

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 19, 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, Larry Rolling, Rick Smith, Patrick McMath and Sam O'Keefe

ABSENT: Joey Roberts

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Tim Burke.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman Rolling made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by **Councilman Coner**. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt the consent calendar. The consent calendar was adopted.

REGULAR AGENDA

Unfinished Business

Items to be voted on:

- 1. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-04-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Setting Forth the Adjusted Millage Rates (O'Keefe)**

Council President O'Keefe stated that a public hearing was held earlier this evening regarding the 2018 Millage Rates.

Council President O'Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2018-04-02. There were no comments by the Council, Administration or public regarding this item.

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

Councilman McMath made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-04-02, seconded by **Councilman Callahan**. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Item No. 2018-04-02. Item No. 2018-04-02 was adopted.

- 2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-04-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Levying and Imposing Taxes on all Property Subject to Taxation in the City of Covington, State of Louisiana, for the Year 2018 (O'Keefe)**

Council President O'Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2018-04-03.

Mayor Cooper discussed this ordinance in which the General Alimony Adjusted Rate is proposed to be increased from 7.390 mills to the original levy of 7.500 mills; the Fire Protection Facilities Adjusted Rate is proposed to be increased from 9.850 mills to the original levy of 10.00 mills; and the Sewer & Sewer Disposal Works Bonds (GOB Bonds) is proposed to be reduced from 4.0 mills to 3.5 mills. He stated that with the adoption of this ordinance this evening, there will still be a net reduction in the overall millage rates for the citizens of the City of Covington from 21.24 mills to 21.0 mills. Also, he stated this will create an estimated reduction in revenue to the City of approximately \$32,000 and will save the property owners approximately \$6.00 per year.

Councilman Rolling pointed out that according to the graph provided by Administration, the total millage rates have been reduced since 2011.

Mayor Cooper responded that for the past 20 years, the millage rates have been reduced. He mentioned that in 1997, the total millage was 24.55 and if the ordinance is approved this evening, the millage rates will have been reduced from 24.55 mills to 21.0 mills. He stated that some years the millage rates were reduced and some years the rates were rolled back up in order for the City to enjoy the increased revenue when needed.

Councilman McMath thanked Finance Director Alisa Faciane and the Administration for their assistance in reviewing and discussing the millage rates. He commented that this represents fiscal responsibility and it eases the burden on the residents of the City of Covington. In addition, it improves the ability of our Fire Department to perform their job safely, responsibly and efficiently. Also, it will allow the City to continue to address our infrastructure needs, all while netting a reduction in our overall millage rates.

Councilmen Callahan, Coner and Smith thanked Alisa Faciane for her help in reviewing and understanding the millage rates.

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

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-04-03, seconded by **Councilman McMath**. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Item No. 2018-04-03. Item No. 2018-04-03 was adopted.

3. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-05-01 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Official Zoning Map of the City of Covington, Louisiana, to Reclassify Lot 1A, Square 1907, Which Property is Situated at the Corner of South Tyler Street and West 19th Avenue, Division of New Covington, City of Covington, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, from a Planned Combined Unit Development (PCUD) to a Planned Commercial District (PCD) with a Base Zoning of Neighborhood Commercial (CN) and Commercial Office/Professional (CO) and also Rescinding Ordinance Numbers 2007-38, 2009-06 and 2010-03 Which Ordinances Created and Amended the Planned Combined Unit Development (PCUD) (Zoning Case No. 18-01-01ZC(PCD) (Rolling)

Council President O'Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2018-05-01.

Mr. Rykert Toledano, attorney for the Aduli family, discussed the proposed development.

Councilman Rolling thanked Mr. Aduli for his commitment to this project and looks forward to the property being brought into commerce. Also, he thanked the Board of Adjustment and Planning and Zoning Commission for their thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Mr. Timothy O'Hara, who resides near the subject property, inquired as to whether the area behind the subject property is a federal wetland area. City Attorney Rod Rodrigue and Mr. Rykert Toledano responded that the area is not a federal wetland area.

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

Councilman Rolling made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-05-01, seconded by **Councilman Callahan**. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Item No. 2018-05-01. Item No. 2018-05-01 was adopted.

4. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-05-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Enlarging the Boundaries of the City of Covington, Louisiana, Describing the Property to be Annexed and Added Thereto as Various Lots and a Parcel of the J. H. Warner Estate and Dedicated Rights of Way Contained Therein Situated in Sections 32 and 38, Township 6 South, Range 11 East, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, Which Property is Located on West 21st Avenue (US Highway 190 Business) and Bounded by Barkley Parc Subdivision, the Section Line Between Section 41 and Sections 32 and 38, Township 6 South, Range 11 East, and West 21st Avenue, and also Classifying this Property as Zoning District RS-2 Under the Zoning Laws of the City of Covington (Zoning Case No. 18-06-01ANNEX) (O'Keefe)

Councilman Rolling made a motion to table Item No. 2018-05-02, seconded by **Councilman Coner**. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to table Item No. 2018-05-02. Item No. 2018-05-02 was tabled.

5. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-05-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2018 Operating Budget to Replace Fire Truck (O'Keefe)

Council President O'Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2018-05-03. He pointed out that this budget amendment is to replace a pickup truck used by one of the officers in the Fire Department which was damaged in an accident; it is not to replace a fire truck.

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

Councilman McMath made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-05-03, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Item No. 2018-05-03. Item No. 2018-05-03 was adopted.

6. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-05-04 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Declaring Surplus and Authorizing Donation of Equipment (O’Keefe)

Council President O’Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2018-05-04.

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

Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-05-04, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Item No. 2018-05-04. Item No. 2018-05-04 was adopted.

7. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-05-05 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Franchise Agreement with Atmos Energy Corporation Granting the Right to Use the Present and Future Streets, Roads, Highways, Alleys, Bridges, and Public Ways, for Such Purposes; Under the Terms and Conditions to Which Such Franchise and Rights are Subject; and Prescribing the Term of Such Franchise and Rights (O’Keefe)

Council President O’Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2018-05-05.

Councilman Coner 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 Coner made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-05-05, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Item No. 2018-05-05. Item No. 2018-05-05 was adopted.

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2018-13 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Selecting the Official Journal for the City of Covington for a Term of One (1) Year (O’Keefe)

Council President O’Keefe led a discussion on Resolution No. 2018-13.

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018-13, seconded by Councilman Rolling. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Resolution No. 2018-13. Resolution No. 2018-13 was adopted in which the St. Tammany Farmer was selected as the Official Journal for the City of Covington for a term of one (1) year.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 2018-14 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Expenditure of Funds from the Garden of Pines Trust (McMath)

Councilman McMath led a discussion on Resolution No. 2018-14.

Mayor Cooper stated that this trust was established in 1970 and the trust funds may be used only for maintenance and repairs at the mausoleum. He mentioned that there are some pending needs at the mausoleum to bring it back to a condition to which we can all be proud. Also, he stated that we have received a competitive quote of approximately \$43,000 to make these improvements, of which \$34,000 will be used from the trust fund and the remainder will be used from funds allocated in the 2018 budget for cemetery maintenance.

Councilman Rolling inquired as to the process for receiving the quote on the improvements to the mausoleum.

Mayor Cooper responded that the City received competitive quotes.

Councilman Smith inquired as to whether landscaping was included in cemetery maintenance and repair.

Mayor Cooper responded that these funds may not be used for landscaping, but there is money budgeted for cemetery lawn maintenance and those funds may be used for landscaping.

Councilman McMath made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018-14, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Resolution No. 2018-14. Resolution No. 2018-14 was adopted.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 2018-15 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Councilman at Large Reappointment of Ella Mae Selmon to the Covington Tree Board for a Term of Three (3) Years (O’Keefe)

Council President O’Keefe led a discussion on Resolution No. 2018-15.

Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018-15, seconded by Councilman Rolling. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Resolution No. 2018-15. Resolution No. 2018-15 was adopted.

4. RESOLUTION NO. 2018-16 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Accepting the 2017 Audit Report Issued by Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC (McMath)

Councilman McMath led a discussion on Resolution No. 2018-16.

Ms. Amy Verberne from Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C. made a presentation to the Council regarding the 2017 audit results. Ms. Verberne stated they have issued an unmodified opinion which is a clean opinion on the audit. She mentioned there was one significant deficiency finding in the report with regard to controls over capital assets. The City agreed to implement the policy of a written determination by the city engineer of assets that are completed and assets that are still

construction-in-progress and the written determination will then be provided to the Director of Finance for further review.

Also, she commended Alisa Faciane and other City employees who participated in the audit process.

Councilman McMath made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018-16, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Roberts) to adopt Resolution No. 2018-16. Resolution No. 2018-16 was adopted.

Items for discussion:

1. Ox Lot No. 19 for Public Parking (Coner)

Councilman Coner commented that installation of the signage in Ox Lot No. 19 has begun and inquired as to when the ox lot would be paved for parking.

Mayor Cooper responded that an evaluation will be performed to determine when the ox lot may be scheduled for paving.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Council District and Committee Reports

1. District A –

Councilman Callahan mentioned that the Juneteenth Celebration was a successful event and thanked everyone for their donations to the event.

2. District B –

Councilman Coner gave honor to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He recognized the June birthdays for City employees. He reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. He thanked Police Chief Lentz and the Covington Police Department for their work on the annual kids' camp. He announced that the Southeast Louisiana Legal Services' Northshore Pro Bono Project is hosting a free legal clinic for Veterans on Friday, July 13, 2018 from 9 A.M. until 12 P.M. at the Northshore Community Foundation. He thanked Mrs. Kelli Moore for her assistance while the Council Clerk was on vacation. His quote for this evening was, "The only preparation for tomorrow is the right use of today."

3. District C – Absent.

4. District D –

Councilman Rolling mentioned that St. Tammany Parish Hospital recently held a very informative community meeting regarding their expansion plans. The expansion will include a three-story building which should be completed approximately two years after the permitting phase. In addition, the parking lots are in the final stages of construction. Also, he announced that nine new businesses applied for occupational licenses in May 2018. Upcoming events: Sparks in the Park on Tuesday, July 3rd at 6 P.M. at the Bogue Falaya Park; St. Tammany Art Association Second Saturday Art Walk on Saturday, July 14th from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M.; Sunset at the Landing concert on Friday, July 20th from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M.; Coffee with the Mayor on Wednesday, July 25th at 9 A.M. at the Trailhead; Columbia Street Block Party on Friday, July 27th from 6:30 P.M. until 9:30 P.M.; and the Farmer's Market every Wednesday and Saturday.

5. District E –

Councilman Smith announced that the Covington Fire Department is in partnership with St. Tammany Parish Hospital Parenting Center to host a free

hands-on, non-certified CPR instruction course which is open to the public. The course will be held on Saturday, June 30, 2018 in the Bogue Falaya Hall. Two sessions are available, either from 10 A.M. until noon or 2 P.M. until 4 P.M.

6. At Large (Vice President) –

Councilman McMath announced that Townsend Underhill and Jan Robert, members of the EOC Facility Advisory Committee, are scheduled to meet with Gina Campo and other parish officials on Monday, June 25th. Also, he mentioned that the next EOC Facility Advisory Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for July 9th and he will give an update on the Committee's progress at the next Council meeting.

7. At Large (President) –

Council President O'Keefe announced that the August 7th Council meeting has been cancelled due to there being no ordinances or resolutions scheduled for public hearing and action. The only meeting in the month of August will be held on August 21st.

Council President O'Keefe mentioned that barring any unforeseen circumstances, this will be his last meeting as Council President. He thanked everyone very much for allowing him to serve as President and to serve the citizens of the City of Covington.

B. Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Cooper's comments:

(a) He emphasized that the audit report distributed to the Council expresses an unmodified, clean opinion. Also, with regard to the finding indicated in the audit, the City is taking the steps to insure proper reclassification of completed construction-in-progress projects and record the necessary depreciation on completed projects in writing. He is very pleased with the report and the work of Chief Administrative Officer Gina Hayes, Finance Director Alisa Faciane and their staff.

(b) He gave an update on some projects:

(1) River Forest Paving and Drainage, Willow Drive, Phase 1 – This section of Willow Drive is basically between Lurline Drive and just south of where Karen Drive intersects Willow Drive. All of the subsurface drainage work has been completed and approximately 50% of the paving is completed.

(2) Sidewalk Improvement Program – The contractor is completing the first task order. Two additional task orders are being devised at this time.

(3) Roadway Improvement Program – The contractor has completed approximately 75% of the work to replace concrete panels. Work is currently underway on West 20th Avenue near Taylor Street and work is planned for several additional streets in the area. All of the work should be completed in the next six to eight weeks.

(4) Old Fire Station Rehabilitation – The pre-construction meeting with the architect and contractor was held today. The notice to proceed will be issued on June 25th.

(5) West 15th Avenue Trail (from River Forest to Gallagher Park) – This project consists of the overlay replacement of the asphalt trail located along West 15th Avenue. The project advertisement will begin on June 20th and bids will be opened on July 19th.

(6) Public Works Building – Bid advertisement for this \$1.2 million project is underway. The Public Works Department has begun the transition from

the existing building to their temporary offices in City Hall. Bids will be opened on June 28th.

(7) Bogue Falaya Park Bulkhead with Kayak Launch – Advertisement for bids is underway and the bids will be opened on July 18th.

(8) Covington High School Sewer Lift Station Rehabilitation – This project involves replacing two above-ground pumps with two submersible pumps for better efficiencies and longer life. Advertisement for bids will begin on June 27th and bids will be opened on July 26th.

(9) Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Survey – Preliminary engineering work has been completed. This year's project will include smoke testing, dye testing and CCTV inspection of many downtown areas where there is old sewer line infrastructure. This is a continued effort to manage the systems, which have mostly been affected by infiltration of storm water into the sewer system. An awareness campaign will be developed to notify businesses of the smoke testing work. The engineering work for this project is expected to be bid in the next two months.

(10) Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Survey Point Repairs – This project will consist of approximately \$500,000 in sewer point repairs in the 1st Avenue, 9th Avenue and New Hampshire Street lift station areas. The point repairs are an effort to reduce the problem of the large amount of storm water infiltration into the sewer system particularly during rain events. Advertisement for bids is scheduled to begin within the next two weeks and the bids should be opened in the next four to six weeks.

(11) West 11th Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – The preliminary plans have been completed for the full replacement of this bridge. The permitting phase will begin with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Scenic Rivers. Final plans will be developed with bid letting later this year.

(12) Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements, Phase 1 – Bids were received on May 16th and the project has been awarded to Gottfried Contracting. The project is currently undergoing preliminary matters such as contracts, bonds and pre-construction meetings. Construction is expected to start within the next two months.

(13) Reverend Peter Atkins Park Restrooms – Advertisement for bids is underway and bids will be opened on June 28th.

(14) West 29th Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – Construction on the bridge is complete and it was opened late last month.

(c) He discussed the timeline for hiring the Fire Chief for the City of Covington. Also, he announced that Mr. Gary Blocker was appointed Provisional Fire Chief upon the retirement of Chief Badon. After the completion of the process as outlined by the Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board, he expects to make his final selection and present the individual to the City Council for confirmation in early September. Also, he remarked that Chief Blocker has been doing an outstanding job as interim chief.

(d) As a result of the recent tragic accident on I-12 and Hwy. 21, he sent a letter to Dr. Shawn Wilson, DOTD Secretary, in which he concurred with other local elected officials who have called for raising the priority of the scheduled improvements to I-12 particularly from LA Hwy. 1077 to LA Hwy. 59. He also asked DOTD to consider incorporating safety precautions in the meantime on this section of the interstate highway that could help prevent serious accidents in the future, which may include reducing the speed limits for all vehicles.

(e) He announced that Randy and Lynn Perkins, who have been very instrumental in documenting our City history by recording our meetings and

events, will be leaving and moving to Missouri to be closer to their family. He thanked both Randy and Lynn for all of their work over the years and presented a "Key to the City" to them.

Council President O'Keefe thanked Randy for all that he has done for the City and wished him well in the future.

Councilman Coner requested that Police Chief Lentz give an update on the donation of the bicycles during the recent kids' camp.

Police Chief Lentz announced that Patrick Brooks, owner of Brooks' Bike Shop, donated over 30 bicycles to the recent kids' camp to make sure that any child who didn't have a bike went home with one. He extended his heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Mr. Brooks.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 P.M.



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



BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk