

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 20, 2018**

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, Diane Weiss, Larry Rolling, Rick Smith,
Patrick McMath and Sam O’Keefe

ABSENT: None.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Rene Maggio.

APPEARERS

1. St. Tammany Parish President Pat Brister discussed the election on Saturday, March 24th and the importance of the Jail and Justice Center Sales Tax Renewals that are on the ballot. She encouraged the public to vote for these two sales tax renewals.
2. Ms. Jan Butler, a member of the Covington Cemetery Advisory Board, commented that the Board is working very hard to bring the City cemeteries back in shape historically. Also, she announced that the Board will present an evening of “Whisperings” on Saturday, October 20, 2018 and it will be dedicated to Lee S. Alexius, Sr.

Mayor Cooper thanked Jan Butler and the members of the Cemetery Advisory Board along with Kelli Moore and Gina Hayes from Administration for their work over the past several years in maintaining and improving the city cemeteries.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilwoman Weiss. Roll call was unanimous to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.

REGULAR AGENDA

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. **RESOLUTION NO. 2018-03** – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Recognizing the Mayor’s Authority to Sign a Lease Purchase Agreement for the Purpose of Procuring an Aerial Fire Truck for the Covington Fire Department (O’Keefe)

Mayor Cooper stated that the lease purchase agreement is pending and with Council approval this evening, the agreement will be signed. Also, he mentioned that the funds for the first payment in the amount of \$225,000 are in the 2018 budget and subsequent payments will be budgeted over the next four years.

Council President O'Keefe led a discussion regarding Resolution No. 2018-03.

Assistant Fire Chief Gary Blocker stated that the new apparatus will be a platform truck with increased aerial capability and will keep the City in compliance with property insurance ratings for the homeowners. Also, he stated that once the order is placed, there is a 365 day delivery.

Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018-03, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2018-03. Resolution No. 2018-03 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. He recognized the March birthdays for City employees. He reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. Also, he asked everyone to keep the victims from the high school shootings and their families in our thoughts and prayers and to pray for peace on earth. His quote for this evening was, "He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass."

3. District C –

Councilwoman Weiss extended thanks and appreciation to the City on behalf of the residents of River Forest for the completion of the Lurline Drive project. Also, she encouraged the public to vote on Saturday, March 24th and reminded the residents of District C that there are three individuals vying for the Council District C seat. Also, she commented that in the event there is a clear winner on Saturday and a runoff is not necessary, she thanked the members of the Council along with the Mayor and his staff for the help afforded to her during her interim position.

4. District D –

Councilman Rolling extended his appreciation to Mrs. Weiss for her service as the Interim Councilwoman for District C. Also, he announced that seven new businesses applied for occupational licenses in February 2018. Upcoming events: Rockin' the Rails concert series begins on Thursday, April 5th from 5-7:30 P.M. at the Trailhead; the Covington Lion's Club Car Show on Saturday, April 7th at the Trailhead; St. Tammany Art Association Art Market on Saturday, April 7th from 9 A.M. until 1 P.M. on North Columbia Street; A Taste of Covington hosted by the Covington Business Association to be held April 11th-15th, "Paper Shredding Day" hosted by Keep Covington Beautiful on Saturday, April 21st from 9 A.M. until noon at City Hall; Covington Antiques and Uniques Festival on Saturday, April 21st and Sunday, April 22nd from 10 A.M. until 5 P.M. at the Trailhead; and the Farmer's Market every Wednesday and Saturday. Also, he reminded the public to support the local businesses and shop local.

5. District E –

Councilman Smith commended the Public Works Department for handling some sewer line issues in District E which were caused by the recent heavy rainfall. Also, he thanked Cody and Nick Ludwig and the Covington Celtic Club for organizing the 2nd Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and festivities. He mentioned it was a great event enjoyed by many citizens and visitors.

6. At Large (Vice President) –

Councilman McMath gave an update on the EOC Facility Advisory Committee. He mentioned that Townsend Underhill and he had a very productive meeting with Parish President Pat Brister and her CAO Gina Campo. They learned some valuable information about the building and the inner workings which will help the committee make an informed decision about the building. Also, he announced that the committee will tour the EOC Building on Thursday, March 29th.

7. At Large (President) –

Council President O’Keefe mentioned that Ms. Lynne Moore, former Council Clerk, is in attendance this evening and commended her for the fantastic job she did as Clerk and for her work with Jan Butler regarding the cemeteries.

B. Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Cooper's comments:

(a) He discussed some recent events:

(1) The St. Patrick’s Day Parade was well-attended and was a great event for the City.

(2) Filming of the Netflix movie, “The Highway Men”, starring Kevin Costner and Woody Harrelson took place last week in downtown.

(3) The Youth Service Bureau’s “Chef Soiree” was held last weekend and was a successful event.

(b) He mentioned that the Covington Police Department was honored at the Crimestoppers Award Luncheon last week. Chief Lentz and he, on behalf of the Covington Police Department, received the Crimestoppers Award of Excellence for their work on “Operation Angel”.

(c) He stated that Friday, March 23rd is Leaders Against Litter Day and he issued a Proclamation in support of the event which he read into the record. There will be a short presentation at 9 A.M. in the Covington Council Chambers with a clean-up of the ox lots following the presentation.

(d) He gave updates on projects that are currently underway:

(1) Safe Routes to School Sidewalks – The plans have been signed by LA DOTD and the bid letting is scheduled for May with a possible construction start date in August. This is a 100%-funded project by LA DOTD.

(2) Bogue Falaya Park Bulkhead and Kayak Launch – According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Louisiana State Preservation office has a 30-day review period which should be the last step for obtaining the permits before bid letting.

(3) East 32nd Avenue between Collins Boulevard and Lee Road – This is a joint project with St. Tammany Parish Government in which the broken concrete panels will be replaced. It is a 50/50 split between the city and the parish. The contract has been awarded to the low bidder, Stranco, and the work on this 30-day project should begin on March 26th.

(4) East 9th Avenue Sewer Lift Station Rehab – The contractor has begun demolition of portions of the existing sewer lift station. Components for the lift station will arrive on site over the next two weeks.

(5) Covington Public Works Barn – Some changes were made to the preliminary plans and the architect is in the process of completing the final plans. The project is scheduled for bid in late summer.

(6) River Forest Paving and Drainage – The Lurline Drive section has been completed. This project will continue onto Willow Drive and will be divided into two phases. The award letter for Phase 1 has been returned and the contracts

are being processed. Pre-construction meetings and the notice to proceed are expected in the coming weeks.

(7) West 29th Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – This rehabilitation project is underway. The piles have been driven and construction of the bulkheads and the forming work for the concrete pile caps will begin soon.

(8) 2016 Sidewalk Improvement Program – The last phase is underway and includes the replacement of sidewalks on West 22nd Avenue and South America Street. Once this final task order is completed, work will begin on the 2017 contract that was funded last year and moved to this year.

(9) 2017 Roadway Improvement Program – This program began recently and mainly involves the replacement of concrete panel streets throughout the city, such as Menetre Drive, some sections in River Forest and the Ozone. Work is currently underway on Hosmer Street in the Ozone area.

(10) Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements – The engineer is currently revising final drawings and advertisements for bids should be published within the next two weeks. This project involves repairing the rusted chlorine and belt press buildings, painting the exterior of the two metal treatment tanks, removing abandoned equipment and miscellaneous mechanical repairs.

(11) Sewer System Evaluation Survey (SSES) Program – This is a review of the inspection videos for the sewer system, particularly on Jahncke Avenue, Rutland Street and in the downtown area. The engineer will focus on point repairs to address large issues first and then revisit with a pipe lining project in the future. This program is to prevent infiltration of stormwater and water from filtering into our sewer system. The next phase of this program is starting with the focus on the downtown area.

(12) Other miscellaneous sewer projects – Failures on Guidry Street and Claiborne Street. These sewer projects are currently being developed as quote packages by the City Engineer's office. Due to the high frequency of unplanned sewer issues, a sewer maintenance program will be initiated to address these items in a more expeditious manner. This work is expected to be bid out in the upcoming months.

(13) Blue Swamp Creek Drainage Program – This project was funded in the 2018 budget and involves the general cleaning and grading along the length of the Blue Swamp Creek. The surveying work has begun.

Council President O'Keefe requested an update from the Mayor regarding the discussions with St. Tammany Parish Government concerning Mile Branch Creek.

Mayor Cooper responded that tentative contracts have been reviewed over the past several weeks and a meeting will be scheduled with city and parish officials.

Councilman McMath requested that the Mayor keep the Council updated as to when the meeting will take place.

Mayor Cooper responded that the Council will be kept updated.

Councilman Smith thanked the Mayor for prioritizing the inspection of the sewer system. Also, he requested an update on the placement of the Walker Percy statue in its final location.

Mayor Cooper responded that currently there is another piece of art in the location. Once that piece is relocated, the Walker Percy statue will be moved into its final location.

Councilman Smith commented that he looks forward to the new Public Works Barn and asked the Mayor if a saferoom will be included for on-call employees during hurricanes.

Mayor Cooper responded that the new Public Works Barn will contain more meeting space and common space, but not a saferoom or bunkroom. In addition, it will be designed to withstand a Category 2 hurricane and on-call employees are welcome to stay in the building.

Councilman Rolling requested an update on the Jefferson Avenue roundabout.

Mayor Cooper responded that the last update he received was that the state is about 99% finished with reviewing the rights-of-way to be acquired and the surveying. Funds are included in the City's budget for the relocation of utilities and the bid let date is either later this year or early next year.


Councilman Coner reminded the Mayor about the meeting with representatives of the Savannahs concerning drainage issues.

Councilman McMath clarified that he would like to attend the meeting with St. Tammany Parish Government regarding Mile Branch Creek.

Councilmen Coner and Smith responded that they would also like to attend the meeting with Parish officials regarding Mile Branch Creek.

Councilman Rolling requested an update from the Mayor after the meeting with Parish officials regarding Mile Branch Creek.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:53 P.M.


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


BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk