

**REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, AUGUST 15, 2022, 6:30 PM.**

Mayor Steve Horton presided with Mayor Pro-tem Fleeta Baggett, Council members: Susie Keck, Anthony Henderson, Charika Davis, Kenneth Morgan, and Don T. Floyd, City Manager Tres Thomas, Assistant City Manager John King, City Clerk Audra M. Gutierrez, Deputy Clerk Amanda Huggins, and City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr. present.

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

Mayor Horton presented a proclamation recognizing Stephon Castle, a Newton High School student and 2022 Region 4-AAAAAAA Player of the Year, for his accomplishments in basketball including a Gold Medal with the 2022 USA Men's U18 National Team in Tijuana, Mexico. Mayor Horton acknowledged August 15, 2022 as "Stephon Castle Day" in Covington, Georgia.

Mayor Horton administered the oath of office to new Covington Police Department officers Armando Pedroza and Deryck Solina.

\*\*\*\*\*

1. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on August 1, 2022, with correction to Council member Floyd's comment, changing Nat Turner Jr. to Nat Turner Sr. at Council member Floyd's request.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

Council member Floyd stated the decision made at the July 18, 2022 Council meeting to place "No Parking" signs on the east side of Lee Street between Conyers Street and Ivy Street as well as painting yellow curb at or near the stop sign locations needs revisiting. Council member Floyd explained he understood the citizens of Lee Street all agreed in favor of "No Parking" signs. Council member Floyd further stated after receiving a petition from citizens of Lee Street presented at the August 1, 2022 Council meeting by Mr. George Jefferson stating opposition to the "No Parking" signs, the decision needs re-discussion by Council.

2. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Henderson to **rescind** the previous motion of placing "No Parking" signs on the

east side of Lee Street between Conyers Street and Ivy Street as well as painting yellow curb at or near the stop sign locations.

Council member Baggett stated she spoke with citizens of Lee Street and she could not see signs are warranted as the street was 19 inches wider than any street in Clark's Grove. Council member Baggett further stated she should have had more diligence in the decision she made, the Council vote was rushed, and further discussion welcomed.

Ms. Hawnethia Williams stated she wants the best and there may have been a misunderstanding with neighbors on Lee Street. Ms. Williams expressed concern for the health and safety of the neighborhood. Ms. Williams informed the Council two of the petitioners were evicted, and other neighborhoods deserve the same attention as Lee Street. Ms. Williams also voiced concern with lack of conviction in decision making from Council.

Ms. Williams' sister, Cynthia Minton, stated there was pictures taken of her truck parked in front of a friend's house on Lee Street and a question was asked why the truck was not parked in Ms. Williams' yard instead of the street. Ms. Minton questioned why this was an issue to the Council.

Ms. Williams stated the Council meeting "Rules for Procedure" apply to everyone including Council members both in and out of meetings and the pictures were intimidating, insulting, and unfair. Ms. Williams pleaded for Council to do homework ahead of time.

Council member Baggett stated she took the pictures to make the point that parking on the street is avoidable as Ms. Williams had space for her sister to park in her driveway or yard. Council member Baggett further stated she works for the entire City of Covington.

Council member Keck stated she understood everyone wanted the signs and realized she made a mistake after considering the petition of opposition.

Mayor Horton stated it is not the place of anyone to dictate whom or why someone parks on a public street, and it is important to consider residents in every neighborhood in making decisions.

Mr. George Jefferson stated there are a few large families on Lee Street that utilize the street to park as they have nowhere else to go, safety is not compromised, and rescinding the decision to place the "No Parking" signs is fair.

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

\*\*\*\*\*

3. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Floyd, to approve **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 16<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF TITLE 13 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **ADOPTING SECTION 13.16.235 (SEWAGE PUMPING STATIONS) OF CHAPTER 13.16 (SEWER SYSTEMS)**, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

With addition to the first sentence of 13.16.225.A stating “...accessible via public right-of-way or easement.”

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

A public hearing was held at 7:28 PM regarding a SUP request for an operation of a private probation agency (JAG Probation) located at 6195 Floyd Street. Planning and Zoning Director Marc Beechuk gave a detailed staff report and recommendations from the Planning Commission, which included the Special Use only being permitted at location until December 31, 2022. Craig Taylor with JAG probation was present to speak in favor of SUP request approval. John Marshall, resident of 6196 Floyd Street, was present to speak against the request. Council member Baggett questioned Mr. Taylor if he was aware it was illegal for JAG Probation to be on Floyd Street and stated this business does not need to be at the end of Floyd Street. Council member Floyd questioned Mr. Taylor on how he obtained business license to operate at location. Mr. Taylor stated he was not aware a permit was required until he had to renew business license.

4. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Floyd to **deny** the SUP request for an operation of a private probation agency (JAG Probation) located at 6195 Floyd Street.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

A public hearing was held at 7:45 PM regarding a SUP request for a homeless shelter (Rainbow Community Center) located at 7153 Turner Lake Circle. Planning and Zoning Director Marc Beechuk gave a detailed staff report. Attorney Stephanie Lindsey was present to speak in favor of approving the SUP request.

5. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve the SUP request for a homeless shelter (Rainbow Community Center) located at 7153 Turner Lake Circle.

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

\*\*\*\*\*

A public hearing was held at 7:57 PM concerning a text amendment regarding build to rent policy. Planning and Zoning Director Marc Beechuk gave a detailed staff report. Ms. Shamica Tucker was present to speak in favor of build-to-rent policy with special considerations for government housing. It was the consensus of the Council to initiate another text amendment in regards to build-to-rent government housing.

6. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a **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 16<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF TITLES 5 AND 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) AND ADOPTING SECTION 16.20.315 (FOR RENT SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED DEVELOPMENT)** TO CHAPTER 16.20 (SUPPLEMENTAL USE PROVISIONS) THEREOF, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Council members Morgan, Davis, and Henderson voting for. Council members Keck, Floyd, and Baggett voting against. Motion carried with Mayor Horton voting for, breaking 3-3 tie.

\*\*\*\*\*

7. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve initiating a text amendment for NR1 accessory use buildings.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

- 8. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve revisions to the Electric Rate Agreement with Three Ring Studios and change language in agreement to reflect maximum cost in the event cost exceeds \$900,000.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

- 9. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Baggett to accept bids from Over & Under and UTEC for overhead electrical work, as well as having City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. draft a one year contract with option to renew for two years.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

- 10. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the low bid from Stuart-Irby for the purchase of 8 pad-mounted transformers amounting to \$96,500.00.

Gresco	\$223,050.00
Stuart-Irby	\$96,500.00
Sunbelt Solomon	\$169,612.00

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

- 11. Motion made by Council member Morgan seconded by Council member Floyd to approve the low bid from A&S Paving amounting to \$70,886.00 with a 15 % contingency built-in for emergency repair of failing stormwater drainage pipe on Westview Drive, ex post facto.

Pittman Construction	No response
Legacy Pipeline	\$152,040.90
A&S Paving	\$70,886.00

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

12. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Davis to approve the low bid from AKA Tree Service amounting to \$56,500.00 for vegetative material removal requested by the Transportation Department.

AKA Tree Service	\$56,500.00
TFR Enterprises, Inc.	\$168,750.00

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

13. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Bob Dew to the Downtown Development Authority.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

14. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Keck to authorize the Purchasing Department to solicit RFPs for providing Thanksgiving boxed meals at Legion Field on November 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

15. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve a resolution of the Mayor and City Council calling for a Special Referendum Election to be held on November 8, 2022 and budget amendment in the amount of \$5,000.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

16. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to approve an agreement with Sutton Consultant, LLC amounting to \$15,000.00 for LOST negotiations, ex post facto.

Motion carried unanimously.

\*\*\*\*\*

The City Clerk left the meeting at 8:56 PM.

The City Clerk returned to the meeting at 9 PM.

Comments from the City Manager:

- Meeting with Freddy Broome on August 30, 2022 to receive guidance on recommendations on hiring of DEI position to bring to Council
- IT Department working with City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. to install cameras in the Square restrooms strategically, while protecting privacy, due to continued vandalism inside the restrooms
- Brian Thompson with the Covington Fire Department recovering at Shepherd Center and will be there about a month, continued thoughts and prayers for Mr. Thompson's recovery and for his family requested

Council member Floyd mentioned several bicentennial banners around the Square have fallen and needed reattachment, and the wooden fence at Legion Field by the Little Red School House has damage. Council member Floyd asked who was responsible for rough pavement at the railroad crossing at FiberVisions, and if it can be required of someone to paint the water treatment facility on Williams Street. Council member Floyd questioned if movie companies hiring CPD officers to work security compensate the City for use of vehicles and gas. Council member Floyd stated a citizen inquired him on why a full inspection from building and zoning and fire department is needed to change the name on a business license as code violations would be found during routine annual inspections.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated area around FiberVisions will be handled as soon as contact can be made with staff from FiberVisions or the railroad and communication with Newton County Water Resource Director James Brown is ongoing in regards to the water treatment facility on Williams Street.

Chief Stacy Cotton stated police officers are not to have vehicles running while parked for traffic control duty and he will speak with staff.

Mayor Steve Horton stated YMCA leases property the wooden fence is located, and asked Community Development Director Ken Malcom to research repair of fence. Mayor Horton stated clarification from Planning and Zoning Director Marc Beechuk can be made regarding business license name change code inspections.

Council member Davis stated she received email request for distribution of flyers to citizens informing allowance of two bulk items of trash for pick up per week. Council member Davis requested update on traffic study regarding Sterling Lakes speed bumps, and requested the email address of state representative for fire and EMS.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated the flier for bulk-item trash pickup will be distributed with utility bills and additional speed radars are needed for traffic studies.

Council member Baggett stated an individual with recycling group is throwing recycling bins across traffic after dumping recyclables and it could be dangerous.

Council member Morgan stated individuals should be concerned with all of Covington and not just issues concerning them. Council member Morgan requested Community Development Director Ken Malcom to organize a meeting with Downtown merchants and Council.

Council member Baggett stated regular meetings are held with Downtown merchants and many do not attend.

Council member Keck stated Covington needs improved trash clean up as trash is everywhere and asked for an update on community service workers. Council member Keck wanted to know who cut grass at Town Center and on the Bypass Road. Council member Keck further stated she mentors a new Council member through GMA program and they discussed length of Council meetings. Council member Keck stated Council meetings should only be 45 to 60 minutes long per GMA and would like to go through agendas at work sessions before meetings to ask questions.

Mayor Steve Horton stated not every item on agenda needed discussion and everyone should monitor themselves.

Mayor Comments:

- Update on gun shot locators
- City Clerk finalizing list for sidewalk tiles and locations for tiles
- EMS update- Chairman to meet with hospital administration on relinquishing license for service or renegotiation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 9:26 PM.

---

Steve Horton, Mayor

---

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk