

# COVINGTON VILLAGE COUNCIL

## MEETING MINUTES

**July 10, 2023**

Mayor Ed McCord called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. The following roll call was taken for council:

### **Council Members Present:**

- Jesse Reynolds
- Keith Warner
- Amy Welborn
- Julie Blumenstock
- Dawn Duff

### **Council Members Absent and Excused:**

- Derrick Canan

### **Non-member Staff participating:**

- Frank Patrizio – Legal Counsel
- Rhonda Gill - Fiscal Officer
- Kyle Hinkelman - Village Administrator
- Lee Harmon – Police Chief
- Tim Cline – Police Sergeant
- Aaron Zuhl - Police Officer

### **Consent Agenda:**

The consent agenda included:

- Approval of Council Minutes (June 20, 2023)
- June Financial Report
- June Fund Balance Report
- June Check Run Report

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Mr. Reynolds and seconded by Mr. Warner. All ayes. Motion carried.

## **VILLAGE OF COVINGTON**

1 South High Street, Covington, OH 45318  
phone: (937) 473-3420 | [www.villageofcovington.com](http://www.villageofcovington.com)

### **Swearing In Ceremony**

Mayor McCord welcomed the family of Mr. Benjamin Marialke. Mayor McCord swore in Mr. Marialke as a new Police Officer for the Village of Covington. The Council congratulated Mr. Marialke.

### **Visitors – Public Comment**

Mr. Terry Garman, 101 S. Pearl Street, expressed concerns pertaining to garbage and recycle trucks use of alley behind High Street and utilizing the Post Office drive as a turn-around. He provided images to Council for their consideration. Mr. Kyle Hinkelman thanked Mr. Garman for the information and stated that they would look into it.

Mayor McCord announced he had been contacted by Mr. Nick Church, current member of the Planning Commission. Mr. Church had turned in a resignation letter effective June 30, 2023. Mayor McCord stated that he will be looking for a replacement member, which he will appoint. The term would end in 2027.

A motion to accept the resignation letter of Mr. Church from the Planning Commission was made by Ms. Welborn and seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion approved.

### **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Hinkelman gave an update on Schoolhouse Park and the Rudy property option of the project. He indicated that there would be curbs within the next week and the roadwork was scheduled for the last two weeks of July. He reminded everyone that is weather dependent, but they are hopeful for the project to meet the deadline of August 1.

Mr. Hinkelman also noted that the second bid for the project for the site work was beginning this week. He stated that M & T is ready to begin closing off the road later this week to allow grading and underground utilities to be installed.

He discussed the wastewater treatment plant and noted that the foundation is in place and horizontal building will begin this week.

Mr. Hinkelman discussed elements of the State Operating Budget (HB33) which goes into effect on July 13, 2023. He specifically discussed in detail the provision that changes the notification requirements of the Village. He stated that public notifications may now be posted on our website, saving the Village approximately \$3,000 per year.

He noted grant opportunities and changes to tax law Ohio. Mr. Hinkelman said he would reach out to the City of St. Mary's Tax Department and verify they are adhering to the requirements set forth by the State of Ohio.

## **VILLAGE OF COVINGTON**

1 South High Street, Covington, OH 45318  
phone: (937) 473-3420 | [www.villageofcovington.com](http://www.villageofcovington.com)



### **Discussion Items**

Mr. Hinkelman responded to a request by Ms. Julie Blumenstock to address the “flag issue”, which was a concern on social media. He stated that the Village is in the process of purchasing American flags for High Street that will properly fit the new light posts. He noted that in the past, a third party purchased flags and put them out on poles. The Village has never put up flags in the past. He explained that he understands the concern of not having flags up for the fourth and wants to assure everyone that the Village will have flags up in the future. In this case though, he reiterated that the Village has not ever done flags. He would encourage anyone who wants to volunteer to help the Village provide these types of services to reach out. He noted that the Village needs more volunteers and that although the Village government provides a lot of services to our community, it is service groups that can help fill the gaps. He asked that when issues that are similar to this arise, the community reach out to the Village to find solutions, instead of assuming something wasn’t completed.

Mayor McCord added that the prior flags that went up in the Village went on poles that fit into a hole in the sidewalk, which are no longer there. He continued that the people who used to put up the flags haven’t done so in three or four years and no one in the Village took up that tasks after they quit doing it.

Ms. Joyce Robertson, 201 Lindsey Street, inquired about if there was a budget for fireworks. Mr. Hinkelman explained the Village has not provided fireworks in the past, and that there is no budget for them in the 2023 budget. He continued that he didn’t anticipate a budget line item in the 2024 budget for fireworks either, as they are very expensive. He noted that the Village is unable to justify the cost and liability of fireworks when there are numerous other items within the Village to address that will provide more value to our community.

Police Chief Lee Harmon added the Optimist Club had recently had an extensive conversation pertaining to fireworks. It was noted Fort Rowdy had facilitated prior firework displays and they have always been funded by private organizations and not the Village.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any additional questions and there were none.

### **Old Business**

#### Ordinance 12-23 – Intention to levy a new 3.0 Mill Fire Levy

Mr. Hinkelman stated there were no changes to the previously discussed Ordinance. Ms. Blumenstock asked if there was any reason why the third reading could not be waived. Mr. Hinkelman stated this is the second reading and the third and final reading will be on July 17<sup>th</sup>. This provides enough time to meet the state requirements for ballot

## **VILLAGE OF COVINGTON**

1 South High Street, Covington, OH 45318  
phone: (937) 473-3420 | [www.villageofcovington.com](http://www.villageofcovington.com)

access, but there is no reason that they couldn't waive the three reading rule if they wanted to do so.

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance 12-23 was made by Ms. Blumenstock and seconded by Ms. Welborn. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion to approve Ordinance 12-23 was made by Mr. Jesse Reynolds and seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion passed.

Resolution R22-23 – Authorizing the Village Administrator to Enter into an Agreement with AES – Schoolhouse Park Pole Movement

Mr. Hinkelman asked the Council members if there was any discussion pertaining to the resolution, if so, a motion needed to be made to remove it from being tabled.

A motion to remove Resolution R22-23 from being tabled for discussion was by Mr. Reynolds and seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion passed.

Ms. Blumenstock explained she had been in contact again with AES, who will not budge on the costs. She reported she had also spoken with Sandra Brassington from the Governor's office but it is her opinion that nothing can be done about the cost.

Mr. Hinkelman again explained that Resolution R22-23 would authorize the Village Administrator to enter into an agreement with AES to move three three-phase distribution poles to outside the Schoolhouse Park boundaries, as required by the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. The current cost from AES is \$294,737.91. He noted again that AES is unwilling to work with the Village to bring the cost down to what was originally discussed, which was \$200,000. The Village is unable to shop around, and the project must be completed by AES. Mr. Hinkelman shared his concern about waiting to approve this resolution, as AES will also not provide a timeline for completion of the work or guarantee that they would prioritize the project, and the poles need to be removed quickly to keep the project moving forward.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any additional questions and there were not. The second reading will be held July 17<sup>th</sup>.

**New Business**

None

**Police Chief and Elected Official's Comments**

**VILLAGE OF COVINGTON**

1 South High Street, Covington, OH 45318  
phone: (937) 473-3420 | [www.villageofcovington.com](http://www.villageofcovington.com)



Chief Lee Harmon reported today was the first day for Officer Ben Marialke, who brings the department back to full staff. The department is excited to have him on board.

He also noted that Officer Russell McNeil will be appointed as the new School Resource Officer and will start that position at the beginning of the 2023/2024 school year in August.

### **Executive Session**


A motion to go into executive session at 7:42PM for the purpose of discussing the purchase of property for public purposes, the sale of property at competitive bidding, or the sale or other disposition of unneeded, obsolete, or unfit for use property under ORC 121.22.G was made by Ms. Duff and seconded by Ms. Welborn. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion to leave the executive session was made by Ms. Welborn and seconded by Ms. Blumenstock at 7:54PM. All ayes. Motion passed.

No action was taken.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Warner, seconded by Mr. Reynolds. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56PM.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rhonda Bell", written over a horizontal line.

Fiscal Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Edward L. McGee", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor

## **VILLAGE OF COVINGTON**

1 South High Street, Covington, OH 45318  
phone: (937) 473-3420 | [www.villageofcovington.com](http://www.villageofcovington.com)