

February 12, 2024

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.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Absher led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Retired Detective Sergeant T J Warren asked the Council for a donation to the Copsicles Team for the Special Olympics Polar Plunge. He told the Council he and Officer Morse have been participating in this fundraiser for Special Olympics for nineteen years. This year's event will be held Saturday, March 2nd at Rend Lake. He explained the money raised goes to help athletes with intellectual disabilities. Mayor Absher said the city will donate if it is in the budget.

Mayor Absher announced the city has the opportunity tonight to recognize two special young ladies. He introduced Bella Mings, one of two Marion students out of thirty-seven Southern Illinois students from eleven schools who were awarded a Chancellor's Scholarship from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He said this is a \$104,000 value that includes tuition, fees, housing, and food for four years. Alexis Ucci is the other student from Marion who was awarded the scholarship. Mayor Absher said Bella and Alexis are part-time employees at the Marion Cultural and Civic Center and the city is very proud of them. He presented Ms. Mings with a challenge coin. She thanked the Council for having her at the meeting and told them she feels extremely blessed and thankful for the opportunity she has been given. Ms. Ucci was unable to attend the council meeting because of a basketball game.

Darla Loftus told the Council she moved to Marion in April last year and after doing some research, discovered Marion has no designated tornado or storm shelters. She said she was visiting a friend in Marion on May 29, 1982, and they were in the phone mart at Town and Country shopping center when the tornado hit. She and her friend survived the tornado by taking shelter in the back of the store and had to be dug out of the rubble. She told the Council it would be wonderful if Marion could have a designated shelter for residents.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain told the Council the four public works items on the agenda are very large purchases that need to be made.

Purchase a New 2025 Vactor

February 12, 2024

Brent told the Council the 2025 Vactor he is asking to purchase is the large truck that is used to clean sewers and is the most important piece of equipment used to maintain the sewer system. He told them the cost of this truck has been included in next year's budget but needs to be ordered now because there is a one-year lead time to receive the truck. He explained purchases like this are planned for as part of the twenty-year plan and indicated the city will get a five-year loan to finance the purchase. Brent told the Council the city already owns two other Vactors which will be kept in the rotation since they are also used by the Water and Street Departments. He explained these trucks are purchased approximately every ten years and the city has had good luck with the trucks and the maintenance department.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the purchase of a new 2025 Vactor. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

Purchase Vapex Odor Control Equipment and Fiberglass Cover System for the Schreiber Treatment Plant

Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain said he thinks this purchase may have been approved at a previous council meeting. He said this purchase was budgeted, but they realized there was not a good structural cover for mounting the equipment. After working with engineers, they finally got a stamped structural drawing for a fiberglass system. The bid for the Vapex equipment is \$169,900, the extended warranty option is \$10,900, and the bid for the fiberglass structural system is \$73,500. He said that everyone is aware of the odor problem along Route 37. He explained that when they did a trial of this system last year, they had really good results. They were able to minimize the amount of odor to almost zero. He explained the use of this system should reduce the need to use and purchase chemicals by half.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the purchase of Vapex odor control equipment and fiberglass cover system for the Schreiber treatment plant. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

Purchase a Crew Cab Half Ton Truck

Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain told the Council he has included purchasing a truck in this year's budget. He would like to be able to go online and search for a used truck that meets their needs. He said they are not partial to any brand, and they are looking at this as an option to reduce lead times and save money and will provide documentation where they have researched various options. He said this vehicle will be purchased with debt service funds. Mayor Absher expressed concern about violating any competitive bidding procedures. City Attorney Wendy Cunningham said that bids are recommended but not required. Mayor Absher indicated that he would like them to obtain three quotes/bids and he would like to look at them before a truck is purchased.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the purchase of a crew cab, half ton truck at a price not to exceed \$45,000. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

February 12, 2024

Purchase New Aeration Equipment for the Schreiber Plant

Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain said the new aeration equipment will be paid from operating funds and it is a major maintenance item. Brent explained that two years ago metal at the bottom of the tank had to be replaced. This will have to be done again at a cost of \$175,000.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the purchase of new aeration equipment for the Schreiber Plant. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Enter into a Contract with Flock for New Investigative Software

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve his recommendation to enter into a contract with Flock for new investigative software. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Chief of Staff Cody Moake explained the Flock software is not for red light cameras. He said many communities including Carbondale and Murphysboro use similar systems. This system will give the police department the opportunity share vehicle makes, models, and license plate information with other law enforcement partners in the region and in other states to help track criminals.

Purchase a Used Vehicle

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of Chief Fitts to purchase a used vehicle for the Police Department for \$25,709, a budgeted item. Mayor Absher seconded the motion.

Chief Fitts told the Council the vehicle they want to purchase is one year newer than the others quoted, has less miles, and is in better shape. Mayor Absher added that it has a certified pre-owned warranty.

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

Hire Ashlyn Sharp for the Vacant Animal Control Officer Position

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of Chief Fitts to hire Ashlyn Sharp for the vacant animal control officer position at the specified rate per the collective bargaining agreement with a start date of February 19, 2024. Commissioner Webb 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 Ashlyn Sharp was an Animal Control employee once before and left for a different opportunity. Now that there is an opening, she was very interested in coming back. Ms. Sharp told the Council she is thankful for the opportunity to come back.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Approve Hub TIF Façade Grants

February 12, 2024

Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council three Hub TIF Façade Grant applications were received. They are for the Smoothie King building on Main Street, the Union Street Arts building, and the Artstarts building. He said all three applications are for exterior improvements and qualify for the grant.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Hub TIF Façade Grants to Brian Ziegler for Smoothie King, Luke O'Neill for Union Street Arts, and Artstarts, Inc. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Resolution 2024-08 Extending the Maximum Maturity of STAR Bonds

Mayor Absher asked Chief of Staff Cody Moake to explain Resolution 2024-08. Cody told the Council statutorily the state legislation allows for the maximum maturity of the STAR Bonds to be extended from twenty-three years to thirty-five years. He said the goal is twofold. First, the extension of time will allow for a safer buy on the bonds. Second, the extension will give a new business locating in the STAR Bond District ten or fifteen years later additional time. He said the Department of Revenue approves the extension of time pending the adoption of this resolution tonight. Cody believes this makes the bonds more attractive to potential buyers.

Mayor Absher explained this does not change the scope of the project and obligates the city's share for a longer period of time. He explained that five or ten years down the line, this project could draw the attention of a potential developer and the city could potentially bond for a phase two of the project. Mayor Absher believes this is in the best interest of the bond buyers and the city.

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-08 extending the maximum maturity of STAR Bonds from twenty-three years to thirty-five years. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

Ordinance 3937 Authorizing the Sale of Real Property

Mayor Absher explained Ordinance 3937 authorizes the sale of the old City Hall building. He said originally the city had not planned on selling the parcel due east of the building, but the buyers want to extend decking on the east side of the building. The city compared the square footage to the parcel that was sold adjacent to John Brown's and the price was adjusted accordingly. Mayor Absher said the selling price is \$220,000 not \$200,000 as was originally agreed. The buyers of the building, owners of the Route 51 Brewing Company, are ready to close on the sale.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 3937 authorizing the sale of real property. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Webb – Streets & Public Improvements

February 12, 2024

Commissioner Webb reported the Street Department has been working on new sidewalks on Third Street and have been doing drainage and tile work on Pemberton, Future, and Garfield Streets. They have been taking down the ice rink and Christmas decorations and patching potholes. He reported the Cemetery Department had seven burials in January.

Commissioner Stoecklin – Public Property, Civic Center, Pavilion

Commissioner Stoecklin said he did not have a report this evening, but the Public Works, Pavilion, and Civic Center employees have been staying busy.

Commissioner Barwick – Public Health & Safety

Commissioner Barwick read the Police Department and Narcotics Unit reports for January. He reported 1,809 dispatched calls; 1,674 911 calls; 4,137 non-emergency calls; and 158 ambulance calls in January.

Commissioner Patton – Accounts & Finances

Commissioner Patton had no report.

MISCELLANEOUS

Marion resident Darla Loftus told the Council that she would volunteer to help with the process of having a designated storm shelter for Marion residents and thanked the Council for their time.

Mayor Absher told Ms. Loftus he is very sensitive to this issue having also survived the 1982 tornado. He said the schools in town have tried to build tornado safe rooms in the past. He explained to be able to call a structure a tornado shelter, there are very stringent building requirements and none of the school buildings in town meet those requirements. He said these federal guidelines make building a structure incredibly expensive and the process very difficult. He also expressed concern for advising residents to go out to seek shelter during severe weather.

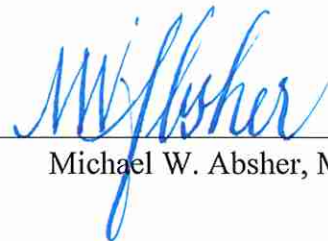
CLOSED/EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Absher stated he did not have a need for executive session this evening and asked if any of the Commissioners had a need for executive session. Hearing no need for executive session Mayor Absher entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

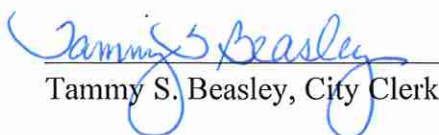
ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:30 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tammy S. Beasley, City Clerk