

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 18, 2018**

Council President McMath 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, Sam O'Keefe
and Patrick McMath

ABSENT: Joey Roberts

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Police Chief Lentz.

APPEARERS

Councilman Rolling introduced Ms. Jan Butler, Board President for the Council on Aging for St. Tammany (COAST), who gave an update on the new activity center located at 19404 10th Street in Covington and invited everyone to the official opening on Friday, September 21st at 10 A.M.

Councilman Joey Roberts arrived at 6:11 P.M.

**CONFIRMATION OF MAYORAL APPOINTMENT OF GARY S.
BLOCKER, JR. AS FIRE CHIEF**

Mayor Cooper presented Gary S. Blocker, Jr. as the new Fire Chief and requested his confirmation by the Council.

Councilman O'Keefe made a motion to confirm Gary S. Blocker, Jr. as Fire Chief, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to confirm Gary S. Blocker, Jr. as Fire Chief for the City of Covington.

Fire Chief Blocker thanked Mayor Cooper for the appointment and the Council for confirming his appointment. He stated that it is his pleasure and honor to serve the citizens of Covington as Fire Chief.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Councilman O'Keefe made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Rolling. Roll call was unanimous 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. 2018-08-01** – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Authorizing the Mayor to Execute All Legal

Documents Necessary to Accept a Donation of Immovable Property, Said Immovable Property Being Described as Lot 6, Square 1910, Division of New Covington, City of Covington, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, Which Square is Bounded by West 20th Avenue, South Filmore Street, West 19th Avenue and South Pierce Street (Rolling)

Mayor Cooper stated that the property owner offered to donate the property to the City and since the City accepted the donation of the adjoining lot several years ago, ownership of the property may prove to be valuable to the City in the future. He respectfully requested that the Council consider adoption of this ordinance.

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 O'Keefe made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-08-01, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2018-08-01. Item No. 2018-08-01 was adopted.

2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2018-08-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2018 Operating and Capital Budget for Annual Software License for the Police Department and 8th Avenue Safety Improvements (O'Keefe)

Councilman O'Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2018-08-02.

Mayor Cooper stated that the City funded the 8th Avenue Pedestrian Study from the 2018 budget, but when the funds from St. Tammany Parish Hospital for the 8th Avenue safety improvements were received, the check was deposited into the City's account and it was necessary to identify the project for which the money was being expended. Also, he stated that funds for the annual software license for the Police Department are included in this budget amendment.

Councilman Smith 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 O'Keefe made a motion to adopt Item No. 2018-08-02, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2018-08-02. Item No. 2018-08-02 was adopted.

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2018-24 -- A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Reappointment of Joe Cunningham as the District E Appointment to the Covington Board of Adjustment (Smith)

Councilman Smith led a discussion on Resolution No. 2018-24.

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018-24, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2018-24. Resolution No. 2018-24 was adopted in which Joe Cunningham was reappointed as the District E Appointment to the Covington Board of Adjustment.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 2018-25 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council in Support of an Application to the Local Government Assistance Program (LGAP) Seeking Assistance for the Purchase of New Water Meters and Related Equipment, and Authorizing the Mayor to Execute Any and All Documents in Connection Therewith (O’Keefe)

Councilman O’Keefe led a discussion on Resolution No. 2018-25.

Mayor Cooper stated that his Administration has been gathering information over the past year for replacement of the water meter system which has run to its end of life. He mentioned that approximately one-half of the funding for the replacement of the water meter system is being requested in the 2019 budget and suggested that the remainder should be budgeted in 2020. In the meantime, the City has an opportunity to apply for a grant for most or all of the cost to replace the water meter system.

Councilman Rolling inquired as to the timetable for receipt of the funds if the City is fortunate enough to receive a partial or full grant.

Chief Administrative Officer Gina Hayes stated that the grant deadline is next week and the City just recently submitted its application. She added that if the City receives the full grant, it will still only pay for some of the meters and will not pay for the entire water meter system.

Councilman O’Keefe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018-25, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2018-25. Resolution No. 2018-25 was adopted.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 2018-26 – A Resolution of the City of Covington Adopting a Complete Streets Policy (O’Keefe)

Councilman O’Keefe led a discussion on Resolution No. 2018-26.

Mayor Cooper discussed the handout that was presented to the Council this evening regarding the Covington Bicycle Plan and Complete Streets Policy. He mentioned that the Plan was provided to the City through the Regional Planning Commission and Digital Engineering with the City contributing 20% of the cost. He pointed out that this resolution is the first step and the Complete Street Policy will have other components which will be adopted by ordinance.

Councilman O’Keefe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2018-26, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2018-26. Resolution No. 2018-26 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 September birthdays for City employees. He reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. His quote for this evening was, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

3. **District C –**

Councilman Roberts encouraged everyone to visit the City’s website to learn about the Mayor’s Council on Healthy Lifestyles and its efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle.

4. **District D –**

Councilman Rolling announced that 10 new businesses applied for occupational licenses in August 2018. Also, he reminded everyone about the ribbon cutting for the new COAST activity center on Friday, September 21st at 10 A.M. at 19404 10th Street in Covington. Upcoming events: Thursday, September 20th at 4:30 P.M. – Covington High School Homecoming parade; Wednesday, September 26th from 4 P.M. until 7 P.M. – News with a Twist will be broadcasting live at the Trailhead; Friday, September 28th at 6:30 P.M. – Columbia Street Block Party; Thursday, October 4th-Sunday, October 7th – St. Tammany Parish Fair; Friday, October 5th at 9 A.M. – St. Tammany Parish Fair parade; Thursdays in October from 5 P.M. until 7:30 P.M. at the Trailhead – Rockin’ the Rails concert series; Thursday, October 4th at 7:30 P.M. at the Southern Hotel – Gala benefiting the St. Tammany Parish Hospital Foundation; Saturday, October 6th from 10 A.M. until 2 P.M. – St. Tammany Art Association Art Market; Saturday, October 13th from 7 P.M. until 10 P.M. at the Covington Recreation Complex – Field of Screams; Saturday, October 13th from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M. – St. Tammany Art Association Fall for Art; Friday, October 19th from 6 P.M. until 9 P.M. – Sunset at the Landing concert; Saturday, October 20th from 10 A.M. until 3 P.M. at the Bogue Falaya Park – Monster Mash presented by the St. Tammany Parish Hospital Foundation; Saturday, October 20th from 5 P.M. until 9 P.M. at Covington Cemetery #1 – Whisperings Reenactment; and the Farmer’s Market every Wednesday and Saturday.

5. **District E –**

Councilman Smith reminded everyone about the “Oxtober Fest” beer-tasting event on Saturday, October 6th from 3 P.M. until 6 P.M. at the Trailhead. He thanked Ms. Cody Ludwig for her efforts in organizing this event which benefits the Covington Boys and Girls Club. Also, he mentioned that the next CBA meeting will be held on the first Wednesday in October at the English Tea Room with the social beginning at 5:30 and the meeting at 6 P.M.

6. **At Large (Vice President) – None.**
7. **At Large (President) – None.**

B. Administrative Comments and Reports

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

(a) He encouraged the Council to review the 2019 Proposed Budget that was introduced this evening in preparation for the public work sessions to be held in October.

- (b) He gave an update on some building projects:
- (1) Old Fire Station on North Theard Street – The renovation is underway;
 - (2) New Public Works Operations Facility – The contractor has mobilized to begin the demolition of the old building;
 - (3) Reverend Peter Atkins Park Restrooms – The old restrooms have been demolished;
 - (4) Bogue Falaya Park Shoreline Protection and Paddlers' Launch – A preconstruction meeting will be held tomorrow and work will soon begin on this project; and
 - (5) Expansion of Ernest J. Cooper Memorial Fire Station – A preconstruction meeting to discuss the expansion of the two bays with the contractor has been scheduled.
- (c) He gave an update on infrastructure projects that are underway:
- (1) East 9th Avenue and Covington High School lift stations;
 - (2) Sewer point repairs in the West 25th Avenue/East Independence Street/East Guidry Street area;
 - (3) Wastewater Treatment Plant, Phase 1, improvements;
 - (4) East Rutland Street drainage improvements – This project consists of drainage system repairs and culvert replacement in the area of the AT&T Building and SSA. Advertisements for bids have begun and the bids will be opened on Wednesday, October 10th; and
 - (5) Safe Routes to School – The new sidewalk along the portion of West 28th Avenue near Pine View Middle School as well as North Filmore Street up to North Columbia Street; and
 - (6) Cleveland Street Bridge Replacement – Advertisements for bids will begin soon and the bids will be opened on Tuesday, October 23rd.
- (d) He gave an update on drainage projects that are in different stages of design or permitting:
- (1) Blue Swamp Creek cleaning and de-snagging;
 - (2) Patricia Ditch cleaning and de-snagging; and
 - (3) Mile Branch improvements for which the City has entered into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with St. Tammany Parish Government.
- (e) He mentioned that Senate Bill 132 which was passed last year did not remove the Scenic River designation or the permitting requirements. He pointed out that before SB 132 was passed, clearing and de-snagging was not allowed. Since the bill passed, clearing and de-snagging in the Tchefuncte River and any associated waterways is allowed with a permit.
- (f) He reminded everyone that due to the pending renovations, the Covington branch of the St. Tammany Parish Library will move the library operations to its temporary location at 1200 Highway 190 Business on Monday, October 8th and will reopen at its temporary location on Monday, October 15th. He mentioned that the Administrative offices are located on West 21st Avenue near the Shack Restaurant.
- (g) He announced that the property located at 833 East Boston Street which is owned by LA DOTD is scheduled for public bid with the bid letting date of October 18, 2018. The minimum bid will be \$450,000.
- (h) He announced that there are four job openings in the City's Public Works Department and encouraged interested persons to apply for these positions before the deadline on October 1st.

Council President McMath inquired as to the stage of the Mile Branch drainage improvement project.

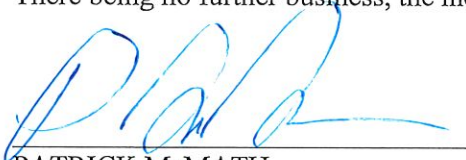
Mayor Cooper responded that the project is being managed by St. Tammany Parish Government and a notice to proceed for the surveying work has been issued. The scope of the surveying work includes the length of Mile Branch just north of West 21st Avenue to West 11th Avenue. City Administration has mailed right of entry forms to all property owners along Mile Branch in order to acquire permission for the surveyor to enter their property.

Councilman Coner inquired as to the status of the canal that runs from East 35th Avenue and Collins Boulevard to Lee Road.

Mayor Cooper responded that he will check on the status.

Police Chief Lentz announced that Lance Benjamin is back home and enjoying some well-deserved R&R. He is scheduled to return to work by the beginning of October.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:52 P.M.



PATRICK McMATH
Council President



BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk