

April 12, 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 AND WEBB AND MAYOR ABSHER.

PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE: COMMISSIONER STOECKLIN.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by City Attorney Wendy Cunningham.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marion resident Donald Gaddis addressed the council regarding good policing versus bad policing. He commented he believes the police in Marion are 85 percent better than most.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Absher asked for the minutes from the March 22, 2021 council meeting to be removed from the consent agenda since they were not available for review in the council packet.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the consent agenda items A through C as presented, removing item D to the next meeting. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

NEW BUSINESS

STREET DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the hire of Matthew Medina to the full-time, non- exempt position of Laborer, filling the position vacated by Tomas Ortega's resignation effective April 13, 2021. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent to hire Logan Halstead as an operator/laborer at the wastewater plant. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain explained there appears to be a pipe shortage in the United States. He located some pipe for some upcoming budgeted projects. He said there was no way to get competitive bids for the pipe because many suppliers did not have what was needed. Brent found two suppliers with the needed pipe. Two thousand feet of 6-inch pipe was available from Midwest Meter, Inc. for \$7.25 per foot for a total cost of \$14,500. Three hundred forty feet of 12-inch pipe was available from Utility Pipe Sales Co. for \$25.14 per foot for a total cost of \$8,547.60. He believes pipe is being purchased and hoarded due to the current shortage and increasing prices. He had spoken with Mayor Absher about this situation and made an emergency purchase of the pipe needed since it was available at that time at a competitive price.

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Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the purchase of watermain pipe for upcoming budgeted projects. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Barwick announced there is a vacancy in the Police Department due to the retirement of Sergeant Kathleen Griffith who has 22 years of service with the department. He congratulated her on her retirement.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the Merit Board's recommendation to hire Codey Strong to the position of Patrol Officer at \$25.93 per hour filling the vacancy created by Mary Kathleen Griffith's retirement effective May 2, 2021. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

Police Chief David Fitts introduced Officer Codey Strong to the Council. He is currently an officer in Paducah, KY where he has worked for three years. He is originally from Cartersville and wants to move closer to home. Prior to working in Paducah, he worked two years in DeKalb County, Georgia. He is a veteran of the US Army.

Chief Fitts said his recommendation for part-time School Security Officer, Alex Jiminez, is a recent graduate of the police academy and currently works as a Pulaski County Deputy. He will be working as a floater to fill in for the other School Security Officers when they cannot work.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the Chief's recommendation to hire Alek Jiminez as a part-time School Security Officer beginning April 13, 2021. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

Commissioner Barwick made the motion to approve the transfer of Jeffrey Jones from the Hub to the open part-time Animal Control position at \$11.00 per hour. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Tim Barnett stated the Fire Department has not increased non-resident fees for services since 1994. He explained the increase in fees does not affect citizens of Marion. These fees are only charged for calls outside of City limits. These fees are also not charged for mutual aid calls.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve Ordinance 3718 Increasing Fire Department Nonresident Fees for Department Services. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

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Fire Chief Barnett explained the funds for the upgrades to the training facility are available through a grant from the 911 License Plate Fund. Marion was chosen this year to receive one of those grants. A good friend of Chief Barnett works at University of Illinois and helped secure the grant for the Fire Department. The funds will be used for maintenance of the training props located behind the Fire Department.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve upgrades to the training facility not to exceed the dedicated grant amount of \$37,800. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

Chief Barnett told the Council the Fire Department is looking to purchase a new aerial truck. It will take 16 to 18 months for the truck to be built. He explained the department needs to upgrade to a new truck because of the enhanced safety features. He has been working on locating grants and securing financing options to be able to purchase the truck. He believes the benefits a new truck will provide will outweigh the costs of the truck. He explained the 2004 Crimson truck the department currently has will be sold when the new truck is available.

Mayor Absher told the Commissioners and audience the City is currently looking at financing options for the new fire truck. Along with financing, the City will also sell older equipment to help offset the cost. The City is also looking at grant opportunities to help offset the cost as well. The City is looking to avoid a \$50,000 price increase for the truck. Mayor Absher explained tonight's agenda item is to vote to authorize the purchase of the truck and lock in the price. Mayor Absher is concerned the price will increase if the price isn't locked in soon. He explained there will be no outlay of funds until the 2022 – 2023 budget year.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the order form to purchase a new ladder truck expected Fall 2022. 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

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 3719 accepting a subdivision platted as Van Carr Subdivision. Commissioner Patton 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 3720 a Hub TIF redevelopment agreement with Picker's Paradise. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Mayor Absher said before COVID, the City was in the process of scheduling larger shows at the Civic Center and Pavilion. Resolution 2021-11 represents a different business model for the City. He explained in the past the City has operated both the Civic Center and Pavilion as rental facilities, relying on other promoters to make the capital outlays to bring shows to these facilities. The promoter then profited from the shows, not the City. Once he understood this

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model, Mayor Absher ran for election on the platform these facilities needed to be run as economic engines for the City by bringing more people here. Mayor Absher stated the City needs to not only rely on promoters to bring shows to the City, but also to underwrite our own shows as well. To do this, the City would have to put deposits down on shows. The larger the show, the larger the required deposit. According to Mayor Absher, the deposits are not really expenditures in the budget, but rather deposits for future revenues. The goal for the future is to hold one major show per week at each facility.

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2021-11 pledging necessary capital to book and promote shows at the Marion Cultural and Civic Center and The Pavilion. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Mayor Absher explained each Congressman has earmarks in the new stimulus bill. They have asked constituents in their districts for proposals for shovel ready projects that are ready to go and need funding. The City has a very expensive ongoing project making improvements to Westminster Drive from Fosse Road to South Carbon Street. This project is 80% federally funded and 20% City funded. Receipt of grant money for the City's portion would give the City an extra \$700,000 to \$800,000 to use for other projects.

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2021-12 supporting the City's application for Community Project Funding through Congressman Mike Bost's office. Commissioner Barwick 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 continues to repair sidewalks, trim trees, clean ditches and demolish vacant houses. He reminded everyone the Spring Clean-Up will be starting on April 19th. He also reported the Cemetery Department started mowing again and is preparing for Memorial Day.

Mayor Absher stated he would like to enlist volunteers, civic organizations, and the Street Department to help clean off the monuments in the cemeteries for Memorial Day.

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last council meeting. He also reminded everyone the Franklin-Williamson Bi-County Health Department is still holding their COVID-19 vaccination clinics at the Pavilion. They are now operating on a walk-in basis.

Mayor Absher asked about anticipated watermain breaks during the winter. Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain reported there were several main breaks during that time, but there weren't as many as expected. Mayor Absher also complemented Franklin-Williamson Bi-County Health Department on the impressive logistical operation they are running at the Pavilion.

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Commissioner Barwick read the March reports for the Police Department, Dispatch, Narcotics Unit and Animal Control. He reported Dispatch answered 4,570 dispatch calls; 5,663 911 calls and 395 ambulance calls during the month of March.

Commissioner Patton acknowledged the Dispatchers for National Telecommunicators Week and congratulated them for all the work they do. He also reported the Treasurer's Office is looking for new payroll software.

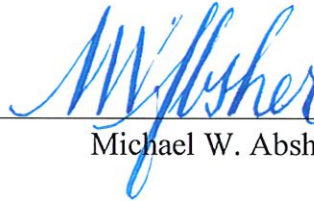
Mayor Absher reported the Senior Citizens Center won the Governor's Hometown Award in the category of healthy futures. This will be awarded on April 20, 2021 in a virtual ceremony.

Mayor Absher stated there was no need for Executive Session this evening.

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 6:23 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy S. Beasley, City Clerk