

September 27, 2021

City of Marion – Regular Meeting

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Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Marion held in the Council Chambers at 5:30 P.M. The City Clerk was instructed to call the roll and the response was as follows:

PHYSICALLY PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB, AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Absher.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Marion resident Donald Gaddis addressed the Council regarding neighbors and neighborly behavior.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

NEW BUSINESS

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief David Fitts told the Council on September 2, 2021, the Police Department responded to a potential kidnapping of a non-English speaking female who was brought from Nashville, TN to Marion. Officers working the case were having trouble communicating with her. They tried to find a translator but could not find one. Around 2:00 a.m., one of the officers thought to call local restaurant owner Salomon Aguilar for assistance. Salomon served as a translator for the officers and due to his efforts, they were able to get the information they needed to find and arrest the suspects who had transported the young lady to Marion. She was returned to her family in Tennessee. Chief Fitts presented Salomon with a certificate of appreciation and a Police Department Challenge Coin. Salomon told the Council he was very proud he was able to use his skills to help.

Officer Jason Plichta told the Council Chief Fitts, and Assistant Chief Morrow had asked the officers to present ideas that would help the department with community relations. He presented them with his idea to create a K9 Therapy Unit within the Police Department. When he was an officer in Chicago, he was part of a Crisis Intervention Team. Therapy dogs were used to help everyone and bring down stress and anxiety levels. He would like to create a similar unit in Marion. The therapy dogs are trained by prison inmates in Florida and can be used in several situations. They are different than service dogs in that they can interact with everyone. Officer Plichta believes these dogs will help to bring the department and community members together. The K9 Therapy Unit would go to accidents, domestic violence calls, sexual assaults, crimes involving children, schools, nursing homes, etc. He would like to solicit donations to purchase the dog and cover vet bills and food. He would also like to sell t-shirts to help raise funds to cover necessary expenses. He plans on the program being self-supporting in the beginning.

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Mayor Absher said his presentation was very impressive. Officer Plichta thanked the Council for their time.

Commissioner Barwick explained the promotion of Officer Bradley Thornton to Detective is not creating an additional position at the Police Department. One of the Narcotics Officers moved back to patrol out of the Narcotics Unit. Officer Thornton is transferring into the Narcotics Unit to fill the vacancy.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Chief to promote Bradley Thornton to the position of Detective and assignment to the Narcotics Unit effective September 6 with a pay rate consistent with the collective bargaining agreement. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain told the Council the Otis Street Watermain project has been delayed several years. This is an older line that has had several breaks. The replacement of this line was budgeted for this year. Three bids were received. The bids were as follows:

Mott Excavating	\$173,306.06
Wiggs Excavating	175,920.60
Skuta Construction	184,554.00

Brent recommended the Council approve the low bid of \$173,306.06 from Mott Excavating.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve awarding the low bid of \$173,306.06 to Mott Excavating for the Otis Street Watermain project. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

The following five properties in the Midway/Concord/Hendrickson project area were presented to the Council for purchase by the City: 1306 West Concord Street, 1102 Midway Court, 1110 Midway Court, 1108 Midway Court, and 1003 South Duncan Street.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the purchase of the five properties consistent with the Midway/Concord/Hendrickson Project. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 3747 a Professional Services agreement with Jacob & Klein and The Economic Development Group to establish and administer the Residential TIF II District. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake addressed the Council and audience giving a summary of each of the Ordinances 3748 through 3753. Ordinance 3748 a redevelopment agreement with J & H Leasing, LLC is a rework of the current agreement with Jeremiah's Kitchen. The original agreement contained an error, the parcel where the restaurant is located was not in the TIF. The agreement has been reworked to a sales tax agreement. Ordinance 3749 is a rework of the current agreement with Marion Antique Mall, Inc. They are planning to make some renovations and the City will front \$15,000 for those renovations. The City will then recapture 100% of the increment over the remaining 12 years of the TIF. Ordinances 3750 and 3751 are redevelopment agreements with Yellow Door Builders, Inc. for building houses at 1012 South Buchanan and 1007 Mechanic. Ordinance 3752 is a redevelopment agreement with Thomas Real Estate Enterprises, LLC to rehab older properties in the Residential TIF creating rental properties. Ordinance 3753 is a redevelopment agreement with JECC Investment, LLC for renovation of 407 North Buchanan.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 3748 a redevelopment agreement with J & H Leasing, LLC; Ordinance 3749 a redevelopment agreement with Marion Antique Mall, Inc. Ordinance 3750 a redevelopment agreement with Yellow Door Builders, Inc. (1012 S. Buchanan); Ordinance 3751 a redevelopment agreement with Yellow Door Builders, Inc. (1007 Mechanic); Ordinance 3752 a redevelopment agreement with Thomas Real Estate Enterprises, LLC; and Ordinance 3753 a redevelopment agreement with JECC Investment, LLC. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

BUILDING & CODE SERVICES

Mayor Absher made a motion to affirm the Zoning Board's approval of a Variance to build a garage on a vacant lot adjoining the property owner's home at 1717 Felts Drive PIN #07-17-226-002. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Mayor Absher explained the original cost estimate for the center of the Tower Square renovations was \$1.25 million. Last week the one bid received for the work was opened and it was higher than anticipated. According to the engineer and planner from Chastain & Associates, LLC, this is due to increased material costs. Samron Midwest Contracting was the only bid received. Mayor Absher explained the reason for the request to increase the project budget to \$1.5 million is so that there will be some extra funds left to purchase new Christmas lighting next year. He said the approximate cost of the ice rink and fountain equipment will be \$1.36 million. He indicated there is enough money left in the project fund to pay for the increased costs since

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revenues collected are outpacing costs in the project fund. He also explained some of the Tower Square renovation costs may be ARPA eligible costs. He told the Commissioners that some lettering included in the engineer's rendering is not a part of the bid. He plans to see if some of the businesses will consider donating funds to cover the costs of the lettering.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve increasing the budget for Tower Square Renovations from \$1.25 million approved on 5/24/2021 to \$1.5 million and to approve the general contractor bid of \$989,000 from Samron Midwest Contracting. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Mayor Absher told the Council Assistant Police Chief Tina Morrow is retiring October 29, 2021. Her last day in office is October 21, 2021. After retiring, Tina will be working with 911/EMA Director William Barrett. Mayor Absher explained William is an expert in and has a degree in GIS/Mapping. Tina working as William's Deputy Director will give the City the opportunity to utilize her experience and utilize William's skills to map the infrastructure of the City. Tina will start as Deputy 911/EMA/GIS Director toward the end of November as she will be taking some time off after retiring. During the month of November, Tina will be on-call to the Police Department in case her assistance is needed with transitioning Assistant Chief Wright and Lieutenant Dwyer to their new duties. This time will be compensated on an hourly basis.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the hire of Tina Morrow to the full-time position of Deputy 911/EMA/GIS Director at \$55,000 per year, exempt benefit position. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Webb reported the Street Department has been repairing sidewalks near Boyton Street. They have also been ditching and working on drainage issues. The Cemetery Department continues with mowing and burials.

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since last meeting. He gave a shout out to the Marion High School football team, Hub Recreation Center, Civic Center and Black Diamond Harley-Davidson for collecting items for Hurricane Ida victims. He also reminded everyone the annual electronics recycling event will be October 2 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Marion Training Center at 211 East Boulevard Street. For the monthly trivia question, he asked if the Continent of Antarctica is a wetland or a desert. It is a desert because it receives less than eight inches of precipitation annually.

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Commissioner Barwick reported the firefighters that went to Louisiana to assist other fire departments after Hurricane Ida have returned home. The MABAS Branch Chief told Chief Barnett they are some of the most professional, well-trained firefighters he has ever seen.

Commissioner Patton had nothing to report, however, he did comment that he is amazed by the amount of gasoline sold each year in Marion. He told the Council Pilot and Loves truck stops are the top sellers of gasoline in town.

Mayor Absher reported activities at Club 60 (the Marion Senior Citizens Center) are booming according to Executive Director Jill Graskewicz. They are currently providing dine-in and carryout meals. They served over 38,000 carryout meals during the pandemic and had requests to continue this service after dine-in service was available. With help from volunteers, they have been able to continue this service. Jill requests seniors RSVP to reserve meals because they are completely selling out on some days. They continue to add new activities each month. These activities are advertised on Facebook and their website. The meal menus are printed in local newspapers. They will be offering a COVID booster shot clinic with HealthDirect for seniors who received the Pfizer COVID vaccine. They will also be holding their Fall pie fundraiser again this year.

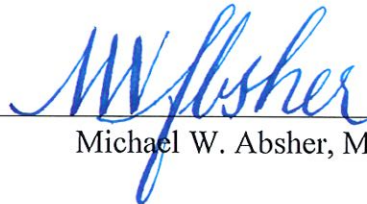
Commissioner Stoecklin reminded everyone the Veteran's Honor Flight is tomorrow. The welcome home celebration will be held tomorrow night. The plane will land around 8:00 or 8:30 p.m. He encouraged everyone to attend. He also announced that Rides Mass Transit District is offering free shuttle service from various locations since there is not enough parking for everyone at Veteran's Airport.

Mayor Absher announced there was no need for executive session this evening.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

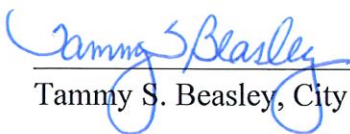
ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:26 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy S. Beasley, City Clerk