

CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

November 02, 2021

Council President Rolling called the regular meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Roll call was as follows:

PRESENT: Councilman Peter Lewis Sr., Councilman John Botsford, Councilman Mark W. Verret, Councilman Joey Roberts, Councilwoman Cody Ludwig, Councilman-At -Large, Vice President Rick Smith, and Councilman At Large, President 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 Chris Davis, former Public Works director for the City of Covington.

Mayor Mark Johnson stated on October 27, 2021, he proclaimed it to be Christopher Davis Day in the City of Covington. Christopher Davis, former Public Works Director started working for the city in 1994 and retired on October 27, 2021 after working for the City of Covington for 27 years. Mayor Johnson read a dedication to Chris's work over the years and introduced Christopher Davis.

Christopher Davis stated the best part about working this job was the family of not just with Public Works but, Administration, the Police Department, the Fire Department and the Council. He thanked the Council for all the many kind words that was always given. He thanked each Council members for his years and if he had to pass the torch to anyone it would be Jim O'Berry.

The Council expressed their appreciation to Chris and his hard work over the years of always taking care of any concerns that arouse in due time and his hard work as Public Works Director. They wished him the best of luck in his retirement, and he will be missed. A resident, Mr. Meredith Berry also thanked Chris for his hard work.

Mr. Jim O'Berry stated he is looking forward to the challenge and working with everyone in the city. Councilman Verret made a motion to approve. Councilman Smith seconded the motion.

Councilman Rolling asked for a motion to confirm Mr. Jim O' Berry to the position of Public Works Director of the City of Covington. Councilman Verret made a motion to confirm . Councilman Smith seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous at 7-0. Mr. Jim O'Berry was confirmed as the new Public Works Director of the City of Covington.

APPEARERS

Council President Rolling introduced Mr. Erik Morales and Ms. Meredith Berry with the Covington Concert Band. Mr. Morales gave an update on where the band is and the progress the band has made over the last year. Mr. Meredith Berry stated since the band has outgrown the Furman Auditorium, he is working with Covington High to have their performances there.

Mayor Mark stated he would like to make a clarification that he is not opposed to the band playing outside the city. He stated he thought it was a wonderful ambassador for the city, but he felt that we do need them to play in Covington.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll Call: Yeas-7 Nays-0 Absent-0 to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.

REGULAR AGENDA

Unfinished Business

Items to be voted on: None

Items for Discussion: None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Items removed from the consent calendar: None.

B. Items to be voted on:

- 1. RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-18** -A Resolution of the Covington City Council Acknowledging Receipt and Compliance with the Louisiana Attestation Questionnaire from the Legislative Auditor's Office.(Rolling)

Mrs. Erin Bivona, CAO stated that this is an annual questionnaire that is associated with our audit making sure we have followed protocol.

There were no public comments on Resolution 2021-18.

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-18, seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2021-18. Resolution No. 2021-11 was adopted.

- 2. RESOLUTION NUMBER 2021-19**- A Resolution of the Covington City Council to Increase the Lease Amount for the Parcel Leased by the City Located at the Southwest Corner of E. Lockwood St. and N. Hampshire St. Adjacent to the Trailhead, Property Description PT SQ 13 Meas 100x15x104x30 in the Division of St. John Covington (Verret)

Councilman Verret gave an explanation of the resolution.

Mr. Rod Rodrigue gave a brief statement.

There were no public comments on Resolution 2021-19.

Councilman Roberts motion to adopt Resolution No. 2021-19, seconded by Councilman Botsford. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2021-19. Resolution No. 2021-19 was adopted.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

A. Council District and Committee Reports:

1. District A -

Councilman Lewis stated he would like to thank the Chief Ferrell and Police Department for their continuous work. He thanked the Administration for their open communication and the support of the Council. He reminded everyone of MLK coming up and is open to volunteers. He hopes the Council will be involved with some part of the event. He also stated that on November 07, 2021 from 6:00pm to 9:00pm, the St. Tammany Parish Democratic Party will be hosting the Kathleen Blanco Gala at the Trinity Banquet Hall located at 1000 Caruso Boulevard in Slidell, La. Tickets will be available on Eventbrite.

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford stated he would also like to thank the Chief Ferrell and the Police Department for their hard work. The Food Bank averages for October were 87 households served daily, 98 boxes, and the total for October was 4217 total households and 1375 boxes. The total year to date for 2021 is 13768 Households served for a total of 15,600 boxes. November will start their busy donation season. If anyone is interested in doing a food drive, please contact Ginger at gkunkle@northshorefoodbank.org. “Pallets with a Purpose” will happen this year. It will take place at the Food Bank on November 12, 2021. The November most needed items are canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned beans, canned soup and cereal. He stated the Porch Fest will be this Saturday, November 6, 2021 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm. which is a free event. All proceeds raised will go to the Hope House.

3. District C –

Councilman Roberts also thanked Chief Ferrell and the Police Department for their presence in River Forest concerning the speeding has been phenomenal. The closure of 15th street and Patricia Drive is congested at this time. Its nice to see the progress. Remember November 11, 2021 is Veterans Day and he stated he would like to thank all the veterans for their service.

4. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig stated Melissa Hodgson from St. Tammany Parish Hospital had no major things to report thankfully to the increase in vaccinations. The in-patients at STPH Covid census has been stabilized at 7-10 patients a day. Even though traditional Beer Fest for Octoberfest this year di not happen, there was a beer dinner at the Seiler Bar in which \$10,000.00 was raised for the Boys and Girls Club of Covington. She stated Mr. Tim Lantrip owner of the English Tea Room, was hit by a car on Boston Street and remains in critical condition. Please keep Mr. Tim and his wife Jane in your prayers. She also stated a few days later there

was another accident on Boston St. with a vehicle hitting the Art Gallery. Events going on in the city are , Coffee with the Mayor on Thursday November 4, at 9:00am and also the Three River Art festival coming up next weekend.

5. District E –

Councilman Verret stated he had a very nice meeting with the Debris Contractor. He stated they went over the plan of where we are and was very satisfied to the response that was given. He stated the city is looking pretty good with just a few areas to focus on. He also mentioned to keep Tim and his family in your prayers.

6. Councilman At Large (Vice President)

Councilman Smith reminded everyone this upcoming Sunday, November, 7, from 4:00pm-7:00pm, the Gala of the Men Who Cook. It will be located on top of the Justice Center parking garage on Jefferson Avenue. It is a great cause in which the proceeds go to the Hope House. He stated his concern for the recent accidents on Boston Street have occurred due to people not paying attention and not speeding. He asked Mayor Mark and Mrs. Erin Bivona to consider petitioning DOTD again to install a traffic light at Vermont and Boston Street. It was done around ten years ago and was denied.

Councilman Lewis forgot to mention The American Legion Post #16 will be hosting the Veterans Day Program on November 11, 2021. From 10:00am to 11:00am there will be food and drinks and the program will start at 11:00am. They are welcoming home all the GWOT, Afghan and Iraq Veterans.

7. At Large (President)

Council President Rolling stated the Three Rivers Art Festival is on November 13-14, 2021. He stated the city is looking good and Administration has been working very hard. The Council has been working hard and the department heads. Tomorrow night is the CBA meeting at 5:30pm at the Seiler Bar. With the Holidays right around the corner , please support your local businesses. Carnival in Covington will have a presentation at the CBA meeting. Everything is looking great for Carnival 2022 which is March 1, 2022. If anyone is looking to get involved , please go to www.carnivalincovington.com .

B. Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Johnson

a. He stated that Thursday night November 4, 2021 at 7:00pm there is the ON Stage performance of the New Orleans Mystics at the Furman Auditorium . Tickets are \$20.00 each.

b. He stated he had directed the debris contractor to postpone the beginning of the 3rd and final pass from this past Monday to this coming Monday. This is important due to residents not being able to get everything out of their yard street side. By postponing this for one week it will allow residents to get more debris to curbside. The monitoring company will continue to confirm all debris is picked up. White goods has really not started for pickup. Public Works has been picking them up and storing them so the debris company can pick them up.

c. He stated hazardous stumps on city property that are determined to be hazardous by FEMA, are cataloged and submitted for removal.

d. He stated the huge root balls that are on side of the roads requires a different type of equipment. These will be picked up last.

e. He stated if a resident feels as though they have been overlooked, please email Mayor Mark at mayormark@covla.com.

f. He stated regarding DOTD, each of the incident reports from the police department have been given to DOTD or they are in the process of being given to DOTD.

g. He stated that Administration met with DOTD in Hammond and also had a meeting with them today. Mayor Johnson asked Mrs. Erin Bivona, CAO if there was anything from the meeting she would like to share?

Mrs. Erin Bivona CAO stated at the meeting yesterday the discussion was on the roundabout at Jefferson Ave. and Boston Street. The accidents on Boston Street were discussed and improvements at 21st and Tyler Street. Also, Collins Blvd. was discussed.

Mayor Mark stated when he was elected Mayor, he suggested that we have a liaison between the City of Covington and DOTD. He is looking to have the Liaison address the Council at the December meeting on updates.

h. He stated that there are two really nice pieces of news from the Covington Fire Department:

(1.) The Covington Fire Department Operator , Trevor Betz is being deployed with the St. Tammany Parish Emergency Response Team to Grand Isle. They will be rotating some of our other Firefighters also. Grand Isle is still without power and water.

(2.) The second news is that we are very happy to announce that effective October 1, 2021 the Public Protecting Classification of the City of Covington Fire Department has improved to the Property Insurance Association to a Class 2. This could translate to lower insurance premiums for many of our residents. Fire Chief Blocker set this out as a goal. He worked for it and achieved it. Congratulations is needed to Chief Blockers. (claps)

i. He stated that there is a lot going on with our Capital Projects in the city and introduced Ms. Callie Baker , City Engineer.

Ms. Callie Baker gave a thorough report on the Capital Projects from the past month and the project projects in the coming month.

Councilman Botsford asked Mrs. Bivona in the meeting with DOTD concerning Collins Blvd, what came out of that meeting?

Mrs. Bivona stated that they discussed the fact that it was time to get funding for the next phase to widen Collins Blvd from Lee Road to the intersection at Hwy 190 and Hwy 25. A discussion was that the data was outdated, and the traffic count was outdated, and it needed to be looked at.

Councilman Lewis asked about the crossways.

Mayor Mark stated the preliminary plans emphasize pathways on each size of Collins Blvd. and the potential to cross at the roundabouts.

2. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer/Director of Administration-None

- **Councilman President Rolling reminded everyone of the 2022 Budget Work Session to be held on November 16 and November 17, 2021 at 5:00pm at the Council Chambers. Also, the December City of Covington Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 14th at 6pm in the Council Chambers.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 PM.

/s/ _____
LARRY ROLLING
Council President

/s/ _____
JOANN RUCKER
Council Clerk