

# **COVINGTON VILLAGE COUNCIL**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**January 23, 2023**

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

### **Council Members Present:**

- Keith Warner
- Derrick Canan
- Julie Blumenstock
- Jesse Reynolds
- Amy Welborn

Absent and excused was Dawn Duff.

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

- Frank Patrizio – Legal Counsel
- Rhonda Gill - Fiscal Officer
- Kyle Hinkelman - Village Administrator

### **Consent Agenda:**

The consent agenda included:

- Approval of Council Minutes (January 9, 2022)
- December Fund Balance Report
- December Check Report
- End of Year Closeout Balance Report

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda as it stands with no modifications by Mr. Jesse Reynolds and seconded by Mr. Keith Warner. All ayes. Motion carried.

Mr. Kyle Hinkelman expressed gratitude to Rhonda Gill and Lisa Cavender of the Finance Department for a great job closing the year and providing year-end figures. All funds are reported in the black. The Village brought in more revenue than anticipated, and expenses were less than anticipated.

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## **Visitors – Public Comment**

**Mr. Mike Kendig**, 365 S. High St., Covington, shared his son has a medical condition that is aggravated by excessive noise near his home. He asked questions of Village staff related to speeding, noise, and signage. Mr. Hinkelman responded to each question noting what the Village has done to help Mr. Kendig's family situation along the way. Mr. Hinkelman also noted that the Village had met with Mr. Kendig multiple times regarding this topic and that they would continue to work to help the family where the Village is able.

Mr. Kendig asked about the requirement for a police officer to cite a driver if they break a law. Mr. Patrizio shared the police have the authority to cite drivers at their discretion but are unable to cite without hearing or seeing an issue themselves.

There was continued conversation among council members and Mr. Kendig. Ms. Welborn noted that the Village was certainly supporting Mr. Kendig based on how quickly his GoFundMe was met. She noted that although some of these issues are not being resolved quickly, Covington is a great community, and the people in it are trying to help as much as they can.

## **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Hinkelman began by noting that the State of the Village has been moved to the February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting due to Mayor McCord not having much of a voice. He then recapped some of the items out for bid including Schoolhouse Park, the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the Government Center Design.

Mr. Hinkelman updated Council on the Village receiving funding for the improvement of State Route 36 through MVRPC. The Village will receive \$3 million from ODOT to put towards this \$5 million project. This project is estimated to begin in 2027 or 2028.

Mr. Hinkelman also discussed the Miami County project utilizing CDBG funding for the High Street demolitions. He noted that the County engineers are working on asbestos abatement and structural improvements. He confirmed with Ms. Williams, who was in the audience, that she was being contacted by the County throughout the project to this point, and she noted she had.

## **Old Business**

Ordinance 01-23 – Updating Various Fees applicable to the provision of certain water / sewer services being provided by the Village of Covington and to adopt formal rules and regulations for those services.

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Mr. Hinkelman discussed Ordinance 01-23, which is in regards to the rates for sewer and water services in the Village. He noted that this was the second reading related to this topic, and reminded Council that the original estimate to construct the wastewater treatment plant was \$14 million, but due to inflation, it is now estimated at \$18 million. He continued that the Village applied for WPCLF funding and within its competitive process was granted \$4 million in loan forgiveness for the project. The project was ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest project in the State of Ohio and beat out many other projects for that funding. Mr. Hinkelman said he is continuing to work with OEPA to determine the final rate for the plant. He noted that currently the Village has budgeted to use the ARPA funds received along with \$100,000 from the Sewer Fund towards the wastewater treatment plant project to help defray the overall cost.

Mr. Hinkelman went on to explain that the current revenue stream in the sewer fund is not enough to cover the anticipated costs within the fund. He noted that enterprise funds, like the Sewer Fund, cannot have other enterprise funds support them. He gave the example of water revenue cannot go to help fund the Sewer Plant. Current yearly revenue within the Sewer Fund is roughly \$600,000. He detailed the breakdown of labor and benefits, operations, and debt and noted that the overall cost is roughly \$450,000 per year, leaving a positive balance of \$150,000 per year currently. He continued that the expected debt payments would be around \$550,000 per year, leaving the Village \$400,000 short each year.

Mr. Hinkelman discussed the options available to the Village to fund the plant. He stated the option they are recommending is to increase rates 10% for 2023 and 10% for 2024. These increases would allow the fund to increase to \$1.5 million by 2025 when the debt payment will be due. He continued that this would allow for drawdowns of that fund balance for the next 10 years, and then rates would cover the debt payments. He stated that to try and offset that increase he recommends that the 3% water increase, which is built into the current Ordinance be switched to zero percent for both 2023 and 2024. This would allow for the impact of the increase on the sewer side to be somewhat reduced by the water side not increasing.

Ms. Julie Blumenstock suggested a public meeting be held for questions. Mr. Hinkelman indicated he would be happy to have a special meeting to discuss this. He also noted that residents are welcome to call him or come to the office if they have additional questions. He went on to say if bids came back March 1<sup>st</sup> lower than anticipated, the Village would only request rates to be raised as much as they have to be raised to cover these costs.

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**Ms. Joyce Robertson**, 201 Lindsey Street, expressed having a meeting after the bids were in to give a better understanding if rate increases would be necessary. She suggested the meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup> instead, so the Village could provide the actual numbers.

There was continued discussion by the Council and it was determined that February 6<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7PM would be an open house with rough numbers. The Village would then hold another meeting before the meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss the exact numbers once they are available.

A motion to table Ordinance 01-23 to the March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting was made by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Ms. Blumenstock. All ayes. Motion passed.

### **New Business**

Ordinance 02-23 – Updating Various Fees applicable to the provision of trash collection services being provided by the Village of Covington and to adopt formal rules and regulations for those services

Mr. Hinkelman discussed Ordinance 02-23, which is the trash and recycling fees and regulations ordinance. He noted that these regulations would create a more consistent and efficient system for residents and the Village staff.

He noted many regulations within the standards, and specifically discussed the yard waste program. He explained that it will be set for Thursday and Friday pickups from April through October at no cost to the customers to make it more efficient without increasing fees. He did note that there will be a limit of yard waste bags of 10 per household without additional fees. He continued that twigs and brush will be picked up once per month at no cost.

Mayor McCord noted that if a tree service trims a tree, or removes a tree, the company must remove all trimmings and debris and the Village will not pick that up.

Mr. Hinkelman continued that all upholstered furniture must be bagged and the bags are free and can be picked up at the Government Center. Charges for large item pickup are applied to the monthly account bill based on the schedule of fees within the Ordinance.

Mr. Hinkelman reminded residents ACH payment is available for utility bill payments. There are no fees. The payment is processed for a checking or savings account each

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month. Residents continue to receive their monthly statement. Download the form at [www.villageofcovington.com](http://www.villageofcovington.com) or stop by the Government Center to get signed up.

Mr. Hinkelman asked that this resolution be tabled at the next meeting to have both Ordinance 01-23 and this Ordinance occur at the same billing cycle, so people are not any more confused about their bills.

The second hearing on Ordinance 02-23 will be on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### Ordinance 03-23 – Transfers in 2023 Budget

Mr. Hinkelman explained that Ordinance 03-23 is to authorize a transfer of \$350,000 to the Capital fund and \$160,000 to Fire/EMS fund from General fund. Both of these transfers are reflected within the adopted 2023 Budget.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any questions on the Ordinance and there were none.

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Ordinance 03-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Mr. Warner. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion to approve Ordinance 03-23 was made by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Warner. All ayes. Motion passed.

#### **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mr. Warner, seconded by Mr. Reynold to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:27PM.

  
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Fiscal Officer  
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Mayor