

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

The regular meeting of the Council for the City of Covington was held on Tuesday, September 11, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers of City Hall located at 333 W. Locust Street, Covington, Virginia.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Thomas H. Sibold, Jr. The Invocation was given by Rev. Dan Gillette followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call of Council showed all members present as follows: Mayor Sibold, Vice Mayor David S. Crosier, Councilwoman Mary Ann Beirne, Councilman Raymond C. Hunter and Councilman S. Allan Tucker.

City Manager: Richard Douglas
City Attorney: Mark Popovich

CORRECTION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, Council voted to approve the following minutes as presented: Work Session of August 7, 2018 and Regular Meeting of August 14, 2018.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT

David Bryant, Director of Finance and HR, presented his monthly financial report to Council. He had prepared a detailed year-to-date written report which included graphs showing debt balances and payments for schools, general debt, wastewater, water and solid waste management through June 30, 2019. Following the report, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Hunter, to approve the monthly financial report. The motion was approved by aye vote of Council.

REQUESTS, PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND APPOINTMENTS

Ingrid Barber, Executive Director of the Community Services Board, presented information regarding the annual performance contract. She noted the changes to clinical assessment for individuals needing mental health services and the additional training for staff. Mayor Sibold inquired about additional funding for substance abuse programs in the future and the possibility of a Drug Court in the area. Ms. Barber explained that to have Drug Court required a full time judge and was a very extensive process. They are currently working to obtain a Drug Court for juveniles and to find additional services for the community. Following discussion, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to approve the Community Services Annual Performance Contract. Motion carried by aye vote of Council.

Wanda Moore, representing HOPE, presented information regarding property at the corner of Alleghany and Cherry which the organization wants to develop into affordable housing for the elderly and disabled. This organization has existed for 14 years and is 501C-3 certified. Mrs. Moore stated that HOPE has been in touch with the Redevelopment and Housing Authority who visited the site and at one time, this was a viable property, but now demolition is required to proceed with any housing plan. HOPE is requesting the city assist them by demolishing the two separate buildings on the property. Vice Mayor Crosier inquired if estimates had been obtained regarding cost of demolition and if HOPE had a business plan. Mrs. Moore responded that a contractor in Roanoke had submitted an estimate of \$24,000 and Mr. Dressler of Covington submitted an estimate of \$18,000. Vice Mayor Crosier said that he likes the idea, but has a concern regarding the number of other churches in the area that also have a 501C-3 designation. He felt that a definite plan of action needs to be in place before proceeding. City Manager Douglas noted that this property is not currently on the minimum housing list. He also recommended that a contract would need to be in place regarding this project on the property. Mr. Hunter would also like to see a performance contract. Mayor Sibold inquired about zoning that may need to be addressed. Vice Mayor Crosier also recommended that a performance

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contract be prepared. Following discussion, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Hunter, to have the City Manager and City Attorney prepare a performance contract regarding the request of HOPE for demolition of property at the corner of Alleghany Avenue and Cherry Street for future consideration. Motion carried by aye vote of Council.

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At this time, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, to add 2 items to the agenda for Council consideration: (1) Add "Council appointed personnel to the Closed Session and (2) the Declaration of Emergency to be considered due to the potential effects of Hurricane Florence. Council approved the additions to the agenda.

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Upon a motion by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Hunter, Council voted to approve the "Declaration of Emergency" regarding Hurricane Florence.

REPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER

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1. Upcoming meetings and events included: (1) October 2nd work session cancelled due to VML Conference; (2) Work Session November 6th Minimum Housing Prioritization List update; (3) Tues. November 6th 4:00 p.m. Dedication of City Park Gazebo in memory of Councilman William B. Zimmerman; (4) Possible joint meeting with Alleghany County Board of Supervisors on joint projects.

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- 2. Benny Van Ness has retired after 23+ years working at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- 3. City has reimbursed Alleghany County \$217,000 from wastewater funds due to a County accounting error.
- 4. The property at 323 Walnut Street has been addressed with the assistance of the mortgage and property management company.
- 5. Meeting has been held with VDOT regarding the Thacker Avenue walkway at Wal-Mart. City encouraged to apply for VDOT funding over the course of the next year.
- 6. The Tow Advisory Committee has met to develop recommendations for inoperable/disabled vehicle towing regulations and contract requirements. A recommended contract should be ready within the next few months.

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7. Meeting has been held with TAP to identify potential land bank properties and procedures. Mayor Sibold inquired if the land bank could be used by HOPE. Mr. Douglas responded that HOPE desires to develop the property. Mayor Sibold also inquired if properties had been identified by the Land Bank. Three properties have been chosen out of the sites visited. Mayor Sibold inquired about ownership of the properties with regard to the TAP Land Bank. The City would transfer ownership of city property to TAP or serve as the intermediary between TAP and the property owner.

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8. A lease agreement is being prepared with a small local drone-related business for use of space at the Edgemont Building.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

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Following discussion, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to approve Appropriation Resolution R-18-41 regarding Economic Development in the amount of \$50,000. Motion carried 5 to 0. Mayor Sibold – FOR; Vice Mayor Crosier – FOR; Councilwoman Beirne – FOR; Councilman Hunter – FOR; Councilman Tucker – FOR.

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Allen Dressler, Director of Parks and Public Works, presented an overview of what has been accomplished at the Jackson River Sports Complex and future development. Appropriation Resolution R-18-42 is regarding the Trail/Boat Ramp Grant in the amount of \$230,706 which is a 50/50 matching grant for the Sports Complex. Discussion was also held regarding the development of camp sites to assist visitors with accommodations during tournaments and other events. Mr. Dressler noted that water/sewer and electrical hookups already had the necessary

utilities available at the Sports Complex. He stated that there are endless possibilities for this property and other communities would like to have what has been developed there. He is also exploring funding opportunities for a 5-year plan. Following discussion, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to approve Appropriation Resolution R-18-42 regarding the Trail/Boat Ramp Grant in the amount of \$230,706. Motion carried 5 to 0. Mayor Sibold – FOR; Vice Mayor Crosier – FOR; Councilwoman Beirne – FOR; Councilman Hunter – FOR; Councilman Tucker – FOR.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to approve Appropriation Resolution R-18-43 regarding boiler repair at Jeter-Watson Center in the amount of \$38,600 (carry-over funds). Motion carried 5 to 0. Mayor Sibold – FOR; Vice Mayor Crosier – FOR; Councilwoman Beirne – FOR; Councilman Hunter – FOR; Councilman Tucker – FOR.

Discussion was held regarding Appropriation Resolution R-18-44 for the Covington Rescue Squad Conference. Mayor Sibold noted that he would like to see the Rescue Squad and other organizations receiving City donations, achieve specific bench marks for additional funding. He proposed that Council provide \$15,000 for the Covington Rescue Squad to attend the annual conference this year. Following discussion, a motion was made by Mayor Sibold, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to approve Appropriation Resolution R-18-44 for the Covington Rescue Squad Conference in the amount of \$15,000. Motion carried 5 to 0. Mayor Sibold – FOR; Vice Mayor Crosier – FOR; Councilwoman Beirne – FOR; Councilman Hunter – FOR; Councilman Tucker – FOR.

Council held discussion regarding the Declaration of Emergency. City Manager Douglas stated that the City is working to prepare for the upcoming storm. (Hurricane Florence). Vice Mayor Crosier inquired if pets would be permitted at the emergency shelters. Allen Dressler responded that preparations have been made for pets also. An emergency plan is in place and the City and Allegheny County are working together for evacuation centers. The Army Corp of Engineers has assured the City that the lake and dam can hold water back during the storm event. Mayor Sibold expressed appreciation to David Bryant, Eric Tyree, Allen Dressler and Chief Morgan for all of their hard work in preparing for the storm.

NEW BUSINESS

Vice Mayor Crosier: (1) Noted that the fence at the parking lot near the Rayon Bridge is a safety concern; (2) Inquired about a meeting for community improvements.

Mr. Tucker: Requested that Council forward any concerns they may have so he may provide them at the meeting of the Roanoke/Allegheny Regional Commission on September 19th.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Bill Wilson, President Jackson River Preservation Association, Inc., presented information regarding the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline. He is also a member of the Cowpasture River Preservation Association, Inc. and the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance. He expressed concerns regarding the effects this pipeline would have on the natural environment in this area and tourism. He noted concerns regarding the potential for additional problems during flooding events. On behalf of the organizations listed, he asked that Council consider action on a resolution to oppose the construction of this pipeline through the area.

Resident inquired about a drainage issue on Jackson Street. Mr. Douglas responded that this project has been put out for bid and Mr. Dressler explained the project.

Business owner expressed concerns regarding the water runoff from Oak Street to her building. Mr. Douglas responded that there is also an issue with the CSX Railroad where cleaning of property is needed. Mayor Sibold noted that part of the water runoff problem is due to areas that used to have houses and yards on the property are now parking lots with increased runoff.

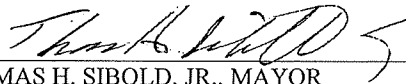
Josh Haynes: (1) Expressed concerns regarding water runoff from Idlewilde Drive pooling in the road; (2) Referenced a letter to the editor that was in the Virginian Review and stated that he challenged the letter as there are many caring individuals who work for the City that truly care about the City and he praised their efforts.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Crosier, seconded by Mr. Tucker, to move into closed session pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act Sec. 2.2-3711 A. 7 regarding consultation with legal counsel and A.1 regarding Council appointed personnel.

Following the closed session, Council reconvened and voted 5 to 0 to certify that only the items stated were discussed. No action taken at this time.

No further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned.



THOMAS H. SIBOLD, JR., MAYOR
PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND, AS SUCH,
EX-OFFICIO OFFICER OF THE CITY OF COVINGTON,
VIRGINIA

ATTEST:



EDITH S. WOOD, CITY CLERK