

CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 08, 2022

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, Councilwoman Cody Ludwig, Councilman Mark W. Verret, Councilman-At - Large, Vice President Rick Smith, and Councilman At Large, President Larry Rolling.

ABSENT: Councilman Roberts

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

A Moment of Silence was observed. Councilman Rolling asked to remember Mr. Meredith Barry, “The Founder of the Covington Concert Band”, family in your prayers. Mr. Barry passed on January 28, 2022.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Nahketah Bagby, City of Covington Director of Planning.

Councilman Rolling recognized three outstanding employees and their retirement from the City of Covington. Each was given a plaque of recognition. Mrs. Nahketah Bagby, City of Covington Planning Director will be retiring on March 25, 2022. She has worked for the City for 21 years. Mrs. Aimee Faucheux City of Covington’s Cultural Arts and Events Director retired on February 25, 2022. She has worked for the City for 12 Years. Mr. Chris Davis, former Public Works Director worked for the City for 27 years and retired at the end of last year. They all will be truly missed.

APPEARERS:

- 1. Mr. Warren Montgomery, District Attorney for St Tammany Parish** spoke on a proposed tax for the District Attorneys office that will be on the ballot for April 30, 2022.
- 2. Ms. Thalia Nakouzi, Health Equity Supervisor for the Louisiana Department of Health through the STD/HIV/Hepatitis program.** Accompanying her was **Ms. Nikole McArthur, Linkage to Treatment Coordinator.** She spoke on their Syringe Service Program.
- 3. Ms. Angel Nelson, Interim CEO for the Boys and Girls Club of Metro Louisiana.** She gave a update on some of the changes of the organization. **Mr. Ron Smith, Club Director** and several children of the Boys and Girls club was also present.
- 4. Ms. Pamela McKay** founder and director of, “God’s Unchanging Hands Feeding ministry Inc.”, presented a PowerPoint on the Community Garden located in Bogue Chitto Park. Also, information on the planned Martin Luther

King, Jr. Children's Community Garden that will be located at Greater Starlight Church. Ms. Beatrix Brown, a student intern also spoke.

5. **Councilman Verret** introduced the representatives from DOTD and expressed his question concerning the Roundabout at Jefferson Ave. and Boston Street. He stated at some point the roundabout changed. His questions were: What is the program? Why did it change? What are the problems with it? Why did it become a oblong? Are there any traffic studies? Mr. Ryan McMillan with DOTD introduced his colleagues in the audience including Mr. Patrick Toney, Project Manager, Mr. Larry Sharp, District Administrator in the Hammond District, and Aiden Eymard who is the designer for the project. There was a lengthy discussion between the Council and the representatives. Mr. Larry Sharp spoke briefly. The traffic Study for this project will be submitted to DOTD by the Council Clerk for a Public Records request on this project.
6. **Councilman Verret introduced Mr. Cameron McKnight and Mr. Adreas Herasymuik.** They presented a presentation to the Council in hopes of requesting a Skate Park be built in the City of Covington.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilwoman Ludwig. Roll Call: Yeas-6 Nays-0 Absent-1 to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.

REGULAR AGENDA

Unfinished Business

Items to be voted on:

1. **PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ON NO. 2022-02-01--** An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Covington Code of Ordinances Chapter 90. Taxation to Add Article V. St. Tammany Parish Sales and Use Tax Uniform Collection Procedures (Smith)

Councilman Smith gave a brief overview of the Ordinance. **Rod Rodrigue, City Attorney** gave a brief statement.

Councilwoman Verret 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 Smith made a motion to adopt Item No. **2022-02-01** **seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2022-02-01. Item No. 2022-02-01 was adopted.**

2. **Items for Discussion: None**

NEW BUSINESS

A. Items removed from the consent calendar: None.

B. Items to be voted on:

1. **RESOLUTION NO. 2022-02-A** Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming The Appointment of Philip Rapp as The Council District At Large Appointment To The Covington Planning and Zoning Commission to Fill an Unexpired Term (Smith)

Councilman Smith introduced Mr. Rapp. **Mr. Rapp** gave a brief statement. **Councilman Verret** stated he could think of no better choice for this position. **Councilman Botsford** welcomed him to the board. **Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-02, seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2022-02. Resolution No. 2022-02 was adopted.**

- 3. RESOLUTION NO. 2022-03-** A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Use of a Portion of the Unconstructed Right of Way on South Pierce Street Between West 19th Avenue and West 20th Avenue as a Driveway. (Ludwig)

Councilwoman Ludwig made a brief statement. **Rod Rodrigue** explained Resolution No. 2022-03

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-03, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2022-03. Resolution No. 2022-03 was adopted.

- 4. RESOLUTION 2022-04-**A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Execute an Amendment with Covington Community Garden for Creation and Maintenance of an Educational Community Garden on City Property (Lewis)

Councilman Lewis gave a brief overview of Resolution 2022-04. **Mayor Johnson** gave a statement on Resolution 2022-04. Mrs. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrator Officer also made a brief statement. **Mr. Elzy** who will be overseeing the New garden made a brief statement.

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-04, seconded by Councilman Botsford. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2022-04. Resolution No. 2022-04 was adopted.

C. Items for discussion: None.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

A. Council District and Committee Reports:

1. District A -

Councilman Lewis stated he wanted to thank everyone for coming out to the meeting tonight. He thanked everyone for working so hard for Mardi Gras. He thanked Councilman Rolling and Amy Tucker for their hard work for Carnival in Covington. He apologized to his constituents in District A and part of District B for what happened this passed Mardi Gras. On Sunday May 1, 2022 in Bogue Chitto Park there will be a Blacnic 1st Annual Picnic at the park. Everyone is welcomed. For more information call Danyell Fabre at 985-334-0632. He stated the VFW and Project Blessing will be hosting an Adult Prom on April 30, 2022 starting at 7:00pm. Contact Tiffany Cyprian for more information 985-710-5699. He stated on Saturday April 16, 2022 at Rev. Peter Atkins Park for Covington Health and Wellness Festival. There will be a Health Walk at 9:00am . The event is from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Covington recreation Department has registration going on for t-Ball and Baseball. He stated he has Raffle tickets at Bounce Back Nutrition for the Chef Soiree 2022 at Bogue Falaya Park on March 20, 2022. He stated Juneteenth 2022 is already in the planning stage on June 19, 2022. There will be a Juneteenth

Planning meeting on March 28, 2022 at 5:00pm at Bounce Back Nutrition.

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford stated the update for the foodbank. The average for February was 94 daily households and 106 daily boxes. The total for February was 1320 for total households and 1489 total boxes. The 2021 February comparison was 136 and the average daily boxes was 151. It has come down a little bit. If anyone would like to do any type of food drives, please contact Ginger Kunkle at gkunkle@northshorefoodbank.org. The March most needed items at the Foodbank include items for the Diabetic T-2 Boxes including Unsweetened Box Cereal, Oatmeal, low salt canned vegetables, preferably spinach and okra. A events to look forward to is Yoga in the Warehouse on Thursday, March 10, 2022. Doors open at 5:30pm and class starts at 6:00pm. Yoga Class is courtesy of Bayou Yoga. The Annual Foodbank Golf Tournament will be on Tuesday, March 10, 2022 at Beau Chene Country Club. In Covington Point, there is work being done on the main bridge at Gratitude Dr. off Collins Blvd. **Mayor Johnson** gave a brief update on this progress.

3. District C –

Councilman Roberts could not be at the meeting tonight, so Councilman Botsford gave his Comments. He stated what an amazing Mardi Gras that we had in Covington and Kudos to everyone that was involved. He said he thanked the Police Departments for their presence throughout the city during Mardi Gras. Th CPD was very visible along with the Sheriffs Department. The kids costume contest was a great success. There were 20 participants. Special thanks to Aquistapaces Supermarket for their sponsorship and support of the event. District C projects continue to be ongoing, progressing and moving forward. The 11th street bridge is a concern due the timeframe quoted but is glad it is being completed.

4. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig stated the St. Tammany Parish Hospital currently has 9 in Covid care. They have three new technology agreements. The first enables lung cancer diagnosis. The second is a new image machine. The third is a neurosurgical robotics that allows neurosurgeons to preform higher level procedures. The Knights of Columbus are doing their fish fries on Fridays at St. Peters Church. On Saturday March 12, 2022 at 12:00pm we will be doing our St. Patrick's Day March. It starts at the Taproom and ends up at Jewels Cigar Shop on Rutland St. There will be a block party after the march until 5:00pm. There will be food and drinks available. There will be bagpipes players and marching groups. The 2022 Grand Marshall will be Ryan Schimpf. In addition, Tim Lantrip, owner of the English Tea Room who was hit by a vehicle in downtown Covington and is recovering very well and will be the Honorary Grand Marshall this year.

5. District E –

Councilman Verret stated he wanted to thank the Council and the Administration for the completion of the Nose Park Track. It came out great. Kudos to the Callie Baker, City Engineer. She really played a good role in moving this project forward. He stated that the city did a

phenomenal job for Mardi Gras. Larry Rolling deserves a lot of credit. (applauds). So keep Covington Rolling.

6. Councilman At Large (Vice President)

Councilman Smith stated he had friends and family who had a fabulous time in Covington Mardi Gras Day and stated Councilman Rolling played a big roll in this happening. He stated it was the best Mardi Gras the City of Covington has ever seen. He complimented the Police Department and also the City of Covington's Public Works Department who had the City looking top notch after Mardi Gras Day. **Councilman Verret** added a thank you to the Lions Club. It was a team effort. Carnival in Covington and the Lions Club nailed it. **Councilman Botsford** also acknowledged the hard work the Covington Police Department and Public Works did for Mardi Paws.

7. Councilman At Large (Vice President)

Council President Rolling thanked everyone for the nice comments. The board of directors for the Carnival in Covington Parade has worked very hard for the last two years . This was a great successful Mardi Gras season. He stated he wanted to give kudos to the Krewe of Olympia, the Lions Club, The Carnival in Covington Parade and Mardi Paws. There was a lot of volunteers in these organizations that worked very hard to put on a show for the City of Covington. The event after the parade, which was Tammany Gras, was a huge success . He stated Mardi Gras 2023 is on February 21. We are already working on Mardi Gras 2023. He stated the Police Department did a great job. The Fire Department and Public Works also did an amazing job. Our business community had sponsorships and really participated in this Mardi Gras season . A big thank you to all of them. He stated the city of Covington is in the process of redistricting and there are two public meetings that will be coming up on Wednesday, March 16th at 6:00 o'clock in the Council Chamber and also Wednesday, March 23rd at 6:00 o'clock in the Council Chambers. The introduction of the ordinance for the redistricting will be on the agenda for the Council Meeting on Tuesday, April 5th, 2022 and a final vote will be on the agenda for the Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 6:00pm at the council here in the council chambers. He stated that Kelly Kicking Cancer 5K Fun Run will be on March 12, 2022. Registration is at 7:30am in the morning.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Mark Johnson

- a. He stated the Krewe of Olympia had one of the largest crowds ever. He thanked the Krewe for the wonderful parade that they gave our city. The next day he received the arrest report from the Police Department, and it was zero. He stated what a wonderful reflection on our community.
- b. He stated he would like to thank the Lions Club and the Krewe of Covington for the traditional Mardi Gras day parade. He thanked Larry Rolling and Amy Tucker and the entire Carnival in Covington Committee for a wonderful Mardi Gras Day parade and the event after at the trailhead.
- c. He stated on Ash Wednesday he received the arrest report from the Police Department. Again, it was zero.

- d. He stated this last Sunday there is another event that has become a signature event in the City of Covington, Mardi Paws. It was a dog gone good time.
- e. He thanked the Covington Police Department but also the Madisonville Police Department, the Pearl River Police Department, the Mandeville Police Department, the Bogalusa Police Department, the Folsom Police Department, the Ponchatoula Police Department, the St Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office and the Louisiana State Police. As well as the Fire Departments from Mandeville, Madisonville, Goodbee, Abita Springs and Fire District No. 12. He also thanked the City of Covington Public Works Department, Coastal Environmental Services and Acadian Ambulance. Great professionalism across the board.
- f. He stated special thanks to Erin Bivona and her team in Administration. He stated they are the backbone of the City and their support of all the other departments is crucial.
- g. He stated a review of capital projects updates are:
 - *The large meter replacements are on currently on hold for they have been on backorder since last fall.
 - * The downtown sidewalk rehabilitation project began this week. He stated he has asked Callie Baker, City Engineer to provide a map overlay of the affected areas.
 - * All Permits have been secured for the de-snagging of Blue Swamp Creek . The project is currently advertised for bid. Th bid opening is scheduled for March 31, 2022.
 - * The design is complete for the new sewer forced main crossing Ronald Reagan Highway to the new sewer treatment plant. The bids for construction are due on March 29, 2022.
 - * The design for the new pump to replace the influent pump at the wastewater treatment plant is 90% complete.
 - * The design for the creating redundancy with the waste water belt press is 100% complete and in review.
 - * The idea to apply for a state grant for the bell press project began with a meeting I had with my friend Senator Jack Donahue in the late summer of 2019. He introduced the application in Baton Rouge and then handed the baton along to newly elected senator Patrick McMath for the Spring of 2020 session. In that ranking we finished priority #2. Which means we will get preference in the following legislative session. Senator Donahue, Representative Mark Wright and Senator McMath were able to get a \$900,00.00 grant for this purpose.
 - * We have received approval from the DOTD for a flashing light crosswalk on Boston Street near SSA and we will be pursuing quotes in house.
 - * Engineer Callie Baker has indicated that with all the mention projects now leaving the design phase and leading into construction, she hopes to find time to continue the research on speed mitigation incline, decline, formally known as speedbumps.
 - * He stated he will continue to look at small curbing and pedestal delineators to consciously slow drivers to slow down.
- h. **He stated** the Police Department has made over 2000 traffic stops in the past several months.

h. He stated portable speed detector has been ordered and hope to get that next week.

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

- **Council President Rolling reminded everyone of the April 2022 City of Covington Council Meeting which will be held on Tuesday, April 05, 2022 at 6pm in the Council Chambers.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Video of this meeting can be found on www.covla.com.

/s/ _____
LARRY ROLLING
Council President

/s/ _____
JOANN RUCKER
Council Clerk