

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

June 07, 2022

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

Roll call was as follows:

PRESENT: 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: Councilman Peter Lewis Sr., Councilman John Botsford

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Covington Police Chief , Michael Ferrell

APPEARERS:

1. **Councilman Verret introduced Mrs. Doree Kelly with Northshore Enduring Hope.** Mrs. Kelly spoke of the needs for resources for children in Foster Care. Northshore Enduring Hope provides that. The Resource Center is located on Hwy. 59 by appointment only. Mrs. Kelly's number is 504-339-1382 if you need these resources or want to donate. Tax -deductible donations can be mailed to 99 Bogue Falaya Dr., Covington, La. 70433 or via PayPal nSENDURINGHOPE@Bellsouth.net.
2. **Mrs. Tiffany McGary Cyprian** spoke of the response she received from Administration on questions she had asked at the previous Council Meeting regarding permits.
Mr. Cecil Hudson with Hudson's Solution Group made a brief comment.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll Call: Yeas- 5 Nays-0 Absent-2 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 2022-05-01**— An Ordinance amending Section 2-206 of the City of Covington Code of Ordinances to Revise the Dollar Threshold for Requests for Proposals for Selection of Professional Contract Services (Smith)

Councilman Smith gave an overview of Item No. 2022-005-01.

Councilman Roberts made a comment.

Mayor Mark Johnson gave a brief comment to a residents question.

Erin Bivona, CAO explained the Ordinance.

Councilman Roberts made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Smith. There were no objections to closing the public hearing. The public hearing was closed.

Councilman Verret made a motion to adopt Item No. 2022-05-01 seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll Call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2022-05-01. Item No. 2022-05-01 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. 2022-09-A** Resolution of the Covington City Council Selecting the Official Journal for the City of Covington for a Term of One (1) Year (Rolling)

Councilman Rolling made a brief comment.

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

- 2. RESOLUTION NO. 2022-10-** A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Councilman At Large Appointment of Pat Stelz to the Covington Tree Board for a Term of Three (3) Years (Smith)

Councilman Smith spoke about Ms. Pat Stelz. Ms. Stelz was not present.

Erin Bivona, CAO made a brief comment.

Council President Larry Rolling stated he had talked to administration on doing website update on the Tree Board and asked Erin Bivona the status.

Mrs. Bivona stated that the Tree Board wanted to have a page on the City of Covington's website. They have worked together with Sarada Bonnett, Director of Events and her assistant Josh Davis to put together a page for their review.

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

- 3. RESOLUTION NO. 2022-11-** A Resolution of the Covington City Council Urging the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to Mitigate, to the Fullest Extent Possible, the Impacts of Constructing and Operating the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion (Verret)

Councilman Verret request to table Resolution 2022-11. Resolution No. 2022-11 was tabled.

- 4. RESOLUTION NO. 2022-12-** A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Execute a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with God's Unchanging Hands Feeding Ministry for Creation and Maintenance of an Educational Community Garden on City-Operated Property (Lewis)

Erin Bivonna, CAO gave a brief overview of Resolution No. 2022-12.

Ms. Pamala McKay gave a brief description of what the Community Garden is all about.

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

C. Items for discussion:

- 1. Police Chief Michael Ferrell** gave an overview of some things the Police Department is working on for the summer months. He stated with school being out he is using this time to train the officers for active shooters. He stated that they also offer “The Alert Training”. This trains the personnel of the school on how to respond to such an event. He stated they will be having a kids camp coming up July 11, 2022 through July 15, 2022. It will also involve the Boys and Girls club. The DARE officer is in full swing for the summer. He is passing out footballs, basketballs, and soccer balls throughout the community getting to know the kids in the community and also, so they know who he is. Lieutenant Blount is assigned to Community Policing. He is riding around the city getting to know whose who. He stated within the last year the Covington Police Department recovered over 38 illegal possessed firearms from the area. He also reminded the citizens of the police departments tip line. One can leave a unanimous tip by texting, CPTLA to 847411. He stated that they are in the process of placing cameras in high crime areas in the city. **Councilman Roberts asked** if there was a curfew in Covington ? **Chief Ferrell stated** yes, the times are Monday-Friday it is 11:00pm - 6:00am and Saturday-Sunday it is 12:00am to 6:00am. This included children 17 and under. **Councilman Smith** spoke of his concern to the children riding around the City of Covington on golf carts. He asked Chief Ferrell if he could ask his officers to watch for these golf carts. He also spoke of his concern of the peddlers and door to door solicitors.
- 2. Mrs. Erin Bivona, Chief Administration Officer** gave a complete detailed overall Hurricane Preparation Plan for the City of Covington. She went over all the improvements for the plan due to the experiences from Hurricane Ida. She went over each step thoroughly. She stated how important it was to stay in touch with the EOC (St. Tammany Parish Emergency Operation Center). She introduced Mr. Kevin Sudbury, Project Superintendent for CERES Environmental Services. Mr. Sudbury presented a PowerPoint for the City of Covington Disaster Preparedness and answered questions from the Council. **Ms. Jan Butler, a Covington resident,** asked a question about the debris disposal. **Ms. Margo Dandry, a Covington Resident** spoke of her concerns after Hurricane IDA and FEMA.

D. Councilman Rick Smith made an Announcement as follows:

The City Council of the City of Covington, State of Louisiana, plans to consider adopting a resolution ordering and calling a special election to be held in the City of Covington to authorize the renewal of an ad valorem tax therein and to authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds at its meeting on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, 222 E. Kirkland Street, Covington, Louisiana (Smith)
Mr. Hardy Andrews, Associate Attorney of Foley and Judell, L.L.P. of New Orleans explained the announcement.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

A. Council District and Committee Reports:

1. District A -

Councilman Verret read Councilman Lewis's report on District A due to Councilman's Lewis's absence. He stated on June 26, starting at 2:00pm the Rock the Block Event small business pop up shop and networking. There will be Vendors, food, music, and more location: Tree of hope building For more information contact Danyell Fabre 985-334-0632. On, June 25, starting at 7:00 pm Back to the 90's Fundraiser Sadie Hawkins Dance Food, music, fun and more; location VFW Ronald Regan Highway. Singles: \$20-----Couples \$30 For more information contact Tiffany with project blessing at June 19, starting at 12pm. There will be a Father's Day Pop up Shop at Bogue Chitto Park in Covington including Games, dance teams, performances and more. For more information contact DJ Bankroll Facebook page.

June 18, starting at 9:00 pm. The Juneteenth community after party all black attire; will be at the VFW on Ronald Regan Highway. There will be Free food, music, and more. For more information contact DJ Bankroll.

Main Event: On Saturday, June 18, 2022 the City of Covington Juneteenth Celebration begins with theme of "One Love" creating unity and spreading love. Starting at 7:45 am we will be lining up for the 3rd annual Freedom Parade, starting at Peter Atkins Park and end at Peter Atkins Park. The route can be found on Juneteenth Facebook page. The Parade will be led by our Soul Super Saints of NOLA, passionate darling, A body by Royalty and many others, CPD, Covington Fire Department. At 11:00 am, the Juneteenth Program begins (Educate, Empower, Entertain) by hosted Dinesha Faith. There will be Special performances by and Michael Jackson of NOLA, Big 6 Brass Band, Ole and NU Style Fellas, Problem Solvaz and others. The evening is full of Education, Empowerment and Entertainment, vendors, resources, free food, and games for the everyone. volunteers are welcome.

On June 12, starting at 4pm at the Fuhrman Auditorium, One Covington in conjunction with the DFER (Department for Education Reform) will host City of Covington Inaugural Junior Juneteenth Fashion Show. Special Guest and Hosts include, NOLA Fashion Week Icon Tracee Dundas, Southern Charm actor Justin Revees music by DJ Bankrole, decoration by Reborn Design, and your very own Councilman Lewis. There will be two sets including youths (10-14) and juniors (15-18) in which each will be judged separately by five judges on attire, essay, and stage presence. Winners will receive \$1500 first place, \$1000 second place for

Junior, and \$250 and \$150 for youth (these funds will be to use for education advancement).

Most importantly special thanks to ONE Covington, DFER, City of Covington, NOLA Fashion week and all the hard-working members, sponsors. Top Sponsors include, Lake Academy, Aquistapace, Starlight Baptist Church, Community Church, Bounce Back Nutrition, MSH Architect and many, many Facebook donors.

We invite Everyone to come out and support your youth as we celebrate, “One Love” moving in one direction for One Covington.

Any and all donation can be sent to One Covington to support the scholarship fund.

2. District E –

Councilman Verret read his report on District E since his was reporting on District A for Councilman’s Lewis. stated he serves as co-captain for the Fools of Misrules. The Fool Fest was in May and on June 14, 2022 the Boys and Girls Club and the Northshore Food Bank will be receiving two substantial checks from this event. He wanted to thank the City of Covington’s Cultural Arts and Events for assisting and putting the event on. He also thanked everyone for their participation and sponsorship and the Fool Fest will be back next year (Applauds from the audience).

3. District B

Councilman Roberts read **Councilman Botsford’s** report on District B due to Councilman’s Botsford’s absence. stated the update for the foodbank. He stated for May, there was an average of 86 daily households and 102 daily boxes. Compared to May 2021, the average was down from 105 daily households and the average boxes was 119. During the summer months donations slow down so please donate. If you want to help, go to www.northshorefoodbank.org and reach out to Ginger Kunkle at gkunkle@northshorefoodbank.org. He stated St. Tammany Chambers Afterhours is on Thursday, June 9 from 4:30pm to 6:30pm.

4. District C-

Councilman Roberts stated that the Tree Board has been mentioned several times and he just wanted to reiterate that there is a process for removing trees from your property so please follow through with the city. We are trying to protect integrity of what Covington looks like and we want to preserve as many as we can. He stated the bids are out for Lurline Drive and we are waiting for those to get back on June 23, 2022 so the repairs can start. Redwood Drive culvert is being replaced so there is a little re-routing of traffic in the area. This is going to help with the drainage. He wanted to thank Public Works for clearing the canal between Kathleen and Ellen Drive. He stated June 6 was D-Day and we also just celebrated Memorial day so, thank you goes out to everyone who has served for there is a lot of faceless heroes out there. He also wanted to thank the Eagle Scout for putting all the markers on 15th Street.

5. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig wanted to mention the passing of Betty Cronin who was larger in life in personality. Her dedication to the city and all of her students for she was very big park of the St. Tammany Parish School system. She stated she will miss seeing her smile around town. She stated that Melissa Hodgson from STPH reported that COVID numbers are on the rise again. The STPH and COAST will be hosting a luncheon called, “ Living Life in a Post Pandemic

Reality”. You can register at www.sttammany.health/livinglife . The St. Tammany Parish Library has a lot of Summer Activities so go to www.sttammanylibrary.org for information. Make sure you sign up for NIXEL Alerts . It helps for keeping updates on things in the city such as Street closures, etc.

6. Councilman At Large (Vice President)

Councilman Smith stated that Mrs. Betty Cronin had such a huge impact on so many people. So many of her former students just loved her. She will be missed and never forgotten.

7. Councilman At Large (President)

Council President Rolling stated he had the opportunity to participate in the Martin Luther Kings Community Garden dedication this pass Saturday. It is located right across from the Greater Starlight Baptist Church. The kids worked really hard on this garden. Southern Hotel representatives were there and a few others cooking the vegetables that were harvested. He wanted to give the kudos to the children and the volunteers and the parents who were working with them. He stated the CBA meeting is going to be on July 6, 2022 at the Rockin Blues Café on N. Columbia Street. It starts around 5:30pm.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Mark Johnson

- a. He stated he had a few DOTD tidbits. Hwy 25 near Lake Ramsey is closed this week replacing a few culverts.
- b. He gave an update on the Bogue Falaya Bridge stating that DOTD has had one planning meeting with the selected contractor, Boh Brothers. They have not had a pre-construction meeting yet. Once the project is started , Boh Brothers will have 495 days to complete the new bridge. So, keep in mind we are looking at a couple of years.
- c. He stated regarding the Jefferson and 21st Avenue roundabout, it is estimated to go to contract in two to three months and once that is done , DOTD will have a preconstruction meeting to discuss the contractors gameplan. It is anticipated that they will start construction this fall and finish by the end of the year.
- d. He stated that July 2nd, 2022 will be Sparks in the Park. There will be the hot dog eating contest and replacing the watermelon eating contest with pie eating contest this year. It is really a treat to see the Covington Concert Band play at the park and they finish the concert with the fireworks synchronized to the music is really a special event.
- e. He stated a big thank you to Eddie d’Hemecourt, the Eagle Scout who put in the mile markers on 15th Avenue running path.
- f. He stated a shoutout to the 15th Street Flyers who are organizing their 4th of July run.
- g. He stated he wanted to talk about the cleanliness of the city. He said most of you know he despises litter and he not talking just about the paper bag on the road but the corrugated signs that are put on the telephone poles and he would like to thank Public Works for helping him with that. If you do put one out for a garage sale , just remember to pick it up after the sales is over.
- h. He stated he also considers litter as our bulk green pickup and recently it has been brown. It has been on the street so long it has vines and grass growing threw it. Coastal Waste does a great job but, like everyone else they are having a shortage of employees especially commercial license drivers. They

have some days that the boom trucks are parked in the plant yard with no one to drive them. When Coastal picks up our branches and leaves and load them on a truck, they drive them to a transfer station in Lacombe. It is a 32 mile round trip. He has made arrangement for Coastal to bring our green waste to the dump in Lake Ramsey on a 6 mile round trip which will improve our efficiency greatly. In addition, since we are now taking their waste, they will be paying us to dump there waste in our landfill. So, this is a win for us and also for Coastal and an increase in efficiency and a decrease in fuel cost for them.

Councilwoman Ludwig asked the Mayor when the crosswalks by SSA were going to be installed. Mayor Johnson stated Callie Bake, the City Engineer is working on that, and we have ordered the pieces to come in and we are waiting on that.

B. Erin Bivona, Chief Administrative Officer/Director of Administration congratulated Mayor Mark and his wife Karen for their new grandchild that will be here any day.

- **Council President Rolling reminded everyone of the July 2022 City of Covington Council Meetings which will be held on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 6pm in the Council Chambers.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM.

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

/s/_____
LARRY ROLLING
Council President

/s/_____
JOANN RUCKER
Council Clerk