

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
January 14, 2025**

Council for the City of Covington held a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 W. Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

Mayor William 'Lance' Carson, Jr. called the meeting to order with the following members present: Mayor Carson; Vice Mayor Fred F. Forbes; Councilwoman Susan S. Crowder; Councilman Raymond C. Hunter; Councilwoman Susan S. Wolfe. 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

Mrs. Crowder motioned to approve the agenda with the exception to add a closed session at the end of the meeting seconded by Mr. Hunter. All members were in favor with "aye" votes.

Approval of Council By-Laws and Rules of Procedure

Mrs. Crowder asked about the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure not being the exact way some of the meetings are held and is sure they were held legally. She suggested making some changes to Sections 2.7; 4.1 and 7.1. Mr. Popovich stated that it is Council's decision how they want to run the meetings and can add/delete to change how they wish. Council can also sit the rules aside, for example, to allow citizen comments. Ms. Wolfe suggested to put suggested changes in an e-mail then Council could decide on any amendments at a later meeting. Mr. Popovich suggested to adopt now and changes can be made at any time.

Mr. Dressler asked Mr. Popovich if there is a need to appoint Becky Nuckols as interim City Clerk and he stated that yes it is necessary.

Motion was made by Mr. Forbes and seconded by Mr. Hunter to approve the Council By-Laws and Rules of Procedure. The roll call votes were as follows: Mrs. Crowder, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Ms. Wolfe for; Vice Mayor Forbes, for; Mayor Carson, for.

Presentations

1. Jeremy Holmes with the RVARC-Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission gave a presentation on the Regional Commission's annual report and project updates. Mr. Holmes advised Council of the areas the RVARC addresses which are: transportation, community development, housing and economic development. Topics discussed were: developing an online pre-application to screen projects with Blueprint for Action; advisory committee to analyze and make suggestions to localities for future grant ground, ongoing technical support and free grant writing are available. The commission gives back to the community such as the assistance that VA Housing has assisted with the former Rivermont School building. There was a recent legislative luncheon hosted by the Regional Commission. Delegate Austin and staff were in attendance. Mr. Holmes thanked Mr. Carson for attending the luncheon and Mr. Dressler for his presentation.

Mr. Holmes spoke about upcoming projects: a regional truck parking study; Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan and a comprehensive economic development strategy update. Mr. Holmes will e-mail Mr. Dressler the work process plan for him to send back to the Commission with recommendation of needs in the City.

Mr. Jay Crowder, in attendance at the meeting, asked if he could ask questions. He asked Mr. Holmes if citizens could get together and have a committee to make suggestions for grant ideas for the community, etc.... Mr. Holmes suggested he give his ideas to Council or Mr. Dressler and it would be forwarded on to him.

Mr. Dressler stated the RVARC is a wonderful resource for the community. The commission has been diligently promoting the City & County's joint pad site in Low Moor and we appreciate all their work.

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Sheriff Kyle Moore asked Mr. Holmes how much was received from the Commission who funded the former Rivermont School project. Mr. Holmes explained it is not a transfer of funds but the Commission assists with grants, however he did not have a figure with him at the meeting.

Mr. Holmes was thanked by Mr. Carson for the presentation.

2. Sheriff Kyle Moore gave Council information on the retirement multiplier for Alleghany County Deputies. At the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors meeting they voted and approved the estimated increase of \$45,000 increase, which would be an additional \$11,000 from the City of Covington. Then there was discussion that Sheriff Moore should have spoken with the City. He is new to the position and apologized on the incorrect process. Ms. Suzanne Adcock Nicely, Alleghany County Director of Finance, advised the Board of Supervisors and Sheriff Moore that the County has the funds to carry over to June and the City could take over in July if they choose to do so. Mr. Forbes asked Mr. Moore if it would be in his budget request and he stated that it would be. Mr. Popovich advised that if the Sheriff puts it in his budget there is no need to come back and present again so there is no action needed tonight. Council thanked Sheriff Moore for his presentation.

Citizen Comments

David Bryant, Jr. of Augusta Avenue, advised Council after recent bad weather the U.S. Postal Service did not deliver mail to Covington. When there is no mail to distribute, it does not go out. There have been delays with postal correspondence in Alleghany, Bath and Highland Counties. Senators are involved in postal issues. An example was given that if a priority mail is purchased for \$20-\$50 on a Saturday, it does not go out until Monday. These issues, including no mail to distribute, are not the fault of the employees. It is required to go through a processing center. He urged Council to look into this because local citizens are missing out.

Mr. Carson thanked Mr. Bryant for the information.

Minutes

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

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| 1) Work session Meeting | December 3, 2024 |
| 2) Regular Meeting | December 10, 2024 |
| 3) Called meeting for Auditor presentation | December 20, 2024 |

Mayor Carson, for; Vice Mayor Forbes, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Mayor Carson explained that newly elected Council members, Mrs. Crowder and Ms. Wolfe would abstain.

Recognition of Retirement for Theresa Harrison and David Kimberlin

Mr. Dressler read the retirement plaque and thanked Theresa Harrison for 20 years for service to the City of Covington's Treasurer's office. He also read the retirement plaque for David Kimberlin who worked for 27 years in various departments within Public Works and recently had been the supervisor at the landfill. Mr. Dressler wished Ms. Harrison and Mr. Kimberlin the best in their retirement.

Report of City Manager

Mr. Dressler spoke of Rob Bennett who recently passed and that he had served in the schools as a teacher, coach and administrator. Mr. Bennett had stressed to students about academics of reading, writing and arithmetic and sports being later. Mr. Bennett was a former City Councilman and Mayor. His service was much appreciated. We extend our condolences to his wife Cindy, his daughter and all the family.

Mr. Dressler spoke of Ozzie Hostetter who recently passed. Mr. Hostetter served as a member of the Planning Commission. He coached many children over many years of service. We extend our condolences to his wife, sons and all the family.

There was an accident in the Marion Avenue and Lexington area for a gas leak this week. The Fire Dept., Police Department did an amazing job communicating with the school system. The leak was repaired. Thanks to all emergency services for their swift work.

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Due to the snow and ice storm the City's landfill was closed on Monday and employees worked removing snow and ice on the road. Thanks to all employees that assisted with snow/ice removal. The main roads are plowed first and employees worked in shifts. Several of the newer employees were getting experience on plowing due to the mild winters in the last few years.

Mr. Dressler acknowledged Terri McClung, Small Business Coordinator, in attendance and noted that Olde Town Covington (OTC) has been designated as an Advanced Virginia Main Street, making the City eligible for additional grant opportunities. Mr. Dressler thanked all the OTC volunteers for their work.

There is a new playground set and cabana next to the Putt-Putt course that is being developed at the Sport Complex. This will provide a nice area for all to enjoy.

The stone is being laid on the new field house at Casey Field. The current field house will be updated for the the visiting team as well as the restrooms for citizens.

Mid-City Mall parking lot will get new sidewalks and paving of the parking lot this spring. There will be a short disruption for citizens however it will be worth it after completion.

The Chamber of Commerce has been working on directional signage in the City, there will be new signs going up soon.

Mr. Forbes thanked Mr. Dressler for the nice art work on the Public Works building and wall by the Depot. Mr. Dressler mentioned the Collins park cabana will be used for events and the artwork will be a nice view.

Mr. Carson thanked employees for snow & ice removal and also for the work that local contractors did to assist the City.

Appointments

The following appointments will be discussed by Council after there are meeting dates & times gathered. Then Council will make decisions on who will serve on the boards/commissions. The following appointments were tabled:

- 1) League of Older Americans Advisory Council (term expired 12/31/24)
- 2) Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism-expires December 31, 2026
- 3) CLEO-Chief Local Elected Officials consortium-Workforce Development- (expired when term on Council ended, 12/31/24)
- 4) Alleghany Highlands Social Services-expires June 30, 2026
- 5) OTC-Olde Town Covington-(votes are ongoing and do not expire)
- 6) Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission CBDS - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy-expires June 30, 2027
- 7) Roanoke Regional Partnership-expires December 31, 2027
- 8) Regional TAP Board-expires July 31, 2025 (Mr. Carson currently serves on the Local TAP Board)

Ordinances and Resolutions

Mr. Forbes motioned to approve the following resolutions and ordinance, seconded by Mr. Hunter.

- 1)To consider Resolution R-25-01 To petition the Alleghany Circuit Court for no need for Special Election to fill a Constitutional office vacancy
- 2)To consider Resolution R-25-02 Parks and Recreation - Litter Grant-Additional funding received from the state above the budgeted amount-No City Match
- 3)To consider Resolution R-25-03 VDOT Sidewalk Grant (20% City Match)
- 4)To consider Resolution R-25-04 Community Bases Policing Contributions-Walmart
- 5)To consider Resolution R-25-05 DARE Police Dept. – DARE Contributions Expenses(Public contribution for the DARE Program)
- 6)To consider Ordinance O-25-01 to Amend & reenact the City Code Chapter 42, Section 42.2 , refund of taxes erroneously assessed

The roll call votes were as follows: Mrs. Crowder, for; Mr. Hunter, for; Ms. Wolfe, for; Vice Mayor Forbes, for; Mayor Carson, for.

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New Business

Mrs. Crowder asked Council to do a resolution in memory of Rob Bennett. Council agreed and Mr. Dressler will contact Mr. Bennett's family.

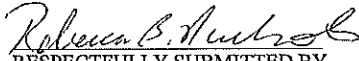
Ms. Crowder moved that City Council enter into closed session for the limited purpose of:

1. The discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position of the public body related to properties located in the City and County; and
2. Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel regarding 410 on Main

Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) and (8) of the Code of Virginia. Council moved into closed session. There was no action taken. Council came out of closed session. With no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned by consensus.


WILLIAM E. CARSON JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:


RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY
REBECCA BRATTON NUCKOLS, ACTING CITY CLERK