

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 15, 2017**

**Council President O'Keefe** called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Roll call was as follows:

PRESENT: John Callahan, Jerry Coner, Larry Rolling, Rick Smith, Patrick McMath and Sam O'Keefe

ABSENT: Mark Wright

The Invocation was given by Mr. Charles Vandercook.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Chuck Morris.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY COUNCIL**

**Council President O'Keefe** and the Council presented a memento to Kathy Alexius and the Alexius' Family in memory of Lee's leadership, professionalism, devotion, dedication and lifelong service to the City of Covington. Kathy Alexius thanked the Council for the memento and for honoring Lee's service.

**APPEARERS**

1. **Councilman McMath** introduced Ms. Lisa Condrey Ward, who discussed the history of Covington's Town Square (Old Courthouse on E. Boston Street) which is presently owned by St. Tammany Parish Government. Also, she offered some ideas to explore in the event that St. Tammany Parish Government makes the decision to sell the building.
2. **Mayor Cooper** introduced St. Tammany Parish Councilman David R. Fitzgerald, Council District 2, who was recently appointed to fill the council position of the late Parish Councilman Dennis Sharp. Parish Councilman Fitzgerald commented that he would like to continue the work of Parish Councilman Sharp and looks forward to working with the Covington City Council and Mayor Cooper.
3. **Mayor Cooper** presented a proclamation to Kristianne Stewart for her work with the Compassion That Compels ministry and her efforts to present every woman battling cancer with a compassion bag filled with practical and spiritual items. Also, he proclaimed September and October 2017 as Compassion That Compels months in the City of Covington.
4. Mr. Reginald J. Laurent, Candidate for Judge, Division H, 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Court, introduced himself and discussed his qualifications for the position of district judge.
5. **Councilman McMath** introduced Mr. Phil Rapp, President of the Savannahs Homeowners Association, who discussed his handout depicting critical drainage issues in the Savannahs Subdivision that require attention. Also, he

requested that the City Council work with the Savannahs homeowners and St. Tammany Parish to improve the drainage issues.

6. Mr. Jay Adair, Candidate for Judge, Division E, 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Court, introduced himself and discussed his qualifications for the position of district judge.

7. Messrs. A. G. Crowe and Chuck Morris discussed the Shop Local Map project and encouraged local businesses to participate in the project.

#### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Councilman Smith requested the removal of Item No. 2017-08-03 from the Consent Calendar and placed on the Regular Agenda, New Business, Items removed from consent calendar, for further discussion.**

**Councilman Smith withdrew Item No. 2017-08-07 from the Consent Calendar.**

**Councilman McMath made a motion to adopt the consent calendar excluding Item No. 2017-08-03 which has been moved to the Regular Agenda, New Business, Items removed from consent calendar, for further discussion and Item No. 2017-08-07 which has been withdrawn, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Wright) to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted with the exclusions set out above.**

#### **REGULAR AGENDA**

##### **Unfinished Business**

##### **Items to be voted on:**

**PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2017-07-01 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 98 Utilities, Article IV. Rates and Charges, Section 98-126. Sewer and Water Connection Charges, Section 98-131. Extension of Water Mains and Section 98-132. Extension of Sewer Mains (O’Keefe)**

**Council President O’Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2017-07-01.**

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

**Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Item No. 2017-07-01, seconded by Councilman McMath. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Wright) to adopt Item No. 2017-07-01. Item No. 2017-07-01 was adopted.**

##### **New Business**

##### **Items removed from consent calendar:**

**INTRODUCTION OF ITEM NO. 2017-08-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 18 Buildings and Building Regulations, Article II. Codes, Division 2. Uniform Construction Code, Section 18-56. Schedule of Permit and**

Inspection Fees; Article III. Land Clearing, Division 2. Permits, Section 18-120. Permits and Approvals; and the Addition of Article V. Contractors (Smith)

**Councilman Smith** led a discussion on Item No. 2017-08-03.

**Councilman McMath made a motion to introduce Item No. 2017-08-03 with the deletion of Article V. Contractors, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call: Yeas – 5; Absent – 1 (Wright); Abstain – 1 (Coner) to introduce Item No. 2017-08-03. Item No. 2017-08-03 was introduced with the deletion of Article V. Contractors.**

**Council President O’Keefe read the revised title of Item No. 2017-08-03 into the record as follows:**

**“INTRODUCTION OF ITEM NO. 2017-08-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 18 Buildings and Building Regulations, Article II. Codes, Division 2. Uniform Construction Code, Section 18-56. Schedule of Permit and Inspection Fees and Article III. Land Clearing, Division 2. Permits, Section 18-120. Permits and Approvals.”**

**City Attorney Rod Rodrigue** commented that this process is solely for the introduction of the item and any motions to amend the ordinance may be offered at the time of the public hearing and action. In addition, he clarified the only change from the original ordinance is the deletion of the entire section entitled Article V. Contractors.

**Mayor Cooper** stated that he discussed this item earlier today with Councilmen O’Keefe and McMath and Administration is in full support of the amendment to the ordinance to allow for further discussion.

**Items to be voted on:**

**(a) RESOLUTION NO. 2017-19 -- A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Reappointment of Edmond d’Hemecourt III as the District B Appointment to the Covington Board of Adjustment for a Term of Five (5) Years (Coner)**

**Councilman Coner** led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-19.

**Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-19, seconded by Councilman McMath. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Wright) to adopt Resolution No. 2017-19. Resolution No. 2017-19 was adopted.**

**(b) RESOLUTION NO. 2017-20 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Acknowledging the Authority of the Mayor to Accept the Donation of the Walker Percy Statue From the Committee for the Covington Public Art Fund and its Placement in the Bogue Falaya Park (McMath)**

**Councilman McMath** led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-20.

**Councilman Callahan made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-20, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Wright) to adopt Resolution No. 2017-20. Resolution No. 2017-20 was adopted.**

**Mayor Cooper** commented that most of the cost for the statue was raised over the past two or three years by the Covington Public Art Fund and the City is delighted that it will finally have a monument acknowledging the presence of Walker Percy in our community. Also, he mentioned there will be an announcement at the White Linen event on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup> about the placement of the statue.

(c) **RESOLUTION NO. 2017-21** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Reappointment of Robert R. Barkerding, Jr. to the City of Covington Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board for a Term of Three (3) Years (O’Keefe)

**Council President O’Keefe** led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-21.

**Councilman Rolling** made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-21, seconded by **Councilman Coner**. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Wright) to adopt Resolution No. 2017-21. Resolution No. 2017-21 was adopted.

## COMMENTS AND REPORTS

### Council District and Committee Reports

1. **District A** – None.
2. **District B** –

**Councilman Coner** gave honor to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Also, he reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. Also, he acknowledged the August birthdays for City employees. His quote for this evening was, “It takes more to plow a field than merely turning it over in your mind.”

3. **District C** – Absent.
4. **District D** –

**Councilman Rolling** announced that 11 new occupational licenses were issued in July. Upcoming events: Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup> – Sunset at the Landing concert at 6 P.M.; Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup> – Covington’s White Linen event in Downtown Covington at 6 P.M.; Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup> – Columbia Street Block Party at 6:30 P.M.; Thursday, August 31<sup>st</sup> – New Business Ribbon Cutting at 9:30 A.M.; Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> – Hoops for Kids Basketball Tournament fundraiser; Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup> – St. Tammany Parish Cattlemen’s Association Car Show and Blood Drive at the Covington Trailhead; Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunset at the Landing concert at 6 P.M.; Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup> – Columbia Street Block Party at 6:30 P.M.; and the Farmer’s Market every Wednesday and Saturday. Also, he reminded everyone that the seventh Covington Business Resource Workshop will be held on September 21<sup>st</sup> from 8 A.M. until noon in the Bogue Falaya Hall. The topic for the workshop will be, “The Changing Workplace,” and it is a free event for the business community. Also, he encouraged the public to buy local to support our local businesses.

5. **District E** –

**Councilman Smith** requested updates from Administration regarding two issues: (1) the sink hole next to the SSA Gym between Jahncke and Rutland; and (2) the barricades that have been on Rutland for well over a year. Also, he reminded the public that schools are back in session and to be aware of the children and school zones. Also, he discussed the YMCA’s upcoming fundraiser, the “Lee Alexius Blue Heron Cup Golf Tournament,” which is scheduled for November 20, 2017 at Money Hill. Also, he reminded everyone that the Covington Boys and Girls Club

is hosting its fifth annual Hoops for Kids 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament fundraiser on Saturday, September 9, 2017 at the Rev. Peter Atkins Park. He encouraged teams to sign up to participate in the tournament.

**6. At Large (Vice President) –**

**Councilman McMath** mentioned that St. Tammany Parish Government will be hosting a meeting on Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at 6 P.M. at 620 N. Tyler Street to present information on the River Glen Drainage Project. He invites residents of the Savannahs Subdivision and any other interested parties to attend the town hall-style meeting. Also, he commented that Parish Councilman Fitzgerald and the Parish Government have been very helpful over the past few weeks and looks forward to working with them on this matter.

**7. At Large (President) –**

**Council President O'Keefe** requested that Administration contact the State regarding the debris obstructing the culverts on the north side of West 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue which may have attributed to the recent flooding issues.

**B. Administrative Comments and Reports**

**1. Mayor Cooper's comments:**

(a) He thanked the candidates who appeared this evening to introduce themselves and invited all of the candidates to appear at the next Council meeting to introduce themselves. Also, he thanked all of the other appearers for attending the meeting this evening.

(b) He gave an update on some completed projects:

(1) West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Culvert Washout – The roadway is open and DOTD will give a final acknowledgement that the project is complete.

(2) West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – The bridge has been reopened to vehicular traffic with a three ton weight restriction. Options for complete repair will be discussed during the 2018 budget process.

(3) St. Paul's Lift Station – This is one of the largest lift stations in the City. The special order pump was installed and is operating. The bypass apparatus will soon be removed.

(c) He gave an update on some projects that are underway:

(1) East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Lift Station – Gottfried Construction has begun work on the rehabilitation of this lift station, which is located next to East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Park on Jahncke Avenue.

(2) Intersection improvements on W. 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue at Jackson Avenue and Van Buren Street – Permits have been obtained from the state to enter the rights of way to extend the roadway and turning radiuses to make it easier and safer for vehicles.

(3) East 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue Lift Station (off Jahncke Avenue) – Bids have been received and work will begin soon on this rehabilitation project.

(4) River Forest Paving and Drainage – The engineering is complete on the section of Lurline Drive from West 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue to Karen Drive. Ten bids were received and the apparent low bidder was Hard Rock Construction Company. Once the contract is signed, work should begin before the end of the year.

(d) He stated he will provide updates to Councilmen O'Keefe and Smith on their concerns that were mentioned earlier this evening.

(e) He mentioned that DOTD recently cleaned out some debris in Mile Branch at W. 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

(f) He commented that he will have more complete information on some of the other City projects at the next Council meeting or any time in between if the Council needs the information.

(g) He announced that effective October 1, 2017, the City of Covington will join the Community Rating System (administered by FEMA) which gives discounts to flood insurance policyholders in communities that exemplify excellence in floodplain management. Each resident and business in the City of Covington who have flood insurance policies will receive a 5% reduction in flood insurance premiums. He thanked Chris Brown, Floodplain Administrator, for his hard work and diligence in compiling the information and receiving acceptance into this program.

(h) He mentioned that Mrs. Hayes will give an update on the local media reports concerning the allegations of contaminants in our water system.

**Mrs. Hayes** read her memo addressed to Mayor Cooper in response to the local media reports concerning our water system. In summary, she stated that Covington's water wells are tested twice daily and the results are forwarded to the Louisiana Department of Health for further analysis. Also, according to LDH, Covington has not failed a water test for cancer-causing contaminants and has had no violations for any cancer-causing agents. Also, Covington meets the Safe Drinking Water Act standards which are regulated by the EPA and LDH.

**Councilman McMath** commented that he was included in some of the emails regarding the City's water system and thanked Mrs. Hayes for her rapid and thorough response.

**Councilman Rolling** asked if Mrs. Hayes' memo regarding the City's water system was posted to the City's website. Mrs. Hayes responded that it was not posted to the website, but that it was addressed with the individuals who asked questions about the local media reports.

**Councilman Rolling** reported that some residents have concerns about the timing of the lights at the intersection of Hwy. 21 and E. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Mayor Cooper** reminded the public that the Hwy. 21 widening project is a DOTD project and the lights will be adjusted when the final lane configuration is completed.

**Councilman Rolling** commented that Chris Davis and the Public Works Department have been great in making sure the ditches are kept cleaned out. Also, he mentioned that some of the catch basins are clogged and asked if Public Works has a rotation/routine cleanout schedule that they follow throughout the City.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that Public Works has a plan in place to routinely clean out the ditches and catch basins.

**Mayor Cooper** stated that Mrs. Hayes will provide the Council with a copy of her memo regarding the allegations of contaminants in the City's water system.

**Mrs. Hayes** reminded everyone that political signs can only be placed on private property, not on public property, rights of way, sidewalks or other public areas. Also, she stated that the maximum allowed size for each sign in residential areas is four square feet and a maximum height of four feet. Also, she stated that four by eight (32 square feet) signs are only allowed in CR and ML zoning districts. Also, she stated that only one sign is allowed per street frontage.

**Mayor Cooper** stated that clarification was needed regarding political signs due to the number of reports Code Enforcement has received over the past few weeks. He mentioned that all political candidates will receive copies of the Code sections relating to political signs.


**Councilman Rolling** commended Code Enforcement for the good work they do for the City.

**Council President O'Keefe** welcomed Andrew Canulette as the new Editor for the St. Tammany Farmer.

**Covington Police Chief Tim Lentz** announced that the Police Department is hosting a Community Meeting on Monday, August 28, 2017 at 6 P.M. in the Council Chambers. There will be a presentation about the Operation Angel project and its successes. Also, the Chief will discuss issues regarding current events, the Police Department and Covington's citizens. Also, he announced that the Police Department has secured the F.A.T.S. (Fire Arm Training Simulator) machine for a week and residents will have an opportunity to sign up for a turn on the machine.

**Council President O'Keefe** thanked everyone who attended the meeting this evening.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.

  
R.S. "SAM" O'KEEFE  
Council President

  
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE  
Council Clerk