

January 27, 2025

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 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

Mayor Absher explained the invoice for installing emergency lighting throughout Market Street Hall is being paid with funds reserved from a grant.

Commissioner Webb 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

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Hire Brylan Mezo as a Patrol Officer at the Agreed Upon Rate per the Collective Bargaining Agreement

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of the merit board, Commissioner Barwick, and Chief Fitts to hire Mason Summers as a patrol officer at the agreed upon rate per the collective bargaining agreement with a start date of February 3, 2025. Commissioner Patton 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 that Mr. Mezo is a self-employed contractor originally from Herrin. He will start the ISP Academy in Springfield on February 17th. Mr. Mezo thanked the Council for the opportunity.

City Clerk Wright administered the oath of office to Mr. Mezo.

The council meeting paused briefly for photos and then resumed.

PUBLIC WORKS

Engineering Agreement with Horner Shifrin for Various Sewer Improvements in the Hub TIF

Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council there are nine years left in the Hub TIF. Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain has identified some infrastructure improvements that need to be made in that area. The TIF District has enough funds to pay an annual loan payment for the

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improvements. Superintendent Cain told the Council they are voting to approve the engineering agreement tonight that includes engineering design and construction management fees. No bids have been received yet for the project.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve an engineering agreement with Horner Shifrin for various sewer improvements throughout the Hub TIF with the project funded through future available TIF funds. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Ordinance 3999 Amending a Redevelopment Agreement with Castellano Properties, LLC to Add Additional Developers

Ordinance 3999 adds an additional developer to the Redevelopment Agreement with Castellano Properties, LLC.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 3999 amending a redevelopment agreement with Castellano Properties, LLC to add additional developers. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

TREASURER'S OFFICE

Ordinance 4000 Repealing and Replacing Ordinance 3861 Outlining Purchasing Procedures

Commissioner Patton explained Ordinance 4000 increases the purchasing limit for the Treasurer to \$3,000.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve Ordinance 4000 repealing and replacing Ordinance 3861 outlining purchasing procedures for all departments within the City of Marion. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Determine Whether the Need for Confidentiality Exists with Respect to Closed Session Minutes per 5 ILCS 120/2.06

Mayor Absher explained the City Attorney reviews closed session minutes every six months and makes a recommendation to the council as to whether the minutes need to be kept confidential. He told the Council there have been three closed session meetings since the last review. City Attorney Cunningham recommended all closed session meetings and the three from 2024 remain closed.

Mayor Absher made a motion to determine the need for confidentiality still exists with respect to Closed Session Minutes of the Marion City Council per 5 ILCS 120/2.06 and the minutes still require confidential treatment. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Mayor Absher said it has previously been discussed how to have a city-owned downtown shuttle van. The city is the recipient of a \$50,000 grant from Ameren based on an electric vehicle planning study the city conducted. The city approached Ameren about using the grant funds to purchase an electric shuttle van with the concept being primarily to be able to get people from the 710 downtown city parking spaces to events happening downtown. Mayor Absher said he, Chief of Staff Moake, and Business Development Director Jennifer Olson looked at a true electric shuttle that would have only been operable downtown. They also researched the Ford Transit Van, which is more expensive but will allow much more flexibility if needed for other purposes. The cost of the van is \$112,583 with approximately \$50,000 of the cost due to the ADA lift and accessibility features. The Ameren grant will cover \$50,000 of the total cost with the remaining balance of \$62,583 being paid from the project fund. Seats in the van are removable so the van could be used for other transport, if needed. Mayor Absher said the city will need to find a place to house the van. Chief of Staff Moake explained there is a garage located behind the Insurance House that is owned by Doug Bradley that the city would be interested in leasing or buying to house the van. Chief of Staff Moake and Civic Center Executive Director Josh Benson will work on a circuit for the van route. This circuit will include stops at various parking locations to shuttle residents to events downtown. Van drivers will not be required to hold a special license, but the city's insurance carrier might require training for drivers. Mayor Absher added that the van will not require a lot of maintenance since it is electric.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the purchase of a new Ford Electric Shuttle Van with an ADA lift for \$112,583 using a \$50,000 Ameren grant and project funds. Commissioner Patton 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

Commissioner Webb reported that the Street Department has been patching potholes that have occurred due to the recent freeze and thaw. They continue canvassing neighborhoods to pick up limbs from the ice storm. He reported all is well at the Cemetery Department.

Commissioner Stoecklin – Public Property, Civic Center, Pavilion

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last council meeting. He reported tips on preventing frozen water pipes. He asked two trivia questions and reported there are 153.7 miles of water lines, and 139.8 miles of sewer lines maintained within the city.

Commissioner Barwick – Public Health & Safety

Commissioner Barwick read the Fire Department December report. He reported seventy total incidents and two annual safety inspections. He reminded residents to check their fireplace chimneys and be careful using extension cords with space heaters.

Commissioner Patton – Accounts & Finances

Commissioner Patton reported that the Treasurer's Office had an employee move away leaving a vacancy. They conducted interviews for a replacement on Friday and today and hope to have a new person hired soon.

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Mayor Absher – Public Affairs

Mayor Absher did not have a report this evening.

MISCELLANEOUS

Mayor Absher said he wants to bring up an issue City Attorney Cunningham has emailed the Council about. He said he wants to discuss fireworks and get feedback before a revised ordinance is presented. He said the issue is coming up now because the city has been getting inquiries regarding fireworks stands. He told the Commissioners this is an issue that has always presented a problem. The city's ordinance has not kept up with changes to the Illinois Pyrotechnic Act. He explained that in 2021 the Illinois legislature changed rules to allow the sale of more powerful ground-based consumer fireworks. The Act states it is still illegal to set off fireworks that are shot into the air such as bottle rockets and roman candles. Those are considered non-consumer fireworks. 2022 was the first year the State allowed the sale of more powerful fireworks. He explained the State Fire Marshall's office issues permits for the sale of fireworks, not the city. The city issues occupancy permits to the sellers and inspects the premises where the fireworks are being sold but does not have the resources to monitor the stands. He said fireworks have gotten out of hand in town and are hard to regulate. He is of the opinion changes need to be made and intends to present an ordinance at the next council meeting in favor of not allowing fireworks stands in city limits. He asked the Commissioners to give feedback to City Attorney Cunningham regarding whether to allow sales and hours and days of sales.

City Attorney Cunningham said the law requires purchasers of consumer fireworks to acquire a permit from the Fire Chief and attend training before they can set them off. Fire Chief Barnett indicated to her this has never been done.

After lengthy discussion, Mayor Absher asked the Commissioners for their thoughts on the subject.

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.

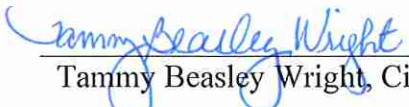
ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, BARWICK, WEBB, AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:00 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy Beasley Wright, City Clerk