

# **COVINGTON VILLAGE COUNCIL**

## **MEETING MINUTES**

**December 5, 2022**

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
- Dawn Duff
- Jesse Reynolds
- Amy Welborn

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

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

### **Consent Agenda:**

The consent agenda included:

- Approval of Council Minutes (November 14, 2022)
- November Tax Report

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

### **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Ed McCord reminded everyone of the Hometown Decorating Contest is due by Friday, December 9, 2022, by 4:00 PM. Voting sheets can be found online and can be

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downloaded. He noted that voting will take place December 15, 16, and 17<sup>th</sup> and that winners will be announced December 19, 2022, during the next Village Council meeting.

Mayor McCord also gave a big thanks to the Village Staff in the various departments for the hard work put forth for the Hometown Christmas event. There was a good crowd with Santa, as well as downtown with the vendors, despite the heavy winds. He also thanked Cindy Westfall and her crew who was instrumental in making lunch with Santa possible.

### **Administrator's Report**

Mr. Hinkelman expressed his thanks to all the vendors at Hometown Christmas and to all those who came out in the weather for the event. Although it was windy, the crowd was good size, and it was nice to see people enjoy each other's company. He noted that the Village will continue to hold activities to bring the community together and hopefully learn and grow from each event held in the Village to make the next one better.

Mr. Hinkelman noted that the "Covington" sign was installed at the Government Center. He said that there were some negative comments about it, but that is expected. Most people who stopped by the Hometown Christmas event said how much they liked it. He also noted he has talked with multiple news agencies about it, and other communities have contacted him about who made it and the costs associated with the sign. He noted that although changes like the sign for some people are sometime hard, the Village will continue to push forward to create a unique and vibrant community that is open to everyone.

He asked if there were any questions of him, and there were none.

### **Discussion Items**

Mr. Hinkelman discussed the government center building and its investment history. He noted that over the last six (6) months there have been more discussions regarding necessary investments to upgrade the Government Center, due to deferred maintenance needs, safety, or upgrades to make work more efficient for employees.

He noted that some modifications are already in the works, like in January, the new internet and phone system upgrade should be complete. He noted that this upgrade, along with the investment in the network infrastructure of the building, was the last substantial investment in the building.

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He continued that in 2006, approximately one million was invested into the government center to bring the building to its current condition, which was the last true large-scale investment in the building. Since that time no internal mechanicals or systems have been replaced, and no substantial investment has been made to the exterior or interior of the building.

Mr. Hinkelman shared that there were short term issues that needed to be resolved, but once he had put a list of all of the items that need addressed, he felt it was appropriate to discuss the need to do a more large-scale rehabilitation and replacement consideration. He met with Candice Goodall, a local Architect, to discuss options for bringing the building up to current standards and to formally address the mechanicals, exterior issues, and safety of the building. She has put together a rough estimate for the potential modifications and broke them down in phases.

Phase 1 - Council Chamber Addition and Administrative offices

Phase 2 - Police Department

Phase 3 – Meeting Room Space

Mr. Hinkelman stated that Ms. Goodall was clear that if the Village decided to do a separate phase one by one the cost would be substantially higher. She recommended that we do the project in one full sweep, if the Village could afford it, as was done in 2006, as the cost savings are substantial. Mr. Hinkelman noted that Ms. Goodall put together rough drawings and rough numbers for consideration, but the Village is at the point where Council needs to decide what direction they would like to move forward towards. He also noted he has not looked into funding mechanisms at this point in time, as the cost of the project and the funding of the project will greatly depend on how Council wishes to proceed.

Ms. Julie Blumenstock asked that since the Government Center will now have internet capabilities in January if council meetings will go back to streaming meetings. Mr. Hinkelman noted that Council would need to decide that once the systems are in place.

Ms. Amy Welborn commented that council chamber size has been a concern for some time, as well as security for those who attend meetings and those who work within the Government Center. She noted her support for looking at improvements to the Government Center building especially the additional Council chambers space and security improvements to the building.

Mr. Hinkelman stated that he would be bringing back more information for Council to consider in the future and that a decision will need to be made about hiring a firm to design an addition and renovations to the Government Center. He noted that the design phase would likely be 4-6 months, and any construction would be based on what is chosen, but likely would also be another 4-6 months.

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He asked if there were any additional questions, and there were none.

### **First Reading Considerations**

#### Ordinance 22-22 – 2023 Salary Ordinance.

Mr. Hinkelman discussed Ordinance 22-22 the annual Salary Ordinance for the Village employees. He noted that this Ordinance includes a 5% COLA for all positions. He discussed the general layout of the salary ordinance but noted that there were not any changes to position titles or the village organization chart.

Mr. Hinkelman recommended the ordinance be approved at the second reading on December 19 to allow this to be in place by January 1.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any questions or comments and there were none. The second reading will be December 19, 2022.

#### Ordinance 23-22 – Amending the Employee Manual.

Mr. Hinkelman explained Ordinance 23-22 which included modifications to the employee manual chapters 4.07, 5.03, and 5.17. He noted the change to chapter 4.07 – Compensatory Time added a section related to police officer overtime pay. This change would allow for an officer to be granted overtime, even if they have utilized vacation, sick, or personal leave within an 80 hour pay period.

He discussed the change to chapter 5.03 – Vacation Time, which modifies the existing years of service table. This change would remove the two current tiers for employees and consolidate the table into one.

The third change relates chapter 5.17 - Retirement. He noted that this change would permit an officer upon honorable retirement to purchase his service weapons for \$100 each.

Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any questions, and there were none. He noted that the second reading will be December 19, 2022.

#### Ordinance 24-22 – Adopting 2023 Budget.

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Mr. Hinkelman discussed Ordinance 24-22 the adoption of the 2023 Budget. He noted that the process has been going on since October, when the Village held their public budget meeting to discuss finalization of the budget. Mr. Hinkelman publicly thanked Rhonda Gill and Lisa Cavender in the Village Finance Department who helped to put together the budget for the new year. He noted changes to the format of the budget that would make it less cumbersome for the Village in the future. Mr. Hinkelman went on to explain this will eliminate the numerous times money will be reappropriated by a resolution. He noted that this will make the budget more similar to other communities, and that line items would still be presented to the Council for review with the monthly account balance reports.

Mr. Hinkelman discussed the overall financial position of the Village, the end of year estimates for 2022 and the priorities for the 2023 budget. He noted that all funds are in solid shape, but that the Street Fund will need to have additional review, as it is forecasted to not have its revenues cover its expenses in three years. He noted that there will need to be cuts to the services provided by the street department, or additional revenue streams discussed in the future.

Some of the discussed priorities included:

- Retirements in 2023. This will cause an increase in both training and equipment.
- Purchase of vehicles in 2023 budget – Police Cruiser and Public Works Dump truck. Due to procurement issues these will likely end up in the 2024 budget.
- Schoolhouse Park funding will be reflected heavily in the 2023 budget.
- Community Park will be receiving additional improvements.
- Replacement of two zero-turn mowers, if they can be procured.
- Events to be held in 2023
- Wastewater Treatment Facility reflects substantial financial impacts on the ARPA funding and sewer funds.

Mr. Hinkelman noted that the Village is doing a large number of services and projects with the money brought in. It can be confusing to the public as revenue or expenditures in specific funds does not impact revenue or expenditures in other funds. He requested that if anyone would like to get a better understanding of how the budget works, to contact Mr. Hinkelman directly, and he could help explain the full budget process.

Mr. Hinkelman stated that the staff is continuing to work on projections for future years, which will allow the Village to be more fiscally sound each year and to save up or spend down when necessary.

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Mr. Hinkelman asked if there were any additional questions and there were none. The second reading will be December 19, at which time Mr. Hinkelman asked council to consider waiving the three-reading rule and approve to assure the budget is in place for the start of 2023.

Resolution R45-22 – Second Amendment to the VA Contract.

Mayor McCord explained that he completed the annual review of Mr. Hinkelman, which continues to show him substantially exceeding expectations, and that he recommends a second amendment to the contract of the Village Administrator. This modification would increase the term by one year and would provide a 5% COLA for the position, similar to the COLA recommended for all other employees of the Village.

There were no further questions. The second reading will be December 19.

Resolution R46-22 – Enter into Agreement – Kleinfelder – Utility GIS Mapping.

Mr. Hinkelman discussed Resolution R46-22 which would authorize the Village Administrator to enter into an agreement to have the utility lines mapped in the Village. He noted that four years ago, the Village paid to have some lines mapped, but not all lines. He explained that there is a need to know the exact location of underground utilities, for safety reasons primarily, but also to allow our employees to utilize less time locating lines. He continued that the data would be put into the current ArcGIS system as layer files that could be utilized and modified by all Village staff. Mr. Hinkelman stated that this is a one-time investment, as the pipes and manholes don't move, so this is a necessary investment in our Village.

He also noted that a second contract would be coming at the December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting that is necessary because of current work order software is no longer supported at the end of the year. This software will be able to utilize this data as well, so we can be more efficient with our work orders, asset management, and maintenance schedules related to the data.

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

A motion to waive the three-reading rule for Resolution R46-22 was made by Ms. Duff, seconded by Mr. Reynolds. All ayes. Motion passed.

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A motion to approve Resolution R46-22 was made by Mr. Reynolds, seconded by Mr. Warner. All ayes. Motion passed.

### **Police Chief and Elected Officials' Comments**

Chief Harmon stated the department is wrapping up with some year-end handgun training.

Mayor McCord mentioned there were some great coloring contest entries this year. He also noted that the three winners from each grade will be invited and recognized at the December 19<sup>th</sup> council meeting.

Ms. Blumenstock asked that it be noted in the Council Minutes that all activity by council meetings is transparent, and that the Village does everything in the open. She also noted that the public is invited to attend meetings to speak up if they feel they have a concern, and they are all encouraged to call the Government Center and speak with Mr. Hinkelman directly if they want to get a resolution. Mr. Hinkelman noted that his door is always open and that he works to publicly state information so more people can know what the Village is doing. He noted an example being the budget, where at this meeting, similarly to what happened last year, he noted the various projects and expenses that were more unique that would be funded in the next year. If a resident has questions, they can contact Mr. Hinkelman and he would be happy to sit down and explain the budget to them or answer any questions.

Mayor McCord added that there are various ways for residents to know what transpires at the Council meetings. He noted that there are plenty of empty seats at the meeting and the public is encouraged to come and sit at the meetings to hear from the Council directly what is going on in the Village. Minutes are taken at each meeting and published on the Village website after they are approved, usually two weeks after the meeting. He continued that the budget is approved by Council, and large purchases or contract are approved by Council, all at public meetings advertised to the public to attend. He reminded everyone that what is read on the internet and posted by others, is not always true. The best way to know what is true, is to come to the meetings and directly ask about them. He noted that there are also elections every two years and people are encouraged to run for Council and get involved.

Council members agreed. Mayor McCord said, "You either get better or you get worse". The Village needs to decide if they want to get better or get worse.

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**Mr. David Besecker**, 367 S. High Street, asked if the budget is public information to which Mr. Hinkelman stated it is available for review if anyone wants to stop in the Government Center and see it. Mr. Besecker agreed residents should not sit back and complain if they are unwilling to come to meetings and listen and discuss things. He noted that he felt residents should come to meetings and speak up if they truly have concerns.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mr. Keith Warner, seconded by Ms. Duff to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 7:49 PM.

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

Fiscal Officer

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

Mayor

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