



REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, JANUARY 20, 2026, 6:30 PM.

Mayor Fleeta Baggett presided with Mayor Pro-tem Jared Rutberg, Council Members: Dwayne Turner, Kimberly Johnson, Anthony Henderson, Charika Davis, and Travis Moore, City Manager Tres Thomas, Deputy City Manager John King, City Clerk Audra M. Gutierrez, and City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr.

Reverend Dr. Royeese Stowe gave the invocation.

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

Mayor Baggett administered the Oath of Office to new Covington Police Officer Seth McCart.

1. Motion made by Council Member Davis, seconded by Council Member Henderson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on January 5, 2026.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Motion made by Council Member Henderson, seconded by Council Member Turner to ratify the approval of a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Covington, Georgia enacting a limited moratorium until July 4, 2026 on the acceptance of applications for Data Center Development

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Motion made by Council Member Davis, seconded by Council Member Turner to amend the agenda to add a discussion of PAR25.0003 - Falcon Wood Annexation.

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Motion made by Council Member Davis, seconded by Council Member Turner to amend the agenda to add a discussion of PAR25.0004 - Alcovy Rise Annexation.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Motion made by Council Member Rutberg, seconded by Council Member Henderson to deny/reject the application for the annexation of PAR25.0003 - Falcon Wood.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Motion made by Council Member Rutberg, seconded by Council Member Davis to deny/reject the application for the annexation of PAR25.0004 - Alcovy Rise.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Motion was made by Council Member Davis, seconded by Council Member Moore to approve a license for **on-premises consumption, off-premises consumption, and Taphouse** only for **Headbangers Taphouse** located at 5125 Hwy 278, NW.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Motion was made by Council Member Davis, seconded by Council Member Moore to approve the Newton County Minister's Alliance as sole source to partner with the City to provide annual Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway for 2026-2030.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Motion was made by Council Member Davis, seconded by Council Member Moore to approve the Newton County Historical Committee on Black Heritage Preservation as sole source to partner with the City for various African American Heritage community events for 2026-2029.

Motion carried unanimously.

A Public Hearing held at 6:53 PM regarding an SUP request, PSU25-0011, to allow a private Christian school within an existing Place of Worship at 13230 Lochridge Blvd, tax map parcel number C081 027A, by Dovestone Church.

Attorney Jason Johnson spoke in favor of the SUP.

10. Motion was made by Council Member Rutberg, seconded by Council Member Turner to approve SUP PSU25-0011, to allow a private Christian school within an existing Place of Worship by Dovestone Church with the conditions that they agree to comply with Georgia Department of Early care and Learning licensing requirements and they meet all required fire, building and life safety inspections prior to operation.

Motion carried unanimously.

11. Motion was made by Council Member Henderson, seconded by Council Davis to approve a resolution requesting grant monies through the 2026 TIP Solicitation for the Hwy 278 CID seeking an additional \$1.3 million dollar for a total project amount of \$2.1 million.

Motion carried unanimously.

12. Motion was made by Council Member Rutberg, seconded by Council Moore to approve a change order in the amount of \$2,358,216.00, for the Utilities Complex to include a concrete paving of parking lot.

Motion carried unanimously.

13. Motion was made by Council Member Henderson, seconded by Council Davis to approve an Agreement for Installation of Natural Gas Mains with developer MTS ATL LLC to serve natural gas to a 52 lot subdivision, Ashton Estates, off of Dearing Street.

Motion carried unanimously.

14. Motion was made by Council Member Rutberg, seconded by Council Henderson to approve a Natural Gas Sales Agreement with SF ATL2 LLC (Serverfarm) to cover rates and supplies.

Motion carried unanimously.

15. Motion was made by Council Member Moore, seconded by Council Henderson to approve a Delivery Interconnect, Reimbursement, Construction and Operating Agreement for a new tap from Transco Pipeline located in Walton County.

Motion carried unanimously.

16. Motion was made by Council Member Moore, seconded by Council Henderson to approve a Cost Reimbursement Agreement with Southern Company for an engineering study.

Motion carried unanimously.

17. Motion was made by Council Member Rutberg, seconded by Council Henderson to approve a request to waive the competitive bid requirements and accept a Year 1 Program Management Services proposal for the One Water Reuse System from GWES in the amount of \$1,615,615.00, to be evaluated and approved on an annual basis.

Motion carried unanimously.

18. Motion was made by Council Member Davis, seconded by Council Turner to approve reviewing the parking ordinance, in regards to parking on the street.

Motion carried unanimously.

19. Motion was made by Council Member Rutberg, seconded by Council Henderson to approve a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Covington, Georgia to request that the Georgia General Assembly approve a Homestead Exemption from Ad Valorem Taxes levied by the City of Covington.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Fleeta Baggett appointed Ms. Nwaka Hughes to the Covington Housing Authority Board.

Mayor Fleeta Baggett appointed Ms. Janice Atkinson to the Library Board.

Ms. Thelma Nolley spoke about the zoning surrounding her neighborhood, stormwater fees, and the future land use map.

Mr. David Norton thanked the council for supporting citizens and denying the annexations.

Mr. Lewis Hadwin discussed an issue with his driveway being partially blocked in Brown Bridge Crossing Subdivision.

Police Chief Fuesting said he will have someone investigate the parking issue further tomorrow.

Ms. Diane Howard thanked the council and said her questions were answered earlier in the meeting.

The City Manager warned of potential ice storm during the upcoming weekend. He mentioned that numerous city departments will be attending a winter weather safety meeting tomorrow to plan for possibilities. He again reminded council of the retreat January 29th, 9AM-4PM, at the Covington Municipal Airport. He welcomed the new Assistant City Clerk Tina Hanson and congratulated her on becoming a permanent employee.

The Deputy City Manager mentioned that the city will be part of a webinar hosted by the EMA tomorrow to help prepare for upcoming weather.

Council Member Rutberg explained that Council Member Moore was looking after the people with his recommendations regarding zoning near the Ohco District. He stressed that the proposal of stormwater fees being spread out over a year was intended to unburden residents from the large lump sum due at one time. He stated he is pleased that the proposed annexations were denied and explained that council members had been awaiting legal advice prior to making decisions. He congratulated new Assistant City Clerk Tina Hanson on becoming a permanent employee.

Council Member Moore stated he is pleased that the proposed annexations were denied and explained that council members always try to explore options to determine the best solution for the City and its residents.

Council Member Johnson thanked Council Member Moore for assisting with trash pick-up.

Council Member Turner thanked Tres Thomas & Frank Turner for their assistance with a resident tree situation. He stated he is pleased that the proposed annexations were denied. He encouraged residents to voice concerns in person, not on social media. He acknowledged the stormwater fee payments were his idea and reiterated the goal was to assist, not harm residents.

Mayor Fleeta Baggett thanked Council Member Davis for stepping in for her at the Martin Luther King Jr Ceremony on Sunday. She encouraged people to attend in the future and hear Sheriff Brown sing. She thanked Jared for stepping in for her at the Newton Tomorrow meeting. She explained that the council tries to be cautious and ensure that the public's interests are implemented legally. She stressed that people should not trust what they see on social media or word of mouth and encourages everyone to reach out to council members via email or phone to discuss any concerns. She stresses that during harsh weather, if possible, stay home to stay safe. She reminded everyone that the warming shelter is open and is accepting donations of coffee, creamer, sugar, cups etc., as well as books, card and board games.

Being no further business meeting, the meeting adjourned at 7:42 PM.

Fleeta S. Baggett, Mayor

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk