

REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, OCTOBER 2, 2023, 6:30 PM.

Mayor Steve Horton presided with Mayor Pro-tem Anthony Henderson, Council members: Susie Keck, Charika Davis, Kenneth Morgan, and Don T. Floyd, City Manager Tres Thomas, Deputy City Manager John King, Deputy Clerk Amanda Huggins, and City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr. present. City Clerk Audra M. Gutierrez was absent.

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

Apostle Rosie Crawford, on behalf of the Citizen’s Review Board (CRB), made a special presentation to City of Covington Police Officer Rashad Rivers.

1. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on September 18, 2023.

Motion carried unanimously.

Electric Director Joel Smith gave update from UTEC Construction, Inc. on the City’s request to accept only 50% of requested price rate increase as presented at the September 5, 2023 Council meeting. Mr. Smith stated there is a typing error on the price tabulation sheet, and the new hourly rate for “Foreman” should be \$100.62, not \$110.62. Mr. Smith stated the costs submitted were post negotiation of original proposal cost, and UTEC denied the request for 50% of the requested price rate increase.

2. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Davis to accept price rate increase for overhead electric contractors UTEC Construction, Inc. as submitted, to include change of new hourly rate for “Foreman” from \$110.62 to \$100.62.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Davis to remove Item 9 “Discussion of a letter from Citizen Review Board (CRB) Chairman to the Mayor.” from the agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

Milagro Porter of 7124 Holmes Court stated being she is a resident of the Housing Authority, the City of Covington should be aware of mold in several units there. Ms. Porter stated she has a compromised immune system and her son has been hospitalized with asthma complications several times since living at the Housing Authority. Ms. Porter stated she had pipes burst and lost many possessions that were not replaced, and even after a six-month delay in allowing her to move units the new unit has mold as well. Ms. Porter said she has spoken with everyone to get help and does not know where else to turn, as neighbors are also having health issues.

Serra Hall of 2105 Lee Street stated she requests Council to consider M1 and M2 zoning is very limited in the City of Covington as they consider Item 12, "Discussion of initiation of a text amendment to allow parking of recreational vehicles (RVs) and tractor-trailers in M1 zoning." Mrs. Hall stated the office of Economic Development is available to work with the City and Council regarding text amendments as they relate to potential resources or attributes, and encouraged such efforts.

Greg Shy of 7143 Laseter Street stated he is thankful for all City employees and adjoining counties that assisted the night of the fire on the Square, and praised the great work by everyone. Mr. Shy stated the citizens of Nelson Heights asked him to request sidewalks and speed calming measures of some kind as traffic is becoming heavy there and safety is a concern.

A public hearing was held at 6:55 PM regarding a request for annexation, rezoning, and future land use (FLU) classification of tax parcel Newton County 0079009B at Flat Rock Road and Gregory Road by JBW Investments, LLC. Interim Planning and Zoning Director Renee Criswell gave a detailed staff report and recommendations, and stated Newton County Board of Commissioners approved annexation on September 19, 2023. Mr. Eric Johansen of 6083 Shadburn Ferry Road Buford, GA 30518 was present to speak in favor.

4. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve annexation, rezoning from County M2 to City M2 Heavy Industrial, and FLU classification (IND) Industrial of tax parcel Newton County 0079009B at Flat Rock Road and Gregory Road by JBW Investments, LLC.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Horton stated there were conditions in the staff report from the Planning and Zoning department that needed reading into the record and approved along with the annexation, rezoning, and FLU classification. Interim Planning and Zoning Director Renee Criswell read conditions into the record.

5. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to re-discuss annexation, rezoning from County M2 to City M2 Heavy Industrial, and FLU classification (IND) Industrial of tax parcel Newton County 0079009B at Flat Rock Road and Gregory Road by JBW Investments, LLC.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Motion made by Council member Morgan, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve annexation, rezoning from County M2 to City M2 Heavy Industrial, and FLU classification (IND) Industrial of tax parcel Newton County 0079009B at Flat Rock Road and Gregory Road by JBW Investments, LLC, with conditions:

- A minor plat must be approved by the Planning and Development department out subdivide out the 16.68 acres.
- A 100-foot buffer must be maintained along the southern and eastern property boundary lines (parcels 79-10 & 79-11) that is adjacent to non-industrial zoning once combined with the larger parcel.
- Any required permits must be obtained from the Planning and Development department before any construction can begin on the property.
- Must abide by the outdoor storage requirements. Sec. 16.20.500.
- Limit the use to a data center.
- A load calculation report, pertaining to development's utilities usage, shall be submitted to ensure City's infrastructure can accommodate proposed.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bill Ross was present to answer any questions in regards to the proposed Impact Fees ordinance. Mr. Ross stated once the Capital Improvements Element (CIE) approval by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is complete, it is ready for adoption by Council as well as the final reading of the Impact Fees ordinance. A second public hearing was held at 7:11 PM regarding the proposed Impact Fee ordinance.

A discussion ensued regarding the request for proposal (RFP) for the City of Covington banking services. Finance Director Randy Smith and Deputy Finance

Director Ashlan Troutman Webb stated there were four respondents to the RFP being TRUIST, Synovus, Newton Federal Bank, and United Bank. The Finance Department, along with a review committee, recommended TRUIST. Council members Keck and Morgan stated that although consideration of local entities that have more presence and investment in the community need revisiting moving forward, it is understood the choices were evaluated thoroughly.

7. Motion made by Council member Henderson, seconded by Council member Davis to approve TRUIST for the City of Covington banking services.

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

8. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the First Amendment to the City of Covington restated Defined Benefit Plan effective as of January 1, 2020.

Mayor Horton, Council member Morgan, and Council member Floyd recused themselves from vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Motion made by Council member Floyd to initiate a text amendment allowing parking of recreational vehicles (RVs) in M1 zoning.

Motion **dies** for lack of second.

Comments from the City Manager:

- Judy Johnson has accepted position as Planning and Zoning Director and begins with the City of Covington on October 18, 2023

Council member Floyd stated there is a thank you letter in the packet addressed to the Covington Fire Department from a citizen for helping to install a handicap ramp for her husband before his passing, and there is a lot of service the City does behind the scenes that goes unrecognized.

Mayor Horton stated there is a transportation planning meeting on October 11, 2023 at the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission office in Athens, GA from 1:00-3:00 PM that he cannot attend, and asked if someone from Council could go. Mayor Horton stated Kathy Morgan with the Newton County Industrial

Development Authority plans on attending as well. Mayor Horton stated there is a re-opening ceremony of the third building of the homeless shelter, the “Doster Building” scheduled for October 13, 2023 at 12:00 PM and a Phase 2 Expansion Grand Opening at Three Ring Studios on October 18, 2023 from 11:30-1:30 PM.

Council member Morgan stated there will be a Public Candidate Forum on October 24, 2023 at the Chamber of Commerce building known as “The Center” located at 2104 Washington Street beginning at 6:30 PM for those running for Mayor and City Council in the 2023 election.

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.

Steve Horton, Mayor

Amanda Huggins, Deputy City Clerk