

March 23, 2026

City of Marion – Regular Meeting

March 23, 2026

#### REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

The Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Marion was 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

A quorum was present.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Absher led the pledge of allegiance.

#### HOPE TRUST HEALTH PLAN UPDATE

Jacob Jansen and Brent Williams of Hope Trust provided a three-month progress report regarding the city's transition to its current health insurance plan. Mr. Jansen noted that while the initial 60 days involved a higher volume of inquiries regarding benefits and identification cards, the plan has reached operational stability. Call volumes to both Hope Trust and the city's administrative offices have decreased significantly, indicating that members are successfully navigating their benefits. To ensure continued oversight, Hope Trust representatives will return for quarterly updates to keep the Council apprised of plan performance.

#### CANDIDATE INTRODUCTION: CHIP MARKEL

The Council welcomed Chip Markel, the Democratic candidate for State Representative in the 118th District. Mr. Markel, a Navy veteran and retired Illinois Department of Corrections employee, shared his professional background and long-standing commitment to union activism. He articulated his objective to provide a stronger voice in Springfield for all areas of the 118th District. He stated his intent to advocate for regional affordability and to help share the prosperity currently experienced in Marion with other communities throughout Southern Illinois.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Absher opened the floor for public comment; however, no members of the public came forward to speak.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included approval of the minutes from the previous City Council meeting and the reappointment of Bill Nielsen to the Zoning Board for a new five-year term. No items were removed for separate votes.

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

Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

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NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Engineering Agreement with Horner Shifrin for a Phosphorus Project at the Wastewater Treatment Facility

The City of Marion is entering a critical phase of infrastructure upgrades to comply with Illinois EPA (IEPA) environmental mandates. The phosphorus reduction project has been in the planning phase for the last few years to determine how the IEPA limits will be met. The discharge of phosphorus and ammonia has been causing issues in the Gulf of Mexico. These issues have prompted the IEPA to mandate a reduction in discharge limits by January 1, 2030. Failing to meet these discharge limits by the 2030 deadline could result in regulatory penalties and restrict future municipal growth.

Brent Cain, a recently retired city employee, and Richard Howell, both representing Horner Shifrin, presented the technical requirements for upgrading the wastewater treatment facility due to IEPA requirements. The IEPA has mandated that the city reduce phosphorus discharge from the current limit of 1 part per million (ppm) to 0.5 ppm. This upgrade requires the implementation of chemical precipitation and enhanced filtration systems.

The total project cost is estimated at approximately \$23 million. The city is aggressively pursuing a funding package that could include up to \$6 million in debt forgiveness based on regional economic criteria. Beyond environmental compliance, this project serves as a vital capacity upgrade; while the current system is designed for a flow of 5 million gallons, the new infrastructure will expand capacity to 10 million gallons, ensuring that sewer limitations do not hinder Marion's long-term commercial and residential expansion.

Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve an engineering agreement with Horner Shifrin for a phosphorus project at the Wastewater Treatment Facility. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Ordinance 4099 Setting Landscaping Requirements for New Commercial Developments

Mayor Absher stated that this ordinance was introduced two meetings ago and is intended to be simple to understand. The ordinance requires specific ratios of landscaping based on property frontage or parking square footage.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 4099 setting landscaping requirements for new commercial developments. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Resolution 2026-13 a Vacant Property Redevelopment Program Application with Jason Churchill for 602 South Eisenhower

Mayor Absher indicated that this application is the seventh application that has been submitted.

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Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-13 a vacant property redevelopment program application with Jason Churchill for 602 South Eisenhower. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

FY26 TIF Grant Applications Received Through March 20, 2026

Mayor Absher stated that there are four TIF grant applications for approval, two for the Hub TIF District and two for the Residential TIF Districts.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve the FY26 TIF grant applications received through March 20, 2026. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Chief of Staff Cody Moake told the Council that Ordinances 4100 and 4101 consolidate the FY 27 TIF exterior improvement programs. Every TIF District included in the program qualifies for the same programs. These programs have played a part in almost \$3 million in home improvement or commercial improvement projects in the downtown and surrounding residential areas. Residential exterior improvement grants are capped at \$5,000 for homeowners and landlords and commercial façade grants are capped at \$10,000.

Ordinance 4100 Residential Exterior Improvement Program for Hub, Residential TIF I, Residential TIF II, and TIF XX Districts

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve Ordinance 4100 approving and adopting the FY27 residential exterior improvement program for Hub, Residential TIF I, Residential TIF II, and TIF XX Districts. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Ordinance 4101 FY27 Commercial Façade Renovation Program for the Hub, Residential TIF I, Residential TIF II, and TIF XX Districts

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve Ordinance 4101 approving and adopting the FY27 commercial façade renovation program for the Hub, Residential TIF I, Residential TIF II, and TIF XX Districts. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Ordinance 4102 Fourth Amendment to the TIF Redevelopment Agreement with Marion Heights II, Inc

Ordinance 4102 does not change the terms of the agreement but adds eight parcels south of Morgan Avenue to the agreement. Chief of Staff Cody Moake said these parcels are located directly east of the diverging diamond and interstate.

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Commissioner Stoecklin made a motion to approve Ordinance 4102 approving the fourth amendment to the TIF Redevelopment Agreement with Marion Heights II, Inc. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion.

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

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS

### Documents to Participate in the New National Opioids Six Remnant Defendants Settlement

Mayor Absher stated that this agenda item involves national litigation that the city entered several years ago to recover funds for the opioid epidemic. The Council discussed the execution of documents to participate in a settlement involving the six remaining defendants in the national litigation. City Attorney Wendy Cunningham recommended participation in the settlement.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve executing documents to participate in the new national opioids six remnant defendants' settlement. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

## COMMISSIONER REPORTS

### Commissioner Patton

Commissioner Patton had no report for the Treasurer's office. He read a report from the Fire Department announcing a car seat safety check event on April 4, 2026, at the Marion Training Center (211 East Boulevard) from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM where certified professionals will provide free inspections and installation assistance.

### Commissioner Stoecklin – Public Property

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last meeting. He reported four water main repairs and five service updates. He asked two water themed trivia questions.

### Commissioner Webb – Streets & Public Improvements

Commissioner Webb reported that the Street Department has been repairing sidewalks on South Van Buren and benches on the Square. They have repaired signs damaged by recent windstorms and demolished a house on Midway Court. He reported that the Cemetery Department began mowing today.

### Commissioner Barwick – Public Health & Safety

Commissioner Barwick was absent.

## MISCELLANEOUS

There were no miscellaneous items to come before the Council.

## CLOSED/EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Council members had a need for executive session.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Meeting Adjourned at 6:10 P.M.



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Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



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Tammy Beasley Wright, City Clerk