

REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, MARCH 16, 2020, 6:30 PM.

Mayor Steve Horton presided with Mayor Pro-Tem Susie Keck, Council members: Kenneth Morgan, Anthony Henderson, Fleeta Baggett, and Don T. Floyd, City Manager Scott Andrews, City Clerk Audra M. Gutierrez, and City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr. present. Council member Hawnethia Williams was absent.

Council member Morgan gave the invocation.

Mayor Horton led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Mayor Horton made the statement:

In consideration of the recent declaration by Governor Brian Kemp of a state healthcare emergency for the State of Georgia, and owing to changing community health conditions and recent guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) relating to the novel COVID-19 virus, and out of concern for public safety, essential city personnel, and the preservation of public services, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Covington, Georgia does hereby affirm and declare that a public healthcare emergency does exist for the City of Covington, GA.

1. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve the statement as read.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Horton stated owing to changing community health conditions and recent guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) and out of concern for our citizens and essential city personnel, the City has implemented social distancing measures including limiting the number of attendees physically present at gatherings. The City of Covington is committed to taking proactive steps to reduce the transmission of the novel COVID-19 virus and appreciates your understanding.

2. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on March 2, 2020.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the **final** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington:

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE COVINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENACTED AND ADOPTED ON THE 16TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISION OF TITLE 8 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING CHAPTER 8.04 (GARBAGE, YARD TRIMMING AND WEEDS)** THEREOF, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member McKelvey to amend the agenda to add, “Discussion of changing the September meeting dates.”

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to remove items from the agenda due to cancelation:

6b. Approval of a Downtown Covington Permit for the Alcovy High School Prom Photos event on March 21, 2020.

6c. Approval of a Downtown Covington Permit for the Eastside High School Prom Photos event on March 28, 2020.

6d. Approval of request for road closure in the downtown area on March 30, 2020 for the NCSS Special Olympics Parade.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Keck to remove item 7, due to cancelation, “Discussion of a request for filming in the downtown area from March 25-27, 2020.”

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Keck to remove item #8, Discussion of public hearing and **first** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington:

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE COVINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENACTED AND ADOPTED ON THE 16TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF TITLE 16 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING SECTION 16.08.010 (DEFINITIONS) OF CHAPTER 16.08 (INTERPRETATIONS AND DEFINITIONS), AMENDING SECTION 16.16.020 (PERMITTED USES) OF CHAPTER 16.16 (STANDARD ZONING DISTRICTS), ADOPTING SECTION 16.20.475 (MIXED-USE BUILDING) OF CHAPTER 16.20 (SUPPLEMENTAL USE PROVISIONS)** AND TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve a license to sell alcoholic beverages for **off-premises consumption** only for:

Turner Lake Marathon

6206 Turner Lake Road

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve a request for a Downtown Covington Permit for the Newton High School Prom Photos event on April 18, 2020.

Motion carried unanimously.

10. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve budget amendment in the amount of \$72,462.00, for ED funding for the last 3 months of FY2020.

Motion carried unanimously.

- 11. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the **first** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington:

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE COVINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENACTED AND ADOPTED ON THE 16TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF TITLE 10 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **ADOPTING CHAPTER 10.20 (SHAREABLE POWERED MOBILITY DEVICES)**, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Morgan, Baggett, and Floyd voting for. Council member Henderson voting against.

- 12. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve additional monies in the amount of \$25,000.00, for the completion of grinding services.

Motion carried unanimously.

- 13. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the low bid from Rueben Morgan Construction in the amount of \$39,870.00, for the construction of a restroom facility at the CNG Station.

Rueben Morgan Construction	\$39,870.00
Sunbelt Builders	\$97,526.00

Motion carried unanimously.

- 14. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to appoint Mike Jewell as voting delegate and Scott Andrews as voting alternate for the MGAG Annual Election.

Motion carried unanimously.

- 15. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve the Dumpster Fee schedule, as presented.

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Morgan, Floyd, and Henderson voting for. Council member Baggett voting against.

16. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve the **first** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington:

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE COVINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENACTED AND ADOPTED ON THE 16TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISION OF TITLE 8 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING CHAPTER 8.04 (GARBAGE, YARD TRIMMING AND WEEDS)** THEREOF, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

A lengthy discussion regarding Tourism ensued. Interim Chamber President Debbie Harper and Visitor’s Center Manager Ron Carter asked the Council to keep Tourism at the Chamber. Chamber Board President Martin Ross asked to have the matter tabled via teleconference. Ms. Harper read a letter from local business owner Ms. Jessica Lowery asking the Council to leave Tourism at the Chamber.

Council member Keck asked the Council to postpone a decision for now.

17. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve to move Tourism in-house.

Motion carried with Council members Morgan, Baggett, Floyd, and Henderson voting for. Council member Keck voting against.

18. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve moving 1st meeting in September to the 9th.

Motion carried unanimously.

City Manager Scott Andrews stated he is proud of staff during this difficult time.

Council member Henderson asked everyone to be safe and stated this is a serious matter.

Council member Floyd stated he applauds staff and to keep first responders in their thoughts and prayers.

Council member Keck stated she is proud of our country.

Council member Morgan thanked the City Manager for keeping the Council informed.

Mayor Horton stated this may be the last meeting for a while.

Mayor Horton made the statement:

As your Mayor, and with regards to this COVID-19 health crisis, I want to again ask everyone to be patient with one another and to not panic. We all saw terrible circumstances unfold on state and national TV this last week where people were lined up sometimes three or more abreast trying to get into grocery stores or supply chains only to find shelves stripped bare by people buying up things as if there would be no opportunity to return for more supplies, when needed. Additionally, in at least one location, we also witnessed, on TV, adults fighting in the floor of some business over some insignificant item, I am sure. Please consider your friends and neighbors and don't buy more than you need. In some cases, I have heard that buyer panic escalated to the point that some stores could not restock shelves fast enough. We are all in this thing together. Let's not allow this thing cause us to hurt another human being.

We should love one another and help one another. The Bible in Leviticus 19:18 says "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." I am also reminded of a Disney made for TV movie about a true story of a blind man and a seeing-eye dog. At the time in the 1930's seeing-eye dogs were not as prevalent as they are today. In fact, they were virtually unheard of. So asking a blind person to put their trust in something he or she couldn't see and a dog at that was a tall order especially given that the thing to be believed in would lead them out into a world of uncertainty. Even out into traffic or into other potentially risky situations. But you know what, when times are their riskiest, with uncertainty, and the potential for harm, we are often required the most to trust in the things we cannot see or the things we are the least sure of. We must trust in God and even people we do not know. Like with the movie story-line, I am compelled to believe that in these most uncertain times, it is love that does and will lead the way. That will help us to pull together, to help and support each other. This is America and I don't care where you come from, if you are here today, right now,

you are an American and we help each other. So I am asking you as an American to please be patient and calm and help one another- "Let love Lead the Way" through this perilous time we are currently dealing with.

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Steve Horton, Mayor

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk