

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
October 04, 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 Joey Roberts

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Melissa Henry, St Tammany Parish Clerk of Court.

Councilwoman Ludwig arrived at the meeting at 6:02pm

APPEARERS:

1. **Councilman Lewis** introduced Mrs. Tiffany Cyprian. Mrs. Cyprian spoke on the upcoming VFW Indoor/Outdoor market to be held on December 03, 2022 from 8:00am to 4:00pm at the VFW located at 2013 Ronald Reagan Hwy, Covington, La. 70433.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

REGULAR AGENDA

Unfinished Business

- A. Items to be voted on: None**
- B. Items for Discussion: None**

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Items removed from the consent calendar: None.**
- B. Items to be voted on:**

1. **RESOLUTION No. 2022-22** A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Execute a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with

the State of Louisiana for State Capital Outlay Funding For Downtown Historic District Overlays Phase II (Smith)

Councilwoman Smith gave an overview of Resolution No. 2022-22.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-22, seconded by Councilwoman Ludwig. Roll call was; Yeas- 6 Nays-0 Absent-1 to adopt Resolution No. 2022-22. Resolution No. 2022-22 was adopted.

- 2. RESOLUTION No. 2022-23** A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Execute a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the State of Louisiana for a Direct State Allocation for Covington Police Department Equipment (Smith)

Councilwoman Smith gave an overview of Resolution No. 2022-23.

Councilman Botsford made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-23, seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll call was; Yeas- 6 Nays-0 Absent-1 to adopt Resolution No. 2022-23. Resolution No. 2022-23 was adopted.

- 3. RESOLUTION No. 2022-22** A Resolution of the Covington City Council to adopt the St. Tammany Parish Hazards Notification and Reporting Plan Revised Through June 2022 (Roberts)

Councilman Smith gave a brief introduction of Resolution No. 2022-22 for **Councilman Roberts.**

Chris Brown, Building Official gave a detailed overview of Resolution No. 2022-22 and answered questions from the Council.

Mrs. Bivona, CAO gave a few comments.

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2022-22, seconded by Councilman Verret. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2022-22. Resolution No. 2022-22 was adopted.

Mayor Johnson gave Kudos to Mr. Brown for recently hosting a Seminar for Flood Plan Managers from across recently at the Bogue Falaya Hall and did a phenomenal job.

C. Items for Discussion:

- 1. Mrs. Melissa Henry, St. Tammany Parish Clerk of Court** presented a detailed presentation about her office and things that are going on in Baton Rouge that will be affecting the elections in the future. There were several comments from the Council with a brief discussion. The Council thanked Mrs. Henry for her presentation and the wonderful work the Clerk of Court Office provides to the Community.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

A. Council District and Committee Reports:

- 1. District A –**
- 4. Councilman Lewis** reminded everyone of the VFW Indoor/Outdoor Market on December 03, 2022 from 8:00am to 4:00pm at the VFW located at 2013 Ronald Reagan Hwy, Covington, La. 70433. He stated over the weekend there was more violence in the City of Covington. He stated the Council has had many meetings on this subject and the Covington Police Department has been doing a fantastic job to try to head off this violence. He

asked Administration if they had any plans to help with the violence or to help the Council or any reports for the community.

2. District B –

Councilman Botsford stated he had no report from the Food Bank at this time due to the change in the regime. He reminded everyone to shop local. He stated the Farmers market is on Wednesdays at the Trailhead and Saturdays by the Police Station. We have a lot of local vendors that we could always help. If possible, eat local and shop local.

3. District C–

Councilman Roberts – Councilman Smith gave the report on Councilman Roberts district for him stating to his constituents on Lurline Drive, it looks as though the street is getting a major upgrade. He asked the residents that are effective directly with the construction to be patient and keep in mind that progress is being made. He stated if there are any issues as work is being done, please contact Councilman Roberts. He wanted to thank the Covington Police Department for their visibility in the neighborhoods during morning school hours. The presence of the Covington Police truly de-escalates speeders. He also reminded everyone of the night out against crime at the trailhead which is tonight until 9:00pm.

4. District D –

Councilwoman Ludwig stated she is also dealing with a change of reign over at the St. Tammany Parish Hospital, so she does not have much to report from them. She had Kudos for Public Works in dealing with some residents and drainage problems and their rapid response on handling the calls. Oxtoberfest Beer & Bites will be October 14, 2022 from 6-9pm at the Covington Trailhead and Oxtoberfest Beer Fest will be October 15, 2022 from 3-6pm at the Covington Trailhead. Tickets can be purchased at www.oxtoberfest.org. She stated the money goes to the Boys and Girls Club of Covington.

5. District E -

Councilman Verret stated on October 16, 2022 at the Seiler Bar and Tap Room, the Saint John's Fools of Misrules will be doing a fund raiser to benefit the City of Covington Police and Fire Department. The main way the money will be generated is the Chicken Drop. To find out more about the Chicken Drop please inquire the internet for this information. He stated that on October 25, 2022 the City Council will be having a Budget workshop at 5:30pm here at the Council Chamber with Department Heads and Administration. He stated a previous Budget workshop was held on September 27, 2022 and was very successful in covering our proposed 2023 Budget. The Administration is working very hard on getting the answers to the questions submitted. He stated the first event with the Covington Heritage Foundation will be Whisperings and it is sold out. It will be a living history tour of Covington's Cemetery No. 1 on October 30, 2022 with modern day actors portraying historic personages that are buried in the Cemetery. In order to participate, one has to be a member of the Covington Heritage Foundation. Memberships for the Covington Heritage Foundation are available at www.covingtonheritagefoundation.com at the cost of Student: \$10/year, Individual: \$25/year, Couple: \$40/year, and Business:

\$100/year. The History & Holly Home Tour will be on December 4, 2022 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm in Old Covington and these tickets are available at www.bontempstix.com . He invited the press to attend the 2023 Budget Workshop and November 01, 2022 Covington Council Meeting where the Budget will be voted on.

6. Councilman At Large (Vice President)

Councilman Smith stated he was contacted from a continent concerning the solicitors on the streets asking for money at the corners and red lights. With the help of the Council Clerk, JoAnn Rucker and Ellen Agee, Planning Administrator there is a process of being permitted. He stated he would like to get together with Rod Rodrigue, City Attorney and Police Chief, Michael Ferrell and make sure our Ordinance is up to date with the law and where we stand as a city. He stated it was dis- heartening to see after waiting three years to get our St. Tammany Parish Fair on again with the families and children having a great time and have these thugs start shooting. He stated there was plenty of police presence in the area with two Covington Police at the front gates which was not far from the situation of the gunfire. The St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Office present was also heavy within the perimeter of the fair. This shows that there are some bracing criminals who don't care. He stated the Covington Police Department put out a press release stating a \$2000.00 reward for anonymous tips on who the shooter is.

7. Councilman At Large (President)

Council President Rolling mentioned again the Budget Workshop on September 27, 2022 went extremely well. He stated the Covington Business Association meeting will be on Wednesday October 5, 2022 at the Heritage Bank in Downtown Covington.

Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Mark Johnson stated

- a. **He stated** that we do have an Ordinance in place for solicitors to have a permit. He stated as soon as the Police Department is notified of a solicitor the Police Department will go out and address them asking for a permit. If they do not, they will be asked to go to City Hall to get a permit. This usually ends the operation and move out of the city. What he asked the residents to do is to text "CPDLA" to 847411. Enter the text exchange as a new contact. He stated when this message is sent , it goes to an officer on duty, and they will respond. He stated there has not been one solicitor come to City Hall to ask for a permit. He stated just a reminder, Walmart and Home Depot are not in the City. The text has been pretty effective . He also stated Ms. Janice who is the lady we see on the park benches and on Boston Street setting her chair up with her belongings chooses the lifestyle she has. He stated the City Police Department does do well checks on her daily to make sure she does no harm to herself or anyone. She refuses any kind of assistance and seems to be pretty happy.
- b. **He stated** his favorite events are in October. There are over twenty-one events within the month including seven free concerts at the trailhead. Some of these events include: Rockin the Rails, Sunset at

the Landing on the third Friday of the month, Bluesberry Fest this coming weekend with national acts. He stated we have our Falls for Art, Columbia Street Block Party, and Nightmare on Columbia Street. He stated for the children we have Monster Mash at Bogue Falaya Park, Trickin n Treatin at the trailhead and we will have Trick or Treating at Peter Atkins Park on Halloween evening.

- c. **He stated** regarding the incident on Saturday evening as Councilman Smith alluded to, is the most dis-heartening thing is that the perpetrators have no fear of themselves being hurt or bystanders being hurt. It is a thug on thug crime. It is typically initiated from people outside of our Parish.
- d. **He stated** that tonight is Night out Against Crime. There is a big event tonight at the trailhead. He stated it's a good time to remind our residents that a couple of years ago this Council stood up for our Law Enforcement and increase our Police pay. This increased our intention and the city of Covington's recruitment. He stated at that time we only had 13 Police Officers and were budgeted for 26 officers. Now we have 26 officers and no longer losing officers to lateral moves. He stated this is a created to this Council. He stated that in as little over this past year the Covington Police Department has removed over 50 guns off the streets of Covington that were illegally possessed. He stated in addition the Covington Police Department has taken over 500 grams of Heroin and Fentanyl off the streets of Covington. He stated over the passed year they have made over 100 felony arrest. Public safety is the number one responsibility of local government, and the City of Covington takes this seriously.

2. Erin Bivona-None

Councilman President Rolling made the following Announcements:

- **Tuesday October 25, 2022, at 5:30pm– 2nd Budget Work Session in Council Chambers. In Attendance will be Council, Administration and Department Heads in attendance to review prior questions submitted and to finalize the 2023 Budget.**
- **November 01, 2022, Council Meeting -The 2023 Budget will be Adopted**
- **All of these meeting are open to the Public.**
- **Council President Rolling reminded everyone of the November, 2022 City of Covington Council Meeting which will be held on Tuesday, November 01, 2022 at 6pm in the Council Chambers.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 PM.

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

/s/_____
LARRY ROLLING
Council President

/s/_____
JOANN RUCKER
Council Clerk