

REGULAR MEETING, MAYOR AND COUNCIL, CITY OF COVINGTON, GEORGIA, COUNCIL ROOM, FEBRUARY 5, 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 City Attorney Frank Turner, Jr. present.

Rosie Crawford gave the invocation.

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

Mayor Baggett stated in recognition of Black History Month in Covington there are historical facts placed along the Cricket Frog Trail, artwork by local youth displayed at Legion Field, a history exhibit at the Welcome Center, and a parade scheduled on February 24, 2024.

Mayor Baggett read a proclamation designating the observance of Arbor Day the Third Friday in February 2024.

1. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on January 16, 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

2. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Keck to table the public hearing and **final** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington until the February 19, 2024 Council meeting, as requested by Planning and Zoning Director Judy Johnson, to comply with advertising requirements:

“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.

3. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve **first** reading of an ordinance for the City of Covington, with a 50% fee schedule rate:

“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 15 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTING CHAPTER 15.52 (DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES);** TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”

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

4. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Davis 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 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.

5. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Rutberg to approve alternatives recommended by Keck + Wood to the Turner Lake Road Improvements Project, allowing the moving forward from the concept phase to preliminary design, as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

6. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Moore to approve the removal of Item 16 from the agenda, "Discussion of acceptance of a gift to the City of Covington of 6.00 acres on Brown Bridge Road, map parcel C062 048."

Motion carried unanimously.

7. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Rutberg to approve a Moratorium extending the Acceptance of Zoning Petitions and Applications for Preliminary Plats and Special Use Permits for Residential Developments until February 19, 2024.

Motion carried unanimously.

8. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve **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 6 OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES (ANIMAL CONTROL) FOR THE PURPOSE OF DELETING ALL CHAPTERS CURRENTLY WITHIN SUCH TITLE AND ADOPTING IN LIEU THEREOF CHAPTER 6.02 (GENERAL), CHAPTER 6.04 (ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES), CHAPTER 6.06 (WILD AND EXOTIC ANIMALS), CHAPTER 6.08 (DOMESTIC ANIMALS), CHAPTER 6.10 (VACCINATION), CHAPTER 6.11 (OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES; NUISANCE AND RESTRAINT), CHAPTER 6.12 (DANGEROUS AND VICIOUS DOG CONTROL), CHAPTER 6.14 (CRUELTY, WELFARE AND MANNER OF KEEPING), CHAPTER 6.16 (ANIMAL ESTABLISHMENTS), CHAPTER 6.18 (ANIMAL DRAWN VEHICLES), CHAPTER 6.20 (IMPOUNDMENT AND ADOPTION), CHAPTER 6.22 (QUARANTINE), AND CHAPTER 6.24 (PUBLIC THREAT ANIMALS), 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 **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 AMEND SECTION 13.08.010 (APPLICATION FOR SERVICE – TERMS OF CONTRACT) OF ARTICLE 1 (GENERALLY) OF CHAPTER 13.08 (ELECTRIC SYSTEM) OF THE SAID CODE OF ORDINANCES**, TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

Motion carried unanimously.

- 10. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Moore to approve the best bid from Gresco amounting to \$178,000.00 for a new automatic switchgear for Piedmont Newton Hospital.

Irby	\$	129,500.00
Gresco	\$	178,000.00

Motion carried unanimously.

- 11. Motion made by Council member Keck, seconded by Council member Moore to approve lowest bid from Parrish Technology Group amounting to \$83,694.16 in order to complete the VMware ESXi Hosts Refresh Project at the 911 Communications Center.

Parrish Technology Group (Includes hardware and labor)	\$	83,694.16
Davonport Group (Includes only hardware)	\$	83,774.00

Motion carried unanimously.

- 12. Motion made by Council member Moore, seconded by Council member Johnson to approve a request for a Water/Sewer Operator position, as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

- 13. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Henderson to approve the proposal from NFP to be the City's broker for City employee medical/dental/vision/auxiliary insurance and benefits.

Alliant	Benalytics
Epic	Gary Massey
Mark III	NFP
Relations	

Motion carried unanimously.

14. Motion made by Council member Davis, seconded by Council member Morgan, to approve the submission of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for consideration under the Department of Community Affairs Redevelopment Fund Program, along with a resolution declaring the Conyers Street Gym as blight.

Motion carried unanimously.

Randy Vinson of 450 Jenkins Road stated he would like to see a couple or minor adjustments to the Turner Lake Road Improvements project. Mr. Vinson stated if the median was shortened by two feet and the landscape strip on the west side between the sidewalk and the curb was shortened to five feet, the plans would be perfect.

Council member Rutberg stated the proposed plan includes gutter.

Mr. Vinson then stated an eight-foot multi-use trail versus a ten-foot trail should be considered, in order to assist with the 35 mph traffic flow.

Jeff Bishop of 10144 Twin Oaks Drive SW stated congratulations to the new Mayor and Council, and that he will support them. Mr. Bishop stated he would like Council to reconsider the decision on Downtown consumption and allowing open container. Mr. Bishop further stated he feels taxpayers should have been able to vote on the matter, and the public was not heard. Mr. Bishop stated he is concerned with underage consumers taking advantage of the decision as well as the increase of unruly behavior.

Comments from the City Manager:

- Applauses to the Public Works department, particularly the Street department, for handling the Old Atlanta Hwy emergency situation involving a six inch water main

Council member Keck stated she would like to thank the City for repairing the damage to the Cricket Frog Trail due to a washout from the storms. Council member Keck further stated she will not be in attendance for the February 19, 2024 Council meeting.

Council member Rutberg stated he would like to thank Code Enforcement officers Danny Bartello and Freda Holloway for allowing him and Council member Moore to ride along and tour the City. Council member Rutberg requested Code Enforcement have permission to send out a public notice before making rounds in the City. Council member Rutberg further stated he researched the traffic on the Covington Bypass in front of the STEM Academy and 300 students that live in the City attend. Council member Rutberg stated he would like a letter sent to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) petitioning for a traffic light at the STEM Academy due to traffic accidents and congested traffic.

15. Motion made by Council member Rutberg, seconded by Council member Keck to add "Discussion of letter of endorsement to send to GDOT for a traffic light on the Covington Bypass in front of Newton County STEM Academy." to the agenda.

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

16. Motion made to approve a letter of endorsement to send to GDOT for a traffic light on the Covington Bypass at intersection of Newton County STEM Academy.

Motion carried unanimously.

Council member Johnson stated there is a large amount of trash, including mattresses, at the watershed in Nelson Heights off Peoples Street.

Council member Moore wanted to commend several City staff members and directors including Tres Thomas, John King, John Hendrix, Mike Jewell, Joel Smith, Kevin Sorrow, Mike Willis, and Dalton Chappellear for all of their help over the last two weeks.

Mayor Baggett stated Gas Director Mike Jewell just returned from a visit to Washington D.C. to talk about natural gas, and the City has great department heads. Mayor Baggett reiterated the events taking place for Black History Month and Arbor Day.

City Manager Tres Thomas stated District 10 Representative Mike Collins reached out to him after Mr. Jewell's visit to Washington D.C. and is planning a site visit for February 12, 2024 in regards to a trucking company.

Being no further business meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.

Fleeta Baggett, Mayor

Audra M. Gutierrez, City Clerk