

October 3, 2023

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
OCTOBER 3, 2023**

The Council for the City of Covington held their regular meeting on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 W. Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

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

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

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Carson motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

Public Hearing

A public hearing was held with regards to the HOPE Project. Ms. Wanda Moore, director of HOPE, 331 E. Hawthorne Street started off by thanking the City Manager, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Bryant, and Becky Nuckols. She said the city partnered with them to approve demolition, and that HOPE received funding from FEMA two years ago. She advised that some of the homeless are from this area, and that they are there to offer a hand up, not a hand out. There was a need seen in our community and responded to. The complex will consist of five units on the corner of Alleghany Avenue and Cherry Street. One site will be for someone in transition. She said that they are with individuals to provide them with the resources that they need. Their goal is to make a difference with these five units and to add to them. Ms. Moore spoke of a lady that had come into her life two years ago after being homeless for 14 years. The lady was determined to make life better and got into Dolly Ann Apartments. She has a therapy dog that is terminal. She is the type of person the organization looks forward to helping. Ms. Moore said this could not be done without Council's support. Mr. Hunter asked if one site would be for veterans. Ms. Moore advised that it would and that veterans could choose where they want to live.

Ms. Yolanda Osbourne, 528 Dewey Street, spoke in support of the HOPE Project.

Mr. Crosier closed the Public Hearing.

Citizen Comments

Mr. Greg Rice, 352 E. Oak Street, requested direction on whom to speak with in regards to a situation with his son and the Sheriff's Department. This is pertaining to some money that was lost in a vehicle search. Chief Chris Smith recommended reaching out to the Virginia State Police.

Mrs. Eunice D. Clark, 449 E. Fairlawn, thanked Council for having paid EMTs. She stated that the citizens appreciated roads getting paved and the constitutional officers that collect the taxes. She said that she is thankful for Russell Carson, the sexton at Cedar Hill Cemetery. She went on to say that she

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understands the composite index and has come up with an idea, raise the real estate taxes and drop the personal property taxes. She explained that she was trying to help Council come up with options and implored them to give the idea some consideration.

#### Correction and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Hunter motioned to approve minutes for the work session held on September 5, 2023 and the regular meeting held on September 12, 2023. This was seconded by Mr. Sibold. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

#### City Manager's Report

Mr. Dressler thanked Eunice for speaking with regards to taxes. He stated that there have been some issues with water and sewer in the city. He gave a shout out to the community for their support of Homecoming. There will be a parade on Thursday with kick-off on Friday. He said the school system will be successful as long as we make it successful.

He said that there are new sport coaches for football, cheerleading, girls' basketball, and soccer.

#### **Paving**

The budget for paving starts on July 1<sup>st</sup> and ends on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. The city is in the process of requesting bids, which he hopes to have within the next ten days. There are several streets on the list, including Princeton Drive, Alleghany Avenue, Pine Street, Royal Avenue, Craig Avenue, Lexington Avenue, and Marion Avenue.

The new ambulance came today.

Mr. Dressler gave a shout-out to the individuals working on the Gordman's building.

He gave a shout-out to the recreation department, naming Kevin Pettitt for his hard work.

#### **Upcoming Events**

There are several events coming up. The events are as follows:

Magic in the Mountains, Pumpkins in the Park, Oktoberfest, Hometown Halloween

Terri McClung, BB Bryant, and other staff have been working on a federal grant from the EDA. Covington is classified as a stressed area and may qualify for federal funds.

#### **Landfill**

There will be a landfill presentation on November 7<sup>th</sup>. There may be a decision to transfer refuse instead of dumping it in a hole.

#### **Mountain Gateway Community College**

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There are talks of constructing an interpretive trail at Mountain Gateway Community College.

### **Nettleton Property**

The city has received a wonderful application from someone with STEM qualifications. The property would be used for hydroponics and growing things.

### **Award at VML Conference**

The city received an innovation award at the recent VML Conference with regards to the school consolidation and working with the youth in our community.

Mayor Sibold asked Mr. Dressler about the Enterprise account. Mr. Bryant advised it was worked into the utilities fund and that rates would rise next year. There are problems that have been around since at least 2012 that have to be addressed or the city will be fined, and the problems will become worse.

Mr. Sibold inquired about the water treatment plant. Mr. Dressler said that it needed several repairs and that some of the money could come from the general fund. The issues with the water storage tank needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Mr. Sibold stated that if we are going to continue to be a city, these problems need to be fixed.

### David Crosier's Comment

Mr. Crosier stated that his dad used to use the phrase, "Give people flowers while they are still here to smell them." He said that in all of Mr. Dressler's speeches, one person is always left out. That is Allen Dressler. Mr. Crosier said that he didn't know if there was anyone he'd ever met that has such a love for this city. As far as he is concerned, he doesn't care what happened at the courthouse...Mr. Dressler is still our City Manager. He went on to thank Mr. Dressler and told him to keep up the good work.

### Appointment

An appointment to the CEDs Committee was tabled by Mayor Sibold to give Council time to find someone from the private sector. Mr. Sibold advised he would be the elected official on the committee.

### Ordinances and Resolutions

The following ordinances and resolutions were passed with a motion from Mr. Carson, seconded by Mr. Hunter:

- 1) Resolution R-23-27-DARE Contributions
- 2) Resolution R-23-28-Retaining the Current Real Property Tax Rate for the Forthcoming Tax Year
- 3) Resolution R-23-29-HOPE Project
- 4) Ordinance O-23-08-Cross Connection and Backflow Control

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The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

Virginia Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

Council approved the initial funding package offer from the Virginia Department of Health on a motion from Mr. Carson, seconded by Mr. Hunter. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

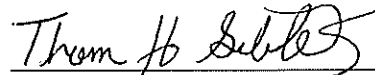
Proclamation

A proclamation to proclaim November 1<sup>st</sup> as Extra Mile Day was approved on a motion from Mr. Sibold, seconded by Mr. Carson. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.


New Business

Mr. Crosier asked Chief Smith if they could step up patrols at the bluff near Walmart, as speeding continues to be an issue. Chief Smith advised they would.

With no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned on a motion from Mr. Sibold, seconded by Mr. Carson. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

  
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Thomas H. Sibold, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

  
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Kyla D. Crosier, City Clerk