

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 6, 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, Mark Wright, 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 Deputy Police Chief Doug Arrowood.

**APPEARERS**

1. Ms. Joy Newhouse and Mr. David Kampen presented a check to Police Chief Tim Lentz for funds raised through a sale of Blue Light Bulbs for the benefit of the Covington Police Department and those police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty. Ms. Newhouse stated that primarily the Blue Light Bulbs were sold in Oak Alley Subdivision.

Police Chief Lentz commented that it is an honor to serve in a community that cares about its police officers and he is humbled by the outpouring of support from the residents of Oak Alley Subdivision.

2. Police Chief Tim Lentz recognized Deputy Chief Doug Arrowood for his years of service to the City of Covington and thanked him for serving as the Deputy Chief for the past three years.

Police Chief Tim Lentz introduced Stephen Culotta as the newly-appointed Deputy Police Chief and stated that he looks forward to working with Deputy Chief Culotta.

**Mayor Cooper** congratulated Deputy Chief Arrowood for his service to the Covington Police Department and wished him well in his retirement. Also, he congratulated Stephen Culotta on his appointment as the new Deputy Chief of the Covington Police Department.

**Mayor Cooper** acknowledged four new Covington Police officers: Officer Laura Aucoin, Officer George Turgeau, Officer Nicholas Greaver and Officer Ben Cato, who recently completed their POST training, and presented certificates of appreciation to them. Officer Cato was not able to attend the meeting this evening due to serving on active duty with the United States Marine Corps.

**Council President O'Keefe** thanked the men and women of the Covington Police Department for their service.

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Callahan. 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. 2017-05-01 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Appendix B, Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of 2010, Part 4. General Provisions, Section 4.2. Landscaping (Zoning Case No. 17-04-TXT) (Wright)**

**Councilman Wright led a discussion on Item No. 2017-05-01.**

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

**Councilman Wright made a motion to adopt Item No. 2017-05-01, seconded by Councilman Rolling. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Abstain – 1 (Coner) to adopt Item No. 2017-05-01. Item No. 2017-05-01 was adopted.**

**2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2017-05-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 83 Fees, Article IV. Miscellaneous Fees, to Add Sec. 83-8. Tree Removal Permit Fee (Wright)**

**Councilman Wright led a discussion on Item No. 2017-05-02.**

**Mayor Cooper pointed out that the tree removal permit fee is currently in effect and this ordinance just adds the language to another chapter in the Code.**

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

**Councilman Rolling made a motion to adopt Item No. 2017-05-02, seconded by Councilman McMath. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Abstain – 1 (Coner) to adopt Item No. 2017-05-02. Item No. 2017-05-02 was adopted.**

**3. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2017-05-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 102 Vegetation, Article I. In General (Wright)**

**Councilman Wright led a discussion on Item No. 2017-05-03.**

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

**Councilman Wright made a motion to adopt Item No. 2017-05-03, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Abstain – 1 (Coner) to adopt Item No. 2017-05-03. Item No. 2017-05-03 was adopted.**

**New Business**

**Items to be voted on:**

**1. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-12 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Accepting the 2016 Audit Report Issued by Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC (O’Keefe)**

Ms. Kathleen Zuniga and Ms. Tina Stewart from Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C. made a presentation to the Council regarding the 2016 audit results. Ms. Zuniga stated they have issued an unmodified opinion which is a clean opinion on the audit and there were no audit findings. Also, she commended the Mayor’s administration for being one of the best and easiest municipalities to work with.

**Council President O’Keefe** thanked Mrs. Faciane, Mrs. Hayes, the Accounting Department as well as the entire Administration for the work they do for the City of Covington.

**Council President O’Keefe** read Resolution No. 2017-12 into the record.

**Councilman Wright made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-12, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-12. Resolution No. 2017-12 was adopted.**

**Mayor Cooper** thanked Ms. Zuniga and Ms. Stewart for their report and for working with the City. Also, he commended Mrs. Hayes and Mrs. Faciane for their hard work again this year.

**Councilman Coner** thanked the Accounting Department and Director of Administration Gina Hayes for a job well done.

**2. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-13 – A Resolution Acknowledging the Authority of the Mayor to Sign a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Project Agreement Between the City of Covington and the Louisiana Department of Culture Recreation and Tourism, Office of State Parks, Division of Outdoor Recreation Regarding the Bogue Falaya Park Bulkhead and Paddle Launch Grant (Smith)**

**Councilman Smith** led a discussion on Resolution No. 2017-13.

**Mayor Cooper** commented that the City is excited to announce the award of the \$250,000 grant to be used toward the bulkhead, boardwalk and kayak and paddle landing in the Bogue Falaya Park, which is Phase 1 of the Bogue Falaya Park Master Plan. Also, he pointed out there are two resolutions to be considered this evening. The first resolution, Resolution No. 2017-13, basically sets out the process the City went through to apply for the grant and acknowledges that the

design process for the bulkhead is underway. Also, it acknowledges the authority of the Mayor to sign the Land and Water Conservation Fund State Project Agreement. The second resolution, Resolution No. 2017-14, was provided to the City by the state agency and acknowledges that the City has funding available for the match of this grant.

**Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-13, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-13. Resolution No. 2017-13 was adopted.**

**3. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-14 – A Resolution Obligating Funds to Land and Water Conservation Fund Project (Smith)**

**Council President O’Keefe read Resolution No. 2017-14 into the record.**

**Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-14, seconded by Councilman Rolling. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-14. Resolution No. 2017-14 was adopted.**

**4. RESOLUTION NO. 2017-15 – 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 read Resolution No. 2017-15 into the record.**

**Councilman McMath made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2017-15, seconded by Councilman Wright. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2017-15. Resolution No. 2017-15 was adopted.**

## **COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

### **A. Council District and Committee Reports**

**Council President O’Keefe led a discussion on the order in which the Council District and Committee Reports are given. Since there were no objections to changing the order this evening, he stated that the reports will be given in reverse order, beginning with District E and ending with District A.**

#### **1. District E –**

**Councilman Smith** recognized and thanked Alisa Faciane and the Accounting Department for their work in preparing for the annual audit. Also, he mentioned that the next CBA meeting will be held tomorrow, Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at Beck-N-Call Cafe, social at 5:30 and meeting at 6:00 P.M. Also, he mentioned that due to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, the CBA’s meeting in July will be held the second Wednesday of the month, which is July 12<sup>th</sup>, at the Southern Hotel.

#### **2. District D –**

**Councilman Rolling** commented that it is a great time for the City of Covington and commended the Police Department, the Accounting Department and Administration for the excellent job they do for the City. Also, he announced that four new occupational licenses were issued in May. Upcoming events: Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> – Wine, Cheese and Native American Folklore: An Evening with Grayhawk Perkin at 6:45 P.M. in the Fuhrmann Auditorium; Sunday, June 11<sup>th</sup> – Tour de Louisiane Cycling Race from 7 A.M. until 1 P.M. in Downtown

Covington; Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup> – Sunset at the Landing concert at 6 P.M.; Thursday, June 29<sup>th</sup> – New business ribbon cutting and Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup> – Sparks in the Park from 7 P.M. until 9 P.M. in the Bogue Falaya Park. Also, he mentioned that the Block Party on June 30<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled due to the Sparks in the Park event. Also, he announced that the next Covington Business Resource Workshop will be held in September and more information will be announced at the Council meeting in July.

**3. District C –**

**Councilman Wright** commented that he was moved by the show of support by the police officers who attended the meeting tonight for retiring Deputy Chief Doug Arrowood and newly-appointed Deputy Chief Stephen Culotta. Also, he stated that he appreciates the work of Deputy Chief Arrowood and wished him well in his retirement. Also, he mentioned that he is excited about the grant for the work in the Bogue Falaya Park and looks forward to the improvements along the river. Also, he commented that he is proud of the financial awards the City receives and commended the Administration for their work. Also, he commented that he noticed some activity on the site of the West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue washout project and looks forward to its completion. He added that he appreciates the public's patience during the process.

**4. District B –**

**Councilman Coner** recognized the June birthdays for City employees. Also, he reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. Also, he wished all the fathers on earth a blessed and safe Father's Day, including all the men who do not have any children and coaches who act as fathers. Also, he congratulated the new police officers for all their accomplishments and welcomed them to the City. His quote for tonight was, "Your words are windows to your heart."

**5. District A –**

**Councilman Callahan** invited the public to attend the annual Juneteenth Celebration to be held on Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup> from 11 A.M. until 3 P.M. at Peter Atkins Park and refreshments will be served. Also, he announced that the West 30s Community Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6 P.M. in Rosenwald Gym and the public is invited to attend and share their ideas.

**6. At Large (Vice President) –**

**Councilman McMath** reminded the public that the Louisiana SAFE Community Meeting will be held tomorrow, Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> from 6 P.M. until 7:45 P.M. at the Registrar of Voters meeting room. Also, he extended kudos to the Mayor and his staff for their work on the grants for the improvements in the Bogue Falaya Park and the drainage study as well as all of the financial awards. Also, he commented that the City of Covington is very fortunate to have Chief Lentz as the leader of the Covington Police Department and extended his congratulations to the new police officers who were introduced this evening.

**7. At Large (President) –**

**Council President O'Keefe** announced that the public hearing and meeting to levy, impose and adopt the millage rates on all property subject to taxation in the City of Covington for the Year 2017 will be held on Tuesday, July 18, 2017 at 6 P.M. in the Council Chambers. Also, he announced the changes to the Council meeting schedule for the remainder of this year: July 18<sup>th</sup>; only one meeting in August on August 15<sup>th</sup>; only one meeting in September on September 19<sup>th</sup>; only one meeting in October on October 17<sup>th</sup>; only one meeting in November on November 14<sup>th</sup> which is the second Tuesday; and only one meeting in December on December 12<sup>th</sup> which is the second Tuesday.

**B. Administrative Comments and Reports**

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

(a) He recognized Kelli Moore, Daniel Hill and Chad Whaley for their work on the Bogue Falaya Park Bulkhead and Paddle Launch Grant.

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

(1) West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Culvert Washout – The contractor, Barriere Construction, has mobilized to the site and will begin work on the project, pending weather. Also, they plan to work on the project daily until completed.

(2) West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – This bridge was closed to traffic recently due to deteriorating pilings that were discovered by DOTD in their bi-annual inspection. Bids were received on June 1<sup>st</sup> for immediate repair that would put the bridge back in service for vehicular traffic, 3-5 tons. The apparent low bid was \$40,750 by Kort's Construction Services and a contract has been forwarded to be reviewed and signed. The project is scheduled to start by the beginning of July and should be completed by the beginning of August. Once the bridge is back in service, the consultant engineer, T. Baker Smith, will provide the City with a report outlining several options to bring the bridge back in service for vehicles up to 25 tons.

(3) West 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – The consultant engineer, T. Baker Smith, is in the preliminary design stage for this rehabilitation project, which calls for the replacement of all the timber piles, abutment curtain walls and wing walls. This bridge is out of service to large vehicles, but is open to passenger vehicles and small pickup trucks. Once the plans have been developed and the bid process completed, the bridge will be taken out of service completely for the rehab work.

(4) Sewer lift station projects:

(i) East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue – This is a complete rehabilitation project and the contractor, Gottfried Construction Company, will be mobilizing on site next week. The schedule for this project is 120 calendar days.

(ii) St. Paul's Pump Replacement – This is one of the largest lift stations in the City. The contractor has ordered the replacement pump and it should arrive in the next couple of months.

(5) LA 21/South Tyler Street – The latest update from DOTD stated that once the new traffic signals have been installed, the northbound and southbound outside lanes will be opened leaving the inside lanes closed while the contractor removes the temporary medians and installs the permanent medians. Pending weather and other factors, all lanes should be completely open by the end of July.

(c) He discussed some planning initiatives that are underway:

(1) Covington Traffic Calming and Connectivity Plan – The City is working with the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) to create a detailed plan outlining specific recommendations and the actions needed to make improvements in the downtown area. The plans call for slowing traffic down on Boston Street to make it easier for people to access businesses. CPEX has scheduled an open house on June 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 P.M. in the Council Chambers to get further input from elected officials and the public. A final plan will be provided to the City by the end of the month.

(2) Land Use and Transportation Study – The City is working with the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to study the area along the corridor of South Tyler Street between West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The consultants, Digital Engineering and Dana Brown and Associates, have gathered information and met with the project management committee. When the study is

completed later this month, the City will request that DOTD provide some of the recommended enhancements along this corridor.

(d) He mentioned that the City received a Community Resiliency Grant in the amount of \$45,000 which was awarded through NOAA and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance for the purpose of developing a flood preparation and response plan for the City. A consultant will be selected to provide a document that pre-plans response activities based upon the known river stage elevations so that the citizens will have enough time to protect their lives and property in a more controlled manner. He thanked City Building Official and Flood Plain Manager Chris Brown for initiating this grant and gathering the necessary information.

(e) He discussed the recent Senate bill that was introduced by Sen. Bodi White regarding the rivers affected by the Scenic Rivers Act and the amendment filed by Sen. Sharon Hewitt to exclude the Abita, Bogue Falaya and Tchefuncte rivers. He mentioned there have been some concerns that by removing these rivers from the Act, the rivers may be destroyed and could cause flooding in some areas. He pointed out that this bill would remove some of the restrictions on our local rivers but the permitting restrictions would remain. The bill passed in the Senate and was forwarded to the House of Representatives where it passed also. The bill is presently on the Governor's desk for his signature and when signed, it will become effective on June 30, 2018. He noted that by taking the rivers out of the Scenic Rivers Act, it does not allow private individuals to cut tree limbs or remove debris or trees from the river. The amended bill gives explicit regulations only to political subdivisions.

(f) He gave an update on two new developments:

(1) Permits were issued in August 2016 to the Volunteers of America for 25 new single family homes in The Groves. Three of the homes have been designed to be ADA-accessible and several of the units are for veterans only. To date, thirteen (13) of the homes have been completed and are now occupied.

(2) Reagan Crossing Apartments – All of the buildings have been framed and the paving for parking is complete throughout the development. The leasing office is open and operating. The first building has passed all City inspections and a temporary Certificate of Occupancy has been issued allowing some residents to move in. Once State Fire Marshal approval is received, the final Certificate of Occupancy will be issued. Landscaping, grading and drainage are complete in the front of the development and the second apartment building is nearing final inspection.

(g) He announced that for the third year in a row, the City received the Times-Picayune/nola.com Top Work Places award. This award was a result of City employees filling out surveys about working for the City of Covington. He was proud to receive this award and that City employees are happy to work for the City and to serve the citizens of Covington.

(h) He thanked Covington Cares and Bryan Burns for their efforts in the West 30s neighborhood. Also, he thanked the volunteers and sponsors for working on this project.

(i) He mentioned that on July 1, 1967, his father, Ernest J. Cooper, was sworn in as Mayor of the City of Covington. To honor him for the 24 years of service to the community and for being the longest-serving Mayor in the City's history, he will issue a Proclamation declaring Saturday, July 1, 2017 as Mayor Ernest J. Cooper Day in the City of Covington and asked the community celebrate the day with him.

**Council President O'Keefe** commented that the Top Work Places award was a testament to the City's employees and thanked the Administration and all the City employees for the great job they do for the City of Covington.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

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

  
BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE  
Council Clerk