Mayor Crosier, Council voted unanimously to approve R-22-07 Police Appropriation for Donation regarding DARE \$500. The vote showed Mayor Sibold: For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson: For; and Mr. Tucker: For.

On a motion from Mr. Tucker, seconded by Vice Mayor Crosier, Council voted unanimously to approve R-22-08 Resolution amending appropriations for acceptance of donation to donate for animal control to non-profit organization (Alleghany Humane Society) \$5,000. The vote showed Mayor Sibold: For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson: For; and Mr. Tucker: For.

On a motion from Mr. Tucker, seconded by Vice Mayor Crosier, Council voted unanimously to approve R-22-09 Resolution authorizing the application to the Covington Department of Public Safety for the Rescue Squad Assistance Fund (RSAF) Emergency grant. (no local match). The vote showed Mayor Sibold: For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson: For; and Mr. Tucker: For.

On a motion from Mr. Tucker, seconded by Vice Mayor Crosier, Council voted unanimously to approve R-22-10 Setting the allocation percentage for personal property tax relief in the City of Covington for the 2022 tax year. The vote showed Mayor Sibold: For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson: For; and Mr. Tucker: For.

On a motion from Mr. Tucker, seconded by Vice Mayor Crosier, Council voted unanimously to approve R-22-11 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for – Virginia Tourism Aids (Chamber of Commerce for Chamber website, social media campaign & advertising) \$15,000. (no local match; funds are received from the state to the City). The vote showed Mayor Sibold: For; Vice Mayor Crosier: For; Mr. Carson: For; and Mr. Tucker: For.

NEW BUSINESS

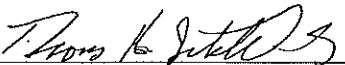
Councilman Carson would like to thank Public Works personnel for the nice job in cleaning out Dry Run culvert where trees and debris had blocked nearly half of it.

Vice Mayor Crosier asked about the utility work on Pine Street with Columbia Gas and how long this project would take and what is the follow up after the project was completed. Ms. Onaitis stated that the project would be 2-3 months and there is also a project with Segra, formally part of Lumos, to bring broad band. The City will begin working with private utility companies for a process to get out a PSA (Public Service Announcement) to notify citizens that work is being done in the area. Also the City will begin working with the utility companies so that they can follow up with the companies for any pavement repairs, etc... that need to be done.

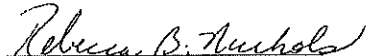
Mayor Sibold stated that the deck on Rayon Bridge is in need of concrete repair. Ms. Onaitis spoke about the timeline for complete replacement of the bridge was to be early 2023 and now it is thought with the engineering company that it may be later.

Mayor Sibold encouraged Council to hold district meetings. He will hold a meeting soon.

With no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, with an "aye" vote by members.


THOMAS H. SIBOLD, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:


REBECCA B. NUCKOLS, INTERIM CITY CLERK