

**REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON,  
GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, MAY 6, 2024, 6:30 PM.**

Mayor Fleeta Baggett presided with Mayor Pro-tem Susie Keck, Council members: Anthony Henderson, Charika Davis, Kimberly Johnson, Travis Moore, and Jared Rutberg, 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.

Dr. Cody McNutt, Senior Pastor of the Covington First Baptist Church, gave the invocation.

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

Mayor Baggett read a proclamation acknowledging the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Week.

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Newton County Historical Committee on Black Heritage Committee President Mary “Terri” James, Ann Burgess, and Roger Smith were present to discuss the history of Juneteenth, need of support and financial assistance to help expand activities during the month of June in recognition of Juneteenth, and presented budget needs. Mayor Baggett explained, legally, the City is not allowed to give money to non-profits, but individuals are allowed to donate money if felt led to. Council member Moore received permission to share the needs on social media as well as seek donations from the community. Council members Henderson and Davis received clarification from City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. on how the City handles the request for proposal (RFP) for the Fourth of July and the Lighting of the Square. Council member Davis requested to see the RFP for the fireworks. Council member Keck stated Community Development would be the best staff to assist with the request. Mayor Baggett stated there needs to be a way to assist that is legal, and this will be investigated. Council member Henderson would like to have someone contact the County to see how they are assisting. President James stated the County donated \$10,000.00 last year, and she is currently waiting to hear back from them regarding this year’s needs. City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr. stated the current RFP approved last year may need amending as well. Mayor Baggett stated she will work with Community Development to see what can be done to help.

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1. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on April 15, 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

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2. Motion made by Council member Moore, seconded by Council member Rutberg 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 16<sup>TH</sup> 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 8.24 (UNFIT BUILDINGS) THERETO, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**”

Motion carried unanimously.

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3. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Rutberg to add “*Personnel*” to Executive Session.

Motion carried unanimously.

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4. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Rutberg to remove Item 13, “*Discussion of Contract Amendment with Waste Management*”, from the agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

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5. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Rutberg to add “*Discussion of qualification requirements of Board and Committees members*” to the agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

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6. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a license to sell alcoholic beverages for **off-premises consumption** only for:

**Food To Go**

**4122 Emory Street, NW**

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 7. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a license to sell alcoholic beverages for **Personal Service Beer and /or Wine** only for:

**Marshinnail3dit Salon**

**6207 Hwy 278, NE**

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 8. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a two-year contract renewal for Artic Wolf 24/7 Cyber Security protection, with year one amounting to \$7,490.20 per month (totaling \$89,882.45) and year two amounting to \$7,865.02 per month (totaling \$94,380.30).

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 9. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve best bid for copiers with Sharp Business Solutions for twelve Sharp Copiers, requesting a three-year agreement with an option for a fourth year amounting to \$1,997.40.

DSI	\$1,476.84 (B/W per copy - .0045, Color per copy .0598)
Nova Tech INC	\$1,628 (B/W per copy - .0049, Color per copy .045)
Sharp Business Systems	\$1,997.40 (B/W per copy - .0055, Color per copy .04)
Systel Business Equipment	\$2,196.80 (B/W per copy - .007, Color per copy .042)
EGP Document Solutions	\$2,468.72 (B/W per copy - .0059, Color per copy .049)
Superior Document Solutions	\$2,482.20 (B/W per copy - .0052, Color per copy .049)
Standard Office Systems	\$2,724 (B/W per copy - .0049, Color per copy .049)

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 10. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve nominations for GMA 2024-2025 District 5 officers.

President	Eric Joyce, Councilmember, Madison
First Vice President	Kurt Ward, Mayor, Braselton
Second Vice President	Amanda Willis, Councilmember, Carlton
Third Vice President	John Howard, Mayor, Monroe

Motion carried unanimously.

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City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. opened an appeal hearing of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) approvals for PMAJ23-0026, PMAJ23-0027, PMAJ23-0028, PMAJ23-0029, PMAJ23-0030, PMAJ23-0031, and PMAJ23-0032 the Cadwell; PMAJ23-0034, PMAJ23-0035, PMAJ23-0081, PMAJ23-0022, PMAJ23-0037, PMAJ23-0038, and PMAJ23-0039 the Dustin; and PMAJ23-0060, PMAJ23-0061, PMAJ23-0019, PMAJ23-0062, PMAJ23-0063, and PMAJ23-0064 the Silverstone at 7:05 PM. Mr. Turner further stated the appellant, Q Dorchester Holdings, LLC is requesting a modification to the action taken by the HPC on March 13, 2024 to approve seven repeats of the Cadwell and Dustin house plans and six repeats of the Silverstone house plan. Planning and Zoning Director Judy Johnson gave a detailed presentation and review of action taken at the March 13, 2024 HPC meeting.

11. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve appeal of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) decision regarding PMAJ23-0026, PMAJ23-0027, PMAJ23-0028, PMAJ23-0029, PMAJ23-0030, PMAJ23-0031, and PMAJ23-0032 the Cadwell, and modifying the HPC action so as to approve seven COAs as requested by appellant.

Motion carried unanimously.

12. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Rutberg to approve appeal of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) decision regarding PMAJ23-0034, PMAJ23-0035, PMAJ23-0081, PMAJ23-0022, PMAJ23-0037, PMAJ23-0038, and PMAJ23-0039 the Dustin, and modifying the HPC action so as to approve seven COAs as requested by appellant.

Motion carried unanimously.

13. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Rutberg to approve appeal of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) decision regarding PMAJ23-0060, PMAJ23-0061, PMAJ23-0019, PMAJ23-0062, PMAJ23-0063, and PMAJ23-0064 the Silverstone,

and modifying the HPC action so as to approve six COAs as requested by appellant.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Planning and Zoning Director Judy Johnson gave a detailed report regarding an extension of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for 2119 Emory Street for a golf cart rental business due to operational issues concerning maintenance to carts. Former owner Jesse Gentes was present to ensure he was not involved with the property or the request.

14. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Davis to **deny** a request for a Special Use Permit (SUP) extension at 2119 Emory Street (PSU23-0001).

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Johnson, Moore, Davis, and Rutberg voting in favor. Council member Henderson voting in opposition.

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15. Motion made by Council member Johnson, seconded by Council member Moore to approve a request by the Gas Department to purchase AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) project materials and to submit a request for proposal, with an estimated cost of \$1,622,010.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

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16. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Johnson to approve a memorandum of agreement between the City of Covington, GDOT and Archer Aviation for the construction funding of the new taxiway and public use compass rose amounting to \$1,416,279.00, with State of Georgia agreeing to a grant of \$500,000.00 to be awarded to the City of Covington.

Motion carried unanimously.

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17. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a Local Road Assistance Program application to receive GDOT supplemental grant amounting to \$253,946.21 with no local match.

Motion carried unanimously.

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18. Motion made by Council member Johnson, seconded by Council member Rutberg to approve the GDOT Local Government Lighting Project Agreement (LGLPA), with resolution.

Motion carried unanimously.

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19. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Moore to approve a request to amend the completion date for the GEFA (Georgia Environmental Finance Authority) Loan CW2021035.

Motion carried unanimously.

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20. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Greg Shy to the Covington Planning Commission, filling the unexpired term of Callie Carter Whitworth.

Motion carried unanimously.

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21. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Jennifer Lathrop to the Board of Appeals and Adjustments.

Motion carried unanimously.

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22. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Don Floyd to the Board of Appeals and Adjustments.

Motion carried unanimously.

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23. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Adam Bewan to the Board of Appeals and Adjustments.

Motion carried unanimously.

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24. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Dania Bernard to the Tree Preservation Board.

Motion carried unanimously.

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25. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Dania Bernard to the Covington Redevelopment Authority.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Debbie Harper thanked Mayor and Council for addressing the Waste Management contract amendment so quickly. Mrs. Harper stated General Mills has a zero-waste landfill global initiative and needs documentation to receive this certification by end of June 2024.

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26. Motion made by Council member Johnson, seconded by Council member Rutberg to approve initiating a text amendment to Sections 16.12.020 and 16.12.160, adding qualification requirements of fifty percent plus one, if possible, to citizens serving on the Covington Planning Commission and the Board of Appeals and Adjustments.

Motion carried with Council members Keck, Johnson, Moore, and Rutberg voting in favor. Council members Davis and Henderson voting in opposition.

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Dania Bernard stated more bike racks would help with the parking situation on the Square. Mayor Baggett stated Community Development would be able to help with this, and the County would have to approve bike racks inside the Square.

Kim Carter stated Boards and Authorities are very important and explained some of the City's board and authorities have struggled partly due to frequent staff turnover. Mrs. Carter stated she currently Chairs the Covington Development Authority and has resigned as Chair of the Redevelopment Authority. Mrs. Carter stated she believes all boards and authorities should have a vetting process, and shared the process used by the City of Norcross with Mayor Baggett.

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Comments from the City Manager:

- Gas Department was awarded the SOAR (System Operational Achievement Recognition) award by the American Public Gas Association at a silver level status last year, and as of last week the status upgraded to gold level status, congratulation to Mike Jewell and his team
- Cramped for office space at City Hall, Luther Buchillon and team with

help from a contractor built offices located at the back of the Council/Court Room, please go and check out their great work

Deputy City Manager John King stated several members of the Downtown Development Authority will be training all day on May 7, 2024 in Athens, GA. Mr. King further stated Agricultural Day (Ag Day) held on the Square May 4, 2024 was a complete success, thanks to Community Development and to Council members that came and helped out.

Council member Keck stated Ag Day was awesome as well as the kick-off to the Thursday Concert Series on the Square. Council member Keck asked everyone to be on the lookout for the escaped inmate.

Council member Johnson stated she also enjoyed Ag Day and thanked Beth Ivey with Community Development Marketing and Multimedia Design for always capturing great pictures at City events. Council member Johnson also thanked Deputy City Manager John King for updating everyone effectively on the escaped inmate, Planning and Zoning Director Judy Johnson and City Planner Renee Criswell for coordinating the Boards and Committees Awards Banquet, and City Manager Tres Thomas and staff for getting pedestrian sign fixed.

Council member Moore thanked the Transportation Department and the Community Development Department for all of their assistance and long hours put in regarding Ag Day and the first Farmers Market of 2024.

Council member Rutberg thanked the Covington Police Department for all efforts put forth in assisting the Newton County Sherriff's Office find the escaped convict. Council member Rutberg stated he is loving all of the events going on at the Square. Council member Rutberg thanked the Covington Police Department and Transportation Department in the handling of one of our homeless on Legion Drive with such great care, especially Lieutenant Allan Seebaran.

Council member Henderson stated he wanted to ensure the conversation regarding 3156 Spring Street building continues as he has spoken with neighbors on how they feel about the proposed uses of the building and received more citizens against it than in favor. Council member Henderson requested a town hall meeting and stated he has a petition signed by many concerned neighbors. Council member Davis suggested Flat Rock Baptist Church as a location for the town hall meeting.

Mayor Baggett stated she was out of town over the weekend and missed all of the local events that occurred but has heard nothing but wonderful things about them. Mayor Baggett stated our community cares deeply about our homeless population and agrees wholeheartedly a town hall meeting is needed to discuss



the potential uses of the property at 3156 Spring Street. Mayor Baggett asked Deputy City Manager John King to present a gift basket to Council member Henderson and congratulated him on the upcoming arrival of his son. Council member Henderson thanked everyone for the gift.

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27. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Rutberg to enter into Executive Session at 7:45 PM for the purpose of discussing land and personnel.

Motion carried unanimously.

City Manager Tres Thomas, Deputy City Manager John King, City Clerk Audra Gutierrez, Deputy City Clerk Amanda Huggins, and City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. were asked to leave Executive Session by Mayor Baggett at 7:59 PM to discuss personnel.

City Manager Tres Thomas, Deputy City Manager John King, City Clerk Audra Gutierrez, Deputy City Clerk Amanda Huggins, and City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. were asked to return to Executive Session by Mayor Baggett at 8:22 PM. The personnel discussion continued. The Property Committee was asked to enter the room for the purpose of discussing real estate.

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28. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Rutberg to enter into Regular Session at 8:59 PM.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Being no further business meeting adjourned at 8:59 PM.

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Fleeta Baggett, Mayor

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Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk