

**CITY OF COVINGTON
COVINGTON CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 4, 2019**

(Council President McMath announced that in light of tonight being the final Council meeting of this term, the Council's long-time leader, Councilman Sam O'Keefe, will conduct the meeting this evening.)

Councilman O'Keefe called the regular meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Roll call was as follows:

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

ABSENT: None

The Invocation was given by Bishop Barry Scott.

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

APPEARERS

1. District 77 State Representative Mark Wright presented a brief recap of the current legislative session. Also, he said good-bye to the current Council and thanked Councilman Sam O'Keefe for his guidance over the past eight years.

2. Ms. Becky Gelatt, representing the Mayor's Council on Healthy Lifestyles, thanked Mayor Cooper and the Council for their encouragement and support over the past eight years in promoting healthy lifestyle choices for the citizens of Covington.

Mayor Cooper commented that the Mayor's Council on Healthy Lifestyles has had a tremendous impact on the community and thanked Becky Gelatt and all the members of the Mayor's Council who have contributed to its success.

3. **Mayor Cooper** introduced Ms. Joan Coffman, President/CEO of St. Tammany Parish Hospital, and Mr. John Herman, CEO for Ochsner North Shore Region, who gave a brief presentation on their collaborative partnership in delivering healthcare in West St. Tammany Parish.

Mayor Cooper gave an update on two projects that the City and St. Tammany Parish Hospital have partnered on in connection with the current expansion of the hospital:

(1) Safety improvements at the intersection of West 8th Avenue and S. Harrison Street – The Notice to Proceed has been issued to the contractor to begin procurement of the materials. The effective start date for construction is July 8th or upon receipt of all the materials, whichever occurs first. The work should be completed over the summer before the start of school.

(2) A new 12-inch water line extension from 15th Avenue to the hospital which will provide additional water requirements to the hospital as well as relieving the

needs of the surrounding community. Design work has begun and surveying work should start within the next two weeks.

4. **Councilman Coner** introduced Bishop Barry Scott, who gave a brief presentation on the development and growth of the Church of Jesus Deliverance Temple located at 321 West 29th Avenue, Covington. Bishop Scott thanked Councilman Jerry Coner, City officials and City employees for their assistance and support over the past several years.

Councilman Coner thanked Bishop Scott for his contributions to the community and mentioned that Mr. John Botsford will be the new Councilman for District B.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Council President McMath withdrew Item No. 2019-06-01 entitled, "An Ordinance of the City of Covington revoking the Utility Servitude in a Portion of Dixon Street Between Jahncke Avenue and Louisiana Avenue, Wayside Addition, City of Covington, Louisiana," from the Consent Calendar.

Council President McMath made a motion to adopt the consent calendar with the exception of Item #2019-06-01 which was withdrawn, seconded by **Councilman Callahan**. Roll call: Yeas – 6; Abstain – 1 (Coner) to adopt the consent calendar with the exception of Item No. 2019-06-01 which was withdrawn. The consent calendar was adopted.

REGULAR AGENDA

Unfinished Business

Items to be voted on:

1. **PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2019-05-01** – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the 2019 Operating and Capital Budget for Replenishment of Funds Used for Change Orders on the Fire Station Bay Addition (O'Keefe)

Councilman O'Keefe led a discussion on Item No. 2019-05-01.

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 Rolling made a motion to adopt Item No. 2019-05-01, seconded by **Councilman Coner**. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2019-05-01. Item No. 2019-05-01 was adopted.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING AND ACTION ON ITEM NO. 2019-05-02** – An Ordinance of the City of Covington Amending the Following Provisions of the Covington Code of Ordinances: Chapter 2 Administration, Article V. Finance, Section 2-161. Fee for Returned Checks (McMath)

Council President McMath led a discussion on Item No. 2019-05-02.

Councilman Coner 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.

Council President McMath made a motion to adopt Item No. 2019-05-02, seconded by Councilman Roberts. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Item No. 2019-05-02. Item No. 2019-05-02 was adopted.

New Business

Items to be voted on:

1. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-16 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Selecting the Official Journal for the City of Covington for a Term of One (1) Year (McMath)

Councilman O’Keefe stated that the official journal for the City of Covington will be the St. Tammany Farmer.

Council President McMath made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-16, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2019-16. Resolution No. 2019-16 was adopted.

2. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-17 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Accepting the 2018 Audit Report Issued by Carr, Riggs & Ingram, LLC (McMath)

Ms. Amy Verberne from Carr, Riggs & Ingram, L.L.C. gave a presentation regarding the 2018 audit results.

Ms. Verberne stated that they have issued an unmodified or clean opinion for the City of Covington for the 2018 calendar year. She mentioned that all of the accounting was complete and accurate.

Also, she mentioned that there are required agreed-upon procedures as designated by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s office. There were four different sections to examine and they found two exceptions in the Ethics’ section. The City has agreed to change its policy in that all employees and elected officials will be required to attest annually to having read the City’s Ethics policy and that all will be required to complete the Ethics training early in the fiscal year.

Councilman O’Keefe thanked Alisa Faciane for an outstanding job as Finance Director over the past eight years.

Councilman Callahan made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-17, seconded by Councilman Coner. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2019-17. Resolution No. 2019-17 was adopted.

3. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-18 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Approving the Renewal Application of CSH Operations, LLC dba Southern Hotel for Participation in the Restoration Tax Abatement Program Application Number 20111123 (McMath)

Council President McMath introduced Mr. Joe Ward, representing the Southern Hotel, who discussed their renewal application for participation in the Tax Abatement Program and the purpose of the program.

Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-18, seconded by Council President McMath. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2019-18. Resolution No. 2019-18 was adopted.

4. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-19 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Mayor to Sign a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement Between the City of Covington and St. Tammany Parish to Undertake Eligible Community Development and Housing Assistance Activities Within the City of Covington Jurisdiction for the Fiscal Years 2020-2022 and Providing for Other Matters in Connection Therewith, All to be Pre-Approved by the City and Parish Before Activities Take Place (O’Keefe)

Mayor Cooper commented that the City is currently under an agreement with St. Tammany Parish Government to undertake community development and housing activities within our community. Under this agreement, St. Tammany Parish will apply for certain grants and funding from the state and invest the funds in the City. He mentioned that two projects have received partial funding from this agreement: (1) the roof over the basketball courts at Peter Atkins Park; and (2) the materials and labor for the renovation of 15-17 homes in our community.

Council President McMath made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-19, seconded by Councilman Callahan. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2019-19. Resolution No. 2019-19 was adopted.

5. RESOLUTION NO. 2019-20 – A Resolution of the Covington City Council Authorizing the Use of Portions of the Unconstructed Rights of Way on East 17th Avenue and Theard Street Between South Washington Street and Jefferson Parkway as a Driveway (McMath)

Council President McMath discussed the comments provided by City staff with regard to this request.

Councilman O’Keefe pointed out that specific approvals by various City departments are required before any improvements are constructed in the City’s rights of way.

Council President McMath made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-20, seconded by Councilman Rolling. Roll call was unanimous to adopt Resolution No. 2019-20. Resolution No. 2019-20 was adopted.

Items for discussion:

1. Annexation, Building and Drainage in the Covington Metropolitan Area (Coner)

Councilman Coner commented that he would like to make the incoming Council members aware of the drainage problems across the City and requested they take these issues into account when considering future annexations.

COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Council Service Recognition

Council President McMath presented mementos to Councilmen Callahan, Coner, Smith and O'Keefe and Mayor Cooper for their loyal and dedicated service to the City of Covington.

Council District and Committee Reports

1. District A –

Councilman Callahan thanked his fellow Councilmen for being the best team in Covington's history.

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 congratulated all the winners in the recent election and commended all candidates for being willing and able to give to the government of our community. He mentioned that Clancy Dubos, a columnist for the Gambit, wrote an article about the winners and losers in elections. He mentioned that the residents of Covington should be aware that there is a town in Germany with approximately the same population that recently elected a 100-year-old lady to public office. His quote for this evening was, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched—they must be felt with the heart," by Helen Keller.

3. District C –

Councilman Roberts mentioned that there has been a string of car burglaries recently and encouraged everyone to remember to lock their car doors. Also, he mentioned that a group of teens has been ringing doorbells and running away. He encouraged parents to talk to their children about their activities when they are out with their friends. Also, he has noticed the progress on the 15th Avenue walkway and drainage work and looks forward to the completion of the project. Also, he commented that there is over 50 years of loyal and dedicated service leaving this Council tonight. He stated that it has been his honor to serve with this Council and thanked them for their support.

4. District D –

Councilman Rolling announced that 10 new businesses applied for occupational licenses in April and May 2019. Upcoming event: the first annual Blues Berry Festival on Saturday, June 8th from 10am-7pm in the Bogue Falaya Park. Also, he commented that the past eight years have been a great experience. He thanked Councilman at Large Sam O'Keefe for his leadership and help in creating a great foundation for the next Council. He expressed his appreciation to the late Councilman at Large Lee Alexius for his guidance over the years. He thanked Councilmen John Callahan, Jerry Coner and Rick Smith for their public service for the City of Covington. He thanked Mayor Cooper for his vision and accomplishments over the past eight years. Also, he commented that he looks forward to the future and working with the new Council and Mayor-elect Mark Johnson.

5. District E –

Councilman Smith expressed his appreciation to Councilman-elect John Botsford for the kind thank you note. Also, he extended his appreciation and kudos to Mayor Cooper, Gina Hayes, Alisa Faciane and the entire Administration; former Police Chief Lentz, Police Chief Culotta and the entire Covington Police Department; former Fire Chief Badon, Fire Chief Blocker and the entire

Covington Fire Department; and Chris Davis and the entire Public Works Department, for all of their assistance and hard work over the past eight years. Also, he looks forward to working with Mark Verret, the newly-elected Councilman for District E. Also, he thanked the late Councilman at Large Lee Alexius along with the members of the Council and the Council Clerk for their assistance and dedication during the past eight years.

6. At Large (President) –

Council President McMath commented that serving on the Council for the past few years has been a great experience. He thanked each Councilman and the Council Clerk for their dedication and service.

7. At Large (Vice President) –

Councilman O'Keefe commented that this Council, including the late Lee Alexius, put their egos aside and chose to work together for the betterment of the citizens of the City of Covington. He mentioned that the past four years have been quite different than most in that there have been two special elections to fill vacant positions on the Council. He thanked Mayor Cooper, City Attorney Rod Rodrigue, Gina Hayes, Alisa Faciane, Cindy Samuel, Denise Windom, JoAnn Rucker, Nahketah Bagby, Olivia Oalman and all City employees for their dedication and service. Also, he commented that the City will be in good hand with the new Council.

B. Administrative Comments and Reports

1. Mayor Cooper's comments:

(a) He thanked the members of the Council for their assistance and cooperation in establishing, budgeting and implementing the goals and improvements for the City of Covington over the past eight years. He expressed his appreciation to the late Councilman Lee Alexius and Councilman Sam O'Keefe for their knowledge and experience in leading the Council. He stated that working with this Council including Mark Wright, former Councilman for District C, has been a tremendous honor and pleasure for him in providing a better community for the residents. He commented that the City has a great foundation for the next Administration in continuing to move the City forward. Also, he thanked City employees for their dedication and congratulated them for being retained by the incoming Administration. He stated that he has been proud to serve as Mayor of his hometown as his father did many years before him. He thanked the Council, City employees and the citizens of the City of Covington for their contributions to the success of the Covington community.

(b) He mentioned that City Engineer Daniel Hill is currently managing over 60 capital projects that will carry over into the next Administration and gave an update on some of the projects and endeavors that are underway or soon to be in progress:

- (1) West 15th Avenue Trail -- overlay and drainage improvements;
- (2) West 11th Avenue Bridge Replacement at Mile Branch – total replacement with a full concrete structure. Bids are opening next week;
- (3) Cleveland Street Bridge at Rattlesnake Creek – new bridge;
- (4) West 15th Avenue Bridge at Simpson Creek – new bridge;
- (5) Regina Coeli Road Waterline Connection – Connecting Oak Alley to Privette Boulevard which will provide better reliability for delivering water service and enhance fire protection in this area.
- (6) River Forest Paving and Drainage Improvements, Willow Drive, Phase 2 – Construction will begin later this year;

(7) Patricia Ditch Clearing and De-snagging – All permits have been obtained; preliminary clearing has taken place; and the project will be underway later this year;

(8) Road Overlay Program is budgeted and scheduled for later this year; and

(9) Public Works Facility – The roof has been installed and the structure should be completed before the end of the year.

(c) He gave an update on three state DOTD projects that are soon to begin:

(1) The mill and overlay of a portion of South Tyler Street from West 13th Avenue to West 21st Avenue – Bids are scheduled for letting in July or August 2019;

(2) The installation of a turning lane on the portion of Ronald Reagan Highway from Highway 25 going west to Covington High School – Bids are scheduled for letting in September 2019; and

(3) The construction of the traffic circle/roundabout at Jefferson and 21st Avenues – Bids are scheduled for letting in early 2020.

He mentioned that all of the projects have been funded with local funding, grants and through the state DOTD without increasing taxes to the citizens or business owners of the City of Covington.

(d) He gave an update on the Master Plan for the Menetre Park and Boat Launch that was commissioned by his Administration. After public input was received, a final plan was prepared and will be provided to the incoming Administration and Council. The purpose of the Master Plan will be to provide conceptual plans for improvements that will increase the safety of all visitors and expand the utilization of the park and boat launch.

(e) He stated that a Final Drainage Reconnaissance Report was commissioned and will be provided to the incoming Administration and Council. The report identified the local, state and parish drainage ways and areas of concern. In the report, the consultants recommended that the City's elected officials and departments establish goals and priorities for action in the form of a Drainage Master Plan.

(f) He mentioned that funding was provided in the 2019 budget for an update of the 2007 Master Plan for the City. Four proposals were received and reviewed by the Professional Services Committee and the process of selecting a consultant is moving forward.

(g) He mentioned that the next phase of the Bogue Falaya Park Master Plan is underway. Funding for planning and design for this phase is included in the 2019 budget and Digital Engineering has been selected for the project. The general scope includes ADA-compliant walkways from the parking area to the existing playground, an ADA-compliant small playground next to the existing playground, covered seating areas for parents to sit as their children play and a few other small site amenities to allow better use of the facilities.

(h) He announced two upcoming events:

(1) The Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Northshore Food Bank at the corner of West 30th Avenue and North Florida Street will be held on Thursday, June 20th at 1pm and the public is invited; and

(2) The Dedication of the Expansion of the Ernest J. Cooper Memorial Fire Station on Jefferson Avenue will be held on Wednesday, June 26th at 10am and the public is invited.

(i) He commented that with the Council's help, the City has continued to move forward to provide infrastructure and facility improvements along with services to our citizens. It has been his honor to serve the community and thanked the citizens for the opportunity. He wished the incoming Mayor and City Council the best of success.

Councilman O'Keefe thanked Council President McMath for the opportunity to preside over the meeting this evening.

Councilman O'Keefe thanked Council Clerk Bonnie Champagne for her dedication and service to the Council and the City of Covington.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.



PATRICK McMATH
Council President



BONNIE D. CHAMPAGNE
Council Clerk