

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 2, 2020**

**DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS, THIS MEETING WAS  
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE AND  
YOUTUBE LIVE STREAM**

**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, Finance Director Stephen Sanders, Fire Chief Gary Blocker and Assistant Fire Chief Steven Michell

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Joey Roberts.

**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**

**New Business**

**Items to be voted on:**

**1. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-10** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Capital Outlay and Encumbrance Rollovers from the 2019 Budget to the 2020 Budget (Rolling)

**Mayor Johnson stated that the monies budgeted for capital projects in 2019, but not expended in 2019, do not automatically roll over to the 2020 budget and this resolution is required to roll the funds over to the 2020 budget.**

There were no public comments on Resolution No. 2020-10.

**Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-10, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-10. Resolution No. 2020-10 was adopted.**

**2. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-12** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Appointment of Bradley Leonhard as the District B

Appointment to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission to Fill an Unexpired Term (Botsford)

**Councilman Botsford** requested confirmation of Bradley Leonhard as the District B appointment to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission to fill an unexpired term.

There were no public comments on Resolution No. 2020-12.

**Councilman Roberts made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-12, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-12. Resolution No. 2020-12 was adopted.**

**3. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-13** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Selecting the Official Journal for the City of Covington for a Term of One (1) Year (Rolling)

**Council Vice President Rolling** gave a brief overview of the selection process for the official journal and recommended the St. Tammany Farmer as the official journal for the City of Covington.

There were no public comments on Resolution No. 2020-13.

**Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-13, seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-13. Resolution No. 2020-13 was adopted.**

**Items for discussion:**

Concerns in District A (Lewis)

**Councilman Lewis** expressed his concerns over the recent shooting and ongoing violence in District A. He inquired as to whether or not the City has consulted with other law enforcement agencies to curb the violence.

**Mayor Johnson** responded that the Covington Police Department continues to investigate crimes in the City and makes arrests as the evidence warrants. He added that he cannot comment publicly on any ongoing investigations but confirmed that other law enforcement agencies have been consulted with regard to the violence in the City. He reminded the public about the new text messaging app created by the Police Department that allows the public to text information and tips anonymously.

**Councilmen Botsford and Lewis** expressed their appreciation to the Mayor and Police Chief Culotta for their efforts in keeping our community safe.

**Mayor Johnson** commented that Chief Culotta does a great job and appreciated his show of support for the community by attending yesterday's vigil/protest.

**COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

**Council District and Committee Reports**

**1. District A – None.**

**2. District B –**

**Councilman Botsford** reminded everyone that today is GiveNola Day and encouraged the public to donate to nonprofit organizations. Also, he announced that the Food Bank's Resale Shop is back open for business and reported that the Food Bank gave out 2,056 food boxes, 1,595 kids' food packs and registered 281 new households in the month of May. He commended the Food Bank for the amazing job they do in helping the community.

**3. District C –**

**Councilman Roberts** thanked the Council for approving the resolution for the capital rollovers which will provide funds for capital projects in District C and throughout the City. Also, he is pleased that Phase 2 will begin soon and looks forward to moving along safely and cautiously. Also, he reminded everyone that today is GiveNola Day which is the largest philanthropic day of giving to nonprofit organizations and encouraged the public to donate as they are able. Also, he commented that he is proud of the citizens of Covington for the peaceful and respectful protest yesterday and thanked everyone for their support.

**4. District D –**

**Councilwoman Ludwig** mentioned that St. Tammany Parish Hospital reported they were treating seven COVID-positive patients as of May 28<sup>th</sup> and the number has remained steady for the past couple of weeks. Also, she reminded the public that antibody testing is available at the Diagnostic Centers in Covington and Mandeville and testing for COVID continues to be offered at the St. Tammany Parish Hospital location in Mandeville. Also, she encouraged the public to participate in GiveNola Day and donate to their favorite nonprofit organization as they are able.

**5. District E –**

**Councilman Verret** thanked the Council and City Administration for their diligent and continuing efforts in addressing the City's utility rates and the Police Department's pay scale. He announced that at the next Council meeting, he will offer a proposal for the City to provide financial assistance to full-time police officers and those in the Police Department who are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs, which will be an added incentive for the City to retain and attract police officers.

**6. At Large (Interim) –**

**Councilwoman Weiss** publicly thanked and applauded all the citizens of Covington for participating in a peaceful protest and expressed her appreciation to the community for their response to the recent horrific event. Also, she mentioned that tomorrow is Global Running/Walking Day and encouraged the public to go outside for some exercise.

**7. At Large (Vice President) –**

**Council Vice President Rolling** thanked St. Tammany Parish Hospital and all medical personnel in our region for their efforts over the past few months. Also, he encouraged the public to shop locally to support our local businesses. Also, he reminded everyone about some upcoming meetings: (1) the CBA meeting is tomorrow night at 5:30pm in the Bogue Falaya Park Pavilion; (2) the next Council meeting will be Tuesday, July 7th at 6pm, tentatively in the Council Chambers but the location may be changed to the Bogue Falaya Hall; (3) there will be a second Council meeting in July on Tuesday, July 21st at 5:30pm for a public hearing on the 2020 Millage rates and the public meeting starting at 6pm, both to be held in the Council Chambers; and (4) the August meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 4th at 6pm in the Council Chambers.

**Administrative Comments and Reports**

## 1. Mayor Johnson

(a) He announced that under Phase 2, City Hall will continue to be open to the public by appointment and in accordance with the Phase 2 guidelines, those employees who are able to work remotely will continue to do so. He mentioned that City staff has been working both onsite and offsite which has been a balance in conducting City business effectively, efficiently and safely. He stated that he will continue to monitor the process weekly and will make any necessary adjustments.

(b) He reminded everyone that recycling pickup, excluding glass and plastic bags, will return on Thursday, June 4th and garbage/trash will continue to be picked up every Wednesday. Also, in order to contribute to the natural beauty and quality of life for the residents of the City of Covington, he encouraged the public to bring their recycling and trash receptacles in after pickup.

(c) He mentioned that DOTD plans to go out for bid next spring for a roundabout at the corner of Jefferson and West 21st Avenue. The City will be responsible for the utility relocation work and some traffic delays should be expected when the work begins.

(d) He gave some updates on projects in the River Forest area:

(1) The smoke testing and video of the sewer lines has been completed and the data is being processed to create a scope of work for the repairs of the old terracotta sewer lines;

(2) The survey work has been completed along Lurline Drive and the design phase has begun;

(3) The design phase is complete on Patricia Drive and bids will be received in the next few weeks; and

(4) Due to some issues with the culverts in the Patricia Canal, a permit will be obtained and work will be performed to correct the problems.

(e) He announced that sewer repairs in the downtown area are complete and permanent patching is underway. Also, he mentioned that smoke testing and video of another section in the downtown area is complete and the process of repairing broken sewer lines will continue for some time.

(f) He stated that with regard to the blockage of the subsurface drainage along Rutland Street near the Tap Room, the survey work has been completed and the design phase for rebuilding the substructure on the eastern side of Rutland has begun.

(g) He announced that he has hired Allison Schilling of Forte & Tablada to act as a liaison between the City of Covington and LA DOTD. Ms. Schilling is an engineer and has recently retired from LA DOTD. He looks forward to working with Ms. Schilling as she works to improve the quality of life in Covington.

*(After the meeting, Mayor Johnson clarified that he has contracted with Forte Tablada in the person of Allison Schilling to act as a liaison between the City of Covington and LA DOTD. Ms. Schilling will act under the Professional Service Contracts section of the Covington Code of Ordinances and not as a City employee.)*

(h) He mentioned that he has reallocated some funds from the Recreation Department that were not spent this spring due to the stay-at-home order and has requested a proposal for improvements to the Ozone Park baseball field. He hopes to move forward with the replacement of the diamond, backstop and fencing in the first phase.

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

**Council Vice President Rolling** thanked Council Clerk Bonnie Champagne and the IT Department for their efforts in scheduling and organizing the past two Zoom meetings.

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

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

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