

January 10, 2023

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 10, 2023**

A regular meeting for the Council of the City of Covington was held on Tuesday, January 10th, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 W. Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

Mayor Thomas H. Sibold, Jr. called the meeting to order with the following members present: Mayor Sibold; Vice Mayor David S. Crosier; Mr. William E. (Lance) Carson, Jr.; Mr. Fred Forbes; and Mr. Raymond C. Hunter. Also present were City Manager Allen Dressler and City Attorney Mark Popovich.

The invocation was given by Pastor Doug Williams, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Crosier made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of Resolution R-23-03, honoring Temple Kessinger. Mr. Carson seconded. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

Special Presentations

- 1) Susan Hammond/Engineer (VDOT)-Ms. Hammond addressed Council regarding various placement options for the new Rayon Bridge. After several questions from Council and a lengthy discussion, Mayor Sibold advised her that option 4A is the option Council would like to choose, as it will not entail closing the current bridge for over two years as the other options would. Council addressed several concerns they had if the road was closed while the bridge was being replaced, including adverse effects to businesses in the area, impeding school traffic, and displacing numerous residents from getting to their destination in a timely manner. Outside visitors would also be impeded from getting into Covington, as many of them travel on Edgemont Drive. Council members were all against having the bridge completely closed while construction of the new bridge was being completed. Ms. Hammond advised them she would take their concerns to the Virginia Department of Transportation. Construction on the new bridge is expected to begin in April of 2026 and extend to the end of the summer, 2028.
- 2) Covington Police Department-Mr. Dressler presented Officer Tony Smallwood a plaque in recognition of his service and retirement from the Covington Police Department (just over 21 years).

Citizen Comments

Mrs. Eunice Wright Clark, 449 E. Fairlawn Drive, inquired as to whether the construction of the new bridge would cause river access to be denied. Ms. Hammond stated it will be part of the environmental permit. Mrs. Clark told Council she was proud of them for selecting Allen Dressler as Covington's City Manager. She welcomed Mr. Forbes to Council and thanked everyone for reelecting Mr. Carson. She thanked Council and the federal government for sending infrastructure money to have the gas lines in Covington replaced.

Mrs. Clark stated she hoped that Council could work things out regarding taxes before the budget was discussed. She suggested freezing personal property values to where they were in 2021 as opposed to

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making abatements. She said the real estate assessment is occurring now and asked Council to look over personal property taxes before the real estate taxes became higher. She said there is a major issue among citizens of Covington regarding high taxes.

Appointments

Planning Commission

- 1) Mr. Crosier made a motion for Stephanie Clark to fill Cindy Scully's unexpired term on the Planning Commission, with a second from Mr. Carson. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

Correction and Approval of Minutes

- 1) Work Session December 6, 2023
- 2) Regular Meeting December 13, 2023
- 3) Called Meeting December 22, 2023

Mr. Crosier made a motion to approve all minutes, seconded by Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

Report of City Manager

Mr. Dressler started off by remembering Mr. Temple Kessinger, saying that he really cared about the city of Covington, and he will definitely be missed in the community.

He congratulated Mr. Smallwood on his retirement from the Covington Police Department.

He stated that Susan Hammond has done wonderful with communicating with him regarding the Rayon Bridge.

He said he had a good meeting with the Economic Development Corporation and the Industrial Development Authority.

Casey Field

Core drilling will start Monday, and hazmat testing of the Boodie Albert Stadium locker rooms/dressing rooms at Casey Field will start soon. They are working on phase 2 to get ready for consolidation in September.

Dry Run Leak

Mr. Dressler expressed thanks to city staff for fixing a sinkhole in Dry Run.

Travel tournaments are complete for the summer, spring, and fall. Every date is spoken for.

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He thanked Ms. Halterman and the school system for providing them with facilities for our kids to play volleyball and basketball.

Maple Avenue/Phase 3

The Streetscape Project began yesterday and will be a 6-8 month project.

Mr. Dressler thanked everyone for his reception for becoming City Manager.


Mr. Carson said the sidewalk on Highland Avenue looked really good.

Resolutions

- 1) Resolution R-23-01-Litter Grant-Mr. Crosier moved for approval, seconded by Mr. Hunter. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.
- 2) Resolution R-23-02-Alleghany Foundation Grant Fund and Revenue Phase 2 Architectural Design at Casey Field-Mr. Crosier moved for approval, seconded by Mr. Carson. Roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.
- 3) Resolution R-23-03-Resolution of Respect Honoring the Service of Former Councilman and Mayor Temple Kessinger, Jr. Mr. Crosier moved for approval, seconded by Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.


Mayor Sibold reminded citizens that there was a Walk of Legacy honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. on Sunday at 2:00 p.m.

With no further business to come before Council, Mr. Crosier moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.



Mayor Thomas H. Sibold, Jr.

Attest:



Kyla D. Crosier, City Clerk