

August 23, 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.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

NEW BUSINESS

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Barwick read a memo given to Chief Fitts by Sergeant Thompson outlining actions taken by Officer Codey Strong while on duty. On July 10, 2021 Officer Strong was dispatched to the Rides Mass Transit District station for a wellness check on two senior citizens. He was told they were traveling by bus and a connecting bus was canceled. He obtained a voucher for them to stay at the Gray Plaza until they could catch another bus the next day. The only available rooms at the Gray Plaza were on the second floor, but they were unable to use the stairs due to their medical issues. No other hotels in town would accept the room voucher, so he took them to America's Best Value Inn and paid \$64.35 out of his pocket for a room. He also arranged transportation to take them back to the bus station the next day to catch their bus. Commissioner Barwick wanted to recognize Officer Strong for doing this because he had no responsibility to do it. Police Chief David Fitts presented Officer Strong with a Marion Police Department challenge coin to show appreciation for his actions.

Chief Fitts announced three of the Police Department K-9s attended the K-9 Olympics in Denver, IN. K-9s from all over the United States, Brazil, Bermuda and the Department of Defense competed. K-9s competed in multiple venues that tested their abilities in drug detection and patrol work. The Police Department's team placed 6th overall in Patrol and 11th overall in Narcotics and in many individual events. Chief Fitts introduced K-9 Unit Supervisor Sergeant Justin Francis and K-9 Loki, Sergeant Dan Ogden and K-9 Zara and Officer Steve Sloan and K-9 Karma. Officer Tyson Baker and K-9 Meta were unable to attend. Chief Fitts presented Sergeants Francis and Ogden and Officer Sloan with challenge coins in recognition of their performance at the K-9 Olympics.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the purchase of an undercover vehicle from Vogler Ford for \$20,300, paid with seized drug funds and two trade-ins. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

August 23, 2021

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of Chief Fitts and Commissioner Barwick to promote Sergeant Justin Dwyer to the rank of Lieutenant at \$80,000 per year plus uniform allowance, exempt position, effective August 24, 2021. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Chief Fitts called Lieutenant Dwyer to the podium. He explained the Lieutenant position was removed from the Police Department some time ago, but there is a definite need for the position. Lieutenant Dwyer told the Council he appreciates the opportunity.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Merit Board to promote Officer William Huddleston to the rank of Sergeant, effective September 4, 2021 to fill the vacancy left by the promotion of Justin Dwyer to Lieutenant. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Chief Fitts called Sergeant Huddleston to the podium. He pinned Sergeant Huddleston's new badge on. Sergeant Huddleston told the Council he has appreciated the opportunity to serve the City for the last 17 years.

HUB RECREATION CENTER

Hub Recreation Center General Manager Chris Georgantas told the Council there were 14 applicants for the Sports and Fitness Coordinator position. Six of those candidates were interviewed.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the recommendation of the General Manager to hire Joshua Haynes as Full-time Sports and Fitness Coordinator, exempt status, at an annual salary of \$40,000 plus benefits. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

TREASURERS OFFICE

Commissioner Patton explained the Treasurers Office would like to hire a part-time employee to help with small items such as filing and opening mail. He said this position would be less than 20 hours per week at a rate of \$12.00 per hour.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to hire a part-time employee for the Treasurers Office to work less than 20 hours per week at a rate of \$12.00 per hour. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

August 23, 2021

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Mayor Absher told the Council and audience he wanted to be explicit in explaining why the City is being asked to support Resolution 2021-22 supporting the Watermark Auto Group Foundation's application for funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration for the purpose of renovating the Citadel Building upper floors for use as a small business incubator. He explained the Watermark Foundation is a not-for-profit charitable organization offspring of the Watermark Auto Group that is funded by the Watermark Auto Group. It exists solely for philanthropic efforts. About a year ago, it purchased the Citadel Building with the intention of turning it into a small business incubator. Floors two through five were renovated by the previous owner. EThOs, the entrepreneurial and technical opportunities incubator now occupies part of the building. The remaining renovations to the building will be at no cost to the City. EThOs will provide co-sharing workspaces for startups. The fourth and fifth floors could be used for light industrial space. The space will be available at low cost/no cost to startups, and they will also receive coaching. EThOs plans to bring in bankers, attorneys, CPAs, and marketing people as advisors to the startups at no cost to them. The Foundation will continue to invest in the building. It is estimated it will cost approximately \$4 to \$5 million to finish the building renovations. A special grant program through EDA can provide funding for business incubators to help displaced workers get retrained. This incubator will not be competing with the incubator at SIU. They will be working together and the SIU incubator has written a letter of support for the grant application. EDA requires support from the City as well as part of the grant application process.

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2021-22 a resolution of support for the Watermark Auto Group Foundation's application for funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration for the purpose of renovating the Citadel upper floors for use as a small business incubator. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Patton had nothing to report.

Commissioner Barwick reported the recent softball game between area police officers and firefighters was a good time for all. The firefighters prevailed, winning the game with a score of 21 to 10.

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last council meeting. He reported Saturday is the football game between the Marion Wildcats and Herrin Tigers. The two teams will be trying to win the Mayor's Cup. He encouraged everyone to come out and support the Wildcats. For the trivia question this month, Commissioner Stoecklin asked the Council and

August 23, 2021

audience how many gallons of water are required to process one pound of hamburger. The answer is four gallons. He also asked what the first water pipes were made from. The answer is fire charred bored out logs.

Commissioner Webb reported the Cemetery Department continues to mow and trim. The Street Department continues work on sidewalks and fixing drainage issues. He also reported the asphalt overlay work should be completed by the end of the week. He thanked the residents for the patience during the paving.

Mayor Absher reported the Marion Carnegie Library Summer Reading Program kicked off Memorial Day with a 5K color run with 150 runners. A total of 2,924 people attended all programs. The Library has resumed the Lawyer in the Library program on the first Tuesday of the month. A licensed attorney is available for free legal advice to the public in twenty minute sessions. The HVAC replacement project is nearing completion.

6:06 PM

Mayor Absher made a motion to go into executive session to discuss a real estate matter pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) and a personnel matter pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1). Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

7:00 P.M.

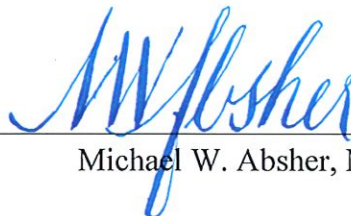
Commissioner Barwick made a motion to adjourn the Executive Session and resume the Regular Meeting. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

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

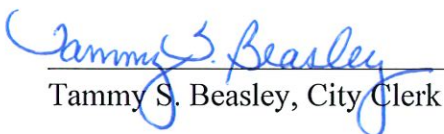
ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:01 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy S. Beasley, City Clerk