

REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, OCTOBER 3, 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 administered the Oath of Office to new Covington Police officer Michael Ward.

1. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on September 19, 2022 with change in Mayor's comment from "Mayor came of Newton County Tomorrow Board" to "Mayor came off Newton County Tomorrow Board."

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson 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 16TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2001, AS AMENDED BY PREVIOUS AMENDMENTS, TO ALTER CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF TITLE 14 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **ADOPTING SECTION 14.12.120 (TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES)**; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Douglas Tuller of 2141 Emory Street spoke in regards to a traffic study done by developer of Clark's Grove Overlay and how there would be no traffic-control benefit in re-opening Old Brown's Bridge Road. City Manager Tres Thomas stated Keck and Wood agreed with the traffic study. Mr. Tuller also stated the northwest corner of intersection belongs to someone else.

3. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve **final** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington, as amended with removal of Condition C, *For Phase 1, construct the Right-of-Way of Old Brown Bridge Rd between an entrance along the southern boundary of the extension parcel to Turner Lake Rd an line up the entrance Brown Bridge Road to form an intersection as nearly right angles as possible, no intersection shall be at an angle less than sixty (60) degrees:*

“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, TO AMEND THE COVINGTON MUNICIPAL CODE, ENACTED AND ADOPTED ON THE 16TH 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 16.24.050 (CLARK’S GROVE OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICT) OF CHAPTER 16.24 (OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICTS)**; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

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

4. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Davis to approve adding “Discussion of bids for fireworks display for Downtown Covington Christmas Tree Lighting and Bicentennial Grand Finale” to the agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to approve a license to sell alcoholic beverages for **on-premises consumption** only for:

City Pharmacy	1105 Church Street
Lucky Day	1113 Floyd Street
Nagoya Japanese Steakhouse	1065 Access Road

Motion carried unanimously.

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

**Pure Food Mart
Covington Package
Covington Raceway**

**4120 Washington Street
6138 Jackson Hwy
5148 Hwy 278 NW**

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to approve a license to sell alcoholic beverages for **on-premises ancillary tastings, off-premises consumption** only:

**Town Square Olive Oil
Publix Super Market #1811**

**1124 Monticello Street
12701 Town Center Drive**

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to approve a license to sell alcoholic beverages for **on-premises consumption, off-premises beer/wine** only:

Mystic Grill

1116 Clark Street

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve **first** reading of a proposed Charter amendment to adopt the final operating budget for the ensuing fiscal year no later than the last day of June each year:

“AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND **SECTION 6.02** OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON; TO REPEAL ALL OTHER ACTS AND ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

A discussion ensued regarding the Citizens Review Board. Reverend Harold Cobb voiced concern of Citizens Review Board not being fully equipped and needing three additional members. Rev. Cobb stated he would like a meeting of the board arranged. Mayor Horton asked City Manager Tres Thomas to fill in the role

former City Manager Scott Andrews held on the board, and for Mr. Thomas to retrieve list from Chief Stacy Cotton of current serving members, along with their contact information. Mayor Horton asked Mr. Thomas to arrange a meeting date. Council member Morgan stated some feel there is a need for Citizens Review Board and some feel there is not. Mr. Morgan feels it is necessary for effective communication and pro-activeness. Council member Henderson asked for clarification on what the City ordinance requires of appointees in order to fill the board. Mayor Horton asked Council to nominate appointees. City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. stated the City ordinance requires seven members on Citizens Review Board, the Mayor appointing one member, three members appointed by vote of East Ward Council members, and three members appointed by vote of West Ward Council members. Mr. Turner stated as long as majority of active members are present for meetings, the body is active. Mr. Turner stated the board is supposed to meet quarterly and then on an as needed basis, and a Board Coordinator is appointed by the Chief. Mr. Turner explained the purpose of the Citizens Review Board is to review complaints against the Police Department after review and protocols are executed by the Police Department to ensure officers and department did not violate policy. Mr. Turner stated if policy is not followed, the Citizens Review Board is responsible to bring forth the matter to City Council. Mr. Turner stated the Citizens Review Board reviews protocols of the Police Department and recommend changes to Council if needed. Council member Davis stated the board should move forward meeting with current active members and establish a meeting calendar. Mr. Morgan stated current members of board would like language in ordinance reviewed as they feel it is not structured, equal, or balanced, and the desire is an effective board. Council member Keck stated her former nomination to CRB withdrew, as the member felt board had no authority. Ms. Rosa Crawford, Chair of Citizens Review Board, questioned the legality of the board, as nothing has happened to give any authority. Chief Cotton explained the Citizens Review Board is to meet quarterly, as incidents arise to discuss. Chief Cotton stated there was one incident last year that presented with no action taken and one incident last quarter that will need addressing.

Human Resources Director Paul Dailey informed the Council the Street Department has had an employee out on Worker's Compensation for close to a year, and the department is in great need for someone. Mr. Dailey explained he is not able to use temporary staffing due to liability issues.

10. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve an emergency hire for the Street Department which includes a budget amendment resolution increasing personnel expenses account by \$53,064.00 and decreasing contingencies account by \$53,064.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

11. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve Personnel Policy 701 "The Pay Plan" which includes a night shift differential of \$1.00/hour for Covington Police Department and 911 Communications Technicians, performance evaluations by Department Managers at intervals of 3, 6, 9, and 12 months from hire date, a one-time upfront salary increase of 9-12% for promoted employees with evaluations to follow, and earned salary increments with 14 standard step pay plan for each job class.

Motion carried unanimously.

12. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve the best bid from Condrey for Human Resources Classification and Compensation study amounting to \$52,500.00 as recommended by staff, including a budget amendment resolution increasing contracted services account by \$52,500.00 and decreasing contingencies account by \$52,500.00.

Archer	\$20,500.00 (Existing client rate)
Bolton	\$47,500.00
Condrey	\$52,500.00
Evergreen	\$37,525.00
Gallagher	\$90,000.00

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

Chief Stacy Cotton gave a detailed explanation and presented a PowerPoint regarding a proposed rifle upgrade and transition.

13. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve moving forward with a RFP for proposed 40 Sig Sauer MCX Rifle upgrade and transition for the Covington Police Department.

Motion carried unanimously.

14. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Keck, to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Mansfield regarding electrical mutual aid.

Motion carried unanimously.

City Manager Tres Thomas asked for an update on eight Electric Department employees sent to Conway, South Carolina to assist in efforts to restore power for those affected by Hurricane Ian. Electric Director Joel Smith stated the employees arrived back safely and did well.

15. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Ms. Hawnethia Williams to the Covington Parking Authority.

Motion carried unanimously.

16. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to appoint Council member Susie Keck as Chairman of the Covington Parking Authority.

Motion carried unanimously.

17. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to appoint Mr. Vincent Passariello to the Covington Parking Authority.

Motion carried unanimously.

18. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Keck to appoint Ms. Kimberly Bakes to the Covington Parking Authority.

Motion carried unanimously.

19. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Morgan to **deny** a request from Newton County to enter into an IGA for maintenance of Sandy's Dog Park.

Motion carried unanimously.

20. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Keck to approved an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Newton County Industrial Development Authority for the provision of services related to Economic Development to include a budget amendment resolution to zero out remaining budget in Economic Development Department, increase payments to others by \$135,000.00, increase contingency by \$150,000.00, and reallocate expenses to appropriate departments in the approximate amount of \$12,867.00.

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

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding Highway 278 CID documents including Project Framework Agreement, a letter of support, and a memorandum of understanding. City Manager Tres Thomas stated this involves Phase II with CID. Mr. Thomas stated the documents would move forward the preliminary engineering phase of the GDOT project. Mayor Horton stated there is concern about who guarantees the entirety of the cost and what Newton County is willing to contribute.

21. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Baggett to deny the execution of the Highway 278 CID documents for Phase II.

Motion was withdrawn.

22. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Morgan to table the discussion of the Highway 278 CID documents until Newton County determines their final position on contribution to project.

Motion carried unanimously.

23. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the best bid from Friends of Covington Fireworks, Inc./PYROTECNICO over Starfire Corporation amounting to \$20,000.00 for fireworks display at Downtown Covington Christmas Tree Lighting and Bicentennial Grand Finale which includes a computer generated synchronized show to holiday music to be played at Square and on local FM channel.

Starfire, Inc.
Friends of Covington Fireworks, Inc.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Horton called for Council consensus on engineering consultants handling future sewer treatment plant upgrades. Council was in favor.

Mayor Horton mentioned a citizen asking for support in writing the Newton County School Board to request senior citizen exemption from paying school tax.

Council member Floyd questioned about sidewalk at Stone Mountain Street. City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. stated an ordinance amendment is required to address sidewalks.

City Planner Renee Criswell stated Planning and Zoning is looking into options regarding sidewalk requirements.

Council member Davis requested updates on the automatic water flusher on Dinah Pace, if Finance Department had followed up with City of Conyers regarding ARPA funds distribution, and Mr. Freddy Broome DEI discussion.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated there was stagnant water causing discoloration and he will follow up on the initiated work order for Dinah Pace. Mr. Thomas mentioned a meeting held with Mr. Broome and several suggestions made. Mr. Thomas stated if action begins regarding DEI it needs to have continuity, and it would benefit the City to wait on the City Manager hire.

City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. stated he spoke with the City of Conyers city attorney and state law says a municipality may not distribute funds as gratuity to individuals. Mr. Turner stated funds may be passed on to nonprofits to legally be distributed.

Council member Keck stated The Arbours apartments should be required to have their own security due to high Police call volume and questioned if a metal detector should be installed in the council room.

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Steve Horton, Mayor

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk