

March 14, 2023

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 14, 2023**

The Council for the City of Covington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, March 14, 2023 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 H. Sibold, Jr. with the following members present: Mayor Sibold; Vice Mayor David S. Crosier; Councilman William E. Carson, Jr.; Councilman Fred F. Forbes; and Councilman Raymond C. Hunter. Also present were City Manager Allen Dressler and City Attorney Mark Popovich.

Mr. Matt Garten, Chairman of the Alleghany Board of Supervisors called the Alleghany Board of Supervisors to order with the following members present: Mr. Garten; Mr. Steve Bennett; Ms. Shannon Cox; Mr. Greg Dodd; Mr. James Griffith; Dr. Ronald Goings; and Mr. Cletus Nicely.

Mr. Jacob Wright, Alleghany Highlands School Board Chairman, called the members of the Alleghany Highlands School Board to order with the following members present: Superintendent Kim Halterman; Assistant Superintendent Melinda Snead-Johnson; Mr. Wright; School Board Member Jonathan Arritt; School Board Member Marie Fitzpatrick; School Board Member Gerald Franson; School Board Member John Littleton; School Board Member Tammy Scruggs-Duncan; School Board Member Karen Willis. Absent from the meeting was School Board Member Danielle Morgan.

The invocation was given by Pastor Steve Noel with a moment of silence out of respect for fallen officer Caleb Daniel Ogilvie.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited after the invocation.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Crosier moved to add Resolution R-23-12 to the agenda, with a second from Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

Mr. Crosier moved Ordinance O-23-02 below the Public Hearing on the agenda due to the fact that it pertained to hearing involving the Alleghany Highlands Public Schools. Mr. Crosier read the ordinance entitled, "An Uncodified Ordinance to Effectuate the Transition From Appointed to Elected Consolidated School Board." Mr. Garten chose not to read the Alleghany County ordinance as it was the same as the Covington City ordinance.

Public Hearing

There was a Public Hearing regarding Ordinance O-23-02 entitled, "An Uncodified Ordinance to Effectuate the Transition from Appointed to Elected Consolidated School Board." There were no citizen's comments for or against the ordinance. Mayor Sibold closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Sibold motioned to approve Ordinance O-23-02, 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.

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The Alleghany County Board of Supervisors approved their ordinance, Ordinance O-23-03.

Alleghany Highlands Public Schools' Budget Presentation

Ms. Kim Halterman, Superintendent of Alleghany Highlands Public Schools spoke regarding the proposed budget. She advised that the budget was based on the Virginia House of Delegates version of the state budget. She stated that the central offices for the schools had merged on July 1, 2022.

Ms. Rebecca Irvine presented the budget proposal to Council. The name of the PowerPoint presentation was, "Superintendents' Budget Considerations for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

She stated that budget development for Fiscal Year 2024 is unique as we merge students and school facilities in the Alleghany Highlands Public Schools Division. She said that we need to be flexible, adaptive, and focused as we respond to the challenges and opportunities presented with the creation of a single student body. We plan for adequate staffing needs, retention of current staff, supporting low pupil-teacher ratios, and providing an optimal educational environment, as there will be a single middle school and a single high school.

The General Assembly adjourned in late February without a final budget. State revenue projections released by the House of Delegates on February 16, 2023, were used to develop the budget presented tonight. The budget presented totals \$47, 545, 227, representing an increase over the current budget, but may need to be revised when the state budget is finalized by the General Assembly.

Budget Highlights

- 1) There will be no increase in local tax appropriations.
- 2) Significant personnel savings due to attrition, combined administrations, and the creation of a single middle school and single high school
- 3) No involuntary loss of jobs or reductions in pay and benefits due to merger
- 4) Uniform percentage increase (1.39 percent) provided between steps for all salary scales. Current scales have percentage increases that vary substantially
- 5) Step 0 of salary scales adjusted to capture state compensation supplement
- 6) Employees advanced one step on salary scales for a minimum increase of seven percent
- 7) Average salary increase of 8.15 percent due to minimum wage increase from \$12 to \$13.50 per hour. Virginia's minimum wage is targeted to increase in January of 2025.
- 8) Continued participation in the Local Choice Healthcare Program with no plan changes. Experience-weighting changes did result in a seven percent premium increase.
- 9) Second year of biennium, so no rate increases for the Virginia Retirement System.
- 10) Payout of accrued retiree sick leave increased to \$40 per day for former ACPS and JRTC

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employees.

- 11) Uniform extra-curricular stipends
- 12) In-house division-wide pre-school program for eligible 4-year-olds at Jeter Watson, Callaghan, Mountain View Elementary, and Sharon Elementary schools. Two new teachers and four teachers' assistants.
- 13) Addition of one full-time English as a Second Language teacher
- 14) Addition of one full-time SPED early childhood teacher
- 15) Addition of one full-time Speech-Language Pathologist, which reduces contract services for speech therapy
- 16) Addition of one full-time and one part-time Occupational Therapist
- 17) Increase contractual services for psychological services to reflect actual usage
- 18) Increase RDA financial management system financial consultation fee
- 19) Unspent school construction funds totaling \$1,751,126 carried forward from FY2023
- 20) Alleghany and Covington Joint School Division Incentive funds totaling \$600,000 included in contingency. If unspent, these funds will transfer to the Joint School Division Fund.

Ms. Irvine presented enrollment projections, anticipated state, federal, and local revenues to Council.

She also presented the budgeted revenue and expenditure summary to Council, as well as the Joint School Division incentive and food service enterprise.

Funding for the Jackson River Governor's School and textbooks were also discussed.

A member from the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors inquired as to what percentage of funding Alleghany County was responsible for. Ms. Urban advised that it was based on the area where the students enrolled came from. The city is responsible for city students, and the county is responsible for county students.

A Format of Expenditures was requested by a member of the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors.

With no further business to come before Council, the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors, or the School Board, Mr. Garten and Mr. Wright motioned to adjourn the meeting. All members were in favor.

Mayor Sibold called the Council meeting back to order.

Appointments

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Two appointments for the Economic Development Corporation were tabled, filling the vacant seats of Ms. Schoppmeyer and Mr. Bill Withrow.

Minutes

The minutes from a work session held on February 7, 2023, and a regular meeting held on February 14, 2023, were approved on a motion from Mr. Crosier, seconded by Mayor Sibold. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

Report of City Manager

Mr. Dressler met with ACOM/Value Engineering Firm to discuss architectural drawings of renovations for the locker rooms at Boodie Albert Stadium. The new team locker room project is coming along very well.

He met with Mr. Reid Walters, Chuck Unroe, and Theresa Hammond regarding working together on a community development grant through the Kaine/Warner Congressional Group in the amount of \$1,000,000 for the revitalization of the City of Covington and the Town of Clifton Forge. We remain hopeful of being approved for the grants.

VDOT

Maple/Phase 3-Everything coming along nicely

Budget

The budget process has been very favorable. He thanked everyone for working together in having open discussions regarding the budget.

Recreation

Yesterday was our first high school baseball game, kicking off spring sports. There was an adult softball tournament two weeks ago. There are thirty baseball teams coming to AET Park this weekend to play.

Columbia Gas

Columbia Gas sent us a public service announcement for the project on Hillcrest. We worked together in notifying the citizens, and the gas company is planning their work with the paving work to be done by the City of Covington.

Hunter's Hill

Public Works is currently working on drainage issues in the Hunter's Hill location. Mr. Dressler received an extremely nice text from a citizen from Hunter's Hill, thanking him and Public Works.

Casey Field/Boodie Albert Stadium Seating Project

Mr. Dressler and Mr. Bryant have worked diligently on this project, and the seats will be ready by football season in the fall.

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There will be large rabbit visiting Covington on April 1st for the Easter holiday.

Resolution R-23-12-Sewer Grant/ARPA Funds-\$5,907,500 Grant

Mr. Mike Jefferies, from Thompson and Litton, placed the application for the sewer grant. The city is investing a lot of money in our EQ Basin Project. We have been very successful in applying for an given the opportunity to receive this grant. The city has to get critical information to the Department of Environmental Quality by April 5th, 2023. Michael Mines, Zoning Administrator and Building Official, and Mr. Dressler are working on getting this information to the DEQ.

ACOM

The city has received for the planning and capacity building flood preparedness fund an amount of \$140,590.00. We have received \$357,380 for the flood prevention and protection study. No match is required from the City of Covington.

A new camera van was looked at today to replace the one struck by lightning last year. There is discussion with Mr. Bryant on possibly purchasing this vehicle.

Mr. Dressler thanked Council for their support and thanked the city employees for the job that they are doing for the city.

Mr. Carson told Mr. Dressler that he'd received several phone calls from citizens regarding how polite the city employees were that came by to inform them of work from Columbia Gas.

Mrs. Stephanie Clark, of 804 South Alleghany Avenue, thanked Mr. Dressler for looking at Hunter's Hill.

Resolutions

Resolution R-23-09-American Rescue Plan Act-Virginia Tourism Corporation-Second Half of Awarded Amount with no City Match-Mr. Crosier moved to approve with a second from 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.

Resolution R-23-10-Byrne Justice Grant-Mr. Crosier moved to approve with a second from 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.

Resolution R-23-11-Resolution of Respect Honoring Fallen Officer Caleb Daniel Ogilvie-Mr. Crosier moved to approve with a second from Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes. Covington Police Chief thanked the community for their love and support after the resolution was read by Mr. Crosier.

Resolution R-23-12-Sewer Grant/ARPA Funds-Mr. Crosier moved to approve with a second from 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.

Proclamations

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- 1) Declaring the month of April as Clean-Up Month in the Alleghany Highlands
- 2) Emergency Management Professionals' Week

Mr. Crosier moved to approve both proclamations with a second from Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes. It was decided there will be a photo scheduled with all four governmental entities in the area.

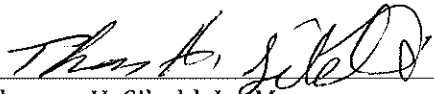
APPOINTMENTS

Vice Mayor David Crosier motioned to table two appointments for the Economic Development Corporation, seconded by Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes. These appointments are to fill the vacant seats of Ms. Lisa Schoppmeyer and Mr. Bill Withrow.

New Business

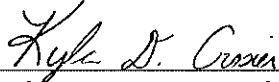
There was no new business to address.

With no further business to come before Council, Vice Mayor Crosier moved to adjourn with a second from Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.



Thomas H. Sibold, Jr., Mayor

Attest:



Kyla D. Crosier, City Clerk