

# COVINGTON VILLAGE COUNCIL

## MEETING MINUTES

**March 13, 2023**

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

### **Council Members Present:**

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

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

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

### **Consent Agenda:**

The consent agenda included:

- Approval of Council Minutes (February 21, 2023)
- February Tax Report
- February Fund Balance Report
- February Check Report

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

### **Visitors – Public Comment**

None

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## **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Ed McCord opened the meeting by encouraging residents to stop by Community Park to see all the updates and improvements completed by Ben Denson and the Public Works staff. He noted that they have put in new gravel, moved bleachers, power washed the restrooms, and the park looks great. He continued that the Village has contracted to put in new epoxy floors in the restroom and put in a permanent fence around the ball diamonds as the Jr. High baseball team will be utilizing the fields this year. There will also be new LED security lights going in for better lighting of the park.

## **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Kyle Hinkelman reminded residents who received the income survey to complete it as soon as possible, so the results can be tabulated. He reminded everyone that the information updates the census information for average income in the Village, and will be utilized to get additional grant opportunities.

He stated that Saturday was the pancake breakfast hosted by the Optimist Club. Approximately 500 people attended. He noted his appreciation for all the volunteers who helped to make it an enjoyable day.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any questions or comments of him and there were none.

## **Discussion Items**

### Murals/Wraps

Mr. Hinkelman provided photos of wraps used by other communities as comparison for the electrical boxes located at Wright and High Street; Bridge and St. Rt. 48; St. Rt. 41 and St. Rt. 48; and at the Government Center. He noted that other communities have seen the price for installation and design in the \$900 range and will take approximately six to eight weeks to complete.

Mr. Canan suggested collaborating with the Historical Society for possible old photos to be used to design the wraps.

Ms. Blumenstock suggested reaching out to the school for ideas and possibly a contest for students to design a wrap.

Mr. Reynolds inquired as to whether time would permit a contest. Mr. Hinkelman indicated he would reach out to the school art teacher and the wrap company for requirements and feasibility.

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Mr. Hinkelman shared he had a few businesses inquiring about murals. He noted that Tipp City has a very successful mural. Mr. Hinkelman showed images of communities who have murals and how they are utilized. He noted that he will work with residents and business owners on possible ideas and locations. He also asked Council members to bring in ideas and suggestions for consideration.

Ms. Blumenstock questioned the status of the High Street homes being demolished by the county. Mr. Hinkelman responded as in previous discussions regarding the demolition, the county is on schedule to complete the project this Spring.

### **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.

Mr. Hinkelman noted this Ordinance adopts new rules and regulations regarding the water and sewer services provided by the Village and adopts a new fee schedule for those services.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any questions or comments on the regulations or rates and there were none.

A motion to approve Ordinance 01-23 was made by Mr. Jesse Reynolds, seconded by Mr. Warner. All ayes. Motion passed.

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 noted this Ordinance adopts new rules and regulations regarding the trash and recycling services provided by the Village and adopts a new fee schedule for those services.

Mr. Hinkelman explained some of the regulation changes.

Mr. Canan requested clarification of construction material removal. Mr. Hinkelman explained that construction materials like drywall and stone are not picked up with

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regular trash. He noted that residents could rent a dumpster from the Village, hire a company to remove it, or they could haul it to the dump themselves.

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

A motion to approve Ordinance 02-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Welborn. All ayes. Motion passed.

### **New Business**

Resolution R05-23 – Declaring certain Village property and seized property as surplus property no longer needed for public use authorizing the Mayor or his designee to dispose of said property by auction, disposal, or destruction. Budget.

Chief Lee Harmon explained the items mostly consist of firearms confiscated over the years through investigation of crimes or suicides. The money received will be used to offset the cost of replacement. The current value is \$5,560.

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Resolution R05-23 was made by Mr. Canan, seconded by Mr. Reynolds. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion to approve Resolution R05-23 was made by Mr. Canan, seconded by Ms. Duff. All ayes. Motion passed.

Resolution R06-23 – Declaring the intention to levy a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation and requesting the Auditor of Miami County, Ohio certification pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 5705.03.

Mr. Hinkelman explained that this resolution is the first step to putting a new levy on the ballot in November. He discussed the current situation regarding the General Fund Levy and Fire/EMS Levy that are in place. He continued that the Village brings in property tax funds to pay the Fire & EMS contract of \$265,000. He stated that the Covington Fire Department requested we consolidate the current General Fund Levies into one levy. He noted he discussed the general generate rates of such a consolidation with the County and they noted that a 3.8 mill levy is estimated to generate \$219,838. He continued that is the Village placed a 2.9 mill levy on the ballot, it would generate approximately \$6,000 additional funds from what is being generated by the current two levies.

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He explained that new levies are calculated on current property values, whereas renewing an existing levy is calculated on property values at the time the original levy was passed. Mr. Hinkelman asked Council members if they wished to move forward with a 2.9 mill or 3.0 mill levy option. Mr. Reynolds and Ms. Welborn stated their support for the 3.0 mill levy.

Ms. Duff asked if the 3.0 mill would increase property taxes, which may cause residents to have more difficulty in meeting tax obligations due to many other increases. Mr. Hinkelman confirmed that both the 2.9 and 3.0 mill levies would increase property taxes on a resident, although not by much.

Mr. Reynolds suggested Mr. Hinkelman provide Resolution R06-23 for a 3.0 mill increase and an additional Resolution for the 2.9 mill should be brought back to Council at the next meeting. He noted that once the council has passed both resolutions, they will be able to obtain actual figures to base their decision for Ordinance to place levy on ballot, which is the second step.

Mr. Hinkelman confirmed that he would bring a second resolution back for Council consideration at the next meeting and noted that the second reading for this resolution would be on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### Ordinance 05-23 – Creation of the Downtown District and Regulations.

Mr. Hinkelman presented the Council with Downtown District Ordinance which includes two exhibits – a map, and downtown district regulations. He explained that the Village Planning Commission met for months about this information and is recommending approval to the Council in a 4-0 vote.

He continued that there were a number of topics that were discussed in great length at the Planning Commission and were revised due to business and resident feedback. Those topics were the residential properties within the boundaries, and the colors that are permitted in the district. Mr. Hinkelman continued that the regulations now have a clear residential exemption for single family residential properties within the district. He noted that if someone wanted to be exempt, they would just need to fill out the form and they would not be required to meet any of the regulations. He reiterated though that those who become exempt are not eligible for any benefits of those within the district boundaries, like grants.

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He noted that this Ordinance would rescind all previous regulations that dealt with the historical district boundary or standards.

He continued to discuss the remaining portions of the regulations with Council and asked if anyone had questions.

Mr. Canan asked how boundaries were set for the Downtown District as there are many historical homes along Pearl Street. Mr. Hinkelman explained that the Planning Commission originally considered Pearl Street, but when residents came to the meeting, they clearly wanted residential properties out of the district, so Pearl Street was removed when the historical consideration was removed and the focus was on the downtown business community generally.

Ms. Welborn expressed her concern as to the color choices being too restrictive. Mr. Hinkelman explained it is important to have consistency and provide owners with expectations and specific process for approval. He noted that theoretically any color could be approved, an applicant would just have to go to the Planning Commission for approval of colors outside of those explicitly listed.

**Mr. David Besecker**, 367 S. High Street, who is a Planning Commission member, was present and clarified the color selections were chosen after considerable discussion by the Commission and the public. He noted that the list included the majority of all historical colors after a business owner requested additional colors.

Ms. Duff, Mr. Canan, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Warner were in agreement with the current regulations and the colors within it. Ms. Welborn and Ms. Blumenstock both shared they felt there should be additional colors added. Mr. Hinkelman asked that if any councilmember wanted to modify the colors that they put together what they want changed and provide it to the full Council for consideration at their next meeting.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any additional comments or questions, and there were none. The second reading will be on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### Ordinance 06-23 – Adopting the High Street Banner Program.

Mr. Hinkelman discussed Ordinance 06-23 which would put a banner project into place for the twenty-eight banners along High Street. This Ordinance establishes rules, regulations, a set timeline for when banners are up, and a fee schedule for the banners.

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Mr. Hinkelman discussed the rules and regulations, types of banners, and details about the program.

Ms. Blumenstock asked if someone had five family members for Hometown Hero banners if they would receive a discount. Mr. Hinkelman explained how the Hometown Hero banners were purchased through the vendor and noted that there would not be a discount available.

There being no further discussion, the second reading will be March 20<sup>th</sup>.

Resolution R07-23 – Accept a Bid for a Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Mr. Hinkelman discussed Resolution R07-23 a resolution that authorized the Village Administrator to enter into an agreement for the construction of the new wastewater treatment facility. He noted that the Village received a valid bid from Peterson Construction for the project and the bid cost was \$18,791,716 that was recommended for approval by Kleinfelder in a letter within the packet. He noted that there would be additional costs for the project including the existing design loan, permits and fees, and other miscellaneous costs that would put the project total at roughly \$21 million.

Mr. Hinkelman explained that the Village was the second ranked project within WPCLF in Ohio and was granted \$4,000,000 in loan forgiveness. The Village also intends to utilize all of the \$284,000 ARPA funds that were set aside to use towards the construction of the wastewater project, along with \$100,000 in the sewer fund.

He noted that the Village was granted hardship status which allowed a one (1) percent loan to be obtained for the remainder of the costs, but also the Village Staff worked to show that the new facility would qualify for the nutrient reduction for a portion of the plant, which is at zero percent.

Mr. Hinkelman stated the Village will be funding a WRRSP project through their debt interest for the Wastewater Treatment facility, which will also lower their one percent rate further, but exactly how much will not be known until the project is finalized in April.

Mr. Hinkelman noted that when looking at the amortization table for the debt, the next ten years the Village will be drawing down funds collected to pay debt. After the first ten years the Village will begin to cover its annual debt obligations with revenue.

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Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any questions about the project, the funding mechanisms, or the bid, and there were none.

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Resolution R07-23 was made by Ms. Duff, seconded by Mr. Reynolds. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion to approve Resolution R07-23 was made by Ms. Duff, seconded Mr. Warner. All ayes. Motion passed.

Resolution R08-23 – Authorizing the Village Administrator to enter into an agreement with the Ohio Environment Protection Agency Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) and Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP).

Mr. Hinkelman discussed Resolution R08-23 which details the process and approvals for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and their programs the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund and Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program. This resolutions authorizes the Village Administrator to enter into a construction loan agreement through the WPCLF and a sponsorship agreement through WRRSP. These agreements will allow the Village to fund and finance the construction of the wastewater treatment facility.

Mr. Hinkelman discussed the project that would be sponsored by the WRRSP and the partner organization The Nature Conservancy.

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

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Resolution R08-23 was made by Ms. Welborn, seconded by Mr. Reynolds. All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion to approve Resolution R08-23 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Ms. Duff. All Ayes. Motion passed.

### **Executive Session**

A motion to enter into executive session at 8:57PM for the purpose of discussing public employee compensation or other terms and conditions of their employment, and to consider 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, seconded by Mr. Canan.

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All ayes. Motion passed.

A motion to leave executive session was made by Ms. Duff, seconded by Mr. Warner at 9:48PM. All ayes. Motion passed.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mr. Keith Warner, seconded by Mr. Reynold to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:50PM.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shonda Hill", written over a horizontal line.

Fiscal Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edward J. McGee", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor

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