

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 10, 2020**

Council 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, Rick Smith and Larry Rolling

ABSENT: None

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

A Moment of Silence was observed.

Council President Rolling mentioned that tomorrow is Veterans Day and he recognized the veterans in the audience and expressed his appreciation to all veterans for their service.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman John Botsford.

APPEARERS

Council President Rolling introduced Mr. Meredith W. Berry, Jr., Founder and Executive Director of the Covington Concert Band, who thanked the Council and Mayor Johnson for their support and encouragement for the newly-created Covington Concert Band. Also, he introduced Mr. Erik Morales, the Musical Director of the Covington Concert Band, who thanked the City for its support.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilwoman Ludwig. 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. 2020-09-01** – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Adopting the 2021 Operating Budget and the Five Year Capital Outlay Budget for the Years 2021-2025 for the City of Covington (Rolling)

Council President Rolling led a discussion on Item No. 2020-09-01.

Councilman Botsford 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 Verret made a motion to amend Item No. 2020-09-01 as reflected in the printout dated November 3, 2020 and as further amended during the Council meeting on November 10, 2020, seconded by Councilwoman Ludwig. Roll call was unanimous to amend Item No. 2020-09-01. Item No. 2020-09-01 was amended as reflected in the printout dated November 3, 2020 and as further amended during the Council meeting on November 10, 2020.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-09-01, as amended, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-09-01, as amended. Item No. 2020-09-01 was adopted, as amended.

2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-09-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Setting the Compensation for the Mayor of the City of Covington for the Year 2021 (Rolling)

Council President Rolling led a discussion on Item No. 2020-09-02.

Councilman Verret 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 amend Item No. 2020-09-02 as follows: Page 1, line 22, should read, “1) Annual salary of \$90,669.28;”

Seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to amend Item No. 2020-09-02 as set out above. Item No. 2020-09-02 was amended as set out above.

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-09-02, as amended, seconded by Councilwoman Ludwig. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-09-02, as amended. Item No. 2020-09-02 was adopted, as amended.

3. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-09-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Declaring Surplus Property Owned by the City of Covington and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute Any and All Documents in Connection with the Donation of Said Surplus Property to the St. Tammany Parish Fire District No. 8 (Verret)

Councilman Verret led a discussion on Item No. 2020-09-03.

Councilman Smith 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.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-09-03, seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-09-03. Item No. 2020-09-03 was adopted.

4. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-09-04 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Declaring Surplus Property Owned by the City of Covington and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute Any and All Documents in

Connection with the Donation of Said Surplus Property to the Washington Parish Fire District No. 5 (Verret)

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.

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-09-04, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-09-04. Item No. 2020-09-04 was adopted.

5. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-09-05 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Declaring Surplus Property Owned by the City of Covington and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute Any and All Documents in Connection with the Donation of Said Surplus Property to the City of Bogalusa Police Department (Verret)

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

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-09-05, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-09-05. Item No. 2020-09-05 was adopted.

6. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2020-09-06 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Declaring Surplus Property Owned by the City of Covington and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute Any and All Documents in Connection with the Donation of Said Surplus Property to the Town of Abita Springs Police Department (Verret)

Councilman Smith 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 Verret made a motion to adopt Item No. 2020-09-06, seconded by Councilwoman Ludwig. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2020-09-06. Item No. 2020-09-06 was adopted.

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-27 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Recognizing and Supporting the Creation of the Covington Concert Band (Rolling)

Council President Rolling led a discussion on Resolution No. 2020-27.

Council President Rolling made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-27, seconded by Councilman Botsford. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-27. Resolution No. 2020-27 was adopted.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-28 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Execute an Amendment to the

Intergovernmental Agreement with the St. Tammany Parish School Board for the Provision of School Zone Crossing Guards (Verret)

Councilman Verret led a discussion on Resolution No. 2020-28.

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-28, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-28. Resolution No. 2020-28 was adopted.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-29 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Reappointment of Robert R. Barkerding, Jr. to the City of Covington Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board for a Term of Three (3) Years (Smith)

Councilman Smith led a discussion on Resolution No. 2020-29.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-29, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2020-29. Resolution No. 2020-29 was adopted.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Council District and Committee Reports

1. District A –

Councilman Lewis announced the “Fishes and Loaves Feeding Program” on Saturday, November 14th at the corner of North Filmore Street and West 33rd Avenue, which is a lunch giveaway hosted by Pastor Wardell Dyson of the Methodist Church. Also, he mentioned they have already started working on the next Martin Luther King Day program and encouraged anyone interested in helping with the event to contact him. Also, he congratulated his niece, Ashley Russell, for opening up her first business, “Ravish Boutique”. Also, he announced that the “Second Chance 5 on 5 Basketball Tournament” will be held on Saturday, November 21st at Peter Atkins Park and donations, sponsors and referees are needed.

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford gave an update from the Food Bank: (1) they sustained no damage from Tropical Storm Zeta; (2) the Pallets With Purpose fundraiser was cancelled, but the sponsors still made contributions; (3) they are experiencing an aluminum can shortage and donations of canned beans, vegetables, etc. are needed; and (4) the Turkey Trot Run/Walk fundraiser will be held on Thanksgiving morning and encouraged the public to participate.

3. District C –

Councilman Roberts congratulated everyone for making it through the budget process and expressed his appreciation to Administration for their efforts. Also, he thanked Mayor Johnson and CAO Erin Bivona for meeting with residents of River Forest and providing them with an update on upcoming projects. Also, in recognition of Veterans Day tomorrow, he recognized and thanked all veterans for their service.

4. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig mentioned that as of today, St. Tammany Parish Hospital had 9 COVID-positive cases and is hopeful the number will continue to decline. Also, she mentioned that the “Beer and Bites” fundraiser benefitting the Covington Boys and Girls Club will be held tomorrow, November 11th and is totally sold out. Also, she mentioned that City Hall will be closed tomorrow in observance of

Veterans Day and she thanked the veterans for their service. Also, she mentioned that Thursday, November 12th is the final “Chillin’ at the River” concert in the Bogue Falaya Park.

5. District E –

Councilman Verret mentioned there will be a Veterans Day Ceremony tomorrow at 10am at the Courthouse and encouraged the public to attend. Also, he mentioned that included in the ceremony will be a rededication of the St. Tammany Veterans Memorial Plaza where 500 bricks with names of local veterans etched in them have been refurbished.

6. At Large – (Vice President)

Councilman Smith mentioned that he has recently received several comments from citizens in which they have complimented the Public Works Department and the great job they are doing. He added that the residents stated the guys are very polite and professional. He congratulated the Administration and Chris Davis for the compliments.

7. At Large (President) –

Council President Rolling mentioned that five new businesses applied for occupational licenses within the past few weeks and he encouraged the public to support our local businesses. Also, he mentioned that the Carnival in Covington Committee is planning the Carnival event for 2021. He added that due to the change in the St. Tammany Parish School schedule, the parade will be held on either the Saturday or Sunday before Mardi Gras and the definitive date will be announced in the near future. Also, he wished everyone a blessed and Happy Thanksgiving.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Johnson

- (a) He mentioned that CAO Erin Bivona and he had a great visit with about 40 homeowners from River Forest and commended them for their community activism.
- (b) He reported that several people in our community have overdosed on heroin recently and the Police Department plans to remind everyone that Operation Angel is available for those who may need help.
- (c) He is excited to announce that Royal Carriages from New Orleans is now offering mule-drawn carriage tours of Downtown Covington.

Councilman Lewis inquired as to the status of the new business that was considering opening at the corner of West 21st Avenue and Tyler Street and if the traffic analysis that DOTD required had been received.

Mayor Johnson responded that the business has not yet made a decision about the project.

Councilman Lewis inquired about the status of the pool at Peter Atkins Park and whether or not there would be a problem hiring enough lifeguards to staff the pool.

Mayor Johnson responded that he was not aware of any problems with a lack of lifeguards and that he would look into the matter.

Councilman Lewis inquired into the status of the cemetery issue concerning Ms. Elliott and if the City had come up with a solution to the problem.

Mayor Johnson responded that he communicated to Ms. Elliott that the City would not be able to resolve her situation.

2. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer – Mrs. Bivona acknowledged and thanked Finance Director Stephen Sanders and his department for their hard work during the budget process.

Council President Rolling reminded everyone that the December Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 8th at 6pm in the Council Chambers.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.

/s/ _____
LARRY ROLLING
Council President

/s/ _____
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk