

April 8, 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

There were no public comments this evening.

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

BUILDING AND CODE SERVICES

Appeal a Sign Permit Denial at 1414 West Main Street PIN 06-13-384-002 (Debbie Hayes)
Debbie Hayes, owner of Jasone's Bed and Breakfast and Restaurant told the Council she has been remodeling for the last six to eight months. She said she has spent a lot of money on renovations and has a landscaping crew coming on Tuesday to remove the existing sign. She wants to install a digital sign and wants to allow advertising on the sign to help offset the cost of the sign. She said the sign measures four by eight feet and is two-sided.

Mayor Absher explained the sign company, DOT, exploited the city code's lack of rules regarding digital sign and installed multiple signs in town. The city enacted restrictions regarding digital signs after the fact. He also stated the city will allow on-premises advertising on a digital sign, but off-premises advertising on digital signs is prohibited. If Hayes allows other advertisers on her sign, it makes it a billboard which is not permitted by city code.

Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake said Ms. Hayes could qualify for a \$5,000 grant to help offset the cost of the landscaping since her property is in the Residential TIF II.

Mayor Absher made a motion to affirm a sign permit denial at 1414 West Main Street parcel number 06-13-384-002 (Debbie Hayes). Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Ordinance 3949 Adopting the FY25 Hub TIF Commercial Façade Renovation Program

Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council the city has received six applications for the Commercial Façade Renovation Program to date. All were approved for FY24. The program will start over again May 1st for FY25 and \$250,000 will be dedicated for grants. The grants are

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for a fifty percent match up to \$10,000 for TIF eligible expenses for properties located in the Hub TIF. Materials for the renovations must be purchased in town. Applicants are only eligible once for a grant at this time.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve Ordinance 3949 adopting the FY25 Hub TIF Commercial Façade Renovation Program. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Ordinance 3950 Adopting the FY25 Residential TIF I & II Exterior Improvement Grant Program
Mayor Absher said the Residential TIF II Exterior Improvement Grant Program is a duplicate of the already existing Residential TIF I Grant Program.

Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake explained there will be a preapproval process this year for these grants. He said \$350,000 is dedicated to each of the two Residential TIF Grant Programs. \$250,000 of that amount will be allocated for grants to homeowners. These grants will have a seventy-five percent match. \$100,000 of that amount will be allocated for grants to landlords and there will be a fifty-percent match. He reported last year there was over a half million dollars in total spent on improvements including grant funds. He said post cards with application information will be sent to residents living in both TIF Districts and applications will be available on the city's website.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve Ordinance 3950 adopting the FY25 Residential TIF I & II Exterior Improvement Grant Program. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

THE PAVILION

Floorscapes Bid for Installation of Ceramic Tile in Bathrooms

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the bid from Floorscapes to install ceramic tile in the bathrooms; a budgeted FY25 expense. Mayor Absher seconded the motion.

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

TREASURER'S OFFICE

FY24 Audit Engagement Letter with Atlas CPAs & Advisors, PLLC

Commissioner Patton told the Council the Treasurer's office has contacted Atlas CPAs & Advisors about doing the annual audit and they have provided the city with an engagement letter.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Treasurer to sign the FY24 Audit Engagement Letter with Atlas CPAs & Advisors, PLLC. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Announce the Availability of the FY25 Budget for Public Inspection

Commissioner Patton told the Council the Treasurer's office has been working on next year's budget for public inspection. He announced the Public Hearing for the Budget Ordinance for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2024, and ending April 30, 2025, will be held April 22, 2024, at

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5:00 PM at city hall. The draft budget ordinance will be on display on the city's website and in the City Clerk's office.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Patton – Accounts & Finances

Commissioner Patton reported the Treasurer's office has been working hard on the annual budget so that it may be presented to the public.

Commissioner Barwick – Public Health & Safety

Commissioner Barwick read the March Fire Department report and reported eighty-eight total calls for the month. He read the March reports for the Police Department and Narcotics Unit. He reported 2,075 dispatched calls; 1,740 911 calls; 3,952 non-emergency calls; and 163 ambulance calls. He also reported seventy-four narcotics-related arrests.

Commissioner Stoecklin – Public Property, Civic Center, Pavilion

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last council meeting. He thanked visitors who came to southern Illinois for the eclipse today. He reminded everyone Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits will be performing at the Marion Cultural and Civic Center this evening.

Mayor Absher said planning for the eclipse has taken months of coordination with many other agencies. He commented that no major issues today is a testament to all of the agencies involved.

Commissioner Webb – Streets & Public Improvements

Commissioner Webb reported the Street Department is still working on replacing drainage tile in Spring Garden. They have been repairing sidewalks on Union and Jefferson Streets. They continue to trim limbs and patch potholes. They are striping the new parking lots at the Pavilion and Training Center and have started mowing. He reported mowing is under way at the Cemetery and there were twelve burials in March.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mayor Absher told the Council his intent is to introduce for Council consideration a revised ordinance on liquor control at the next council meeting. Due to business growth, licenses need to be updated and he wants to simplify the license classifications, making them easier to read and understand. He wants to address a bigger issue tonight to allow the Council time to consider it and to allow constituents the opportunity to speak for or against it. He told them the issue is whether to create another class of licenses to allow grocery stores to sell beer and wine, not hard liquor. This would be specifically grocery stores, not convenience stores or dollar stores. In the proposed ordinance, grocery stores are specifically defined. He told the Council the city code does not explicitly say that grocery stores cannot sell beer and wine and never has said that. He explained that there is a great deal of discretion that goes along with being the Liquor Commissioner and interpreting the code. He believes it was clearly the preference of Mayor Butler and Mayor Rinella not to grant licenses to grocery stores. He said one of the most common requests from constituents is that the city needs to recruit more grocery stores. Over the last five years he has spoken with several grocery stores about locating in Marion, but the conversation stops when they find out they cannot sell beer and wine. He stated he is neutral on the issue, but he does not believe his preference or that of his predecessors should turn into a

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business prevention department, and he fears that is the case. He plans to introduce grocery stores as a separate liquor license class that will be more expensive than the other classifications. He believes the Council needs to speak on this issue and that it should not be solely his decision.

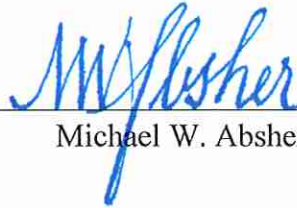
CLOSED/EXECUTIVE SESSION

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 he 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 6:15 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy Beasley Wright, City Clerk