

August 11, 2025

City of Marion – Regular Meeting

August 11, 2025

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, WEBB, AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER.

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER BARWICK

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Absher led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments this evening.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Hire Aaron Lake as a Patrol Officer at the Agreed Upon Pay Rate per the Collective Bargaining Agreement

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the recommendation of the merit board, Commissioner Barwick, and Chief Fitts to hire Aaron Lake as a patrol officer at the agreed upon pay rate per the collective bargaining agreement. Lake's start date will be August 12, 2025. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

Police Chief David Fitts introduced Aaron Lake to the Council. He told the Council Mr. Lake applied for a position with the Police Department but due to age restrictions was not eligible for hire. Mr. Lake attended the part-time police academy on his own and has been working part-time for Carterville Police Department. He will take a forty-hour online course and will attend SWICC Academy for two weeks beginning September 2, 2025. Mr. Lake told the Council that he attended the police academy last year and prior to that he was an EMT and firefighter. He said he wants to work in Marion because he likes it here and his daughter attends school here.

Mayor Absher called for the vote.

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

City Clerk Tammy Beasley Wright administered the oath of office to Mr. Lake. The meeting paused briefly for photos and then resumed.

August 11, 2025

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the recommendation of Chief Fitts to hire Nathan Douglas as a school safety officer at the agreed upon pay rate between Marion Unit 2 schools and the City of Marion. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

Mr. Douglas was not present this evening. Police Chief David Fitts told the Council that Mr. Douglas recently retired as a Captain with the Illinois State Police where he worked for twenty-eight years. He will start work on Wednesday.

Mayor Absher called for the vote.

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

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Bid from Barnett Electric for Materials and Labor to Install Components in an Existing Building for the Sewer Department

Public Works Superintendent Brent Cain stated that they are trying to turn an existing building into a maintenance building. He said they have budgeted \$125,000 to spend this year. They received two bids, one from Bruce Electric for \$97,146 and one from Barnett Electric for \$65,363.47. He recommended the Council approve the low bid from Barnett Electric.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve the low bid of \$65,363.47 from Barnett Electric for materials and labor to install components to an existing building for use as a mechanic shop for the Sewer Department, a budgeted item. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

Ordinance 4057 Accepting the Plat of Subdivision for Hospitality Tru Subdivision

Mayor Absher explained this agenda item is a plat of subdivision for a new Hilton Tru hotel that has been planned for this area for some time. The location has changed to the southeast corner of the stadium parking lot. The subdivision is carving out the piece of property for that hotel.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 4057 accepting the plat of subdivision for Hospitality Tru Subdivision. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Mayor Absher explained that agenda items 7B and 7C are related. He said that two years ago eight inches of rain fell in a short period of time and caused substantial flooding in the Moore Park/Westernaire area. The city has been planning with Horner & Shifrin and others to try and fix the problem. The area is in a flood plain and has some limitations due to the Army Corps of Engineers and the city's inability to change how the creek flows. The city has a plan to fix the flooding problem that is estimated to cost approximately \$1.5 million. The Delta Regional Authority has a grant program that now allows funds for flood control. The city is submitting the plan to DRA in hopes it will be considered for this grant award cycle. Mayor Absher believes the plan is approvable by the Army Corps of Engineers. The plan includes widening a ditch in that area and replacing undersized culverts in addition to cleaning out the waterway south of Old Route 13 and pouring concrete in the bottom to help the water flow out of that area to Crab Orchard Lake. The engineers working on this project believe this work will significantly lower

August 11, 2025

the flood level there. The resolutions on the agenda allow Mayor Absher and Greater Egypt to execute and submit documents to DRA on behalf of the city.

Resolution 2025-12 Authorizing Mayor Absher to Execute Documents to DRA for the Fiscal Year 2025 Federal Award Program

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-12 authorizing Mayor Absher to execute and submit any and all documents to DRA for the Fiscal Year 2025 federal award program cycle for the proposed Moore Park Drainage project. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

Resolution 2025-13 Authorizing Greater Egypt Regional Planning & Development Commission to Execute Documents to DRA for the Fiscal Year 2025 Federal Award Program Cycle

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2025-13 authorizing Greater Egypt Regional Planning & Development Commission to execute and submit any and all documents to DRA for the Fiscal Year 2025 federal award program cycle for the Moore Park Drainage project. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

FY26 TIF Grant Applications Received Through August 7, 2025

Mayor Absher stated that six grant applications were received through August 7, 2025.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve FY26 TIF grant applications received through August 7, 2025. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Presentation by Mayor Absher on Employee Health Insurance

Mayor Absher prepared an executive summary for the Council to help them understand the insurance options proposed by Hope Trust. He stated that two weeks from tonight the Council will need to decide whether to join Hope Trust. He reported that 189 employees and their dependents are currently on the city's health insurance totaling approximately 400 people. The total expenditure for the year is just short of \$4.6 million. The city does not have a renewal quote from the current carrier, Blue Cross Blue Shield, and will not until much closer to the renewal date. Last year the premiums increased by seven percent. The expected inflation rate for health insurance premiums is between eight and twelve percent per annum. This would result in an increase of between \$4.9 million and \$5.142 million in premium costs.

Mayor Absher stated that Hope Trust offers three options. Option 1, the "1000" Plan is close to the city's current health insurance plan with no out of pocket costs and premiums are not materially lower than the current plan. Option 2, the "4000" plan has a \$4,000 deductible and includes an HSA to help offset out of pocket costs. The city will contribute annually to the HSA. Employees can also contribute to the HSA pre-tax. Option 3 is the Health Reimbursement Plan (HRP) for employees who have coverage from another source such as a spouse's insurance plan. Mayor Absher stated that the hope is that overall, all claims will be five to seven percent less per year with this insurance and that employees become better health care consumers. He is asking the Council to consider whether the city should offer this insurance and asked them to direct

August 11, 2025

questions to him or to Chief of Staff Moake. If this health insurance carrier is approved at the next council meeting, the changeover will take place January 1st.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Barwick – Public Health & Safety

Commissioner Barwick was absent.

Commissioner Patton

Commissioner Patton had no report for the Treasurer's office. He read the July 2025 Police Department report in Commissioner Barwick's absence. He reported 2,201 dispatched calls; 1,511 emergency calls; 3,310 non-emergency calls; and 164 ambulance calls.

Commissioner Stoecklin – Public Property

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last council meeting.

Commissioner Webb – Streets & Public Improvements

Commissioner Webb reported that the Street Department has been working on sidewalks on Vicksburg Street. They are working on drainage issues on State Street, Red Row, Bridge Street, Mack Avenue, and Scottsboro Road. They continue mowing and picking up trash. They worked on a riprap project on Wildcat Road in conjunction with the Sewer Department. He reported that all the brush from the tornado has been cleaned up and burned. He reported twelve burials in July for the Cemetery Department.

Mayor Absher – Public Affairs

Mayor Absher had no report. He thanked everyone for their attention and listening to his presentation on employee health insurance.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chief of Staff Cody Moake announced the Wildcat Road roundabout is open.

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 Patton seconded the motion.

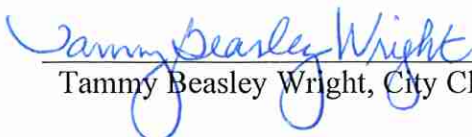
ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS PATTON, WEBB, AND STOECKLIN AND MAYOR ABSHER ALL VOTED YEA. COMMISSIONER BARWICK ABSENT.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:40 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy Beasley Wright, City Clerk