

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
May 14, 2024**

Council for the City of Covington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, May 14, 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; Absent: Councilman Raymond C. Hunter. Also present were City Manager Allen Dressler and City Attorney Mark Popovich.

The invocation was given by Pastor Mrs. Wanda Moore, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

**Special Presentation**

Mr. Dressler introduced Tucker Keener who is former student in the area school system. He is a recent graduate from VCU. Mr. Keener thanked Council for allowing him to present his work on 'Growth in Appalachia: Downtown'. He also thanked for Mr. Dressler for working with him. Mr. Keener spoke of revitalization and many of the highlights and goals are: Downtown Covington, Virginia has 129 structures. There are vacancies in downtown, approximately 83% live in the area, who would be more invested in the area; 48% visit weekly. What to do to get more visitors: some buildings need repair, need restaurants, apparel and entertainment. Recreation & shopping after 5:00 p.m.; while talking to businesses, they mentioned there is a need for elderly parking. Goals: 1. Encourage the creation of new businesses 2. Increase foot traffic with events, etc. 3. Improve the design of downtown with a scenic trail, etc. 4. Mitigate vacancies and improve the aesthetics of buildings 5. Incorporate the paper mill with downtown revitalization 6. Establish a link with the Jackson River Sport Complex and downtown 7. Establish a leverage center 8. Establish lodging, for example, an Airbnb 9. Promote Covington throughout the region, state and the Omni Homestead and the Greenbrier resorts.

Mr. Tucker thanked Council again for their time. Council members thanked Mr. Tucker and appreciated the work he put into this presentation and stated that his concepts are very informative.

**Public Hearings**

Mayor Sibold opened the Public Hearing pursuant to Sections 15.2-1427 (D), 15.2-2006, and 15.2-1800 of the Code of Virginia (1950, as amended) to consider Covington City Code by Amending and reenacting Chapter 44, Traffic-Bicycles, Mopeds, etc. Michael Phillips of N. Beverly Avenue spoke about the Virginia Code and this code. Mayor Sibold stated that he sees mopeds, electric bikes and electric unicycle bikes drive fast and some drivers are not observing traffic laws. There were no other comments from citizens. Mayor Sibold closed the public hearing.

Mayor Sibold opened the Public Hearing Public pursuant to Sections 15.2-1427 (D), 15.2-2006, and 15.2-1800 of the Code of Virginia (1950, as amended) to consider Covington City Code by Amending and reenacting Chapter 44 Traffic, Article V, Yield Right-Of-Way; Stop; Through and One-Way Streets, Section 44-239, Trucks restricted from certain designated residential streets. Mayor Sibold stated that there are currently 47 streets that are restricted where trucks, tractor trucks, or semitrailers are restricted, as they cannot get turned after going down the street. Mr. Dressler received a call asking about Dolly Ann because GPS sends drivers there and that is why this street needs to be added to the list. No citizens spoke in reference to this public hearing. Mayor Sibold closed the public hearing.

**Citizen Comments**

Dewey Perkins stated that with all due respect that Dewey's Automotive, LLC, 609 West Chestnut Street has been in the same location for 50 years and several businesses have been next door where the current Wright Way Motors is located. He has gotten along with all businesses. There have not been any accidents. Closing the street would be detrimental to his business. Large trucks going into

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
May 14, 2024**

Covington Middle School also backup into this street to get in/out for deliveries. Closing this street would land lock seven of his lots. He showed Council photos of trucks leaving the lot. He thanked Council. Lance Perkins, co-owner, reiterated what his brother Dewey had stated and the street needs to remain open.

Brandon Wright, Owner of Wright Way Motors, thanked Council for allowing him to speak. He stated that previous owner, Tommy Garten, had the lot paved and closing the street would not put anyone in danger. The car wash bay area of the car lot is a danger. He spoke about the 30 foot, off of Craig Avenue, that would assist Dewey's. He mentioned that there have not been any accidents however if it would happen then the conversation would be remembered. He thanked Council for allowing him to speak.

Mayor Sibold remembers when there were houses on the vacant lots and paving took place. The wash bay safety concerns him also. He delayed further discussion to the end of the meeting under old/unfinished business.

**Minutes**

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

Work Session	April 2, 2024
Regular Meeting	April 9, 2024

All members were in favor with "aye" votes

**Report of City Manager/Presentation of proposed budget**

Mr. Dressler met with Columbia Gas representatives this week to confirm where they will be working next before the City begins paving in a specific area. There is great communication and Mr. Dressler appreciates this and information is then forwarded to the public with Public Service Announcements.

There are areas in the City where grass is not getting mowed, a notice is sent to give owners a time limit. If then not mowed, it will be mowed and an invoice sent to the owner. The City is offering the spring cleanup. Paving is continuing in the City. The paving schedule is being discussed and it must be addressed each year. The City will offer employees a picnic on May 24 and will be given a couple hours after the event. There will be a Farm Fest tractor event to be held Saturday, May 18 in downtown from 12:00 p.m. to 9:30 pm with events.

He met with DEQ and Engineers at the WWTP-Wastewater Treatment Plant, \$8 million dollar EQ Basin project to tour the plant. There are a few small items that need to be wrapped up, otherwise it is completed.

Work is continuing on the Love pocket park on Main Street.

There will be a \$6 million dollar grant project for wastewater lines throughout a portion of the City beginning soon.

The Nettleton property is City owned with City utilities. There is a lease agreement and the leaser pays payments to the City. Work is continuing.

The Joint \$10 million dollar City and County Pad Site project in Low Moor should be completed in late summer.

There have been sidewalk repairs going on in the City. There is a salt storage facility now ready for storage of salt for roads during inclement weather.

**Budget Presentation**

Mr. Dressler thanked citizens and businesses for their support and investments in the community. He thanked the Commissioner of Revenues' office for their work with citizens. He thanked Central Accounting staff for all their work on the budget, David Bryant, Susan Walton, Lori Humphries and Sylvia Brown do a wonderful job.

MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
May 14, 2024

Mr. Dressler proposes no real estate tax increase for fiscal year 2024-2025; the proposed budget is over \$1 million less than the previous budget, he proposes \$0.50 increase in utilities and \$1.50 in sewer with a total increase in the utility bill of \$2.00 making it a new combined total bill of \$90 per month. The departments have gotten their budget requests in. There is a 32 year old fire truck that needs replaced. There is a worn out refuse truck that is used every day and needs replace. The camera van was destroyed in the lightning strike at Public Works a few years ago and needs replaced. The state mandates that water/sewer lines are checked via camera. The community is fortunate to have a volunteer fire department. Mr. Dressler attended a meeting recently and the fire house is in need of an alarm system and updated HVAC system. The public works facility on Maple Avenue needs work including the façade. There is green space between public works and the former car wash, the vision is for there this to be a gathering area for citizens. The former car wash would become a museum for Fire Department history. There is a proposed addition of two new staff members for public relations for getting out information to the public, etc.

There is \$750,000 proposed budget for: water & wastewater treatment plant maintenance, development of a puppy park, putt-putt course and sidewalk repairs. The landfill has approximately 18 months of life left. There is work being done to find other choices of where to dispose of refuse. The City will continue to service citizens.

Mayor Sibold discussed budget work sessions to be held May 21 and if needed May 28 at 5:30 p.m. all Council members agreed.

Mayor Sibold asked that all streets be checked if they are marked with no truck signs.

#### Ordinances and Resolutions

Mr. Crosier motioned to approve the following resolutions and ordinances, seconded by Mr. Carson.

- 1) Resolution R-24-14 Private Donation to the Alleghany Humane Society.
- 2) Resolution R-24-15 Opioid Settlement Recoveries.
- 3) Ordinance O-24-01 to amend and reenact the Covington City Code by Amending and Reenacting various sections of Chapter 44, related to the use and operation of motorized mopeds, motorized bicycles, etc..
- 4) Ordinance O-24-02 to amend and reenact the Covington City Code by Amending and Reenacting Chapter 44, Traffic, Section 44-239, restricting trucks on designated residential roadways.

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

#### Old/Unfinished Business

There was continued discussion and consideration for intent to vacate the right-of- way and disposition of public property with regards to a boundary adjustment survey between Wright Way Motors located at 820 South Lexington Avenue, Covington, VA, and Dewey's Automotive, LLC located at 609 West Chestnut Street, Covington, VA. Mr. Carson noticed that this street was already in the City code not allowing trucks. Mr. Sibold stated that it was many years ago and that now it is being considered to be abandoned. There was discussion for a proposed entrance into Craig Avenue. Dewey Perkins stated that this will not work with his business because he owns and sells cars there and the change could cause tearing down of power lines with large trucks.

Mr. Sibold spoke about this abandoning of the street would keep cars out and kids safer. Mr. Carson stated that he is for keeping children safe. Each property would get approximately 30 feet from the original survey.

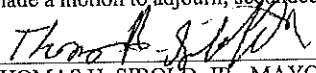
Mr. Crosier made a motion to vacate the street, seconded by Mr. Carson. The roll call votes were as follows: Mr. Carson, for; Mr. Forbes, for; Vice Mayor Crosier, for; Mayor Sibold, for.

Mr. Perkins asked about his right-of-way because the entrance is a hill and cannot be used. Mr. Sibold stated that the vote was over and the street will be closed. Mr. Perkins stated that he will contact his attorney who will contact the City.

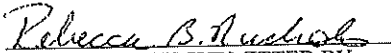
**New Business**

Mr. Sibold mentioned that since Mercer Street has been paved, that it needs to continue to be kept cleaned up.

With no further business to come before Council, Mr. Crosier made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Carson. All members were in favor with 'aye' votes.

  
THOMAS H. SIBOLD, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY  
REBECCA BRATTON NUCKOLS  
ACTING CITY CLERK