

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 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 and City Attorney Rod Rodrigue

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Rick Smith.

APPEARERS

1. Council President Rolling introduced Mrs. Priscilla Floca, who gave an update from Keep Covington Beautiful.

2. Council President Rolling introduced Ellen M. Creel and Richard Ducote, candidates for District Judge, 22nd Judicial District Court, Division J, who introduced themselves to the Council, Administration and public.

3. Council President Rolling introduced Warren Montgomery, candidate for District Attorney, 22nd Judicial District Court, who introduced himself to the Council, Administration and public. (*Candidate Vincent Wynne was invited to appear but was unable due to a prior commitment.*)

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Smith 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. 2020-09-08 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 42 Environment, Article III. Litter, Section 42-64. Responsibility (Rolling)

Council President Rolling led a discussion on Item No. 2020-09-08.

(*Councilman Lewis left the meeting at 6:55pm.*)

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.

Council President Rolling made a motion to table Item No. 2020-09-08 for further review by the Council's Public Works/Public Safety Committee and City staff, seconded by Councilman Botsford. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Lewis) to table Item No. 2020-09-08. Item No. 2020-09-08 was tabled.

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2020-26 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Execute an Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement with the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office for Dispatch Services (Rolling)

Council President Rolling led a discussion on Resolution No. 2020-26.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2020-26, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Lewis) to adopt Resolution No. 2020-26. Resolution No. 2020-26 was adopted.

Items for discussion:

Council President Rolling presented and read the 2021 Council meeting schedule into the record.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Council District and Committee Reports

1. District A – Absent.

Councilman Botsford read the announcements for District A in Councilman Lewis' absence: (1) Early voting will be open from October 16th through October 27th and he encouraged everyone to vote early to avoid the long lines and to become familiar with the amendments on the ballot before going to the polls; (2) There will be an Informational Booth on Saturday, October 17th from 2pm until 4pm at 1351 North Columbia Street where volunteers will provide information on "Get out the Vote"; (3) the Wilson Cemetery "Clean-up Day" will be held on Saturday, October 17th at 9am; and (4) the City of Covington will be presenting a concert by "The New Orleans Mystics" on Thursday, October 15th from 5pm until 7:30pm at Peter Atkins Park.

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford gave an update on the Food Bank: (1) they received a surplus of donations and were able to help out not only the Northshore community but other food banks in the hard-hit hurricane areas; (2) as of mid-September, they set a record in which they have distributed more than one million pounds of food this year; (3) the Pallets With Purpose fundraiser has been cancelled; (4) the Resale Shop is open and donations are needed; and (5) they are experiencing an aluminum can shortage and donations of canned vegetables, etc. are needed. Also, he congratulated Kimmi Duncan from the Covington Fire Department for being named "First Responder of the Year for 2020".

3. District C –

Councilman Roberts mentioned that today is former Councilman Sammy O’Keefe’s birthday and he wished him a happy birthday. Also, he mentioned that CLECO has been trimming trees and replacing the burnt out lights along 15th Avenue and thanked them for their efforts. Also, he requested that Mayor Johnson address some of the issues the City has encountered with the recent utility rate increase. Also, he appreciates the Mayor’s willingness to meet with River Forest residents to address some of their concerns and looks forward to scheduling the meeting. Also, he mentioned that he has lost several personal friends to suicide this year and encouraged everyone to check on family and friends regularly and if anyone is suffering from anxiety or depression, please urge them to contact NAMI for assistance.

4. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig mentioned that as of October 12th, St. Tammany Parish Hospital had 10 COVID-positive cases and is hopeful the number will continue to decline. Also, she mentioned that the St. Tammany Parish Library offers classes and has resources available to the public. She encouraged everyone to check their website at sttammanylibrary.org or follow them on Facebook for more information. Upcoming events: Blood Drive on Wednesday, October 14th in the Bogue Falaya Hall; “Chillin’ at the River” concert series begins with a performance by “The New Orleans Mystics” on Thursday, October 15th at 5pm at Peter Atkins Park with future concerts being held every Thursday through November 12th at the Bogue Falaya Park; Sunset at the Landing concert on Friday, October 16th at the Columbia Street Landing; the Wilson Cemetery Community Cleanup Day on Saturday, October 17th at 9am; Trickin’ and Treatin’ free kids’ event on Saturday, October 24th from 10am until 12pm at the Covington Trailhead; the Downtown Covington Pumpkin Stroll Shop & Dine event hosted by the Southern Hotel from October 29th through November 1st; and the Oxtoberfest Beer Festival to benefit the Covington Boys and Girls Club has been cancelled but a smaller fundraiser is being planned for Wednesday, November 11th with more details to come.

5. District E –

Councilman Verret encouraged everyone to vote in the upcoming election and mentioned some important dates and deadlines: early voting starts on Friday, October 16th and runs through October 27th from 8am until 7pm; the deadline to request an absentee by mail ballot is October 30th; and the deadline for the Registrar of Voters in St. Tammany Parish to receive a mail-in ballot is November 2nd. Also, he recited a quote by Thomas Jefferson, “We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate.”

6. At Large – (Vice President)

Councilman Smith mentioned that he has been contacted by some residents about the manner in which CLECO has been trimming tree limbs and requested that Administration contact CLECO’s local representative about these concerns.

Mayor Johnson responded that he has been in touch with CLECO to express the City’s concerns.

Councilman Smith reminded everyone that “A Taste of Covington” will be held on Friday, October 23rd and Saturday, October 24th. Also, he mentioned that the Men Who Cook fundraiser to benefit the Children’s Advocacy Center (Hope House) has been cancelled this year but some “celebrity” cooks have partnered with local restaurants to offer customers the opportunity donate funds in exchange for some of their local favorites. He announced that he has partnered with Beck-N-

Call Restaurant and a free serving of bread pudding will be given to anyone donating \$10 or more to Hope House.

7. At Large (President) –

Council President Rolling mentioned that 20 new businesses applied for occupational licenses between July 1st and October 9th and he encouraged the public to support our local businesses.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Johnson

(a) He commented on some of the issues that have arisen with regard to the recent increase in utility rates.

(b) He recited a quote that a gentleman shared with him recently, “There is no place on earth better to be than right here right now.” He encouraged everyone to realize how fortunate and blessed we are to be living in this town at this time.

2. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer –

Mrs. Bivona thanked Mayor Mark for helping some residents with their questions regarding the utility rate increase and commended him for being the best Utility Billing Specialist in the City.

Council President Rolling reminded everyone about some important dates:

- The 2021 Budget Work Session will be held on Tuesday, October 20th at 5pm in the Council Chambers. If needed, the review of the budget will continue on Wednesday, October 21st at 5pm in the Council Chambers;
- The November Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10th at 6pm in the Council Chambers; and
- 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 8pm.

/s/ _____
LARRY ROLLING
Council President

/s/ _____
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk