

**REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, AUGUST 21, 2023, 6:30 PM.**

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

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

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1. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on August 7, 2023, with corrections including changing every occurrence of designated prefix "PCA23" to "PMAJ23" and changing PCA23-0002 Griffin C011A/000 parcel designation to PMAJ23-0002 Griffin C011A/016.

Motion carried unanimously.

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2. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve setting the 2023 Property Tax Millage Rate at 5.756 mils for the City of Covington, which is equal to the corrected 2023 rollback millage rate.

Motion carried unanimously.

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3. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Morgan 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 PROVISION OF TITLE 5 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING SECTION 5.12.060 (QUALIFICATIONS FOR LICENSEES) AND SECTION 5.12.100 (LICENSE FEES) OF CHAPTER 5.12 (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) THEREOF,** TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

Motion carried unanimously.

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4. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to remove “Discussion of Land Disturbance Permit for a 227-unit townhome development at Covington Bypass/Martin Luther King Jr Ave.”, per the applicant’s request.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Carla Ham of 5140 Worsham Street NE stated she wanted to propose to the City Council adding signage to the Village of Covington Mill acknowledging the area as a historical district in order to add property value, and presented paperwork from the National Registry of Historic Places showing the area recognized in the year 2000 as such.

Carla Ferry of 2145 Anderson Ave SE stated the website she created, savebakerfield.com, has received good response. Mrs. Ferry stated companies have expressed interest in providing tarp for the Conyers Street Gym. Mrs. Ferry recognized Bryant Autry and mentioned her son has autism. Mrs. Ferry would like to work with the City seeking funds to support special needs causes.

Mayor Horton stated permits through the Planning and Zoning Department may need to occur regarding the tarps, and funds are budgeted for plans regarding Baker Field rehabilitation as well as matching grant funding for environmental remediation required for Conyers Street Gym.

Ray Lustenberger stated his submission request to speak at the last Council meeting was two hours late, which he understood, so he wanted to review the events that occurred at the June 5, 2023 Historical Preservation Committee. Mr. Lustenberger stated he requested the City Attorney to attend this meeting and, that did not happen. Mr. Lustenberger stated the Committee received information discussed at the meeting three days prior, and the Committee has forty-five days after receiving information to approve, deny, or modify per request. Mr. Lustenberger would like a text amendment initiated by Council regarding build- to-rent regulations.

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5. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve the sole bid from A & S Paving Inc. for “Stormwater Rehabilitation Project #2023-21” regarding multiple small repair projects for stormwater infrastructure, amounting to \$265,213.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

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A public hearing was held at 6:50 PM for the **first** reading of a text amendment to an ordinance for the City of Covington regarding **SECTION 16.16.020 (PERMITTING USES) OF CHAPTER 16.16 (STANDARD ZONING DISTRICTS)**. City Planner Renee Criswell explained the permitted uses chart currently does not allow data processing centers in the M-2 Heavy Industrial zoning district, which is best suited for that type of facility. Mrs. Criswell gave a staff report and recommendations to include other changes such as requiring special use permits for data centers in NM (Neighborhood Mixed-Use), CM (Corridor Mixed-Use), and TCM (Town Center Mixed-Use) zoning districts.

6. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve **first** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington with staff recommendations:

“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 16 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING SECTION 16.16.020 (PERMITTING USES) OF CHAPTER 16.16 (STANDARD ZONING DISTRICTS)**; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

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

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Division Chief of Training for the Covington Fire Department Danny Garner gave a presentation regarding Community Connect, an online tool for residents and business owners to provide potentially life-saving information to the Covington Fire Department. Mr. Garner stated a City wide digital marketing campaign begins this week, followed by a grassroots campaign passing out fliers with QR codes to access the tool. Council member Davis asked if annual update reminders occur, and Mr. Garner stated Community Connect reaches out annually to update information for participants. Council member Floyd asked if the Knox box system was still an option, and Covington Fire Chief Joe Doss explained it was.

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7. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve the adoption of the Covington Fire Department Community Risk Assessment/Standard of Coverage document.

Motion carried unanimously.

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8. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Baggett to authorize a letter prepared by the City Attorney to terminate the Tower Site Management Agreement between ATC Managed Sites, LLC and the City of Covington as of March 19, 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

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9. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between Newton County and the City of Covington for Provisions of a Regional Government Enterprise Agreement for GIS Software with Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI).

Motion carried unanimously.

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10. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve a GDOT agreement for the Gas Department regarding PI 0013751-SR 81 @ Dried Indian Creek Road Bridge amounting to \$78,540.00 , and allowing the Mayor and City Clerk to sign a resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the agreement.

Motion carried unanimously.

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11. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve a GDOT agreement for the Water/Sewer Department regarding PI 0013751-SR 81 @ Dried Indian Creek Road Bridge amounting to \$301,960.00, and allowing the Mayor and City Clerk to sign a resolution authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the agreement.

Motion carried unanimously.

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12. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve the GDOT confirmation letter for acceptance of funding regarding the 2023-2024 Airport Improvement Project Asphalt Rehabilitation for the Southeast ramp.

Motion carried unanimously.

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13. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve adoption of the GDOT Procurement Policy for the Procurement, Management, and Administration of Engineering and Design Related Consultant Services.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Mr. Gary Massey of Gary Massey Agency, Inc. gave a detailed Property and Casualty Coverage insurance update from provider Traveler's Insurance.

14. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve Property and Casualty Coverage renewal with Traveler's Insurance, as presented by Mr. Gary Massey, a premium amount as recommended of \$799,769.00 paid over four payments quarterly, and a budget amendment resolution increasing the Liability Insurance account by \$36,000.00 and decreasing the Contingencies account by \$36,000.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

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A detailed discussion ensued regarding consideration of granting a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for City of Covington retirees. Human Resources Director Paul Dailey stated actuaries recommended a 2.5% COLA increase May 9, 2022 that would increase annual funding approximately \$90,000.00. Mr. Dailey stated updated numbers will be available at the November 2023 Retirement Review Committee quarterly meeting and asked Council to wait on making a final decision until those numbers are in. Council members Baggett and Davis requested a special called meeting of the Retirement Review Committee to address the granting of a COLA for City of Covington retirees. Approved to table discussion until the September 18, 2023 Council meeting, after the Retirement Review Committee special called meeting.

15. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to table the discussion regarding consideration of granting a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for City of Covington retirees until the September 18, 2023 Council meeting, after a special called meeting of the Retirement Review Committee is held and updated numbers from actuaries are presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Comments from the City Manager:

- Twelve members from MEAG toured the City beginning at City Hall, stopping by the Welcome Center and Cinelease Studios, and finishing the day at the Mystic Grill, ongoing projects were discussed as well as some City history, Deputy City Manager John King along with a few Electric department employees escorted the tour
- Planning and Zoning Director Ralph Moore resigned last week and City Planner Renee Criswell is serving as Interim Planning and Zoning Director, Mr. Lloyd Kerr has been retained temporarily to assist with upcoming COA cases
- Deputy City Manager announced Senior Facilities Maintenance Technician Rodney Powell just welcomed a new baby boy into his family

Council member Keck asked for an update on the Neely Farms sign monstrosity and about when the Dorchester and Covington Place trailhead work will begin.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated Code Enforcement sent out a non-compliance letter regarding the Neely Farm sign.

Deputy City Manager John King and Community Development Director Ken Malcom stated Peachstate Concrete is to begin work at the Dorchester and Covington Place trailhead, and the project is in que.

Mayor Horton asked Community Development Director Ken Malcom about the real time data wait time on the census software in place discussed at the July 17, 2023 Council meeting. Mayor Horton reminded Council of the Benton House Cruise Week “sendoff” and proclamation presentation scheduled 11:30 AM on September 11, 2023, and encouraged attendance if possible.

Community Development Director Ken Malcom stated the wait time for generated updated data is three days.

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Being no further business meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM.

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Steve Horton, Mayor

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Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk