

April 27, 2026

City of Marion – Public Hearing & Regular Meeting

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PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Absher called the public hearing to order at 5:00 P.M. Treasurer Lance Roye told the Council the budget projects total expenditures of \$75 million. The city has budgeted for a surplus of \$51,000 for the coming year and budgeted expenditures for the general fund have increased. One third of total expenditures are for payroll and do not include insurance. Mayor Absher thanked everyone involved in the budget process and closed the budget hearing at 5:05 P.M.

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, BARWICK, AND STOECKLIN, AND MAYOR ABSHER.

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER WEBB

A quorum was present.

Mayor Absher made a motion to recess the meeting until Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at 5:30 P.M. due to the threat of inclement weather. He announced that the agenda will not change. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

Meeting recessed at 5:32 P.M.

RECONVENED CITY COUNCIL MEETING

April 28, 2026

The Reconvened 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, BARWICK, AND STOECKLIN, AND MAYOR ABSHER.

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER WEBB

A quorum was present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Absher led the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Absher opened the floor for public comment.

Carmen Allen-Adeoye announced the fifth annual Connect 360 Black and Gold Party at the Pavilion on Saturday, May 2nd from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The event raises money for scholarships. The event includes a band and catered food.

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Boyton Street Community Center board member Colin Howthorn announced there will be a women's health fair on May 16th from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Center.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda included approval of payment to REDCO for FY2026-2027, approval of the minutes from the April 13, 2026, city council meeting and the April 20, 2026, special city council meeting. No items were removed for separate votes.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

TREASURER'S OFFICE

Resolution 2026-14 Authorizing Revision of the FY2026 Annual Budget

Commissioner Patton made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-14 authorizing revision of the FY2026 Annual Budget of the City of Marion. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Mayor Absher explained this is an annual statutory requirement to modify the actual spending to match the budget template established the previous year.

Ordinance 4107 Adopting the FY2027 Budget for the City of Marion

Mayor Absher noted that the statutorily required budget hearing took place the previous evening at 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve Ordinance 4107 adopting the FY2027 budget for the City of Marion. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Non-Bargaining Employee Salary Adjustments as Presented in the FY2027 Budget

Commissioner Patton made a motion to approve the non-bargaining employee salary adjustments as presented in the FY2027 budget. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Hire Nicholas Compton as a Patrol Officer at the Agreed Upon Pay 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 Nicholas Compton as a patrol officer at the

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agreed upon pay rate per the collective bargaining agreement with a start date of May 11, 2026. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Chief Fitts noted that Mr. Compton is a University of Alabama Huntsville graduate currently teaching baseball who is not present this evening. He will return to the area in time for his start date and will attend the May 11, 2026, city council meeting.

Hire Kaylea Potter as a Patrol Officer at the Agreed Upon Pay 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 Kaylea Potter as a patrol officer at the agreed upon pay rate per the collective bargaining agreement with a start date of May 12, 2026. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Chief Fitts noted that Ms. Potter is a resident of Marion and a former United States Marine.

City Clerk Tammy Beasley Wright administered the oath of office to Patrol Officer Kaylea Potter. The meeting briefly paused for photos and then resumed.

Purchase Six Dodge Durangos and One Ford F-150 from Jim Hayes, Inc.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the recommendation of Chief Fitts to purchase six Dodge Durangos and one Ford F-150 from Jim Hayes, Inc., FY2027 budgeted items.

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

Chief Fitts clarified that the F-150 will be utilized as a K-9 vehicle. Mayor Absher recommended an upgrade to the truck's cooling system for heavy-duty use. Existing older vehicles will be taken out of service, and they may be donated to other departments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Ordinance 4106 a TIF XX Redevelopment Agreement with Castellano Properties, LLC

This agreement is for new construction taking place between an existing duplex and a house, with access from Garfield and the alley.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 4106 a TIF XX Redevelopment Agreement with Castellano Properties, LLC. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

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STREET DEPARTMENT

Resolution 2026-15 Approving and Authorizing the Financial Commitment to the Fair Street and Morningside Drive Safe Routes to School Project

The Safe Routes to School Grant was approved three years ago.

Mayor Absher made a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-15 approving and authorizing the financial commitment to the Fair Street and Morningside Drive Safe Routes to School Project Section 24-00132-00-SW. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

The project is one hundred percent grant funded with no local matching funds required. The engineering is finalized for a June letting. The sidewalk will start at People's National Bank and will run along Fair Street to Morningside Drive. There it will turn west and run to Reveille Road where it will connect to the sidewalk in front of the villas.

Purchase a Komatsu WA320-8 Wheel Loader

Street Department Superintendent Doug Phillips told the Council this equipment replaces a 24-year-old machine. This new model features a third spool valve that allows it to utilize a grapple attachment to clear debris off roadways. The old loader will be given to the Sewer Department to use at the plant.

Commissioner Barwick made a motion to approve the purchase of a Komatsu WA320-8 Wheel Loader for \$233,480 from Roland Machinery, a FY2027 budgeted item. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Purchase Hydraulic Excavator Work Tools

Street Department Superintendent Doug Phillips told the Council this tool is a drum mulcher attachment for an excavator. It will easily clear underbrush and small trees from creeks and ditches, grinding the debris into compost without the need to haul away debris.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve the purchase of Hydraulic Excavator Work Tools for \$54,768.64 from Fabick, a FY2027 budgeted item. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Boyton Street Community Center board member Darrell Wimberly arrived and reported on the activities at the Center. He highlighted an Illinois housing blueprint listening session, their partnership with Deaconess for the upcoming women's health fair, their new computer lab, and the summer food program for youth that runs from June 6th through July 31st.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ordinance 4108 Appointing Department Heads for FY2027

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Mayor Absher made a motion to approve Ordinance 4108 appointing department heads for FY2027. Commissioner Stoecklin seconded the motion.

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

Proposals from MCCi for Licensing, FOIA Tracking, and Laserfiche Software

Chief of Staff Cody Moake explained the software options will streamline various paper-based city licensing processes, help the city track high volumes of FOIA requests, and centralize digital document storage in Laserfiche. Bringing hotel tax collections into this software will save enough on collection fees to pay for the system.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve proposals from MCCi for licensing, FOIA tracking, and Laserfiche software, a FY2027 budgeted item. Commissioner Patton seconded the motion.

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

Create a Legal and FOIA Coordinator Position within the City Attorney's Office

Mayor Absher explained this is more than just a FOIA position. This position is for a certified/trained paralegal. City Attorney Wendy Cunningham explained that city staff, especially the police department, are severely overwhelmed by routine FOIA requests, many generated for social media channels. Reviewing and redacting body camera footage takes up to 40 hours a week for some staff, and this new paralegal position will help to alleviate that burden by coordinating responses.

Mayor Absher made a motion to approve creating a legal and FOIA Coordinator position within the City Attorney's office. Commissioner Barwick seconded the motion.

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

City Attorney Cunningham told the Council that seventy-five percent of the FOIA requests received are for the Police Department. The Police Department records staff spends forty or more hours each week fulfilling FOIA requests.

Mayor Absher added that this is such a big issue state-wide, there are several proposed bills to help with this issue. City Attorney Cunningham explained FOIA to the audience and that it applies to all public bodies in Illinois.

Police Chief David Fitts added that one member of the records staff spent forty hours reviewing body worn camera footage for a request because several officers were involved.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Patton

Commissioner Patton had no report.

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Commissioner Barwick – Public Health & Safety

Commissioner Barwick reported that Marie Pardus, wife of Police and Fire Merit Board President Jay Pardus, passed away on Saturday, April 25th. He extended condolences to the Pardus family.

Commissioner Stoecklin – Public Property

Commissioner Stoecklin read the Water Department report since the last council meeting noting three new service taps, five leak repairs, two disrupted services, and two fire hydrant repairs. He asked water-related trivia questions.

Commissioner Webb – Streets & Public Improvements

Commissioner Webb was absent.

MISCELLANEOUS

There were no miscellaneous items to come before the Council.

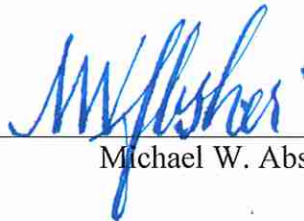
CLOSED/EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Council members had a need for executive session.

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

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

Meeting Adjourned at 6:31 P.M.



Michael W. Absher, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tammy Beasley Wright, City Clerk