

REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, MARCH 6, 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.

1. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on February 20, 2023 with the addition of “Motion carried unanimously.” vote to Item 15.

Motion carried unanimously.

A discussion ensued regarding proposed changes to the City of Covington Procurement Policy from the Finance Department. Deputy Finance Director Ashlan Troutman Webb presented Options A and B to Council, along with other proposed changes:

<u>Approval Required</u>	<u>Current Threshold</u>	<u>Option A</u>	<u>Option B</u>
Department Director	\$0-\$1,000	\$0-\$5,000	\$0-\$5,000
Dept. Director & Finance Director- requires (3) quotes	\$1,001-\$5,000	\$5,001-\$10,000	\$5,001-\$20,000
Dept. Director, Finance Director & City Manager- requires (3) quotes	\$5,001-\$20,000	\$10,001-\$50,000	\$20,001-\$75,000
City Council- requires sealed bid	Over \$20,000	Over \$50,000	Over \$75,000

Other proposed changes:

- Added language allowing blanket purchase orders where necessary
- Added language allowing local bidders to match lowest bid (within 5%) in an effort to keep business local while still maintaining fiscal accountability

- Added language listing purchase types exempt from the competitive purchasing methods
- Added language for standing approved purchases for system critical equipment or services
- Added language for standing approval of expenditures relating to pre-approved grant or loan

Deputy Finance Director Ashlan Troutman Webb stated the Finance Department recommends Option B as listed regarding purchasing threshold changes per consultation with GMA and the Carl Vincent Institute of Government. Mayor Horton stated a change to the City Charter will need to occur, and along with the listed changes, would like the executioner of all formal contracts on behalf of the City addressed, as the Charter currently only allows the Mayor to do so. City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr. stated the threshold cap limit could be increased or deleted from the City Charter if desired, and the executioner of all formal contracts may be addressed as well. Consensus of Council is to delete threshold cap limit from the City Charter.

2. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve changing the Procurement Policy to Option B, contingent upon future change to the City Charter removing \$20,000 excess cap.

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

A discussion ensued regarding the Warming Shelter expenditures and closing date, and proposed requests for funding. Mayor Horton gave an update on the County's proposals to collaborate with the City to fund the Warming Shelter through March 31, 2023. Council member Davis stated she did not feel comfortable further funding the shelter until final tabulation is received at the end of March 2023. Council member Keck stated low temperatures are forecasted along with lots of rain through the end of March. Council member Morgan stated the City agreed to see the shelter through and any funding needed for the shelter to remain open through the end of March should be given, and discussion on managing the next cold season needs to begin now.

3. Motion made by Council member Baggett, seconded by Council member Floyd to **deny** proposed amount from County to split Warming Shelter funding of \$42,536.00, totaling \$21,268.00 from the City.

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

4. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to contribute \$17,500.00 to Newton County for Warming Shelter operation through March 31, 2023.

Council members Keck, Davis, and Henderson voting for. Council members Morgan, Floyd, and Baggett voting against. Motion carried with Mayor Horton voting in favor, breaking 3-3 tie.

Mr. Maurice Carter of 3117 Floyd Street and Mrs. Nancy Schulz of 5113 Swann Street spoke on behalf of Sustainable Newton. Mr. Carter stated Earth Day is April 22, 2023 along with the Cheerios Challenge and Sustainable Newton would like to collaborate with the YMCA to commemorate Dr. David G. Simons during post-race events. Mr. Carter would like the City of Covington Council to prepare a proclamation stating Dr. Simons' contributions to space research, environmental issues, and science. Dr. Simons was a resident of the City of Covington later in his life, and the uncle of Deputy City Manager John King.

Consensus of Council is to prepare a proclamation commemorating Dr. David G. Simons and present at the post-race events of Cheerios Challenge on April 22, 2023.

5. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Davis to approve the sole source bid from Huber Technology, Inc. for complete rebuild of two Headworks Step Barscreens amounting to \$49,536.71.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Davis to approve the sole source bid from Ryan Public Safety System for purchase of Texty for Text to 911 System amounting to \$23,118.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Davis to approve the low bid from Power Connections, Inc. to purchase five electric reclosers amounting to a total of \$162,485.00.

Gresco	\$176,950.00 w/ controls, \$133,250.00 w/o controls
Power Connections	\$162,485.00

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve the **first** 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 PROVISION OF TITLE 13 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING SECTION 13.08.380 (RIDERS AND ADJUSTMENTS) OF CHAPTER 13.08 (ELECTRIC SYSTEM) THEREOF**, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Horton recognized Rev. Harold Cobb and Rev. Rosie Crawford in attendance for first reading of proposed revisions to Section 2.32.030 (Citizen Review Board). City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. read the proposed revisions to the ordinance. Council member Morgan clarified with Mr. Turner that the Mayor has the authority to fill vacant positions on the Citizen Review Board. Mr. Turner stated if vacancies exist for more than sixty days, the Mayor has the power to appoint someone to the board. Council member Floyd questioned how many Citizen Review Boards are operating in Georgia. Council member Baggett stated there are three including the City of Covington, and does not understand why the board is needed as one incident has needed addressing in the past. Council member Morgan stated it is about being pro-active in City government and helps with citizen and police relations. Council member Keck thinks it is great to have one and the revised verbiage will help the board move forward. Rev. Harold Cobb and Mr. Wayne Bryant spoke in support of the CRB.

9. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to approve the **first** 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 PROVISION OF TITLE 2 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF **AMENDING SECTION 2.32.030 (CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD) OF CHAPTER 2.32 (POLICE DEPARTMENT) THEREOF**, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Horton called for a recess at 7:27 PM.

Mayor Horton called the meeting back to order at 7:31 PM.

- 10. Motion made by Council member Floyd, seconded by Council member Morgan to approve the best bid from Cornerstone Mechanical amounting to \$39,149.00 for a new re-use pump system, installation, and startup.

Process Equipment Controls (PEC)	\$55,530.00
ECO-TECH, INC.	\$38,275.00 no installation
Conerstone Mechanical	\$39,149.00 with installation

Motion carried unanimously.

- 11. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the contract documents for residential and business customers including the Agreement and Service Terms and Conditions for Covington Fiber.

Motion carried unanimously.

- 12. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Floyd to approve proceeding with seven projects for the Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues Tourism Product Development Funding with a maximum total budget of \$555,000.00.

1) Dorchester Entrance	\$10,000.00
2) Stalling Street Entrance	\$10,000.00
3) North Central Park Restrooms & Pavilion	\$80,000.00
4) Washington St. Center Basketball Court	\$140,000.00
5) Legion Field Building HVAC	\$175,000.00
6) Welcome Center Restroom Improvements	\$60,000.00
7) Welcome Center Conyers St. Parking Lot	\$80,000.00

Motion carried unanimously.

13. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Baggett to approve a five-year software agreement for the CNG station with EKOS amounting to \$6,407.00 for first year and set up, then \$1,188.00 annually.

Motion carried unanimously.

Comments from the City Manager:

- Work Session scheduled for March 28, 2023 from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM at Covington Municipal Airport to discuss Homelessness, Parking, Legion Field, and any other pressing issues
- Boards and Committees Banquet scheduled for April 13, 2023 from 6:00 PM-8:00 PM at Legion Field
- Electric crew came home early from assisting in Kentucky and all went well

Council member Morgan thanked Chief Cotton, the Minister's Union, City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr., and Mayor & Council for the Citizen's Review Board ordinance. Council member Morgan would like the engineering department to look at the intersection of Emory and Conyers Street as it is extremely dangerous and a safety issue. Council member Morgan suggested a four-way stop placed there.

Mayor Horton suggested a three-way stop and stated engineers should look at the intersection.

City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. stated Georgia state law requires a traffic study be done before any action taken.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated engineering has observed the intersection a few times over the last two years and consultants suggested waiting for the first quarter traffic report from GDOT to be released.

Council member Baggett thanked 911 Communications Director Trudy Henry and stated the department has exciting things happening.

Council member Davis wanted to know if anyone had reached out to the Sterling Lakes or Walker's Bend community to give an update on the traffic studies completed in those areas. Council member Davis stated she had complaints from constituents regarding contractors working late hours past 10:00 PM, and would like a discussion to occur regarding a change to the timeframe for contractors to stop working.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated no one in the Sterling Lakes and Walker's Bend area have been notified yet of traffic study results, but if the contact emails from each community are received, he can send the reports. City Manager Tres Thomas stated, in regards to the contractors working late hours, there is a noise ordinance, and there has been a circumstance recently in which the contractors worked late to finish projects as weather has hindered the work.

Council member Morgan stated there is a contract with Latham Sanitation and the City of Covington sold all of their sanitation equipment. Council member Morgan stated Latham has the City's logo on their trucks, as do many other contractors. Council member Morgan wanted to know if someone could sue the City or hold the City liable if trucks were in another municipality and something negative happened.

City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. stated legally a lawsuit could not hold water as anyone can have a logo of any kind attached if wanted.

Council member Floyd stated he would like to know the plans of maintaining the traffic calming devices at East and Floyd Street, and asked everyone to keep the family of Mr. Benson Dial in their prayers as he passed away over the weekend. Council member Floyd stated Mr. Dial worked at Snapping Shoals for almost 50 years.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated he will follow up with the transportation director regarding the maintenance of the traffic calming devices at East and Floyd Street.

Mayor Horton questioned when the CDBG grant application would be coming back to Council to vote on, and when the fireworks bids and sound production provider bids would come to Council.

Community Development Director Ken Malcom stated Special Projects Coordinator Randy Conner is actively working on the CDBG grant, and the bids for the sound production provider and the fireworks vendor will be on the March 20, 2023 Council agenda.

Mayor Horton questioned if a Council member could attend the Georgia Piedmont Technical College Special Signing Ceremony with Absolics on March 9, 2023 from 4:00 PM-6:00 PM. Mayor Horton stated there is a Homelessness and Affordable Housing Event for Walton, Newton, Morgan, and Jasper Counties at the T.K. Adams Community Band Room across from Cousins Middle School on March 11, 2023 at 1:00 PM.

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Steve Horton, Mayor

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk