

December 13, 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: COMMISSIONER PATTON ACTING AS MAYOR PRO-TEM, COMMISSIONERS BARWICK, WEBB, AND STOECKLIN.

ABSENT: MAYOR ABSHER.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Marion Attorney Ron Osman.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Marion business owner Denise Couty addressed the Council regarding the lack of taxicab service in Marion after 5:45 p.m. Since COVID, she said the local cab company has not been providing 24/7 service. She feels like the City needs to address this and investigate possibly getting Uber drivers to serve Marion. She also has issues with the odor from the Sewer Plant. She feels like the smell is worse than it has ever been. She can smell the Sewer Plant inside her building on South Court Street. She thinks the City needs to address this issue. Commissioner Stoecklin told her he has had the same issues with cab services in other towns and cities. He believes it is an issue of the cab companies not having enough drivers available to provide 24/7 service. Regarding the Sewer Plant odor, Glenn Clarida stated the plant is treated with chemicals to help with this issue, however, the chemicals are expensive. He wasn't aware there was an issue.

Presentation from Marion Center Project

Rodney Cabaness addressed the Council regarding updates to the Marion Center Project. Rodney told the Council he and business partner Shad Zimbardo have been doing business in Marion for 15 years. He said it has been a pleasure doing business in Marion and that he and Shad are happy to be here. He acknowledged the various partners that work with them every day. He said they have taken on many partners to work on their development projects. Rodney gave an update on the mall project, The Oasis. He stated things change every day. They have been trying to figure out what will create the most tourism. They continue to look for more opportunities. He told the Council sports tourism is a huge draw that seems to be recession resistant. He stated Rent One Park is an amazing jewel for the City and he and his partners have a contract with the Simmons family to purchase the stadium. He believes it is the cornerstone to sports tourism. The intent is to grow and utilize the park. He and his partners would like to work with the City on this project. They are also planning outdoor fields and a sports complex on land north of the mall. Rodney told the Council the Pavilion is in the middle of this land. He and his partners think it would be a great location for an indoor sports facility. They may revisit that with the City at a later time. He also told them they will partner with Sports Facilities Management (SFM) to run the sports complex. A representative of SFM made a presentation to the Council about the sports tourism industry and other facilities SFM manages.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Commissioner Patton told the Council and audience the City has been aware of Rodney's group's desire to acquire the ballpark for a few weeks or months. The details of his request regarding the extension of the sales tax incentive were important for him to make the acquisition. The Memo of Understanding in item 7C is intended to give him the commitment he needs from the City to secure financing. The basic parameters include extending the sales tax incentive from

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2037 to 2042. The current agreement ties the incentive to debt service. The City will negotiate with other potential applications of the incentive. Once negotiations are finalized, the City will consider an amendment to the original agreement currently held by the Southern Illinois Baseball Group. The MOU also accepts the assignment of the original amount with Marion Stadium, LLC contingent with future agreements.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the MOU with Marion Center Project. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Stoecklin 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 ALL VOTED YEA. MAYOR ABSHER ABSENT.

NEW BUSINESS

MARION CULTURAL AND CIVIC CENTER

Commissioner Patton read the letter from Yolande Peterson resigning as Chairman of the Marion Cultural and Civic Center Board. Commissioner Patton stated it was tough to read her letter of resignation. He said that for what she has done for the community and the lives she has affected, her positive influence over the years is immeasurable. The City of Marion and its residents, the Civic Center and countless generations of arts students owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Mrs. Peterson for her years of tireless dedication to the arts in Marion. It is very likely the Civic Center would not exist today without her passion and willingness to rally the community together for a common goal. He regretfully accepted her resignation.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to accept the resignation of Yolande Byassee Peterson as chairman of the Marion Cultural and Civic Center Board effective immediately.

Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of Commissioner Barwick and Chief Fitts to hire Jordan Arnold as a full-time dispatcher beginning December 14, 2021 at the Probationary 1 pay rate per the collective bargaining agreement. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Police Chief David Fitts introduced Jordan Arnold and welcomed her to the Police Department.

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Chief Fitts told the Council Caleb Stowers was to be a second hire as a full-time dispatcher. His current employer offered him a promotion when they found out he was leaving so he decided to stay there. Hiring a second full-time dispatcher will be tabled until a later meeting. Chief Fitts hopes to have a candidate for the December 27th meeting.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council Ordinance 3762 is a standard TIF agreement for the Residential TIF District. The address of the property being renovated is 506 East Carter Street. Cody said Carlos Tanner whose company Mr. JECC, LLC has been acquiring older properties and renovating them.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve Ordinance 3762 a Residential TIF Redevelopment Agreement with Mr. JECC, LLC. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

Economic Development and Municipal Planning Director Glenn Clarida told the Council Resolution 2021-27 is an IDOT resolution for work on the intersection of Williamson County Parkway and 17th Street. He told the Council this is a high accident area, and the work is being done with federal funds.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to adopt Resolution 2021-27 IDOT Resolution for Improvement Under the Illinois Highway Code for Williamson County Parkway and Outer Drive/17th Street. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

STREET DEPARTMENT

Commissioner Webb told the Council a storm sewer on Matthew Lane is in dire need of repair. He said there are many utilities and a fence to move to do the work which increases the cost of the project. The City received two bids to re-line the storm sewer. The bids were received as follows:

Skuta Construction, Inc.	\$70,075
Plummer's Environmental Services, Inc.	\$101,310

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the low bid of \$70,075 from Skuta Construction, Inc. for a storm sewer re-lining project at 1400 Matthew Lane; a budgeted item. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council two years ago the City signed a contract with United Medical Response out of Salem, Illinois for ambulance service. He said they have provided exceptional service to the City and their response times have been impressive. He said they have been giving back to the community and investing in the community. They also provide ambulance service for the City of Herrin and they have placed a substation at the Route 148/Route 13 intersection to provide additional coverage for both Marion and Herrin. He told the council the contract extension is for six years at no cost to the City.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the contract extension with United Medical Response. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless is mostly grant funded. Cody explained the Coalition has been providing emergency housing for homeless individuals instead of the City operating a warming center as they have in past years. The Coalition provides a voucher for shelter assistance to a homeless individual. They also provide services to help the individual obtain permanent housing. The vouchers may be obtained through the Police Department or the Coalition. Cody told the Council ARPA funds may be used to provide emergency shelter. The City is providing \$50,000 of the ARPA funds received to help the Coalition provide the emergency shelter assistance. Cody told the Council the City has received one half of the ARPA funds that have been allocated.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to adopt Resolution 2021-26 allocating \$50,000 of ARPA funding to the Southern Illinois Coalition for the Homeless for emergency housing response. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

Commissioner Patton told the Council Ordinance 3763 is due to Allison Hasler leaving employment with the City. Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council Allison Hasler's position as Community Programs Director was more of a grant writing position. Since she left the City, outside sources for grant writing have been identified not necessarily needing a staff position for that. Cody told the Council in rethinking Allison's position after her departure, Mayor Absher saw an opportunity to help businesses figure out how to rebound from the Pandemic and how to figure out how to grow businesses, with the ultimate goal being how to retain businesses. Cody said these are the things Mayor Absher wants to accomplish with this position. He said the City has an excellent candidate for the position. Jennifer Olson currently works for Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development and has worked in business development for many years. Jennifer is well versed in business development and will report to Economic Development and Municipal Planning Director Glenn Clarida and support his efforts.

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Jennifer told the Council her background is fifteen years in commercial lending, leading a Chamber of Commerce and most recently as economic development director for Greater Egypt. Jennifer told the Council she loves to work with entrepreneurs and marketing comes natural to her. She hopes to join the City and support the efforts of Glenn Clarida to attract business, but also to work with existing businesses to retain them and make sure they have the resources they need to expand, grow, add jobs, and make additional investment in Marion. She told the Council she appreciates them considering her for this opportunity.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve Ordinance 3763 creating the position of Business Development Director and appointing Jennifer Olson to the position at \$65,000 per year, exempt position plus benefits. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Webb reported he is proud of the Street Department for getting out ahead of the bad weather that was predicted for Friday night. He told the council he sends out thoughts and prayers to those affected by the storms. He reported the Cemetery has been straightening monuments and maintaining equipment to be ready for next year's mowing season.

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last meeting. He mentioned the drop-off locations for donations to the Mayfield effort. He also noted the Chamber of Commerce has published a list of needed items. Since this is the last meeting before Christmas, he told everyone to have a safe and happy holiday. He also told the audience to be ready for Downtown Christmas in 2022. He thanked the Street Department for their work outlining all the buildings on the Square with lights. He commented on the phenomenal concerts that have come to the Civic Center recently. He also noted the carriage rides downtown were a huge success this year and the online booking process was very smooth and easy. He announced there would be a live Nativity this weekend.

Commissioner Barwick read the November Fire Department, Police Department, Narcotics Unite, Detective Unit and Animal Control reports. He reported there were 6,133 dispatched calls during the month of November. There were 2,045 9-1-1 calls and 308 ambulance calls. He also reminded everyone looking for a new pet to please consider adopting a dog or cat from Animal Control.

Commissioner Patton wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Commissioner Patton Acting as Mayor Pro-Tem stated there was no need for executive session this evening.

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

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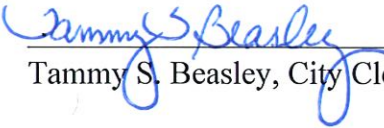
ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND
STOECKLIN ALL VOTED YEA. MAYOR ABSHER ABSENT.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:35 P.M.



Douglas S. Patton, Mayor Pro-Tem

ATTEST:



Tammy S. Beasley, City Clerk