

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
March 12, 2024**

Council for the City of Covington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, March 12, 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.

The invocation was given by Pastor Bill Gilliland, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

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

Citizen Comments

Cindy Scully of Park Street stated that the City had changed the old Edgemont School on Park Street, (now referred to as the Edgemont building), to Zone 1 for drone zones only. This was accepted however there is a PEER support group located in the former school and it does not comply with the current zoning.

Mary Ellen Haines of Church Street spoke of the same building that Ms. Scully spoke of the current zoning and asked why this is the only school incubator that this service went into. Now another business is a violation of your zoning. Park and Church streets have homes with retirees and some live alone. There is a church nearby with a preschool. The PEER support group that has gone into the building is a service not a business. Now seven years later this service is a violation and needs to be in another location.

Mayor Sibold thanked Ms. Scully and Ms. Haines for their comments.

CONSENT AGENDA/CORRECTION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Crosier motioned to approve the following minutes, seconded by Mr. Hunter:

- 1) Work Session-February 6, 2024
- 2) Regular Meeting-February 13, 2024

All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

REPORT OF CITY MANAGER

City Manager, Allen Dressler, thanked everyone for attending. In reference to the PEER support group that is using a room at the Edgemont building, it is his credit/blame. He will address the location of this much needed service.

Meetings/Events/Upcoming Projects/Appreciation

During the busy week there were meetings with the Gauntlet and Mountain Rush. The downtown meeting had wonderful attendance. There is a lot happening with renovations by private citizens and the owner of the building at the corner of Locust and Court, which is the former Court Street Restaurant. They are having the old brick exposed and brought back and replacing some windows, etc. They will work on the interior after

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finding what type business is interested. All revitalizations that property owners and businesses are working on in the City are appreciated.

There will be hydrant flushing April 8-19. This maintenance is done twice a year, a notice will be put out to advise everyone. The City looks forward to offering Spring Clean Up once again, it will be April 29 – May 10.

There will be a Tea party, Spring Craft Show and Easter event in downtown Covington on March 23. The Parks & Recreation department and Olde Town Covington's work is appreciated.

The AHSS-Alleghany Highlands Small Business Stakeholders meeting will be attended by Terri McClung, Small Business Coordinator, on March 14, 2024 as Mr. Dressler has a virtual meeting all day that has been set for months. There will be several visiting the area for economic discussions, they are with Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project and IEDC-International Economic Development Council, Rural Recovery Corps. They will tour the communities and see all the many good things going on. The City is striving to become a designated downtown.

The City's Public Works department has been working with the school in Low Moor to assist in some sewer needs; Work has begun on the new field house at Casey Field; There is work being done at Nettleton on Lexington Avenue. Flowers have been planted; The Public Works area on Maple Avenue will be getting some facelift work soon; There are planned improvements coming to Maple & Hawthorne.

The City will begin a mandatory lead pipe survey. The City is also working with commercial businesses regarding the installation of back flow prevention.

Mr. Dressler asked if there were any questions from Council or those in attendance. Mr. Alan Whitmore was in attendance and asked about the lead testing. Mr. Dressler stated if there is lead pipe identified from City cut off to residence then that section of pipe would be the responsibility of the resident.

Mr. Dressler spoke of the exciting new project of Mountain Rush at the former Kroger building that will be a Family Entertainment Center and is being led by Mr. Richard Mansell.

The painted murals that are being created have been appreciated and Mr. Dressler has gotten requests for painting in other neighborhoods. We appreciate the work & talent of Cheyenne R. Marcus.

Mr. Dressler thanked Kyla Crosier for her work as City Clerk and for Becky Nuckols for filling in.

Former Rivermont School Building

There was an announcement by the Governor that the former Rivermont School has received a \$2.1 million grant and with other funds earmarked will reach \$3 million. This is a much needed housing project.

Mayor Sibold asked if the PEER support group service was a temporary location in the Edgemont building. Mr. Dressler stated that it was a temporary location for the needs of this service. He will continue to look for a better more suitable location. Mayor Sibold asked that the other business in the building be looked at for their agreed time limit in the building and the entire building be looked at for other uses.

Symposium

On March 27, Mr. Dressler will give a presentation at the VADMO (VA Assoc. of Destination Marketing Organizations) Spring Symposium - Panelist for Public/Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Richmond he will speak about the Jackson River Sport Complex. He is proud of the Parks and Recreation staff and their work. A representative from Salem, VA will also be presenting information about their recreation facilities.

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Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism

The Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism s annual dinner was held last Saturday at the Omni Homestead and was a nice event. We are proud of the recognitions received for downtown businesses: Barnwood Blessings and Formals & Florals On Main.

Mr. Alan Whitmore mentioned that it would be nice to spend the money in Covington instead of holding the Chamber dinner out of the area.

Teresa Hammond, Executive Director of the Chamber will be retiring in April. Mr. Dressler stated that we appreciate all the work that Teresa has accomplished at the Chamber and wish her well in retirement.

IDA-Industrial Development Authority/410 W. Main Street

The IDA-Industrial Development Authority has met and unanimously voted and signed the documents that the attorneys have corrected, due to a typographical error with name/state. We thank the IDA members and investors of 410 On Main for their investment in this project.

Mayor Sibold stated that with the documents concerning the building at 410 W. Main Street had some clerical errors with name/state being from Virginia or West Virginia this has all been corrected, signed and filed.

Mr. Dressler stated that two Professional Engineers have been on site at 410 W. Main street building, they have confirmed that the electrical and plumbing are approved. There was no demolish on the second floor, no walls taken out. The Building Official is finishing up certifications. The Engineers will get the City a report in approximately two weeks.

The Mayor stated that the process for the building was that the Alleghany Foundation purchased 410 W. Main Street at auction. The Alleghany Foundation transferred the property to the IDA and the AHBDC marketed the building. He confirmed with Mr. Dressler that the only work that the City performed or spent on the building, was the 2" water line, which is the same that would be done for any business. There was a grant from the Alleghany Foundation for \$20,000 a year for 5 years. This was used to maintain the building, for insurance, fire alarms work, utilities, etc... The grant monies were used for two years (\$40,000). The two investors are now paying for all expenses for the building.

Water/Wastewater

There is a grant for \$6 million that has been received by the City for I & I – Inflow and Infiltration to assist with how much storm water goes into the system.

The WWTP-Wastewater Treatment Plant EQ Basin project will be wrapped up on March 25, 2024. We thank the Engineers, Central Accounting staff and those working with the grant on this much needed project.

Paving

Paving bids have been completed. There is a \$795,000 budget which will be milling of old asphalt, which is stored and used for filling potholes, then there will be paving & painting. Mid-City Mall will be getting paving work done. With any paving work, there will be a small time of inconvenience but the end result will be worth it.

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Mayor Sibold stated there is a need to check on the agreement with Columbia Gas after they tear up streets doing their work and how they pave & it should be corrected to satisfaction. Mr. Dressler appreciates the communication he has had with Columbia Gas representatives.

Upcoming Joint meeting with Alleghany County & Schools

David Bryant, Finance Director, was in attendance and reminded everyone of the joint Council meeting with Alleghany County officials and school officials on March 19, 2024 at 6:00 pm, Alleghany County Governmental building.

Funds remaining from Rayon Bridge

There was discussion about the remaining funds from the Rayon Bridge project being approved to use for additional paving such as Jackson Street or a needed backhoe, etc...

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Crosier motioned to approve the following ordinances, seconded by Mr. Hunter.

- 1) Resolution R-24-08 HOPE Planning Grant
- 2) Resolution R-24-09 Local Seizure received from Department of Criminal Justice
- 3) Resolution R-24-10-Rayon Bridge Fund

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

APPOINTMENTS

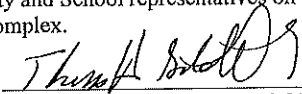
Mr. Crosier motioned to reappoint Ralph Fitzpatrick to the IDA-Industrial Development Authority. The term will begin on March 26, 2024 and ends on March 25, 2028. His motion was seconded by Mr. Hunter. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

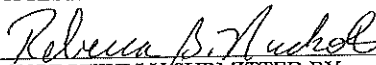
Mr. Crosier motioned to nominate Xavier Storey to the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation to fill the unexpired term of Kathy Cucci's seat. The term expires June 30, 2027. His motion was seconded by Mr. Hunter. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

The meeting was recessed to the joint meeting with the County and School representatives on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 6:00 pm at the Alleghany County Governmental Complex.


THOMAS H. SIBOLD, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY
REBECCA BRATTON NUCKOLS
ACTING CITY CLERK