

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 5, 2019**

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

Roll call was as follows:

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

**ABSENT:** None

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Jayne McMath.

**APPEARERS**

**Councilman Coner** stated that Mrs. Montana was not able to attend the meeting this evening.

**Councilman Coner** requested an update from Mayor Cooper on the status of the drainage work from Lee Road to the river. Also, he requested the contact information for the individuals with the state and parish who are responsible for the project.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that the drainage in the Ozone area and nearby subdivisions is in the watershed of water draining from the north of city limits. (Maps depicting the watersheds north of city limits were handed out to each Councilman.) He stated that the City continues to coordinate with the state and parish to install the proper size culverts and bridges in connection with the drainage improvements in this area.

**Councilman Coner** requested that the City contact the state and parish for a timeline with regard to the drainage improvements in the Ozone area.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that the City has made some drainage improvements in the area and will continue to coordinate with the state and parish. Also, he stated that the City will request an update on the drainage work and upon receipt, the information will be provided to the Council and City residents.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Councilman Smith** made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by **Councilman Coner**. 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. 2019-01-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2018 Budget for Grants (McMath)**

**Council President McMath led a discussion on Item No. 2019-01-02.**

**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. 2019-01-02, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2019-01-02. Item No. 2019-01-02 was adopted.**

**2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2019-01-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Authorizing the Mayor to Enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with St. Tammany Parish Hospital District No. 1 Relating to a New Water Main and Lift Station Upgrades (Rolling)**

**Councilman Rolling led a discussion on Item No. 2019-01-03.**

**City Attorney Rod Rodrigue** discussed the future sewer and water capacity needs for St. Tammany Parish Hospital as a result of its expansion plans. Also, he discussed the contents of the proposed Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Covington and St. Tammany Parish Hospital District No. 1.

**Councilman Smith** congratulated the Mayor and his Administration for their work in negotiating with St. Tammany Parish Hospital to enter into this agreement.

**Mayor Cooper** respectfully requested the adoption of the ordinance this evening in order for the sewer and water improvements to move forward. Also, he thanked St. Tammany Parish Hospital’s Board and CEO Joan Coffman along with the attorneys for the Hospital and City for their efforts in forging the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement that will be mutually beneficial for both the City and Hospital.

**Council President McMath** commented that the Hospital is one of the largest economic drivers in the area and appreciates their reinvestment in the community.

**Councilman Coner** stated that the Hospital has always been a good business for the City of Covington and its residents along with the residents in the surrounding areas.

**Councilman O’Keefe 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 Rolling made a motion to amend Item No. 2019-01-03 as follows:**

**Page 2, Line 5, to insert a new paragraph which shall read,**

**“BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED** that in accordance with Section 2-12(C) of the Covington Home Rule Charter, this ordinance shall be effective on the date of approval by the Mayor.”

**Seconded by Councilman McMath. Roll call was unanimous to amend Item No. 2019-01-03 as set out above. Item No. 2019-01-03 was amended as set out above.**

**Councilman O’Keefe made a motion to adopt Item No. 2019-01-03, as amended, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2019-01-03, as amended. Item No. 2019-01-03 was adopted, as amended.**

**New Business**

**Items to be voted on:**

**1. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-03 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Allowing an Overhang of the Second Floor Front Balcony of a Residential Building to be Constructed on Lots 113 and 114, Square 19, Division of St. John, City of Covington, St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, to Extend into the Public Right of Way (Coner)**

**Councilman Coner led a discussion on Resolution No. 2019-03.**

**City Attorney Rod Rodrigue** commented on the intent of Resolution No. 2019-03. Also, he stated that by adopting this resolution, the Council will acknowledge that the second floor balcony will project into the air space above the City’s right of way.

**Councilman O’Keefe** inquired as to whether or not there will be any obstruction in the alley that will affect emergency vehicles.

**Councilman Smith** responded that the overhang of the second floor balcony will project over greenspace and not affect the alley in any way.

**Councilman Coner** stated that the homeowners’ association has no objection to the overhang.

**Councilman Coner made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-03, seconded by Council President McMath. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2019-03. Resolution No. 2019-03 was adopted.**

**2. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-04 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council in Support of a Grant Application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the Bogue Falaya Park Playground Project, and to Recognize the Mayor’s Signatory Authority (McMath)**

**Council President McMath led a discussion on Resolution No. 2019-04.**

**Councilman O’Keefe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-04, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2019-04. Resolution No. 2019-04 was adopted.**

## **COMMENTS AND REPORTS**

### **Council District and Committee Reports**

**1. District A – Councilman Callahan** announced that the VFW and Project Blessing are sponsoring a Mardi Gras Ball on February 16<sup>th</sup> at the VFW Hall on Ronald Reagan Highway.

**2. District B –**

**Councilman Coner** gave honor to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He recognized the February birthdays for City employees. He reminded everyone to shop locally to support our local businesses. He congratulated Councilman-elect John Botsford, Councilman Joey Roberts and Councilwoman-elect Cody Ludwig. His quote for this evening was, “People, but not all people, are funny; they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the church.”

**3. District C –**

**Councilman Roberts** stated that everything in District C is going well with the continued conversations regarding the drainage issues. Also, he thanked the residents of District C for having confidence in him as their councilman for the next four years and he looks forward to working with the incoming Council.

**4. District D –**

**Councilman Rolling** thanked the Covington Tree Board, Keep Covington Beautiful and Priscilla Floca for providing the Council with the special report regarding the preservation of the City’s Live Oak trees. Also, he reminded everyone about the Covington Business Resource Workshop scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, from 8:30 until noon in the Bogue Falaya Hall. The topic of the free workshop will be, “Work Force Retention: The Good, the Bad and the Challenges.” He thanked the Covington Business Association for providing the refreshments at the workshop. He mentioned this is the eighth workshop that he has coordinated since 2012 and hopes they have made a difference in the community. Also, he reminded everyone about Carnival in Covington on Mardi Gras Day, Tuesday, March 5, 2019. He encouraged marching groups, riders or other participants to join in the parade. He thanked Mayor Cooper for his support in revitalizing the Mardi Gras Day experience in the City of Covington. Also, he thanked Aimee Faucheux, Amy Tucker and the committee for planning, organizing and coordinating the parade and the after-parade party at the Trailhead. Also, he thanked Tiffany McGary-Cyprian for arranging to have Michael Lewis, former New Orleans Saints player, serve as the Grand Marshal. Upcoming events: the OnStage series presents, “The New York Tenors,” on Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 P.M. in the Fuhrmann Auditorium; the Gurney Games fundraiser sponsored by St. Tammany Parish Hospital on Sunday, February 17<sup>th</sup> from 2 P.M. until 5 P.M. at the Trailhead; Krewe of Olympia parade on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6 P.M.; and the Farmer’s Market every Wednesday and Saturday.

**5. District E –**

**Councilman Smith** mentioned that he looks forward to Mayor Cooper’s progress reports this evening concerning drainage issues. Also, he congratulated the candidates in the upcoming election who had no opposition and who will automatically take office. Also, he reminded the public about the council at large and mayoral candidates’ forum sponsored by the St. Tammany West Chamber of

Commerce and Covington Business Association on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 P.M. in the Fuhrmann Auditorium.

**6. At Large (Vice President) –**

**Councilman O’Keefe** thanked Councilman Larry Rolling for spearheading the efforts to revitalize the Mardi Gras Day experience and for the creation of the business resource workshops. Also, he extended his appreciation to all candidates who qualified for the upcoming election. Also, he congratulated Councilman Joey Roberts, Councilman-elect John Botsford and Councilwoman-elect Cody Ludwig for being unopposed in the election.

**7. At Large (President) –**

**Council President McMath** congratulated Councilman Roberts, Councilman-elect Botsford and Councilwoman-elect Ludwig for the vote of confidence and trust from the community in being unopposed in the election. Also, he looks forward to the next few months and continuing to move Covington in the right direction.

**B. Administrative Comments and Reports**

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

- (a) He stated that the demolition of the old DOTD building on East Boston Street is underway and almost completed;
- (b) He mentioned that as a result of the downtown drainage issues discussed at the Council meeting in January, the City Engineer has developed a plan for addressing the issues. The first step will involve determining the connectivity and sizing of the drainage pipes. A subsurface utility inspection company will be hired to clean, inspect and map the subsurface drainage system at a cost of approximately \$100,000, which funds are available in the 2019 budget. The City Engineer is currently preparing a quote package for the Downtown Storm Sewer Cleaning Project. The typical turnaround time is approximately one month and work should begin by the end of March or beginning of April.

**Councilman Smith** inquired as to when the bid package will be completed.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that the bid package is in the process of being prepared and once completed, it will be provided to the interested bidders.

**Councilman Rolling** requested a clarification on the time frame for the project.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that the bid process is moving as expeditiously as possible. The estimate is that once the preparation of the bid package is completed, it will take several weeks to request and receive the quotes.

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

- (1) Covington High School Lift Station – The project should be completed by the end of this month.

- (2) Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Survey (SSES) Sewer Point Repairs -- The project is focused on deep sewer lines throughout the City, including locations on South Jahncke Avenue, South New Hampshire Street and East 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The project is about 40% complete and will cost approximately \$550,000.00. He asked for the public’s patience during this project.

- (3) Rutland Street Drainage Improvements – This is a major drainage project that will soon begin near St. Scholastica School and the AT&T Building and continue to Jahncke Avenue.

(4) Cleveland Street Bridge Replacement – A pre-construction meeting was held with the contractor last week and a “con-span” bridge (a pre-ordered, pre-constructed span) has been ordered. A notice to proceed date will be set and work is expected to start around the end of March. All construction will be coordinated with the residents on Cleveland Street.

(5) Bogue Falaya Park Bulkhead – The contractor has completed the installation of the sheet piling for the bulkhead and paddler’s launch. The project is proceeding according to schedule and should be completed by the end of April.

(6) 2019 Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Survey (SSES) – The sewer monitoring work is underway on the deep sewer lines in the downtown area. The inspection report is expected next month and upon receipt, the repair work will enter the design stage.

(7) Waste Water Treatment Plant Improvements, Phase 1 – All painting and rehab of the belt press and chlorine buildings are complete. The contractor is currently completing all of the punch list items and work is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

(8) Sidewalk Improvements – The contractor is currently completing the punch list items and work is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

(d) He gave an update on the facility projects that are underway:

(1) The Ernest Cooper Memorial Fire Station -- The expansion of two bays is about 75% complete. The exterior work and interior buildout is in progress and work is expected to be completed by the end of April.

(2) The Reverend Peter Atkins Park restroom facility – The renovations are about 95% complete and work is expected to be completed by the end of February.

(3) The old fire house renovation – The interior work is about 85% complete. Site work is expected to start in the next two weeks with the completion of the project by the end of March or beginning of April.

(4) Public Works Barn – The concrete slab has been poured and the metal building is scheduled to be delivered on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Once the concrete slab has cured, the metal building will be installed.

(e) He handed out and discussed a Building Permit Report for the period July 2011 through January 2019 that was prepared by Building Official Chris Brown. The report included information on the permits issued for new single-family residential, new multi-family units, new commercial and institutional, and demolitions.

**Councilman Coner** mentioned that the citizens in the Savannahs, Covington Point and the Ozone area would like the City to request a timeline from the state and parish in connection with the proposed drainage work between Lee Road and the river.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that he plans to contact state and parish officials to discuss the timeline for the drainage work.

**City Attorney Rod Rodrigue** pointed out that the City cannot perform work outside city limits and that the City has no control over the timeline for drainage work outside city limits.

**Council President McMath** commented that the drainage issues in the Savannahs and the surrounding areas involve a larger scale project and City officials have

attempted to work with state and parish officials to improve the drainage in these areas.

**Council President McMath** inquired as to whether or not the timeline for the downtown drainage work might be shortened given that the cause may be much more manageable since it is within City limits.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that he recognizes the urgency for the drainage work and quotes will be solicited as soon as possible.


**Councilman Smith** requested an update on the work in Mile Branch and how the budgeted funds are being spent.

**Mayor Cooper** responded that surveying is underway in Mile Branch and the estimated cost is \$120,000.

**Councilman Smith** pointed out that there are mattresses and other debris in Mile Branch that are impeding the flow of water. He suggested that the City contact St. Tammany Parish Government about the problem and request assistance in cleaning out the debris.

**Councilman Rolling** mentioned that some downtown residents and property owners have expressed their appreciation for the City's efforts to resolve these drainage issues.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 P.M.

  
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PATRICK McMATH  
Council President

  
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BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE  
Council Clerk