

February 10, 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

Marion resident Cynthia expressed her concern about the direction Marion is going. She is concerned that an elementary school and junior high school are so close to the adult store. She is worried that Marion is headed in the wrong direction.

Ashley DeBoer from The Infinity Project, a 501(c)(3) organization addressed the Council because they want to host a charity 5K run at the Crisp Sports Complex. Mayor Absher explained that she will need to contact Marion Unit #2 School District about using the sports complex. He also told her she will need to speak with Police Chief David Fitts if the run will be going outside the sports complex.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ordinance 4005 Approving Issuance of Series 2025 STAR Bonds

Mayor Absher told the audience that the Public Affairs agenda item is first due to out-of-town visitors being present this evening. He said this agenda item is to approve an ordinance agreeing to issue Series 2025 STAR Bonds. Mayor Absher recognized former State Representative John Bradley who originally helped to pass the STAR Bonds legislation in 2009 and 2010. Mayor Absher told the Council and audience that in April 2020 he and Chief of Staff Cody Moake began having conversations with many people about how to resurrect the STAR Bonds District.

Mayor Absher introduced Attorney Sean Flynn, with Gillmore & Bell, the city's bond counsel. He also introduced Jim Lahay, John Klaus, and Zach Napper with Stifel, the bond underwriters. Mayor Absher thanked many who have been part of the STAR Bonds process including John Bradley for his continued guidance; the Illinois Department of Revenue for being an extraordinary partner with the city and developers; and Chief of Staff Cody Moake for being the city's STAR Bond Administrator and expert on all things STAR Bonds. He also thanked Rodney Cabaness, Shad Zimbardo, Jerry Barras, and the other investors with the Master Developer Team.

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Chief of Staff Moake explained STAR Bonds are sales tax alternative revenue bonds. He said the goal with STAR Bonds is to define a project area so that all sales tax revenue generated within that area is then pledged to pay down the bonds. With STAR Bonds, there is no risk to the city's general fund because the city is not responsible for paying back the bonds. He said that people coming to the area for activities within the district will also spend money at other businesses outside the district. For example, the sports complex is not in the STAR Bonds project area, but is a partnership between the city, Williamson County, and the Master Developer Team. The idea behind the sports complex is to generate 200,000 visitors to Marion each year to stay in hotels and to shop. He explained the school districts in the region will also be beneficiaries of the STAR Bond District. In 2006 or 2007 the county voters passed a referendum allowing a one percent construction related sales tax incentive for school districts within Williamson County. Based on the numbers that are presented in this project, that fund should grow exponentially and every school district within the county will benefit. Fifteen percent of all the new real estate tax increment created within the district will go to the Regional Office of Education and the money will be spread amongst the schools in the ROE district. All sales tax generated within the district will be dedicated to paying the bonds back. This includes the State of Illinois' five percent sales tax. One hundred fifteen million dollars in bonds is expected to be issued. Mayor Absher added the one percent school facility sales tax is distributed per capita.

Mayor Absher said the STAR Bonds legislation is elegantly crafted, but difficult to navigate. It creates a win-win-win situation for all involved.

Chief of Staff Moake played a video that will be shown to prospective investors.

Chief of Staff Moake said that once complete, the developers will have close to 98.1 million invested. He added that construction contracts have been signed, and construction will start immediately once the bond process is complete. The mall will be partly operational by the end of this year and the field house and hotel will be operational by the middle of next year.

Jim Lahay from Stifel told the Council this community has been a pleasure to work with because they are strong advocates for the community. He told them investors from all around the country will purchase the bonds. He said if this is approved tonight, they will print the offering documents this week and start the marketing process by the end of the week. On February 26, 2025, all details of the bond issue will become final with closing a couple of weeks after that. He thanked the Council for all they have done.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 4005 approving the issuance of Series 2025 STAR Bonds. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Commissioner Patton thanked Gillmore & Bell, Stifel, Illinois Department of Revenue, Chief of Staff Moake, and Shad, Rodney, and Jerry for their commitment to the community and the investment they have made. He thanked John Bradley for resurrecting the STAR Bonds and making this possible. He thanked everyone for this once in a lifetime opportunity.

Mayor Absher presented the signed ordinance to Gillmore & Bell Attorney Sean Flynn.

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Developer Rodney Cabaness thanked the Council for their confidence in his team and this project. He expressed his enthusiasm for showing everyone the opportunity that Southern Illinois has because of STAR Bonds and because the Council had the courage and wisdom to think outside the box for a way to make change. He thanked Gillmore & Bell and Stifel for their help with the process. He said this has been a labor of love for the development team and he looks forward to the future.

Mayor Absher briefly paused the meeting to give the out-of-town guests an opportunity to leave the meeting.

STREET DEPARTMENT

Change Order for Halfway Road Storm Drainage Project

Mayor's Chief of Staff Cody Moake reported that the Halfway Road Storm Drainage Project is in the planning phase and several changes need to be made. He explained that some additional thirty-inch pipe is needed, modifications need to be made to an existing inlet, and some additional electrical lines need to be relocated. He said the contractor also requested a one-month extension to the completion date due to weather delays. The cost of the changes will increase the contract price by \$41,895.96. Chief of Staff Moake said Ameren will bill for the electrical line relocations separately.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve a change order in the amount of \$41,895.96 for the Halfway Road Storm Drainage Project. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONER PATTON ABSTAINED.

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

Approve Purchase of An Equipped 2003 International 7000 Dump Truck to Replace a Damaged Unit

Commissioner Webb explained that the Street Department had an older truck that was in an accident and is now out of commission. Street Department Superintendent Doug Phillips found a replacement truck that is already equipped for \$30,000. This was not budgeted and will be paid for by the general fund.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the purchase of an equipped 2003 International 7200 Dump Truck to replace a damaged unit. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Ordinance 4006 Directing the Sale of Surplus Police Vehicles

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve Ordinance 4006 Directing the sale of surplus police vehicles. Mayor Absher 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 Jim Hayes was willing to purchase these old vehicles that are no longer in service.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

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Ordinance 4001 a Hub TIF Redevelopment Agreement with Yellow Door Builders, Inc.
Mayor Absher told the Council the Hub TIF Redevelopment Agreement with Yellow Door Builders, Inc. is for their meeting facility on Union Street.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 4001 a Hub TIF Redevelopment Agreement with Yellow Door Builders, Inc. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

Ordinance 4002 a Residential TIF II Redevelopment Agreement with Barnett Rentals and Real Estate Development, LLC

Chief of Staff Moake told the Council the Residential TIF II Redevelopment Agreement with Barnett Rentals and Real Estate Development, LLC is for the former Fox's Cleaners Building.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve Ordinance 4002 a Residential TIF II Redevelopment Agreement with Barnett Rentals and Real Estate Development, LLC. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

Ordinance 4003 a Hub TIF Redevelopment Agreement with Fleet Fabrication and Wiring, LLC

Chief of Staff Moake told the Council the building off Court Street just behind the Fire Department and Hale's Automotive annex building is owned by former police officer Bart Baldwin. His business outfits police vehicles.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve Ordinance 4003 a Hub TIF Redevelopment Agreement with Fleet Fabrication and Wiring, LLC. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Ordinance 4004 a Residential TIF I Redevelopment Agreement with SI Thermal

Chief of Staff Moake told the Council this TIF I Redevelopment Agreement is for a house flip on Hillcrest. This was a home that burned and has been renovated by SI Thermal.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve Ordinance 4004 a Residential TIF I Redevelopment Agreement with SI Thermal. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

Commissioner Patton – Accounts & Finances

Commissioner Patton complimented the staff in the Treasurer's Office for the extra work they have been doing since they have been down one person. He congratulated Assistant Treasurer LaDonna Smoot on her fifteenth anniversary with the city on February 22nd.

Commissioner Barwick – Public Health & Safety

Commissioner Barwick read the January Fire Department report and reported 113 total calls for the month. He read the January Police Department report. He reported 1,445 dispatched calls; 1,779 911 calls; 3,954 non-emergency calls; and 164 ambulance calls for the month.

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Commissioner Webb – Streets & Public Improvements

Commissioner Webb reported that the Street Department continues to pick up limbs from the ice storm and patching potholes. He reported the Cemetery had eight burials in January.

Commissioner Stoecklin – Public Property, Civic Center, Pavilion

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since last council meeting. He reported on a sell out show at the Civic Center. He announced Connect 360 will hold a food drive at Marion High School on Saturday starting at 10:00 a.m.

Mayor Absher – Public Affairs

Mayor Absher read the Club 60 report prepared by Director Jill Graskewicz. He reported the construction is going well at Club 60. During construction, all services have continued with some adaptations. Club 60 has been introducing some new programs including individual and group technology classes. They have been assisting seniors with tax filings. Jill wanted to thank the Council for allowing her and her staff to serve others as they are changing the face of aging here in Marion.

MISCELLANEOUS

There were no miscellaneous items to come before Council this evening.

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 6:35 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy Beasley Wright, City Clerk