

**REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, DECEMBER 9, 2019, 6:30 PM.**

Mayor Ronnie Johnston presided with Mayor Pro-Tem Kenneth Morgan, Council members: Hawnethia Williams, Josh McKelvey, Anthony Henderson, Michael Whatley, and Susie Keck, City Manager Leigh Anne Knight, City Clerk Audra M. Gutierrez, and City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr. present.

Council member Morgan gave the invocation.

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

The Honorable Judge Horace Johnson, Jr. administered the Oath of Office to elected officials Don T. Floyd, Fleeta Baggett, Kenneth Morgan, and Steve Horton.

Mayor Johnston introduced the new City Manager Scott Andrews.

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1. Motion made by Council member Whatley, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on November 12, 2019 and the minutes from the Called Meeting on November 20, 2019.

Motion carried unanimously.

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2. Motion made by Council member Whatley, seconded by Council member McKelvey 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 8.04 (GARBAGE, YARD TRIMMING AND WEEDS)** THEREOF, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

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3. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member McKelvey 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 5 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING SECTION 5.12.040 (HOURS OF OPERATION) OF CHAPTER 5.12 (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES)** THEREOF, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried with Council members Whatley, Morgan, Keck, McKelvey, and Henderson voting for. Council member Williams voting against.

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4. Motion made by Council member McKelvey, 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 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 **ADOPTING SECTION 5.12.260 (COVINGTON HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT)** OF CHAPTER 5.12 (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) THEREOF, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried with Council members Whatley, Keck, McKelvey, and Henderson voting for. Council member Morgan and Williams voting against.

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5. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member McKelvey 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 5 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **ADOPTING SECTION 5.12.270 (LEGION FIELD ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT)** OF CHAPTER 5.12 (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) THEREOF, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried with Council members Whatley, Keck, Williams, McKelvey, and Henderson voting for. Council member Morgan voting against.

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6. Motion made by Council member McKelvey, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve amending the agenda to add, “Discussion of funding for trail paving.”

Motion carried unanimously.

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Ms. Kim Carter thanked all of the council for their public service to the City.

Police Chief Stacey Cotton thanked everyone for the outpouring of support to the police department and to Asst. Chief Almond Turner’s family during the recent tragedy. Chief Cotton informed everyone the police department has received their 10<sup>th</sup> award for accreditation.

Covington Housing Authority Director Shemica Tucker thanked the council for making her first two years go smoothly. Ms. Tucker stated they are applying for a grant to build 7 houses.

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- 7. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve licenses to sell alcoholic beverages for **on-premises consumption** only for:

<b>Amici Italian Café</b>	<b>1116 College Ave SE</b>
<b>Bangkok Grill Thai Cuisine</b>	<b>5135 Hwy 278 NW</b>
<b>Bread &amp; Butter Bakery</b>	<b>1122 Monticello Street</b>
<b>Chili’s Grill &amp; Bar</b>	<b>14480 Paras Drive</b>
<b>City Pharmacy</b>	<b>1105 Church Street</b>
<b>Pizza Hut #36042</b>	<b>4168 Hwy 278 NE</b>
<b>Your Pie</b>	<b>1115 Washington Street SW</b>

Motion carried unanimously.

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

<b>Alcovy Liquor</b>	<b>10117 Alcovy Road</b>
<b>Aldi #48</b>	<b>11152 Hwy 142 N</b>
<b>Exxon Food Mart</b>	<b>9123 Hwy 278</b>
<b>EZ Trip</b>	<b>10125 Alcovy Road</b>
<b>Food To Go</b>	<b>6229 Turner Lake Road</b>
<b>Ingles Markets #452</b>	<b>7173 Turner Lake Road</b>
<b>Kroger #214</b>	<b>3139 Hwy 278 NE</b>
<b>La Tampiquena</b>	<b>7134 Hwy 278 NE</b>
<b>Shell Food Mart</b>	<b>8109 Washington Street</b>

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 9. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve an application for an **Art Shop** to allow patrons to bring and consume Beer and/or Wine in limited quantities:

<b>Wildart LLC</b>	<b>1105 Washington Street</b>
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Motion carried unanimously.

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- 10. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve an application for Personal Service beer and/or wine license only for:

<b>Anthology Hair and Body</b>	<b>1123 Church Street Suite 102</b>
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Motion carried unanimously.

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- 11. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve an application to obtain a license for a **Beer and/or Wine Retail Amenity** only for:

<b>Revolution Casual Living</b>	<b>1114 Monticello Street</b>
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Motion carried unanimously.

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- 12. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve renewing a contract with PRO-VISION Securamax for the Covington Police Department in the estimated amount of \$48,000.00 per year for 3 years.

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 13. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve a contract with regards to MEAG Power Sale of Excess Reserve Capacity to the City on behalf of the City of LaGrange.

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 14. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve an invoice payable to Consolidated Pipe and Supply Inc. in the amount of \$49,750.00, for 120 bore.

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 15. Motion made by Council member Williams, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve selecting Southeastern Advisory Services as Financial Advisor for the City's Defined Benefit Plan with a cost of 10 basis points per dollar of assets.

Top 5 bidders:

IRA Group	.25 to .35 bp (approx. \$110,000 - \$150,000 annual) 5 yr. fee guarantee
Fiduciary Vest	.10 bp on first \$50 mil (approx. \$45,000 annual) 3 yr. fee guarantee
Amret/Callan &co	.10 bp (approx. \$45,000 annual) 5 yr. fee guarantee
Southeastern Advisory Services	\$45,000 3 yr. fee guarantee .10 bp (approx. \$45,000 annual) 5 yr. fee guarantee

Motion carried unanimously.

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- 16. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve selecting Foster & Foster in the amount of \$144,000.00 for a 3 year contract, to provide Defined Benefit Portal and Administrative Services.

Resource Centers	\$93,600.00 plus <u>unknown</u> setup fee
Nyhart	\$146,000.00
Foster & Foster	\$144,000.00

Motion carried unanimously.

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17. Motion made by Council member Whatley, seconded by Council member McKelvey to approve the Fourth Amendment to the City’s Defined Benefit Plan.

Motion carried unanimously.

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18. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve invoice payable to sole source provider Consolidated Pipe and Supply Co. in the amount of \$24,750.00, to purchase materials for Stanton Springs Parkway.

Motion carried unanimously.

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19. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Whatley to approve the proposed list of streets for the 2020 LMIG:

1	Brown Bridge Rd	Tuner Lake Rd	City Limits
2	Dearing St.	Conyers St.	Plantation Trce
3	Stallings St.	Pace St.	Emory St. (S.R. 81)
4	Elm St.	Floyd St.	S.R. 278
5	Scarlett Dr	Tara Dr	Melody Cir
6	Wheat St.	Baker St.	Mill St.
7	Colony Dr.	Village Dr	Stone St.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Council acknowledged receipt of the City Manager’s Annual Appointments for 2020.

1. In accordance with section 2.12.010 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Covington, I have appointed **Audra Gutierrez as City Clerk**
2. In accordance with section 2.32.010 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Covington, I have appointed **Stacey Cotton as Police Chief** and will maintain a force of at **least fifty (50) sworn officers.**
3. I have also made the following appointments:

- a. **Tres Thomas – Public Works Director**
- b. **Trey Sanders – Deputy City Clerk**

4. The managers below will also serve as follows:

**Randy Smith – Finance Director**  
**Freddy Morgan – Electric Director**  
**Mike Jewell- Gas Director**  
**Paul Dailey – Human Resources Director**  
**Trudy Henry – E911 Director**  
**Mary Darby – Planning and Zoning Director**  
**Jeremy Holmes – Fire Chief**

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20. Motion made by Council member McKelvey, seconded by Council member Keck to approve contributing \$40,000.00 to assist Newton Trails in completing the section of the walking trail to the trestle behind City Hall.

Motion carried unanimously.

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Mayor-elect Steve Horton thanked the council and Leigh Anne Knight for serving the City.

Mayor Johnston presented Leigh Anne Knight with a plaque for her years of service to the City.

The City Manager presented Council members McKelvey and Whatley plaques for their years of service to the City.

The City Manager presented Mayor Johnston a plaque for his years of service to the City.

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Comments from the City Manager:

“While I have everyone’s undivided attention, I want to say something very important. Over my seven years as City Manager I have been able to watch the relationship between citizens and city employees and it isn’t always pretty.

Instead of being appreciative for a group of people who do their very best with the tools they have, they often get disrespected by the people they are trying to help. I have heard citizens tell employees “I pay your salary” and “you are here to serve me.” While not polite, those are mostly true statements, but of course there is always the “do you all get paid to make stupid decisions,” what genius without a degree decided to do it that way” and of course, “you all really don’t have any idea what you are doing, do you?”

Let me be very clear: You should be grateful for the 330 employees you have serving you, because they work hard every day to create a better community for all of us. If you are one of those citizens think thinks you are a manager of 330 “employees” because you “pay their salary,” I invite you to retake that management class you might have skipped or slept through.

What is the best way to get the most out of people? It certainly isn’t degrading them. Let them know you appreciate their efforts and if you see something that needs correcting, politely let them know. They will most assuredly be more receptive if you are kind. Keep in mind these men and women work in 100 degree and freezing temperatures, through all hours of the night. Through rain, storms and droughts to provide you a service. They put themselves in harm’s way when you want to run the other direction and run in your burning house while you are running out.

What you perceive as negligence might actually be intentional. Case in point: Not long ago we paved a street leading to an intersection and did not reconnect a loop for the traffic light because it would have been cut again when we paved the adjoining street in a couple months. This resulted in the traffic light being on a timer and not traffic sensing, causing a little longer wait. We got several complaint emails and calls because we “forgot” to fix the light or “didn’t even know the light was broken.” No... we knew. We just chose to save the city thousands of dollars by not running wire that would have been cut only to then fixed again. A short time later, the light was back to normal and the city saved thousands.

I cannot stress to this community enough: You have a group of talented, highly educated people who care about Covington and believe it or not, they care about you. Contrary to popular belief, nobody gets rich by working for a local government. Employees get paid fair wages but could make a lot more money if they took their talents to the private sector. But they choose to contribute to this town, doing jobs that most people aren't willing to. They do it professionally and with a great knowledge base. Remember that the Police, Fire, 911 and Public Works departments are nationally accredited.

We have dozens upon dozens of college graduates with varying degrees from prestigious universities. We have countless more employees with more certifications and accolades than you can count. This is a first class organization. Period.

Instead of using your time and energy making trivial complaints on Facebook, how about writing a thank you note and posting it? Or even drop it off at City Hall. If a thank you note gets written to someone by name, it goes in their personnel file and the note gets shared with everyone at City Hall.

Some people love to talk about the budget and there is a thought around town that the City is not in great shape financially. That could not be further from the truth. I am an accountant, so forgive me if I nerd out on numbers, but here are a few facts:

Over the past 10 years, the City's budget has remained consistent. In 2009 the budget was \$132,754,622. The 2020 budget \$127,626,982. Yes, while budgets fluctuate yearly with grant revenue and projects associated with them, general operating expenses have remained consistent.

Each year, the City has stayed within budget allowing us to receive an unqualified audit opinion which means, we as a city had no major misstatements of our financials. In addition to consistency in our budget, the net position of the city has increased by \$57,301,000 growing from \$143,810,000 in 2009 to \$201,111,000 in 2019. Simply stated, this evaluates the City's assets against its liabilities

This speak volumes about the ability of this staff to provide the necessary services to its citizens while still being financially responsible with the resources we are given. In addition to the extremely healthy net position, we have also reduced our outstanding debt by \$10,322,000 from \$21,929,000 in 2009 to \$11,607,000 in 2018.

Citizens, in no way, shape or form need to worry about the current financial stability of the City of Covington. That is a promise.

I want to welcome Scott to the City of Covington and I hope you have heard everything I said. You have an amazing group of people that will work tirelessly for this community. Without them, your job is impossible.

I want to thank the Mayor and City Council, both past and present, for giving me the opportunity to lead an amazing group of people. It pushed me out of my comfort zone, allowed me to grow and I am thankful for that.

Lastly, I want to thank my family... both of them. My immediate family and my work family.

My work family was patient with me and were never hesitant to answer the phone when I called in the middle of the night with an emergency. You all are the embodiment of professionalism and I am so proud to have had the opportunity to work alongside you all.

To my immediate family: This job has taken a toll on all of us and I can't thank you all enough for your patience and understanding. You all were my rock when I needed something solid. I love you all dearly and I cannot wait to start the next chapter of my life with you.

Lastly, incredible employees and sound financial position are worth more than words can every express. I truly hope that each of you as citizens will see the value in what you have in this community and truly appreciate it day after day."

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Council member Henderson thanked Leigh Anne Knight, Nike Whatley, Ronnie Johnston, and Josh McKelvey for their service to the City. Council member Henderson congratulated Mayor-elect Steve Horton, Council members-elect Don Floyd and Fleeta Baggett, and new City Manager Scott Andrews.

Council member Morgan stated he is happy for the elected officials and thanked all who allowed him to serve another term. Council member Morgan further stated it has been an honor serving with Josh and will truly miss him. Council member Morgan stated he will miss Mike and it was great getting to know his family. Council member Morgan thanked Ronnie for his leadership in moving the City forward. Council member Morgan thanked Leigh Anne for treating him with respect and wished her the very best.

Council member Williams congratulated the new City Manager. Council member Williams stated Covington is a wonderful city and she is looking forward to working with Steve, Don, and Fleeta. Council member Williams thanked Chief Cotton for the way he honored Almond Turner. Council member Williams thanked Josh, Ronnie, Mike, and Leigh Anne for their service to the City.

Council member Keck welcomed the new members of the council and stated she is looking forward working with them.

Council member McKelvey stated these four years went by quickly. Council member McKelvey congratulated the next mayor and council and asked everyone to continue to pray for the community.

Council member Whatley thanked the employees for making him feel like part of the city family. Council member Whatley congratulated the new members of the council and thanked his constituents for allowing him to serve for 20 years.

Mayor Johnston thanked the city for welcoming him and his family to the community. Mayor Johnston stated we have to work together to move forward. Mayor Johnston congratulated Steve Horton and asked everyone to work together.

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Being no further business meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

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Ronnie Johnston, Mayor

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Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk