

February 6, 2024

**MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
FEBRUARY 6, 2024**

Council for the City of Covington held a work session on Tuesday, February 6, 2024 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; Councilman William (Lance) Carson, Jr.; Councilman Fred F. Forbes; Councilman Raymond C. Hunter. Also present were City Manager Allen Dressler and City Attorney Mark Popovich.

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

**Citizen Comments**

Ms. Deloris Quarles, 701 Wrightstown Avenue, spoke with regards to her mother (1513 Dolly Ann Drive), her aunt (1517 Dolly Ann Drive) having issues with tractor trailers that are being directed by GPS to Smokey Bear Lane causing the trucks to get stuck and causing traffic issues near their homes. Most of the trucks are involved with Westrock, according to Ms. Quarles. She asked Council to consider placing signs to keep trucks from entering Dolly Ann since it continues to happen.

Mrs. Eunice Wright Clark, 449 East Fairlawn Drive, thanked the manager and Council for cleaning up the roadway on Town Hill. She advised she had been talking with several senior ladies who are retired and looking for stuff to do. She told Council that they would like to see some things done for the senior ladies. She stated that Kathy Nicely, director of the Senior Center, had shared a list of individuals who would participate. Mr. Dressler stated that a large part of attendance goes back to Covid. He advised the Kathy Nicely and Thomas Smals work together to provide programs for the seniors, but it is difficult to get the word out due to most seniors not having access to social media. Mr. Dressler advised Mrs. Clark that he would speak to Mr. Smals regarding this request.

**Presentation-Roanoke/Alleghany Regional Commission**

Mr. Jeremy Holmes, from the Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Regional Commission, asked Council about the city's upcoming projects or needs. He advised that transportation and economic development planning would be addressed. The Commission will come up with the most efficient, cost-effective ways to address these issues.

There are three general projects:

- 1) Housing-We were able to provide 400 thousand dollars for development of the old Rivermont School. We are looking to address housing shortages across the region.
- 2) Developer's Roundtable-To determine what is causing impediments. The Regional Revolving Loan Fund is used to support affordable housing construction.

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3) Roanoke Valley Collective Response-This includes anyone who has been involved in the opioid addiction process.

There are experts available to assist any locality looking for assistance.

There are several grants available and 700 thousand dollars in LAA funding.

There is a project with Virginia Tech to determine what assistance each locality needs.

Ready Appalachia-Smaller communities cannot compete. We pay the professional grant writer to do the work to get the grant submitted.

Alleghany County will possibly get an EV (electric vehicle) charging station. There is an EV charging station market study being conducted, and a want for them to come to smaller communities.

#### Report of City Manager

Mr. Dressler started off by presenting a video highlighting Covington as a place to be. He said that Covington is moving in a forward direction, and that he is proud to be a citizen of Covington.

#### Salt Shed

Local folks involved with the construction of the salt shed have done a wonderful job of cleaning the area up. The company representing the dome was from Michigan. Public Works provided lighting in order for the workers to complete their task in the dark. Mr. Dressler thanked Anthony Lowry, Mike Mines, and the rest of the Public Works staff for their work involving the salt shed.

#### Jeter Watson Center Repair

The city is getting to the point of repairs with the contractor, which should be within the next thirty days. The Jeter Watson Center has become a wonderful spot.

#### Stop Light Repair

The stoplight at the intersection of Alleghany and Pine Street has been repaired.

#### Fort Young Playground

Mr. Dressler expressed thanks to Thomas Smals, Matt Smith, Lisa Worley, and other Parks and Recreation staff for their work involved with the accessible playground constructed at Fort Young Playground. The equipment company used was Gametime.

#### Wastewater Treatment Plant

George Jamison retired January 31, 2024. There is an outside agency procured to help maintain operations and quality.

Mr. Dressler expressed kudos to the staff and police staff of the City of Covington.

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Items for Regular Agenda/February 13, 2024

Mr. Crosier approved the following items for the regular agenda:

- 1) Resolution R-24-02-DARE Contribution
- 2) Resolution R-24-03-Community Based Policing Contributions
- 3) Resolution R-24-04-Opioid Settlement Recoveries
- 4) Resolution R-24-05-Alleghany Highlands Drug Task Force/Supplies and Seizure Expenditures
- 5) Resolution R-24-06-Casey Field Improvements/Alleghany Foundation Grant
- 6) Proclamation-Career and Technical Education Month-50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- 7) Appointments
  - Industrial Development Authority
  - Redevelopment and Housing Authority
  - Board of Zoning Appeals
  - Economic Development Corporation
- 8) Discussion-Urban Archery and E-Bikes
- 9) Approval of Revised Council Bylaws and Rules of Procedure

Urban Archery

Mr. Carson asked Mr. Dressler what areas you can actually hunt in in the City of Covington. Mr. Crosier said that he was concerned about doing this in more densely populated areas. Mr. Dressler advised the hunter has to get permission from the owner of the property and abide by hunting laws, and that hunting has to be done on a mountain far away from houses.

Mr. Forbes suggested notifying surrounding neighbors of the intent to hunt.

Mr. Popovich offered to speak with surrounding localities to evaluate the effects and procedures of urban archery.

E-Bikes

Council discussed concerns regarding E-Bikes. Chief Chris Smith advised it was legal to use and e-bike after being charged with a DUI. He stated that it is illegal to use e-bikes, skateboards, etc. on sidewalks in the downtown area of Covington. Anything that can travel 35 miles per hour or over is considered a motor vehicle. Chief Smith offered to help come up with the best option for controlling the use of e-bikes in Covington. Council agreed that something needed to be done to protect the public. They will have Chief Smith look into it further.

Revised Council By-Laws and Rules of Procedure

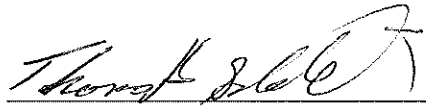
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The by-laws are to be approved every two years at the re-organizational meeting.

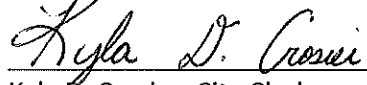
New Business

Mr. Carson stated that citizens were complimenting the downtown area. He also said that there had been inquiries with regards to charging stations for electric vehicles being set up in Covington. Mr. Dressler suggested the Riverside parking lot. Mayor Sibold suggested having them placed at the Mid-City Mall parking lot.

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

  
Thomas H. Sibold, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

  
Kyla D. Crosier, City Clerk