

CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

April 13, 2021

Councilman Vice President Smith called the regular meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Roll call was as follows:

PRESENT: Peter Lewis Sr., John Botsford, Cody Ludwig,
Mark W. Verret, Joey Roberts, and Rick Smith.

ABSENT: Larry Rolling, Cody Ludwig,

ALSO, PRESENT: Mayor Mark R. Johnson, Chief Administrative Officer Erin Bivona, City Attorney, Rod Rodrigue and Police Chief, Stephen Culotta.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. Jan Butler.

Councilwoman Ludwig arrived at the meeting at 6:05 P.M.

APPEARERS

Councilman Vice President Smith introduced **Mrs. Shanna Felker**, co-owner with her husband Josh Felker of Fitness Equipment Solutions. She expressed how there is a need for play for children especially now after Covid. She introduced **Mr. Brad Pittam, with Kompan Playground Equipment**, which is the largest manufacture of playground equipment. Kompan also partners with Fitness Equipment Solutions. **Mr. Pittam** stated their research has shown that play helps children develop in many positive ways. He is hoping to work with Covington to upgrade Peter Atkins Park and also the Nose Park which are two examples of a need for equipment upgrade.

Councilman Lewis thanked Mrs. Felker and Mr. Pittam for their presentation and look forward to working with them in the near future for some upgrades.

Councilman Vice President Smith recommended that they get with Mayor and Administration to discuss the future upgrades.

Councilman Botsford commented how he loves the idea of mixing adult and children working out and thanked them for coming out.

Councilman Roberts stated that some of the points that they made of childhood obesity and the importance of having someplace for kids to go and mental health and all the compacity that a playground brings to a community is huge and thanked them for coming out.

Councilman Vice President Smith introduced Ms. Chiquita Lattimore from United Way and the Prosperity Center. Ms. Lattimore stated that the Prosperity City is there to help residents of Covington with financial issues. There is help offered to prepare tax returns, credit counseling, credit coaching and financial education workshops. The biggest program offered is called IDA. It helps

individuals purchase their first home, start a small business or expand their business or someone that needs to continue their education. The Program runs Monday -Friday 9:00am to 3:00pm. This program was brought to Covington with help from United Way, Mayor Johnson and Councilman Peter Lewis. Ms. Lattimore stated they serve seven parishes and partner with Habitat for Humanity. The prosperity number is 985-244-6580 and is located at 834 North Columbia Street.

Mayor Johnson stated that the Prosperity Center has full support from him and the City Administration to help facilitate United Ways success with the Prosperity Center.

Councilman Smith addressed **Councilman Lewis** for a requested he had due to him having to leave the meeting early. **Councilman Lewis** made a motion to table his Resolution Number 2021-08 that is on tonight's agenda, until the May 4, 2021 meeting. **Councilman Botsford** seconded the motion. **Roll Call was unanimous to table Resolution Number 2021-08. Resolution Number 2021-08 was tabled.**

Councilman Lewis left the meeting at 7:22pm.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Roberts made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by **Councilman Verret**. **Roll Call: Yeas-6 Nays-0 to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.**

REGULAR AGENDA

Unfinished Business

Items to be voted on:

1.PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2021-02- 01 – (THIS ITEM WAS TABLED AT THE MARCH 2, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING)-An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Covington Code of Ordinance Chapter 14. Animals Article 1. In General Section 14-10 Public Nuisance. (Smith)

Mayor Johnson briefly went over the amended changes that were made to Item No. 2021-02-01

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 Botsford made a motion to adopt Item No. 2021-02-01 seconded by **Councilman Roberts**. **Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2021-02-01.**

Item No. 2020-02-01 was adopted.

2. PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2021-03-01-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 4. General Provisions, Section 4.3 Accessory Use regulations, Section 4.305. Development Standards (Zoning Case No. 20-11-03TXT) (Ludwig)

Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer stated Chris Brown, Building Official for the City of Covington will answer any technical questions about the regulations that were drafted.

Chris Brown, Building Official for the City of Covington made a brief comment.

Councilwoman Ludwig gave an overview of the proposed Ordinance.

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 Roberts made a motion to adopt Item No. 2021-03-01 seconded by Councilman Botsford. Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2021-03-01.

Item No. 2020-03-01 was adopted.

NEW BUSINESS

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-06- A Resolution of the City of Covington Council Informing the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality of the Actions Regarding the Sewerage Treatment facility (MWPP) (Smith)

Councilman Smith introduced **Mr. David Curtis, Operations Manager from Curtis Environmental Services** to give an overview of the (MWPP) audit.

Mayor Johnson wanted to give kudos to the **Council, Senator Patrick McMath and Representative Mark Wright**. He stated that this Council for the past couple of years has been vigilant about funding the repairs at the wastewater treatment plant and tonight's good report from the (MWPP) audit is a result of the decisions that were made from you.

There were no public comments on Resolution 2021-06.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-06, seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2021-06. Resolution No. 2021-06 was adopted.

2. RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-07- A Resolution of the City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Execute a Sidewalk Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) for Maintenance of a Sidewalk to be Constructed as Part of the US 190B@Jefferson Avenue Roundabout Project. (Verret)

Councilman Verret asked **Mayor Johnson** when this project was going to start and when it was going to be completed.

Mayor Johnson responded that there was no set date, and it was a DOTD project.

Councilman Vice President Smith asked if the utilities had been moved. **Mayor Johnson** responded, yes, the utilities have been moved.

There were no public comments on Resolution 2021-07.

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-07, seconded by Councilman Ludwig. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2021-07. Resolution No. 2021-07 was adopted.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Council District and Committee Reports:

1. District A-

Councilman Lewis -Councilman Botsford reported on District A for Councilman Lewis. A reminder of Juneteenth, which will be on June 18 and 19, 2021. On June 18th's evening event, there will be a dance team from Chicago performing and on June 19 the Freedom Parade will begin at 11:00am. They are looking for volunteers and parade riders. If anyone is interested, please call Councilman Lewis at 225-202-3030. The prosperity Center is open. One Covington and Future Leaders of Louisiana are looking for leaders to help young men and women to become leaders within District A. For more information, please contact Councilman Lewis.

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford gave an update for the Food Bank; (1) In March, 1637 Households received assistance, which is a 11% increase from March. (2) 1964 boxes of food was distributed last month. (3) The Food Bank also wanted to mention a big welcome to the Prosperity Center and was glad to have them here in Covington. (4) Currently the most needed items are: Dry Beans, Rice, Chicken Broth, Canned Peas and Cereal. (5) The Food Bank Golf Tournament is scheduled this year for Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at Beau Chene in Mandeville. Golfers' registration and corporate sponsors are still available. Contact Yvette Roysell at 985-893-1485 or yroysell@northshorefoodbank.org.

3. District C-

Councilman Roberts mentioned that 15th Street has stripes. The residents have been asking and now it is done. So, knowing there is a visual at night is an asset and safety as well. He stated that there is work being done on 15th and traffic is being routed through The Village Subdivision. There is not a concern, he just wanted to thank the resident of The Village of being open as they possibly can and wanted to remind the community to drive with respect to the residents. Councilman

Roberts also wanted to thank Coastal Waste. They missed a street in his neighborhood and responded within an hour to return and pick up the trash.

4. District D-

Councilwoman Ludwig mentioned that the St. Tammany Parish Library is back to their normal hours. She encouraged everyone to use the online free resources that the library has to offer found at www.sttammanylibrary.org. She recognized Melissa Hodgson, AVP/ Communications from St. Tammany Parish Hospital in the audience. Also, she mentioned that as of today, St. Tammany Parish Hospital has only 4 COVID-positive cases and they have administered 21000 vaccines since December 2020. You can go on “My Chart” if you are a patient of St. Tammany or call 985-898-4001 for an appointment to receive a vaccine. Upcoming events: Mayor Johnson will give more details on the more extensive music events happening in Covington but, she just wanted to remind everyone of the Heritage Foundation Antique and Unique’s Festival this weekend, April 17 and 18, 2021 at the Covington Trailhead from 10am to 5pm.

5. District E-

Councilman Verret thanked Councilwoman Ludwig for covering the events. He stated that the Covington Heritage Antique and Uniques Festival has more vendors this year than ever before. He mentioned he will be riding around as the unofficial Mr. Hospitality between the Heritage Foundation and the City of Covington. A meeting was held with the Heritage foundation and they are going to have two new events. The first is “History and Mysteries” which will be on October 24, 2021. This is where the history of a particular block that is chosen in the City of Covington will be discussed. The second is on Veteran’s Day where a movie night will be attempted. He stated it will be held at Bogue Falaya Park. The Covington film will be shown which is about 12 minutes and maybe John Wayne’s, In Harms Way. Councilman Verret also thanked Councilman Vice President Smith for being the interim Council President tonight.

6. At Large (Smith)-

Councilman at Large Smith reminded everyone of the Northshore Heart Walk on May 8, 2021. This will be the first time this event is in Covington and encouraged everyone to get out and exercise and support our local businesses.

7. At Large (President)-

Council President Rolling-Absent

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Johnson

- (a) He Stated “I, Mark Johnson, Mayor of Covington hereby proclaim Councilman Mark Verret the official Mr. Hospitality of the Antique and Unique’s Festival”.
- (b) He mentioned the quarterly blood drive at the Bogue Falaya Hall will be Wednesday April 14, 2021 from 10am to 6pm. You can make a appointment with the Blood Center or walk in. Also, you may gift your blood donation to Christopher Robert or the designee of your choice.
- (c) He stated Thursday Night April 15, 2021 at Peter Atkins Park, “That Band” will be performing starting at 5:30pm. They will be doing “Soul Train Review”. There will be social distancing circles at the park.
- (d) He stated also on Thursday night, the Covington Concert Band will be having their premier performance at the First Baptist Church in Covington at

7:30pm. They will be performing, “A night at the Movies’. This is a free concert. The band consist of over 50 musicians. They will also be performing the same concert a second time on Saturday April 17, 2021 at 3:00pm in Peter Atkins Park.

(e) He stated on Friday April 16, 2021, “Sunset at the Landing” sponsored by Heritage Bank, has been moved to the Bogue Falaya Park due to a Construction Project at the Landing. All the sidewalks have been removed and are being replaced with all ability access sidewalks.

(f) He stated on Thursday, April 29, 2021 Chillin at the River- Christian Surface and Ghost Town “Go Country” will be performing at Bogue Falaya Park at 5:30pm to 8:00pm. with special guest “The Mandy Milk Shakers” performing at intermission.

3. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer-

Mrs. Bivona gave an update on the hack that occurred on March 11, 2021 on the City of Covington Computer Systems. She stated City Hall, The Trailhead and the City of Covington Fire Department are almost fully functional. Quenton Belanger, IT Director and Trey Mahon, Deputy Chief of the police department have been working very hard to get us up and running. The only thing the city is lacking at this time is getting the historical emails at this point and the backups from the server which are the older documents. The Police Department is operational, and they are able to respond to emergencies but, are not as far along as the other departments. They are having a few more technical issues such as an older phone system that needs to be upgraded. There are phones in place now, but they will not be the permanent system. As of today, Munis, which is our financial system, is up and running. As far as the server backup, Quenton is in the process of restoring over 1.7 million files and will be able to restore as recent as January 23, 2021. Anything between January 23, 2021 and March 11, 2021 may not be recovered.

Councilman Vice President Smith reminded everyone that the May Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 6pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm.

/s/ _____
LARRY ROLLING
Council President

/s/ _____
JOANN RUCKER
Council Clerk