

August 26, 2024

City of Marion – Regular Meeting

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REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Marion held in the Council Chambers at 5:30 P.M. Mayor Absher called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. The City Clerk called the roll, and the response was as follows:

PHYSICALLY PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS BARWICK, WEBB, AND
STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER.
ABSENT: COMMISSIONER PATTON

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Absher led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments this evening.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

OLD BUSINESS

Resolution 2024-15 Authorizing Mayor Absher to Enter into a Lease and to Contract with E.T. Simonds to Pave Parcels South of Monroe Cleaners

Mayor Absher explained the city is always looking for affordable options for parking spaces. He said the area behind Monroe Cleaners is the area the city is looking to lease and pave. He said this would add approximately twenty parking spaces. The city will pay the annual property taxes and maintain the asphalt on the lots. City Attorney Cunningham will prepare the lease agreement. The city received a proposal from E.T. Simonds Construction for \$26,619.74 for the paving. This will be paid from Hub TIF funds and parking will be along both sides of the lots.

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-15 authorizing the mayor to enter into a lease and to contract with ET Simonds to pave PINs 06-13-497-003 and 06-13-497-007, adding approximately twenty parking spaces directly south of Monroe Cleaners. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

NEW BUSINESS

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Hire Keith McPheron as a School Security Officer at the Agreed Upon Pay Rate with Marion Unit 2 Schools

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Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of Chief Fitts to hire Keith McPheron as a school security officer at the agreed upon pay rate between Marion Unit 2 schools and the City of Marion. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Police Chief David Fitts told the Council Mr. McPheron recently retired from Herrin Police Department.

Ordinance 3973 Authorizing Sale of a 2013 Ford Explorer to the City of Carrier Mills for \$4,000
Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve Ordinance 3973 authorizing the sale of a 2013 Ford Explorer that is currently assigned to the Investigations unit to the City of Carrier Mills for \$4,000. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Police Chief David Fitts told the Council Carrier Mills reached out to the department and asked if they had any vehicles available for sale. He told them this vehicle is being replaced with a new one that has been delivered but is waiting to be outfitted.

STREET DEPARTMENT

Ordinance 3972 Imposing Weight and Length Restrictions for Vehicles Travelling on Main Street Between Fair and Court Streets

City Attorney Wendy Cunningham told the Council she was asked to put together an ordinance to limit or restrict larger trucks and semis on Main Street and the roundabout. She said IDOT has indicated that Main Street is not a truck route. The proposed ordinance would restrict trucks longer than fifty feet and weighing more than thirty thousand pounds and. She told them Fair and Court Streets are truck routes. There was discussion about various businesses along Main Street and on Tower Square who receive deliveries in larger trucks on a regular basis. Mayor Absher said he thinks the ordinance needs to include language to allow local deliveries and tour buses, but limit through traffic. He does not want to restrict local deliveries and is not in favor of a permitting process for local deliveries.

After discussion, Mayor Absher requested this item be tabled for further consideration.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Engineering Agreement with Horner & Shifrin for the Route 148/Old Route 13 Watermain Relocation Project

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the engineering agreement with Horner & Shifrin for the Route 148/Old Route 13 Watermain Relocation Project. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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Mayor Absher explained IDOT is constructing a roundabout at Route 148 and Old Route 13, and it is the city's responsibility to move the water main.

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Resolution 2024-16 Supporting an ITEP Grant Application for a Multi-use Path to the Crab Orchard Greenway

Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council the ITEP Grant Application covers a finger of the Crab Orchard Greenway that would connect Joseph Cannon Way to the COG. It would go down Joseph Cannon Way would take in property from Deaconess Hospital that will require right-of-way acquisition and continue down Bainbridge Trail, connecting to the COG south of Old Route 13 on Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Property. This was part of the original Crab Orchard Greenway Plan, and he feels it has a good chance of getting funded through IDOT. This will also give the city the opportunity to continue with ITEP applications to build out a bike path network in and around the mall area. Cody said this is an investment in future ITEP applications. He said the city will be responsible for twenty percent or \$450,000 for this project. Cody said the grants will be approved in the Spring 2025 and construction would start in FY27.

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-16 supporting an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) Grant application to build a multi-use path from Joseph Cannon Way to the Crab Orchard Greenway. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

FY25 TIF Grants Received through August 23, 2024

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve FY25 TIF Grants received through 8.23.2024. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

Mayor Absher asked Chief of Staff Cody Moake about the status of being overdrawn on the homeowner grants by \$4,696.29. Cody explained the last grant application came in and a choice needs to be made to fund the entire application or only a portion. He said there is enough money in Residential TIF I to fund the overage. He asked the Council to fund the last application and then cut off applications at that point if no additional funds are allocated. There were three applications that came in after the cut off. Cody said he and Jennifer will start making calls in March to see if incomplete projects will be completed. If they will not, the three additional projects can be funded. Mayor Absher asked if the remaining money left in Residential TIF I could be used to fund the remaining projects in Residential TIF II.

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Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the three Residential TIF II grant applications that were presented supplementally on the sheet Cody presented. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Webb – Streets & Public Improvements

Commissioner Webb reported the Street Department has been working on erosion issues along Crab Orchard Creek to help improve drainage away from the city. They have been working on sidewalks from Otis to Williams Street. They have been doing drainage work on Gregory and Fair Street. They are also doing tile work along Fair Street from DeYoung to Morningside in preparation for the sidewalks. He announced the asphalt paving is finished, and they are striping the newly paved streets. They have also been mowing and doing general clean up around town. He reported all is well with the Cemetery.

Commissioner Stoecklin – Public Property, Civic Center, Pavilion

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last council meeting. He asked two trivia questions this evening.

Commissioner Patton – Accounts & Finances

Commissioner Patton was absent.

Commissioner Barwick – Public Health & Safety

Commissioner Barwick read the Police and Fire Department reports for July. He reported 1,774 dispatched calls; 1,992 911 calls; 4,593 non-emergency calls and 181 ambulance calls. He reported eighty-six total calls for the Fire Department.

Mayor Absher – Public Affairs

Mayor Absher said he was asked by some Commissioners to address issues regarding property tax bills. He said it appears there will be a surprise on some residents' tax bills. He said he and Chief of Staff Moake receive questions when a TIF District is listed on property tax bills. Due to the way it is listed on the bill, it appears the TIF District is the culprit for the increase in the property tax. He stated that is never the case because that is not the way TIF works. TIF is not a taxing district, and the city does not levy taxes in TIF. He explained TIF has no bearing on how much property tax a resident pays. The city has no control over the mechanisms that cause a tax bill to increase. The mechanisms are how much the assessor thinks a property is worth and how much the taxing bodies involved levy against the aggregate amount of those properties. Those factors derive the tax rate listed on the tax bill. This year the county is increasing rates in some townships including Blairsville, Herrin, Lake Creek, East Marion, and Creal Springs. These all have a township equalization factor of 1.135. East Marion township is from Van Buren Street east which extends out of town. He read from a notice published by the county directing questions to the Tax Assessor Alex Simpson. Mayor Absher explained the city only levies \$100 in total over all properties in town.

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At 6:16 p.m. Mayor Absher called a short recess to speak with Chief of Staff Cody Moake and Hub Recreation Center General Manager Chris Georgantas.

At 6:20 p.m. Mayor Absher resumed the meeting.

Chief of Staff Cody Moake gave an update on Tower Square construction. He told the Council the Square is nearing completion. During the next two weeks pavement markers and lighted beacons will be installed. During the week of September 9th, milling and paving will take place in the four quadrants and the brick pavers will be laid. The work will be done from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. He said crews are hopeful each corner will be completed in one week. There will be no parking in those areas during that time. He has notified business owners of the closures.

Cody told the Council Boyton Street Community Center has set the pole for the LED sign. The building addition project is due to be completed in December. The building will start going up in the next two weeks.

Cody said there are two events on the square the next two weekends. This Saturday from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. the S I Truck Showdown Cruise-In is expecting seventy to eighty vintage cars on the square. There will be a band playing on the square during this event. There is also a concert at the Civic Center.

The following Saturday, September 7th, is the Veterans Parade at 10:00 a.m. There will be a concert later that night called Marion Stands with Veterans. A stage will be set up by the Civic Center. Mayor Absher said professional songwriters will come in from Nashville and interview local veterans on Friday and will write a song and perform it on Saturday night. It is a free concert.

Mayor Absher said he and Chief of Staff Cody Moake visited with Chris at the Hub. The Council approved repairing and resurfacing the slide at the Hub several months ago. The repairers have never seen the type of coating that is on the slide before. It is not what they thought it would be. The repairs required now would cause a change order to the original contract. Since this item was not on the agenda, the Council cannot act. The consensus was to proceed with the change order option B.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mayor Absher reported on the Sister City Visit. He said the long time Mayor of Kanie Town, and seven students came with the delegation from Japan. The group visited from Tuesday through Saturday last week. They went on several tours and outings. A group from the Chamber of Commerce and City will visit Japan next October.

CLOSED/EXECUTIVE SESSION

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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 COMMISSIONER PATTON ABSENT. COMMISSIONERS BARWICK, WEBB, AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:38 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy Beasley Wright, City Clerk