

December 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

There were no public comments this evening.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Treasurer Steve Hale told the Council the City's actuary believes if the City makes the State recommended pension contributions, the pension funds will be underfunded. Treasurer Hale told the Council the actuary computed an amount approximately \$22,000 less than last year for the Police Pension Fund. He told the Council the City can make a higher contribution and he thinks it should be kept the same as last year. He said the actuarial recommended contribution amount for the Fire Pension Fund increased approximately \$39,000. Treasurer Hale recommended the Council approve the actuarial recommended contribution of \$729,540 for the Fire Pension Fund and keep the Police Pension contribution the same as last year at \$1,217,031. He told the Council these contributions will be made May 1, 2022.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Treasurer to make the following pension contributions for FY2023; Police Pension \$1,217,031 and Fire Pension \$729,540. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Chief David Fitts told the Council he sent out letters to solicit donations for the National Child Safety Council. He thanked the 68 businesses, churches and individuals who donated to the Council. So far \$12,995 has been raised. He explained the Council is the oldest and largest 501(c)(3) dedicated to the safety of children in the United States. They provide materials that the Police Department passes out to children. The Police Department partners with them every year to raise funds.

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Chief Fitts told the Council the Police Department recently embarked on a new program. They now have a K-9 Therapy Program. Officer Jason Plichta was interested in being a part of this program. He traveled to Florida for training and recently returned. Chief Fitts introduced Officer Jason Plichta and K-9 Gary to the Council and audience. Officer Plichta told the Council his first deployment with Gary was last night. They responded to a residence where a burglary occurred.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of Commissioner Barwick and Chief Fitts to hire Cassidy Reno as a full-time dispatcher beginning January 4, 2022 at the Probationary 1 pay rate per the collective bargaining agreement. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Commissioner Barwick made the motion to approve the recommendation of Commissioner Barwick and Chief Fitts to hire Shane Harriss as a part-time dispatcher beginning January 6, 2022 at the Probationary 2 pay rate per the collective bargaining agreement. Following training, Mr. Harriss will be moved to the 1,500-hour level. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

Chief Fitts introduced Cassidy Reno to the Council. He told them her father is a Police Chief and her mother is a retired Police Chief. She is a member of the National Guard Reserves.

Chief Fitts told the Council this is the Council meeting where he gets to recognize two individuals who have gone above and beyond in their work.

Chief Fitts told the Council the Dispatcher of the Year has been with the department since November 2017 coming from the Williamson County Sheriff's Department where he began his dispatch career in 2006. Since working at the Police Department, he has become a CTO (training officer) and a union representative. He is extremely strong-willed and stands by what he believes is right. Chief Fitts read a letter he received from a Marion family thanking this individual for help he provided during an emergency with their daughter in Phoenix, Arizona. Chief Fitts said this individual was also instrumental in getting resources to help a kidnapped female from Tennessee being held against her will. He presented the Dispatcher of the Year award to Ben Wylie.

Chief Fitts told the Council the Officer of the Year led the department in arrests with 146, led the department in cases with 207, and led the department in citations with 754. He wrote seven search warrants and was responsible for 37 controlled drug purchases. He had 13 documented confidential sources. He was responsible for the seizure of 584.8 grams of methamphetamine; 30.3 grams of cocaine; 4 grams of heroin; 10,030.6 grams of cannabis; 8 doses of MDMA; 2 doses of LSD; 89 prescription tablets; \$25,992 in US currency; and 9 firearms. He is a member of the MPD Narcotics Unit. He presented the Officer of the Year award to Nick Keltner.

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Chief Fitts thanked First Tactical for donating backpacks to the award recipients. He said they donate every year to the winners.

CIVIC CENTER

Marion Cultural and Civic Center Executive Director Josh Benson addressed the Council regarding upgrading the sound system at the Civic Center. He told them a few years ago the lighting at the Civic Center was upgraded, but the sound equipment was not. He explained for many of the shows, the Center must rent additional equipment to meet technical rider requirements. This usually costs between \$4,000 and \$7,000 per show. He told the Council Chief of Staff Cody Moake applied for the Shuttered Venue Operating Grant. The grant money received can be applied to general operating costs freeing up funds in the budget to pay for the sound system upgrades. He received two bids for the needed equipment. The bids were as follows:

Midwest Music Supply	\$220,375.59
Byassee Music and Sound	\$223,767.68

Commissioner Patton asked Josh how many shows in a year would require this type of equipment. Josh thinks 25 to 30 shows would require it. Commissioner Barwick asked if both bids were comparable equipment. Josh stated they were comparable. Josh also explained Midwest has design software for placement of the components. Commissioner Webb asked if the bids included training for staff. Josh stated a trainer will be brought in who can train staff and train outside contractors who also work there. Josh explained the useful life of the equipment is 10 to 15 years before it becomes obsolete within the industry.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the low bid of \$220,375.59 from Midwest Music Supply for sound and production equipment. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Mayor Absher explained that founding members of REDCO bought land that Aisin partially occupies. The loan on that property has been paid down over the last 20 years and they want to refinance the loan with a local bank at a lower interest rate to save money. Ordinance 3765 is the intergovernmental agreement approving that.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 3765 approving an amended and restated intergovernmental economic development agreement dated January 1, 2022 by and among the City of Marion, City of Herrin, City of Carterville, and the Regional Economic Development Corporation. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

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Mayor Absher explained the IDOT Engineering Services Agreement is for the sidewalk project from State Street to Fair Street. Commissioner Webb said he talked with Street Department Superintendent Doug Phillips and this project is being financed with MFT funds. It is a budgeted project. This project will include the construction of new sidewalks, ADA compliant ramps, curb and gutter and striping along the north side of DeYoung Street.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the IDOT Engineering Services Agreement for DeYoung Street from State Street to Fair Street with Clarida & Ziegler Engineering for \$25,000. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

City Attorney Wendy Cunningham told the Council many municipalities have nuisance ordinances. This is common where there are properties with constant police contact and nuisance violations. She explained cities use this to get owners to help correct problems and encourage property owners to take more action and make changes. Mayor Absher read section three to the Council and audience to be transparent. He thinks this ordinance will cause many questions from landlords and may even create some pushback. Commissioner Stoecklin asked about the process and how the ordinance will work. Commissioner Barwick stated he thinks this ordinance will be welcomed by most. He receives questions as to why the City allows the same issues to be repeated at certain properties. Commissioner Patton thinks this ordinance is a step in the right direction. Mayor Absher stated he is not sure some landlords realize what is going on at some properties. Commissioner Barwick stated he thinks this ordinance helps to put all homeowners on equal ground. Commissioner Patton thinks the ordinance might need tightened up a bit. He thinks it might be too lenient. Wendy stated she will have a current draft ready on Tuesday morning that can be posted on the website for the public to view.

Mayor Absher explained the Police and Fire pensions used to be funded with revenues from the property tax levy. In his 2020 Vision Plan, he changed that, so the pensions are funded with sales tax revenues. The total tax levy for the City for 2021-2022 is \$100.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 3764 setting the FY 2021-2022 tax levy at \$100. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

MISCELLANEOUS

Mayor Absher told the Commissioners he wanted to bring an item to their attention. He told them there is a constituent not happy about the new fast-food restaurant on West Main Street because he owns apartments across the street. He has concerns about the noise. Mayor Absher has tried to explain the constituent is the exception not the rule. He told the Commissioners he

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thinks we need language in the Zoning Ordinance to address these types of concerns. He would like the Council to draft some proposed language to address this issue.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Webb reported the Street Department is working on cleaning ditches and repairing sidewalks. The Cemetery is trying to keep everything attached to the monuments with all the high winds we have had recently.

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last meeting. He reported the odors from the Sewer Plant are due to input coming from some of the larger facilities in town. He is working with Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain to try and mitigate that ahead of time. For the trivia question, he asked how many light bulbs were outlining the buildings on Tower Square. He said there were 3,000 feet of lights.

Commissioner Barwick asked everyone to drive safely on New Years Eve.

Commissioner Patton had nothing to report.

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

Commissioner Patton 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 6:55 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy S. Beasley, City Clerk