

**CITY OF COVINGTON  
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 7, 2019**

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

Roll call was as follows:

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

ABSENT: Jerry Coner

A Moment of Silence was observed.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mrs. Catherine Cooper.

**APPEARERS**

1. Police Chief Culotta presented the members of the Covington Police Department who were recently promoted: Lieutenant James Blackwell, Sergeant Edwin Masters, Lieutenant Trey Mahon and Deputy Chief Robert Blount.
2. Police Chief Culotta introduced Officer William Seals, who recently joined the Covington Police Department.
3. Ms. Lindsey Gray, President and CEO of Bantam Strategy Group, presented the Plan Summary for the Tammany Bikeshare Plan and answered some questions regarding the proposed plan.

Ms. Jody Burke, a resident of Covington, expressed her concerns that a bikeshare program would cause local, family-owned bicycle shops to close their businesses.

4. Mr. Chris Masingill, Chief Executive Officer of St. Tammany Corporation, presented an overview of the Industrial Tax Exemption Program, which is a state incentive program that offers a favorable tax incentive for manufacturers to build or expand in the state. He mentioned that the last project to impact the City of Covington was Dependable Glass Works and pointed out that the 10-year cumulative tax abatement for this project will be \$9,800.00.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Councilman Rolling made a motion to adopt the consent calendar, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) 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. 2019-03-01 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Levying, Imposing and Adopting the Millage**

Rates on all Property Subject to Taxation in the City of Covington, State of Louisiana, for the Year 2019 (McMath)

**Council President McMath pointed out that with the adoption of this ordinance, the millage rates will remain at 21 mills for 2019.**

**Councilman O'Keefe 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. 2019-03-01, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Item No. 2019-03-01. Item No. 2019-03-01 was adopted.**

**2. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2019-03-02 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 42 Environment, Article III. Litter, Sec. 42-64. Responsibility (McMath)**

**Council President McMath led a discussion on Item No. 2019-03-02.**

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

**Councilman Rolling made a motion to adopt Item No. 2019-03-02, seconded by Councilman Smith. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Item No. 2019-03-02. Item No. 2019-03-02 was adopted.**

**3. PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2019-03-03 – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2019 Operating and Capital Budget for New Water Main and Lift Station Upgrades (McMath)**

**Council President McMath led a discussion on Item No. 2019-03-03.**

**Councilman O'Keefe 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. 2019-03-03, seconded by Councilman Rolling. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Item No. 2019-03-03. Item No. 2019-03-03 was adopted.**

#### **New Business**

**Items to be voted on:**

**1. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-10 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Reappointment of Ron Vaccaro as the District C Appointment to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission for an Additional Term of Five (5) Years (Roberts)**

**Councilman Roberts led a discussion on Resolution No. 2019-10.**

**Councilman Roberts made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-10, seconded by Councilman O'Keefe. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Resolution No. 2019-10. Resolution No. 2019-10 was adopted.**

**2. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-11 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Reappointment of Tom Huval as the District C Appointment to the Covington Board of Adjustment for a Term of Five (5) Years (Roberts)**

**Councilman Roberts led a discussion on Resolution No. 2019-11.**

**Councilman Roberts made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-11, seconded by Councilman O'Keefe. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Resolution No. 2019-11. Resolution No. 2019-11 was adopted.**

**3. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-12 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Reappointment of Joe Fetter as One of the Council at Large Appointments to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission for an Additional Term of Five (5) Years (O'Keefe)**

**Councilman O'Keefe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-12, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Resolution No. 2019-12. Resolution No. 2019-12 was adopted.**

**4. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-13 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Confirming the Reappointment of Teddy Boone as One of the Council at Large Appointments to the Covington Planning and Zoning Commission for an Additional Term of Five (5) Years (McMath)**

**Councilman O'Keefe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-13, seconded by Councilman Rolling. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Resolution No. 2019-13. Resolution No. 2019-13 was adopted.**

**5. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-14 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council in Opposition of All Proposed Legislation That Transfers the Administration and Collection of Local Sales and Use Taxes to the Louisiana Department of Revenue (O'Keefe)**

**Councilman O'Keefe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-14, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call: Yeas – 4; Nays – 2 (McMath and Roberts); Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Resolution No. 2019-14. Resolution No. 2019-14 was adopted.**

**6. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-15 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Proposing the Acceptance of an Act of Donation from the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to the City of Covington of a Section of LA Hwy 437 (West 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue) from its Intersection with North Columbia Street to its Intersection with US 190 (North Collins Boulevard) (Coner)**

**Councilman O'Keefe led a discussion on Resolution No. 2019-15.**

Mayor Cooper stated that this two-block section of West 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue is in need of repair and upon completion of the improvements by the state, the street will be donated to the City. He also pointed out that the state will provide almost \$80,000 in roadway transfer credit to the City and this credit will be used to make further improvements on North Columbia Street.

Councilman O'Keefe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-15, seconded by Council President McMath. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Absent – 1 (Coner) to adopt Resolution No. 2019-15. Resolution No. 2019-15 was adopted.

#### Items for discussion:

1. Industrial Tax Exemption Program (Coner)

Council President McMath stated that this item appeared earlier on the agenda and was discussed at that time.

#### COMMENTS AND REPORTS

##### Council District and Committee Reports

1. District A – None.
2. District B – Absent.
3. District C –

Councilman Roberts mentioned that the residents of River Forest are excited that the clearing of the Patricia ditch has begun and are looking forward to the overlay of the West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue path. He requested that striping be installed on West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue to improve visibility and to make the roadway easier to navigate. Also, he expressed concerns about the odor from the sewer treatment plant located behind Barkley Parc Subdivision as a result of the warmer temperatures.

4. District D –

Councilman Rolling mentioned that the new water main and lift station upgrades near St. Tammany Parish Hospital is ongoing and traffic has not been affected during the day. Upcoming events: the LPO's "Swing in the Pines" concert will be held on Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at 6pm in the Bogue Falaya Park; OnStage presents, "Joshua Kane's Borders of the Mind," on Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the Fuhrmann Auditorium; Sunset at the Landing concert on Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at 6pm; the Columbia Street Block Party on Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup> from 6:30 pm-9:30 pm; the Art Market sponsored by the St. Tammany Art Association on Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup> from 9am-1pm at the Trailhead; the Kokomo Stroll sponsored by the Covington Business Association on Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> from 4pm-7pm; the Blues Berry Festival on Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup> from 10am-7pm at the Bogue Falaya Park; and the Farmer's Market every Wednesday and Saturday. Also, he encouraged the public to shop locally to support our local businesses.

5. District E –

Councilman Smith congratulated Mark Verret on his election to the District E Councilman seat.

6. At Large (Vice President) –

Councilman O'Keefe recognized Mayor-elect Mark Johnson, Councilwoman-elect Cody Ludwig and Councilman-elect John Botsford who are in the audience this evening. Also, he expressed his appreciation to the City workers who have been cleaning out the Patricia ditch. Also, he mentioned that the surveying work is underway on the Mile Branch.

**7. At Large (President) –**

**Council President McMath** congratulated Mark Verret for being elected as the Councilman for District E. Also, he acknowledged Mayor-elect Mark Johnson, Councilman-elect John Botsford and Councilwoman-elect Cody Ludwig who are in the audience tonight. Also, he reminded everyone that the “Cocktails and Cotton Candy” fundraiser event sponsored by the Boys and Girls Club will be held on Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup> at 6pm at the Boys and Girls Club on North Columbia Street.

**B. Administrative Comments and Reports**

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

(a) He gave an update on projects:

(1) The 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Trail from Gallagher Park to River Forest – The construction contract has been signed and a pre-construction meeting was held with the contractor. Work is scheduled to begin in June and should be finished in July.

(2) Rutland Street Drainage Improvements – This project includes the area between Jahncke Avenue and Massachusetts Street near AT&T. The contractor has three more trench drains to install and all drainage work is scheduled to be completed in the next three to four weeks.

(3) SSES Point Repairs – The contractor is addressing the deep, sewer lines that have collapsed or need replacement. Work is underway on the last three to four sections of this project which are located on North Jefferson Avenue. The project is scheduled to be completed in the next few weeks and upon completion, sixty-four sections will have been repaired.

(4) Bogue Falaya Park Bulkhead and Paddler's Launch – The project is complete and a final walk-through/punch list are scheduled for tomorrow. The dedication of the bulkhead and paddler's launch is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10am.

(5) The Ernest J. Cooper Memorial Fire Station – The expansion of the fire station with two additional bays is basically complete. Interior renovations are underway and should be completed by the middle to end of June. Also, delivery of a new aerial truck is expected around the same time. A dedication ceremony will be scheduled in the near future.

(6) West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Safety Improvements – Quotes were received and the lowest bidder was Command Construction. Contracts are being processed and a construction schedule should be released in the next two weeks.

(7) West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Mile Branch – This is a complete replacement of the timber pile bridge. T. Baker Smith has completed the design plans and all permits have been obtained. With the help of the City Attorney, the last item which was the signing of the construction servitude for property on the banks of the Mile Branch has been received. Advertising for the project should begin next week with bids due early to mid-June.

(8) Cleveland Street Bridge at Rattlesnake Creek – The project has been designed and the contractor has been selected. Plans are being developed to manage access for the Cleveland Street residents during construction. Due to an issue with the overhead utilities, utility relocations have been requested.

(9) West 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bridge at Simpson Creek – This is a replacement of the small bridge at Simpson Creek between Van Buren and Madison streets. Permits have been received and AT&T lines are being relocated. Upon completion, advertising for the project will begin.

(10) Public Works Operations Facility – The old maintenance barn is being replaced with a new \$1.2 million facility. Work is underway on the interior and exterior framing along with the metal roof. Work is scheduled to be completed in September or October.

(11) Regina Coeli Road Waterline Connection – This is a 10-inch waterline in the Regina Coeli Road right of way for the purpose of connecting Oak Alley Subdivision and Reagan Crossing Development with the Privette Boulevard waterline. This connection will provide for better reliability for delivering water service and enhance fire protection in this area. The Notice to Proceed is May 20<sup>th</sup> and the project should be completed in four to six weeks.

(b) He mentioned that the Northshore Food Bank has begun construction on its new 14,300 square foot warehouse and office building at the corner of West 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue, North Florida Street and West 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

(c) He mentioned that the Children's International Medical Group will soon begin construction on a 2,176 square foot pediatricians' office building at the corner of North Columbia Street and West 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

(d) On behalf of the City of Covington and the City Council, he congratulated our high school graduates and wished them the best in their future endeavors.

(e) He announced that one of the Rockin' the Rails concerts that was cancelled due to inclement weather has been rescheduled for Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> at the Trailhead. Boogie Falaya and Four Unplugged will perform at this special concert.

(f) He mentioned that his Administration is finalizing the 2019 Hurricane Incident Plan and it will be distributed prior to the start of hurricane season on June 1<sup>st</sup>. He thanked CAO Gina Hayes and the department heads for their work on the plan.

(g) He reminded everyone that today is Give Nola Day, which is a 24-hour online giving campaign that benefits 49 local non-profits on the Northshore.

(h) He mentioned that he attended a prayer breakfast on Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> in Pearl River in observance of the National Day of Prayer. Also, he issued a Proclamation declaring Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> as the National Day of Prayer in the City of Covington.

(i) He announced that the Covington Community Prayer Breakfast facilitated by the Kiwanis Club of Greater Covington will be held on Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup> at the Briggs' Assembly Center at St. Paul's. He invited everyone to attend this event.

**Councilman Rolling** stated that in light of the upcoming hurricane season, he requested an update on the Mile Branch project with St. Tammany Parish Government.


**Mayor Cooper** responded that geotechnical studies and surveying are underway. He stated that the City is working cooperatively with St. Tammany Parish Government and he will give an update on the project at the next Council meeting.

**Councilman O'Keefe** thanked Mr. Phil Rapp, Mr. Tim Burke, Mrs. Ella Mae Selmon and Mr. John Botsford for attending many Council meetings over the last eight years and extended his appreciation to them for their comments and encouragement.

**Mayor Cooper** commended CAO Gina Hayes and City Attorney Rod Rodrigue for attending the Council meetings. Also, he commended Nahketah Bagby for

attending tonight's meeting and for serving as a member of the Tammany  
Bikeshare Plan Task Force.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20pm.

  
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PATRICK McMATH  
Council President

  
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BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE  
Council Clerk