

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 21, 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, Fire Chief Gary Blocker, Police Chief Stephen Culotta and Sgt. Lance Benjamin

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Cody Ludwig.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Botsford. 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. 2020-06-05 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Setting Forth the Adjusted Millage Rates (Rolling)

Council Vice President Rolling stated that a public hearing was held earlier this evening regarding the 2020 Millage Rates.

Mayor Johnson gave a brief overview of the millage rollback and millage roll forward process.

Council Vice President Rolling led a discussion on Item No. 2020-06-05.

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

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-06-05, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-06-05. Item No. 2020-06-05 was adopted.

2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-06-06 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Levying, Imposing and Increasing the Millage

Rates on All Property Subject to Taxation in the City of Covington, State of Louisiana, for the Year 2020 (Rolling)

Council Vice President Rolling led a discussion on Item No. 2020-06-06.

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

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-06-06, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call: Yeas – 3 (Weiss, Rolling and Roberts); Nays – 4 (Ludwig, Verret, Lewis and Botsford) to adopt Item No. 2020-06-06. According to state statute, two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Council is required to roll forward. Since this did not occur, the roll forward was denied.

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-15 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Urging Assistance to Those Full-time Police and Fire Department Employees Who Have Obtained and Completed Additional Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in Their Respective Fields at Approved Accredited Institutions (Verret)

Councilman Verret led a discussion on Resolution No. 2020-15.

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-15, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-15. Resolution No. 2020-15 was adopted.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Council District and Committee Reports

1. District A –

Councilman Lewis announced that Ever After Boutique will be hosting, “Small Business Saturday: Family Day in the Park,” on Saturday, August 1st from 2pm until 7pm in the Bogue Chitto Park. Also, he introduced Ms. Elle Carroll who presented the mission statement of the Sunflower Initiative, which is a new non-profit organization.

2. District B – None.

3. District C –

Councilman Roberts thanked Ms. Carroll for appearing this evening and expressing her views. Also, he thanked the Covington Police Department for their efforts in keeping Covington safe.

4. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig gave an update from the St. Tammany Health System. She reported that St. Tammany Parish Hospital had 28 COVID-positive cases last week but currently has 15 COVID-positive patients with two cases pending. Also, she wished Councilman Mark Verret a Happy Birthday.

5. District E –

Councilman Verret mentioned that there has been a community initiative throughout the country for additional education and training for police officers and

firefighters. He expressed his appreciation to the Covington Police Department and Covington Fire Department for the impressive job they do for the citizens of Covington. Also, he applauded the Council for voting in favor of the resolution this evening.

6. At Large (Interim) –

Councilwoman Weiss clarified some of her comments from the last Council meeting in which she discussed the creation of a community committee to review the traffic flow around St. Peter's, St. Paul's, Covington Elementary and Christ Episcopal schools. She mentioned that some folks felt she was forming a school safety committee and that was not her intention. She stated that instead of forming a committee, she will catalog and note the current traffic/street flow limitations around the schools. Once the list is completed, she will forward copies to the Council and City Administration for review and consideration for improving safety around the schools. Also, she thanked the appearers who attended the meeting this evening.

Councilman Verret thanked Interim Councilwoman Weiss for her efforts in compiling the list of current traffic flow limitations around these local schools.

7. At Large (Vice President) –

Council Vice President Rolling encouraged the public to support the local business community and patronize local restaurants and retail shops. Also, he commented that it's great to be back home in the Council Chambers after meeting virtually and in the Bogue Falaya Hall due to COVID-19 restrictions. Also, he announced the new businesses that have invested in our community and obtained their occupational licenses recently.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Johnson

(a) He gave an update to an article highlighted in one of his recent e-blasts in which a local resident was facing a financial challenge as a result of having a gas leak in her home and the gas service being disconnected. He reported that the Covington community stepped up and donated over \$6,000 to a complete stranger for the repairs to her home. Also, he reported that Goodbye Plumbing donated 100% of their time, skill and materials to make the repairs. He expressed his appreciation to the wonderful, caring community in which we live.

Councilman Botsford expressed his appreciation to Mayor Johnson for the update and thanked the community for the outpouring of support. He mentioned that unfortunately, there are several families in the West 30s that are dealing with hard times.

2. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer –

Mrs. Bivona wished Mayor Mark a belated Happy Birthday.

Council Vice President Rolling reminded everyone about the upcoming Council meeting on Tuesday, August 4th at 6pm in the Council Chambers.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

/s/ _____
LARRY ROLLING
Council Vice President

/s/ _____
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk