

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 4, 2020**

Council Vice President Rolling called the regular meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Roll call was as follows:

PRESENT: Peter Lewis Sr., John Botsford, Joey Roberts, Cody Ludwig, Mark W. Verret, Diane Weiss and Larry Rolling

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Mark R. Johnson, Chief Administrative Officer Erin Bivona, City Attorney Rod Rodrigue, Police Chief Stephen Culotta and Finance Director Stephen Sanders

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by former Council President Sam O'Keefe.

APPEARERS

Councilman Botsford introduced Mr. Michael Williamson, President and Chief Executive Officer, United Way of Southeast Louisiana, who discussed the mission and vision of the United Way and its "Blueprint for Prosperity".

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.

REGULAR AGENDA

Unfinished Business

Items to be voted on:

1. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-07-01 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Authorizing the Mayor to Execute an Act of Sublease with C. R. Restaurant/ Café No. 1, L.L.C. for the Use of its Property for Public Parking (Verret)

Councilman Verret led a discussion on Item No. 2020-07-01.

Mayor Johnson commented that the City will enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the owners of the property in which the owners will allow the City to offer the lot for public parking and in return, the City will maintain and stripe the lot for public parking.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-07-01, seconded by Councilman Botsford. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-07-01. Item No. 2020-07-01 was adopted.

2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-07-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 98 Utilities, Article IV. Rates and Charges, Section 98-122. Water rates and Section 98-123. Sewerage rates (Botsford)

Councilman Botsford led a discussion on Item No. 2020-07-02.

Mayor Johnson gave a presentation on the vision for the City of Covington over the next ten years.

Councilwoman Ludwig made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Botsford. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-07-02, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-07-02. Item No. 2020-07-02 was adopted.

3. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-07-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Repealing the Comprehensive Pay/Step Plan Established for the Covington Police Department (Botsford)

Councilman Botsford led a discussion on Item No. 2020-07-03.

Mayor Johnson remarked that the current comprehensive pay/step plan does not allow the flexibility to increase the salaries by \$4,000.00 for all Police Department employees.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Verret. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-07-03, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-07-03. Item No. 2020-07-03 was adopted.

4. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-07-04 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2020 Budget to Increase Compensation for the Covington Police Department (Botsford)

Councilman Botsford led a discussion on Item No. 2020-07-04.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Councilman Roberts made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-07-04, seconded by Councilwoman Ludwig. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-07-04. Item No. 2020-07-04 was adopted.

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-14 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Recognizing Juneteenth Day in the City of Covington (Lewis)

Councilman Lewis read Resolution No. 2020-14 into the record.

Councilman Lewis led a discussion on Resolution No. 2020-14.

Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-14, seconded by **Councilman Botsford**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-14. Resolution No. 2020-14 was adopted.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-16 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Informing the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality of the Actions Regarding the Sewerage Treatment Facility (MWPP) (Rolling)

Council Vice President Rolling led a discussion on Resolution No. 2020-16.

Mr. Mike Curtis from Curtis Environmental Services, Inc. led a discussion on the results of the 2019 MWPP Environmental Audit.

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-16, seconded by **Councilwoman Weiss**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-16. Resolution No. 2020-16 was adopted.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-17 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Acknowledging Receipt and Compliance with the Louisiana Attestation Questionnaire from the Legislative Auditor’s Office (Rolling)

Council Vice President Rolling led a discussion on Resolution No. 2020-17.

Chief Administrative Officer Erin Bivona commented that the Legislative Auditor requires that the City submit this questionnaire to our auditor every year. She stated that Finance Director Stephen Sanders completed the questionnaire and is available to answer any questions.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-17, seconded by **Councilwoman Ludwig**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-17. Resolution No. 2020-17 was adopted.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Council District and Committee Reports

1. District A –

Councilman Lewis thanked Danielle Fabre for hosting the recent Family Day in the Park. He added that it was a great event and well-attended. Also, he announced an upcoming seminar presented by Ashley Marissa entitled, “Steps to a Successful Business”. More information on the seminar will be announced in the next few weeks. Also, he congratulated Coby Callahan and Justice Casanave who have been accepted into college and will soon begin their postsecondary education.

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford gave an update from the Food Bank and announced they are still serving approximately 50% more people than pre-COVID; they distributed 1,125 summer kid food packs in July and will continue to distribute emergency kid packs to anyone in need; and the Resale Shop is open. He mentioned that donations are needed and encouraged the public to support the Food Bank. Also, he mentioned that the new sign at the Bogue Chitto Park has been installed and asked the Mayor if the City would remove the old, deteriorated sign.

Mayor Johnson responded that once the City receives permission, the Public Works Department will remove the old sign.

3. District C –

Councilman Roberts thanked Michael Williamson for appearing at the meeting this evening and encouraged the public to support the United Way. Also, he commented that the pay raise for the Police Department employees is well-deserved and congratulated Chief Culotta and the Police Department. Also, he thanked Jordan Johnson for attending the meeting this evening and expressing his views. Also, he congratulated Councilman Lewis for the adoption of the Juneteenth Day resolution and encouraged public participation and support. Also, he reminded everyone about the election on August 15th and thanked Mrs. Diane Weiss for her service as Interim Councilwoman at Large.

4. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig reported that St. Tammany Parish Hospital has 26 COVID-positive cases and not as many patients are on ventilators as there were in the spring. Also, she mentioned that construction is continuing on the 11th Avenue crosswalk outside STPH's Emergency Department. Also, she reminded everyone about the Sunset at the Landing concert on August 14th at 6pm.

5. District E –

Councilman Verret reminded everyone about the upcoming election. Also, he thanked Diane Weiss for answering the call twice to serve on an interim basis on the City Council. He commented that Mrs. Weiss has been a vital part of this Council and it has been his distinct pleasure to serve with her.

6. At Large (Interim) –

Councilwoman Weiss commented that she will forward a report to the Mayor and the Public Works Department about some needed work along the 15th Avenue bike path. Also, she plans to submit her list of current traffic/street flow limitations around St. Paul's, St. Peter's, Covington Elementary and Christ Episcopal schools to the Council and City Administration for review and consideration for improving safety around the schools. Also, she remarked that due to the upcoming election, this will be her last official meeting as Interim Councilwoman at Large. She commented that this has been an amazing experience and thanked the Council and City Administration for their dedication and commitment to the citizens of the City of Covington.

7. At Large (Vice President) –

Council Vice President Rolling thanked Mrs. Weiss for her service as Interim Councilwoman at Large and added that she has been an asset to the Council. He invited her to attend the September 15th Council meeting for a special presentation from the Council. Also, he reminded the public that the runoff election is August 15th with early voting taking place now through August 8th. Also, he mentioned that Aimee Faucheux is working on the Antiques and Uniques Festival and it may take place Labor Day weekend, September 5th through 7th, depending on the current COVID-19 guidelines.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Johnson

(a) He mentioned that the Mayor's Council on Healthy Lifestyles is inviting everyone to participate in "Eat Fit Northshore" this Friday evening. This event is a special collaboration through Ochsner Hospital, St. Tammany Health System and Slidell Memorial Hospital, where the chefs at several Northshore restaurants prepare healthy and delicious meals.

(b) He announced that "Zumba with the Mayor" will be held on Sunday, August 16th from Noon until 1:30pm in the Bogue Falaya Hall. This is a free event sponsored by St. Tammany Parish Hospital and Ochsner.

Council Vice President Rolling reminded everyone about the upcoming Council meeting on Tuesday, September 15th at 6pm in the Council Chambers.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

/s/ _____
LARRY ROLLING
Council Vice President

/s/ _____
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk