

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
August 13, 2024**

Council for the City of Covington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 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 Fred F. Forbes; Councilman Raymond C. Hunter; Absent: Councilman William (Lance) Carson, Jr. Also present were City Manager Allen Dressler and City Attorney Mark Popovich.

The invocation was given by Pastor Stephanie Clark 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**

Stephanie Clark, of Alleghany Avenue, spoke that if the City would purchase the old building at the corner of Pine Street and Alleghany Avenue, that is in bad repair and make a parking lot to assist with parking in the area. She spoke about having a housing project and citizens would pay utilities, purchase in the City and eat at local restaurants. Mayor Sibold thanked Ms. Clark for her comments.

**Minutes**

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

Regular Meeting July 9, 2024

All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

**Report of City Manager**

Mr. Dressler thanked:

Ms. Clark for her prayer and for mentioning our great City; For everyone attending the meeting; Chief Smith, emergency management and staff for the wonderful well attended National Night Out last week at the Main Street Park; Staff of Public Works, Police Department and Parks/Recreation for their work getting downtown ready for the Annual Street Scene Event last Saturday and for the wonderful cleanup after the event. Mr. Dressler received many compliments about the nice paving, street striping and flowers in downtown. He thanked Cars Unlimited for this event and Alleghany Cruisers for other area events.

The City was prepared when tropical storm Debby came to the area. Staff checked storm drains and areas that are known to have issues. If the City needs to declare an emergency declaration we have 45 days to do so. CSX was on site and working cooperatively. Thanks to Chief Smith and staff for their work keeping us safe during the storm.

With winter freezes and spring thaws is has caused a crack and wall to lean in the Chestnut Street underpass.

We are looking forward to the new school year starting August 14, 2024 and also the new football season beginning soon.

There was a ribbon cutting event for Ray's Sweet Shoppe and Poutinerie on Main Street this week. We wish them well in their new business.

Mr. Dressler would like to work with restaurants for possible events at the Pocket Park on Main Street.

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The Wastewater treatment plant EQ Basin project is in the final completion, City staff and Engineering met with DEQ on site.

Mr. Dressler and staff met with VA Tech Assistance Design Center and an environmental assessment group working on the Edgemont building for possible brownfield grants. Mr. Dressler and Terri McClung, Small Business Coordinator, are very interested in this grant.

Mr. Dressler and other staff will meet with Virginia Tech Applied Research Corporation (VT-ARC) to discuss STEM at The Nettleton across from Covington Middle School. This will be a great opportunity to work with the schools.

The field house at Casey Field has had some block laid this week. We thank the Alleghany Foundation with the grant process and their financial assistance with the project. The City owns and manages Casey Field.

There will be façade work at the Public Works facility, a project next to this and another at the former car wash on Maple Avenue.

There is work at the Sport Complex for a foot bridge, trail work to connect to the Jackson River Scenic Trail and work on a putt-putt course for next year.

There is anticipation for the next big event of the Unions' Labor Day celebration coming up September 2, 2024.

Mr. Dressler asked if there were any questions/comments. There was a question about Pitzer's Ridge paving. Mr. Dressler stated that the RFP is prepared and going out.

There was a comment that the cold patch that Columbia Gas did is very poor and they should be responsible for this. Mr. Dressler agreed and stated that Columbia Gas is scheduled to have paving completed before cold weather. He stated that Alleghany Avenue had a water break and the City repaired it and paved. Mr. Dressler and staff have been continuing meetings with Columbia Gas to keep up with their schedule and the City's. Expensive vehicles are having to travel on the repaired roads.

There was a comment that when Columbia Gas is doing their work that it is difficult to get out to go to work. Also, there should be equal concern for vehicles of all value driving on the rough cold patching repairs.

Mr. Dressler stated that there is a paving plan set through the remainder of warm weather.

#### **ALLEGHANY HIGHLANDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Kim Halterman and Melinda Snead Johnson, School Superintendents, were in attendance along with three school board members.

Ms. Halterman gave an update on the 2023-24 school year. The highlights were: a huge thank you for the generous financial support for the school system; they are proud of all staff; there was a sensible consolidation process & no involuntary job loss; there have been additional opportunities and provisions for students; continued student/staff safety measures and many student and staff achievements.

For the new 2024-25 school year, students, teachers and staff are prepared for the new school year. Ms. Halterman and Ms. Snead Johnson are both on statewide boards. Darrell Gleason is sending out positive information with multiple links, which motivates the team. Highlights for 2024-25 are: begin with a charge to continue making a positive difference; continued work on the Virginia Literacy Act, history standards, math standards, and particular CTE areas; addition of AHA: Law and Political Science; continued revisions of the SOLs expected; revision of the accreditation/accountability

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standards expected; continued work on attendance; AHS track project reaching completion (August 15 is a mark date); advancement of MG-TEC lab school as a partner school division; Fierce for Kids Communication Initiative - Cougars are fierce. Mr. Sibold thanked Ms. Halterman for her update on schools.

Mr. Crosier mentioned the Governor's cell phone policy and asked about the schools current policy. Ms. Halterman stated that the school system thought ahead two years ago with a policy. Students that are up to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade are to keep cell phones out of sight and mind. Their motto is, "No Cell Until The Bell". The 6<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders can use their phones at lunch only.

**Ordinances and Resolutions**

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

- 1) Resolution R-24-20 to accept appropriations-Rayon Bridge.
- 2) Resolution R-24-21 to accept appropriations-Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) VA Dept of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) Grant for AECOM Flooding Drainage Study and a Grant for Resilience Plan (Name Change).

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

**Old Business**

Mr. Popovich discussed re-adoption of By-Laws and Rules of Procedure for City Council. This change is for electronic meetings if there should be a need for this in the future.

Mr. Crosier motioned to approve re-adoption of By-Laws and Rules of Procedure for City Council, seconded by Mr. Hunter.

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

**Appointment**

Mr. Crosier motioned to appoint Renita Jeter to the Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board her term will expire August 31, 2028, seconded by Mr. Hunter.

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

**New Business**

Mr. Hunter spoke about the need of crosswalk painting at the doctor's office and Gray's Jewelry store on Monroe Avenue. Mr. Dressler stated that street striping stencils were received today and painting will begin soon. The alley behind Oak has many pot holes and trees where cut. Mr. Dressler stated that the City cut the trees. Mr. Hunter mentioned photos concerning a raccoon problem. Chris Smith, Police Chief, was in attendance and he stated that the City cannot trap wild animals. The employee would need to be licensed. He will check into the cost of a staff member getting licensed versus using a professional service to trap. The raccoons are at an old building that is a breeding ground. Mr. Hunter mentioned a lot of cats on Cherry Street. The City will try to contact the citizens that are feeding them.

Mr. Crosier asked about the Alleghany Humane Society's hours of operation and someone had mentioned having trouble. Mr. Dressler stated that he had met months ago with area officials, the humane society was to hire more help and post hours. David Bryant, Finance and HR, was in attendance, and was asked about funding; he stated that the City contributes approximately \$80,000 a

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year. Rebecca Nuckols, Admin. Assistant/Acting City Clerk, asked to speak. She stated that she had been to the Humane Society a week ago, the hours where posted on the door. She had taken a pet for a surgery transport. She had called the Humane Society that day, 8/13/24, to ask if there would be another transport in September, left a message and it was returned quickly. She had no problems.

Mr. Crosier mentioned that there was a meeting held with all area Managers/Administrators before the pandemic and maybe they could look into this again.

There was discussion about the need for a mirror at Rayon and Jackson Street for better visibility.

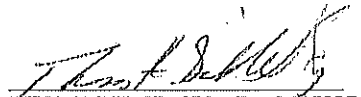
Mr. Dressler mentioned that at the Sport Complex a baby deer was born. The mother was most likely resting nearby. Citizens were petting the fawn, which does not need to occur because then the mother may reject the newborn with human scent. Mr. Sibold mentioned that there has also been interaction with wildlife such as feeding the squirrels.

**Closed Session**

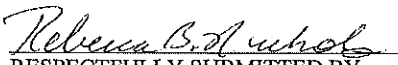
The Vice Mayor moved to enter into Closed session pursuant to Section 2.23711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia for the limited purpose of consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual litigation where such consultation in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the City regarding Case Number CL24-326.

Also to enter into Closed session pursuant to Section 2.23711(A)(7) of the Code of Virginia for the limited purpose of consultation with legal counsel pertaining to probable litigation where such consultation in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the City regarding an EEOC complaint. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

With no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned by consensus.

  
THOMAS H. SIBOLD, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY  
REBECCA BRATTON NUCKOLS  
ACTING CITY CLERK