

October 25, 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 his thoughts on the word of the Lord.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council Consent Agenda Item A 1, the invoice for the 2022 Colt World Series, was part of rethinking the use of the ballpark. The ballpark has been committed for next year's tournament.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Patton 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 made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Merit Board to hire Jovontae Coleman to the position of Patrol Officer per the collective bargaining agreement; to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Assistant Chief Tina Morrow; start date November 1, 2021. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Police Chief David Fitts told the Council that he found a new hire to fill the vacancy from Assistant Chief Tina Morrow's retirement. Jovontae Coleman currently works at the Pulaski County Sheriff's Department. He introduced Jovontae to the Council. Jovontae thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve the City.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of Commissioner Barwick and Chief Fitts to hire Mary Kathleen Griffith as Records Clerk for the Police Department to fill the vacancy that will be created by the upcoming retirement of Linda Tondini; start date of November 1, 2021. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Chief Fitts explained retired Patrol Sergeant Kathleen Griffith was the best candidate to fill the Records Clerk vacancy that will be created when Linda Tondini retires. He told the Council

October 25, 2021

Kathleen knows the system and it should be a smooth transition. Kathleen thanked the Council for the opportunity.

Chief Fitts reminded everyone the Police Department Spooktacular will be Saturday night at 5:00 p.m. at Rent One Park. The event will be held outside in the parking lot. He said trunks and tables are still needed. The rain date will be Sunday night.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Stoecklin told the Council the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge has maintained their own water and sewer system for decades. They have asked the City to take over operation of the system. Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake explained Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge wants the City to replace the water and sewer infrastructure and take over the operation of the system. He told the Council this is a \$16 million dollar project that will be paid by the federal government. Subcontractors will be hired to install the lines that will become City property and will be maintained by the City. The City will be reimbursed for any expenses incurred during the installation. These additional lines will not cause any capacity issues with the current City water and sewer system.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the contract with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to design and replace water and sewer lines throughout the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Affordable Gas & Electric representative Jordan Haarman addressed the Council regarding the natural gas aggregation contract for City gas accounts. He explained there currently is no contract. The City currently has a variable rate with Ameren that fluctuates month to month. Cody presented quotes to the Council from Constellation and Direct Energy. Constellation was the low bidder. Cody recommended the 48-month contract with Constellation for \$.486.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the 48-month contract with Constellation at \$.486 for the natural gas aggregation contract for City gas accounts. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Mayor Absher gave an update on Tyler Hughes' Eagle Scout project. He showed the Council and audience a bracket and pole that will be used to display flags around the Tower Square. He said almost the entire project has been funded through donations. The flags were purchased by the Elks.

October 25, 2021

Commissioner Webb reported the Street Department has been working on sidewalks on Duncan, Seventh and Holland Streets. They have also been working on a crosswalk by the bus station on West Main Street. He reminded everyone the Street Department would be starting the Fall Clean Up on November 8th. He reported the Cemetery has had several weddings in Goddard Chapel this month.

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last council meeting. He reported the Water Department has been doing dirt work in yards for safety. He told the Council and audience the Water Department has 35 unclaimed deposits to send back to the state. They do this once per year. If a customer thinks they might have an unclaimed deposit, they can check with the Water Department to find out. He announced Trick or Treating will be Friday, October 29 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., the Marion Police Department Spooktacular will be Saturday night at Rent One Park, and the Elks Chili Cook-off will be coming up in November. Commissioner Stoecklin asked the monthly trivia question. "How much water in the world is drinkable?" Only one percent of all fresh water is drinkable.

Commissioner Barwick read the September reports for the Police Department, Police Department Narcotics Unit, Detective Unit and Fire Department. He reported there were 4,650 dispatched calls, 2,329 911 calls and 351 ambulance calls during September.

Commissioner Patton had nothing to report. He announced the Boyton Street Community Center will be holding an open house for the Lights on After School program. This will be October 28 from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Absher reported Club 60 has been serving meals at full capacity. They are currently offering dine-in and carry-out meals. They are starting a gospel quartet and have many upcoming activities. Medicine Shop will be hosting a flu shot clinic and a COVID booster shot clinic at Club 60. Club 60 representatives will be offering Medicare enrollment help to any seniors needing it. The Farmers Market will continue through Thanksgiving.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mayor Absher asked South Market Street resident Monica Neice to address the Council with her concerns regarding her neighborhood. She stated the area from Mitchell Street to Boyton Street is open space with broken sidewalks and poor lighting. She is hoping the City can plant some trees and flowers in that area. She wants to be sure residents of that area can walk to the Square safely. Mayor Absher asked her if she would be willing to enlist volunteers to serve on a committee or to help plant flowers, etc.

Residential TIF Discussion

Commissioner Stoecklin said the City should start making improvements in neighborhoods where residents are interested in doing work to help with the improvements. Commissioner Webb asked if decorative lighting similar to the lighting around the Square could be installed in neighborhoods. Commissioner Patton thinks improvements need to be based on need. He thinks

October 25, 2021

neighborhood needs should be evaluated. Commissioner Webb asked if the Boyton Street Community Center is part of the Residential TIF. Mayor Absher stated it is in the Residential TIF, however, he thinks some of the ARPA funds can be used for improvements at the Boyton Street Center. Commissioner Barwick suggested the City create a committee of residents from different neighborhoods within the TIF District to work on a plan for improvement. He suggested a Neighborhood Pride Program. Mayor Absher reminded everyone there is no timeline on spending the TIF funds. Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake will facilitate getting interested parties together to form a committee and will serve as an at large member of the Committee. Cody also recommended that 50% of the TIF funds be reserved each year for sidewalk repairs.

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

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

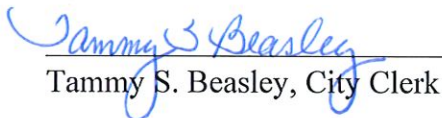
ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:27 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tammy S. Beasley, City Clerk