

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

April 5, 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, Councilman Joey Roberts, Councilwoman Cody Ludwig, Councilman Mark W. Verret, 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 .

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Clerk JoAnn Rucker.

APPEARERS:

1. **Mrs. Tiffany McGary Cyprian** spoke on her concerns with Building Permits, Standards, and Protocol in the City of Covington. She also spoke of her concern of an incident involving the Mayor on Mardi Gras Day 2022.
2. **Mr. Cleveland Wester, MSW who is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Youth Service Bureau in Covington** gave a brief overview of the Youth Service Bureau. Mr. Wester spoke of all the programs available at the YSB and the fund raising events including the Chef Soiree 2022 which took place on March 20, 2022.

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

A. Items to be voted on:

1. **PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ON NO 2022-03-01**— An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Development Agreement Between the City of Covington and the Privette Family, LLC. (Smith)

Councilman Smith gave an overview of Item No. 2022-03-01. There were comments from each person of the Council.

Mr. Rod Rodrigue, City Attorney gave a brief statement.

Councilman Rolling 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 Roberts made a motion to adopt Item No. 2022-03-01 seconded by **Councilman Smith**. Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2022-03-01. Item No. 2022-03-01 was adopted.

2. PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ON NO. 2022-03-02- An Ordinance of the City of Covington to Amend the 2022 Operating and Capital Budget (Smith) **Councilman Smith** made a brief statement.

Mayor Mark Johnson gave an overview of Item No. 2022-03-02.

Councilman Rolling 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. 2022-03-02 seconded by **Councilman Smith**. Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2022-03-02. Item No. 2022-03-02 was adopted.

B. Items for Discussion: None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Items removed from the consent calendar: None.

B. Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2022-05-A Resolution of the Covington Council Informing the Louisiana department of Environmental Quality of the Actions regarding the Sewerage Treatment Facility (MWPP) (Smith) **Councilman Smith** introduced **David Curtis** of Curtis Environmental Services, Inc. **Mr. Curtis** gave an overview of the report done by Curtis Environmental Services.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-05, seconded by **Councilman Verret**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2022-05. Resolution No. 2022-05 was adopted.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 2022-06- A Resolution of the City of Covington City Agreement with St. Tammany Parish Government for Drainage Improvements in the Savannahs Subdivision (Botsford)

Councilman Botsford gave an overview of Resolution No. 2022-06.

Mrs. Bivona, Chief Administrator Officer gave a brief comment.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-06, seconded by **Councilwoman Ludwig**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2022-06. Resolution No. 2022-06 was adopted.

3. RESOLUTION 2022-07-A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Capital Outlay and Encumbrance Rollovers from the 2021 Budget to the 2022 Budget (Smith)

Councilman Smith gave a brief statement.

Mrs. Bivona, Chief Administrator Officer gave a brief comment.

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-07, seconded by **Councilman Roberts**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2022-07. Resolution No. 2022-07 was adopted.

4. RESOLUTION NO. 2022-08- A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Enter Into a Cooperative Agreement with the Covington Concert Band (Rolling)

Mrs. Bivona gave a brief comment.

Councilman Verret recognized the late Mr. Meredith Berry.

Councilman Lewis clarified the contract.

Mrs. Tiffany Cyprian asked if the Covington Concert Band was now a non-profit.

Mrs. Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer stated yes .

Councilman Rolling made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-08, seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2022-08. Resolution No. 2022-08 was adopted.

C. Items for discussion: Councilman Smith stated Mr. Guidry could not be at the meeting tonight due to health issues and will make his presentation at the May 03, 2022 Council Meeting.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

A. Council District and Committee Reports:

1. District A -

Councilman Lewis stated he would like to apologize to Mrs. Cyprian for Mardi Gras Day. He stated as elected officials we are looked up to as role models and we are regarded as examples to our community and the people we represent. As one person said, “we represent one of the coolest cities in the world.” Does that mean we are perfect? No, it does not. Does that mean we cannot make mistakes? No, it does not. But how we react when we do make a mistake determines our character. I apologize because I want to represent a positive forgiving city. With that said, taking responsibility in situations like this need to happen. Not only to allow the city to move forward but maybe to teach such reason for our youth and take responsibility. What we experienced in our city is not a political gain or an attack on any one person. This was always about dealing with the safety of our citizens no matter where they are from. He stated that District A use to have a parade for Mardi Gras. (Councilman Lewis passed out a picture from the past of this celebration). Councilman Lewis gave an overview of all the events that went on at this time. Are we ignored ? Yes, we are but not in the sense we need questionable behavior. This Council has worked hard to bring this community together. When you make a mistake, apologize. You need to make it right and move forward. Stop making excuses for something you did wrong. He stated the events going on in District A are:

*April 23, 2022 at Greater Starlight Baptist Church they will be doing a dedication to the new community garden they started. This will take place at 11:00am across the street from the church. Contact Pamela McKay at 985-237-3138.

* Bogue Chitto Park First Annual Blacknic in the Park- Contact 985-334-0632 Sunday May 1, 2022.

* The Adult Prom with Project Blessing will be at the VFW on April 30, 2022 starting at 7:00pm. Contact Mrs. Tiffany Cyprian at 985-710-5699

* Juneteenth will be on June 18, 2022. The next meeting is April 11, 2022 at Bounce Back Nutrition.

* April 16, 2022 in Peter Atkins Park -Covington Health and Wellness Festival starting at 10:00am.

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford stated the update for the foodbank. The average households for March were 87 daily households and 111 daily boxes. Compared to 2021 the average households were 120 and average boxes were 137. The total for March was 1399 for total households and 1557 total boxes. They have a new program this year called the Food Bag Program. This program is when sick kids in low income areas are not in school will be brought lunch. They would like to expand that into our area. If anyone would like to do any type of food drives, please contact Ginger Kunkle at gkunkle@northshorefoodbank.org. The April most needed items at the Foodbank include Corn Bread Mix, Tomato Sauce, Rice, Oatmeal, and Canned Vegetables. They are looking for volunteers at the warehouse and the retail store. They are participating in a new program this year on April 7th -9th called Kendra gives back to Northshore Food Bank. There are two ways to shop. On April 7th, 2022 5-7pm at Lakeside Shopping Center or online. Use code GIVEBACK-BRONP They will donate 20% of your purchase to the Food Bank. There golf tournament is Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at Beau Chene Golf Course. May 22, 2022 is Fools Fest. It will benefit the Northshore Food Bank and the Boys and Girls Club. He reminded everyone of the Farmers Market at the Trailhead on Wednesdays and Saturdays next to the Police Department. He also stated STARC needs Mardi Gras Beads. He wished everyone a Happy Easter.

3. District C –

Councilman Roberts stated there will be a Bunny Breakfast at the YMCA with the Knights of Columbus on Saturday April 09, 2022 from 8:00am to 10:00am. It's a \$5.00 donation and you get to take pictures with the bunny. He mentioned the Health and Wellness Fair on April 16, 2022 at Peter Atkins Park and encourage everyone to attend. He thanked Mr. Cleveland Wester for appearing tonight. He recognized Ron Smith from the Boys and Girls club in the audience and stated what a good job he does at the Boys and Girls Club. He stated he wanted to iterate on what Mrs. Tiffany Cyprian had spoken of earlier. I lost one of my basketball players to a drunk driver and it's probably one of the hardest moments I have ever been through. In my life, I have lost relatives to old age to cancer, but I've never last someone so sudden where they just get a phone call, but they let you know this is what happened. Yesterday there was a huge court issue with four young ladies that were in the car it was a DWI incident and two of those young ladies passed away. It is those things that come up that you say was there somebody present proactively that could have stopped something from happening. If you see something say something do something and maybe, we can stop some incidences from occurring so just a reminder do not let things slide like that.

4. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig wanted to mention the Library. They are trying to develop a strategic plan for the library's future. On their website is a survey and it is also on Facebook. There is only one Covid Care case at the St. Tammany Hospital at this time. She reminded everyone of Rockin

the Rails that will be this Thursday, April 7, 2022 at the trailhead at 5:30 pm. She also mentioned the Free Easter Event at the Trailhead on April 16, 2022. Also, Spring for Art is this weekend April 9, 2022 from 6:00pm-9:00pm. Also, remember to support our local businesses.

5. District E –

Councilman Verret commented to Mrs. Cyprian that it takes courage to come up and speak to the public and the City Council appreciated her coming forward. He stated that he had some of his constituents contact him today of their concerns that across from Downtown Drugs where the sidewalks are getting repaired, four live oaks and one red oak tree have disappeared. He would like Administration to check into this for this is part of what we enjoy about Covington. What makes it worse was the four live oaks were actually planted by families in the 1990 for their children. He wished everyone a Happy Easter.

6. Councilman At Large (Vice President)

Councilman Smith stated that the Spring for Art is a big boost for the businesses in town. He stated the CBA Meeting is Next Wednesday April 13, 2022 at the 19th Hole located at 1645 N. Hwy 190 in Covington. The social starts at 5:00pm -6:00pm and the meeting starts at 6:00pm. Just a reminder to support your local businesses.

7. Councilman At Large (President)

Council President Rolling recognized former Councilwoman Francis Dunn in the Audience. He stated that the redistricting ordinance was introduced tonight, and it will be voted on at the May 03, 2022 meeting. Just a note we had two public meetings on March 16, 2022 and March 23, 2022 in this Council Chambers on the redistricting. We did have a few citizens show up and give their input. Each Councilman and Councilwoman worked very hard for the interest of the whole city, and we came up with a good redistricting plan. He stated with Easter coming up, there is a lot to be thankful for. We live in a great city. Remember to support your local churches. There are two Fridays left before Easter. A lot are having fish fry's.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Mark Johnson

- a. He thanked the Council for the Budget Amendments. These budget Amendments are what allow our city to keep our projects moving forward.
- b. He stated that each project that we had in the design phase last summer, got delayed during the Ida recovery. As we come out of that into January, February and March of this year, those projects prices were coming in 30, 40, 50 percent over what we had originally budgeted. We may see some more of this down the road.
- c. He stated in the case of Lurline Drive, tonight we did that budget amendment. In the case of De-snagging Blue Swamp Creek, we are actually trying to juggle around some other budget areas so that we can continue to move forward with that project.
- d. He stated that the guard railing at the southeast corner of 11th Avenue and Mile Branch has now been replaced and stated he has advised Engineering and Public Works that on future bridge replacements, that we work with the Concrete aesthetic guardrail.

- e. He stated that Covington was listed in the most recent issue of Southern Living Magazine as one of the top twenty small towns in America. It was nice for such an esteem publication.

Councilman Roberts stated Kudos to us and the City of Covington for making this list.

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

- **Council President Rolling** reminded everyone of the **May 2022 City of Covington Council Meeting** which will be held on **Tuesday, May 03, 2022 at 6pm in the Council Chambers.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 PM.

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

/s/ _____

LARRY ROLLING

Council President

/s/ _____

JOANN RUCKER

Council Clerk