

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 7, 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, Building Official Chris Brown, Finance Director Stephen Sanders, Fire Chief Gary Blocker and Assistant Fire Chief Steven Michell, Police Chief Stephen Culotta and Deputy Police Chief Robert Blount, Utility Billing Director Michelle Plauche

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by City Attorney Rod Rodrigue.

**APPEARERS**

**Councilman Verret** introduced Ms. Suzy Potter, Community Development Manager for The Blood Center, who discussed the needs of The Blood Center and invited the public to participate in a blood drive on Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup> to benefit a young girl suffering from leukemia. Also, Ms. Potter introduced Ms. Melanie Smith, a leukemia survivor, who discussed her journey while battling leukemia and encouraged the public to support the community by donating blood and platelets.

**Mayor Johnson** discussed an article highlighted in his upcoming email in which a local resident is facing a financial challenge as a result of having a gas leak in her home and the gas service being disconnected. He requested assistance from any plumbers who may be able to help out at a reduced cost or anyone who may be able to donate funds to defray the cost.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

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

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**Unfinished Business**

**Items to be voted on:**

**Councilman Verret** stated that due to the large number of people in the audience this evening, he made a motion to move Item Nos. 5 and 6 to the beginning of the Regular Agenda, Unfinished Business, Items to be voted on, seconded by **Councilman Botsford**. Roll call was unanimous to move Item Nos. 5 and 6 to the beginning of the Regular Agenda, Unfinished Business,

**Items to be voted on. Item Nos. 5 and 6 were moved to the beginning of the Regular Agenda, Unfinished Business, Items to be voted on.**

**Council Vice President Rolling made some announcements:**

- **Everyone in attendance tonight who wishes to make comments will be given an opportunity to do so;**
- **Each speaker will be limited to three minutes; and**
- **In order to eliminate repetitive comments, a spokesperson may be designated.**

*(Item No. 5 from Agenda)*

**1. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-06-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Authorizing the Closure of South Theard Street Between East Temperance Street and East 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue During School Hours (Ludwig)**

**Councilwoman Ludwig led a discussion on Item No. 2020-06-03.**

**Councilwoman Weiss 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 Roberts made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-06-03, seconded by Councilwoman Ludwig. Roll call: Yeas – 5; Nays – 1 (Lewis); Abstain – 1 (Verret) to adopt Item No. 2020-06-03. Item No. 2020-06-03 was adopted.**

*(Item No. 6 from Agenda)*

**2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-06-04 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Authorizing the Closure of East 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue Between South Theard Street and South Washington Street During School Hours (Ludwig)**

**Councilwoman Ludwig led a discussion on Item No. 2020-06-04.**

**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. 2020-06-04, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call: Yeas – 1 (Ludwig); Nays – 5; Abstain – 1 (Verret) to adopt Item No. 2020-06-04. Item No. 2020-06-04 was denied.**

**3. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-06-07 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Official Zoning Map of the City of Covington, Louisiana, to Reclassify a 12-Acre Parcel of Property on the West Side of Lion Drive, City of Covington, Parish of St. Tammany, State of Louisiana, from CO (Commercial Office/Professional) to ID (Institutional) (Zoning Case No. 20-05-01ZC) (Roberts)**

**Councilman Roberts led a discussion on Item No. 2020-06-07.**

**City Attorney Rod Rodrigue mentioned that this matter was unanimously approved by the Zoning Commission at its recent meeting.**

**Councilman Roberts 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.**

**Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-06-07, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-06-07. Item No. 2020-06-07 was adopted.**

**4. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-06-08 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Official Zoning Map of the City of Covington, Louisiana, to Reclassify Two (2) Parcels of Land at the Southwest Corner of Polders Lane and North Columbia Street from CN (Neighborhood Commercial) to a Planned Unit Development— Planned Residential District (PRD) with a Base Zoning of RS-1 (Single-Family Residential—Existing Small Lots) Zoning District (Zoning Case No. 20-05-02ZC) (Lewis)**

**City Attorney Rod Rodrigue announced that the owner of the subject property has requested this matter be tabled for further review.**

**Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to table Item No. 2020-06-08, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to table Item No. 2020-06-08. Item No. 2020-06-08 was tabled.**

*(A short break was taken.)*

**5. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-06-01 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Appendix B– Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of 2010, Part 3. Use Districts, Section 3.50. Statutory Authority, Findings of Fact, Purpose and Methods of Flood Hazard Prevention, and Part 4. General Provisions, Section 4.3. Accessory Use Regulations (Zoning Case No. 20-04-01TXT) (Rolling)**

**Council Vice President Rolling led a discussion on Item No. 2020-06-01.**

**City Attorney Rod Rodrigue mentioned that these amendments will bring the Code into compliance with new FEMA regulations.**

**CAO Erin Bivona commented that these amendments were required at the parish level and now municipalities are required to incorporate them into their Codes.**

**Councilman Verret made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Council Vice President Rolling. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.**

**Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-06-01, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-06-01. Item No. 2020-06-01 was adopted.**

**6. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-06-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provision of the**

Covington Code of Ordinances: Appendix B – Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of 2020, Part 3. Use Districts, Section 3.15. CO Commercial Office/Professional (Zoning Case No. 20-04-02TXT) (Lewis)

**Councilman Lewis led a discussion on Item No. 2020-06-02.**

**City Attorney Rod Rodrigue mentioned that this is a text change which will allow snowball stands as a permitted use in the CO Zoning District and it was unanimously approved by the Zoning Commission at its recent meeting.**

**Councilwoman Weiss 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.**

**Councilwoman Ludwig made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-06-02, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-06-02. Item No. 2020-06-02 was adopted.**

**7. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-06-09 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2020 Budget for the Purchase of a New Fire Truck for the Covington Fire Department (Rolling)**

**Council Vice President Rolling led a discussion on Item No. 2020-06-09.**

**Mayor Johnson mentioned that the primary fire truck was acquired in 1993 and due to recent engine failure, the purchase of a new fire truck is necessary.**

**Councilman Botsford 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.**

**Councilwoman Weiss made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-06-09, seconded by Councilman Botsford. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-06-09. Item No. 2020-06-09 was adopted.**

## **COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

### **Council District and Committee Reports**

**1. District A – None.**

**2. District B –**

**Councilman Botsford** announced that the Food Bank provided 1,730 households with food boxes, 1,686 kids' food packs and registered 112 new households in the month of June.

**3. District C –**

**Councilman Roberts** thanked the Council for their efforts over the past few months.

**4. District D –**

**Councilwoman Ludwig** reported that St. Tammany Parish Hospital currently has 13 COVID-positive patients and none are on ventilators with the total inpatient census being 158. Also, she reminded everyone that the Covington branch of the St. Tammany Parish Library is open with limited capacity and curbside pickup is still available.

**5. District E –**

**Councilman Verret** mentioned that he has been working on a resolution to offer supplemental pay to the Police and Fire Department employees who are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs and plans to include the resolution on the next Council agenda.

- 6. At Large (Interim) – None.**
- 7. At Large (Vice President) – None.**

### **Administrative Comments and Reports**

#### **1. Mayor Johnson**

- (a) He announced the hiring of Michelle Plauche as the new Utility Billing Director and introduced Michelle to the Council.
- (b) He announced that the work on the 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge should be completed by September.
- (c) He announced that the City has been awarded a grant from the State in the amount of \$900,000 to be used toward the refurbishment of our Waste Water Treatment Plant. He added that the City's match will be \$300,000 which will give us \$1.2 million to go toward the estimated cost of \$2.2 million for the repairs. He thanked Senator Donohue, Senator McMath and Representative Wright for their efforts with regard to this grant award.

#### **2. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer – None.**

**Council Vice President Rolling** reminded everyone about the upcoming Council meetings:

- Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30pm in the Council Chambers – Public hearing on the 2020 Millage rates
- Tuesday, July 21<sup>st</sup> at 6pm in the Council Chambers
- Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> at 6pm in the Council Chambers

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9pm.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
LARRY ROLLING  
Council Vice President

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE  
Council Clerk