

**REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON,
GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, JANUARY 16, 2024, 6:30 PM.**

Mayor Fleeta Baggett presided with Mayor Pro-tem Susie Keck, Council members: Anthony Henderson, Charika Davis, Kimberly Johnson, Travis Moore, and Jared Rutberg, City Manager Tres Thomas, Deputy City Manager John King, City Clerk Audra M. Gutierrez, Deputy Clerk Amanda Huggins, and Attorney Bob Stansfield. City Attorney Frank Turner Jr. was absent.

Ashley Smith 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 CPD Officer Christopher Bowles.

Police Chief Philip Bradford gave a presentation for outgoing Citizens Academy Board members Ruth Norman, Lowanna Bell, and Wendy Jacques.

1. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on January 2, 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

Community Development Director Ken Malcom presented a PowerPoint presentation in regards to the need of a Special Events Coordinator position.

2. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Moore to approve a Special Events Coordinator position request by the Community Development Department.

Motion carried unanimously.

Planning and Zoning Director Judy Johnson gave a detailed report and recommendations from staff and Planning Commission regarding proposed text amendments to Title 16 Code of Ordinances as it relates to allowable densities. Mayor Baggett stated the former Council heard the public hearing that occurred at the December 11, 2023 Council meeting and could not bind current Council, and a public hearing will be held at the second reading of the ordinance

scheduled for February 5, 2024. Council member Rutberg stated he is on board with all changes.

3. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Davis to approve **first** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington, as presented by Planning and Zoning Director Judy Johnson:

“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 16.08.010, SECTION 16.28.025.E.2.b, SECTION 16.28.025.F.1.b, SECTION 16.28.025.F.1.c., SECTION 16.25.025.A., SECTION 16.16.020, SECTION 16.25.025.D., AND SECTION 16.25.025.C AS IT RELATES TO DENSITY DEFINITIONS, ALLOWABLE DENSITIES IN ZONING DISTRICTS; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”**

Motion carried unanimously.

4. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to remove Item 18 on the agenda, “Discussion of Warming Shelter Agreement.”

Motion carried unanimously.

5. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Moore to approve sole bid to purchase a Valve Maintenance Skid System from E.H. Wachs – A Division of ITW amounting to \$105,775.00 for the Water and Sewer Maintenance Department.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Motion made by Council member Moore, seconded by Council member Keck to approve a Facilities & Permit Specialist position request by the Community Development Department, with budget adjustment resolution. The budget adjustment resolution includes both a Special Events Coordinator position as well as a Facilities and Permit Specialist position amounting to:

- \$55,246.00, regarding Hotel/Motel Fund increasing account 275-7541-61.1000 TRANSFER OUT by \$55,246.00 and decreasing account 275-7541-54.1300 BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS by \$55,246.00, and,
- Regarding General Fund- Revenue, increasing account 100-1510-39.1201 OPERATING TRANSFERS IN by \$55,246.00, General Fund-Expense increasing accounts 100-1572-51.XXXX SALARY AND RELATED EXPENSES by \$81,388.00 (\$37,632.52 + \$43,754.80), and decreasing accounts 100-1320-51.XXXX SALARY AND RELATED EXPENSES by \$26,142.00 (remainder of salary and benefits budgeted for ICMA fellow in City Manager’s department).

Motion carried unanimously.

Downtown Coordinator Allen Martin presented an update on the 90- day trial period performed by the Community Development department regarding open container on the Square in the Downtown Historic Entertainment District, excluding Square Park.

7. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Moore to approve **first** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington, excluding the request to allow residents of the Lofts on the Square to purchase City designated cups:

“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 5 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF AMENDING SECTION 5.12.310 (COVINGTON HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT) OF CHAPTER 5.12 (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) THEREOF,** TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion **failed** with Council members Johnson, Rutberg, Davis, and Henderson voting against. Council members Keck and Moore voting in favor.

8. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve **first** reading of said ordinance for the City of Covington, excluding the request to allow residents of the Lofts on the Square to purchase City designated cups as well as limit to six days a week, Monday to Saturday, excluding Sundays.

“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 5 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF AMENDING SECTION 5.12.310 (COVINGTON HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT) OF CHAPTER 5.12 (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) THEREOF,** TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

Motion carried unanimously.

9. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the continuation of the use of four part-time firefighters at the Covington Fire Department to be extended to the end of the 2023 budgetary year (June 30th), and the addition of four part-time personnel, with budget adjustment resolution. The budget adjustment resolution amounts to \$100,986.00, increasing account 100-3501-51.XXXX PERSONEL EXPENSES by \$55,246.00 and decreasing account 100-1510-57.9000 CONTINGENCIES by \$100,986.00.

Motion carried unanimously.

10. Motion made by Council member Moore, seconded by Council member Johnson to approve the lowest bid from HI Tech Utility amounting to \$75,295.35 regarding the hiring of a fiber construction crew to construct and overbuild a fiber network, providing internet service in the Downtown Square and surrounding business areas.

Reedwick	\$ 209,907.30
NGT Group	\$ 243,713.00
Cable East INC	\$ 105,823.75
HI Tech Utility	\$ 75,295.35

Motion carried unanimously.

11. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Moore to approve a request from the Engineering department to enter into service agreement with Georgia Water & Environmental Services (GWES) in Category B regarding ongoing consulting services .

Motion carried unanimously.

12. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Keck to approve a request from the Engineering department to enter into service agreements with six firms in Category A (Ardurra, Carter & Sloope, Garver, GWES, Keck & Wood, and Thomas & Hutton) regarding on-call consulting services, to include stipulations concerning budgets presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

13. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Moore to approve the Reynolds Street and Elm Street 4-way stop installation, ex post facto.

Motion carried unanimously.

14. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the Town Center Blvd. and Town Center Drive proposed temporary 4-way stop.

Motion carried unanimously.

15. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Davis to approve the GDOT Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) application for Fiscal Year 2024 amounting to \$205,055.92, with a local City match (SPLOST) of 30% that amounts to \$61,516.77, for the Usher Street and Reynolds Street project totaling \$319,193.62, estimated.

Motion carried unanimously.

16. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Keck to approve the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant and resolution, with grammatical changes mentioned.

Motion carried unanimously.

17. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the MCT Signatories/Incumbency and Resolution.

Motion carried unanimously.

18. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Moore, to approve the KCVC (the FAA identifier for the City of Covington) Automated Weather Observing System (AWOS) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reimbursement contract extension from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), ex post facto.

Motion carried unanimously.

19. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Moore to table discussion of the Turner Lake Road Improvements Project until the February 5, 2024 Council meeting allowing Keck + Wood to present project budget with Council's input included.

Motion carried unanimously.

Rosie Crawford stated she received a phone call from a homeowner in Settler's Grove regarding water collecting in her yard. Ms. Crawford stated the homeowner called to report the issue several times with no response from the City, which prompted the homeowner to call the Sherriff's office.

Mayor Baggett asked Ms. Crawford to leave homeowner's address with the City Clerk in order to follow-up.

Natalie Rockhead-Goss of 9161 Aaron Drive (Timely Freight Inc.) stated she would like to expand her business for truck parking using gravel and would like to de-annex the property from City.

Mayor Baggett stated she would like a meeting arranged with Ms. Rockhead-Goss, City Planning and Zoning Director Judy Johnson, City Manager Tres Thomas, the City Attorney, and herself to discuss further.

Angela Hardy of 5118 Hartsook Drive stated she has a lake front property and the City placed a channel behind property. Ms. Hardy further stated there is a creek that builds up after massive rain that produces a large amount of standing water in her yard, and her neighbors struggle with flooding. Ms. Hardy stated

tunnels and the channel are the cause of the flooding and she would like the Engineering department to come and address this.

Comments from the City Manager:

- Meeting with Georgia Municipal Association, Mayor, and Council scheduled for March 5, 2024 at Covington Municipal Airport from 8:00 AM to approximately 4:00 PM
- Hwy 278 CID stakeholder meeting scheduled for Tuesday January 30, 2024 from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM at Legion Field, GDOT will host meeting for the public in the Spring as well
- Bailey Dickinson's last day is January 23, 2024, he has been a great asset to the City and will be missed

Deputy City Manager John King stated there is a wind chill advisory until 10:00 AM January 17, 2024, and asked everyone to stay warm.

Council member Johnson stated it was brought to her attention Norfolk Southern owned a corner of property at Stone Mountain Street and she has contacted them about placing a streetlight on this property as requested. Council member Johnson further stated she contacted Mr. Hay about donating a streetlight, and he stated he would not.

Council member Davis requested that Mayor Baggett begin with Council comments from the opposite side of the podium at next meeting.

Council member Rutberg stated he would like to thank the Water Resource Department for the tour of their facilities. Council member Rutberg further stated this is the citizens' City and does not belong to developers. Council member Rutberg requested citizens to stop flushing baby wipes and other things that should not be flushed down toilets, to stop littering, and to stop speeding in the City, as these are things that can help our City at no cost and care for our neighbors. Council member Rutberg asked Fire Chief Joe Doss to explain how long it takes firefighters to complete hiring with no experience.

Fire Chief Joe Doss stated it take approximately a year and a half. Chief Doss stated current staffing need has not changed since 2005 despite call volume increasing times four since then to current.

Mayor Baggett stated she wanted to thank everyone for coming despite the extreme cold temperature and that the warming shelter is open. Mayor Baggett further stated the safety of everyone is being monitored and requested everyone to look after neighbors. Mayor Baggett stated City employees have to

use the email system, as it is a point of record and main point of communication, and requested everyone to take the time to put requests in writing in order for results to occur.

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Fleeta Baggett, Mayor

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk