Minutes of a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Marion, Virginia held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on March 20, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Tricia Spencer, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter (arrived late) and Avery Cornett Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Assistant Town Manager Billy Hamm, Town Clerk Cindy Stanley, Town Attorney Mark Fenyk, Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols; Police Chief John Clair, Fire Chief Richard Keesling, Director of IT Todd Long and Director of Economic Development Ken Heath.

**ABSENT:** Suzanne Jennings.

**VISITORS:** Janene Walker, Jim Talley, Rose Likins, Anna Leigh DeBord and Dr. Charles Wassum.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:** Mr. Heath rendered the invocation. Mayor Helms led the Pledge to the Flag. Larry Carter arrived.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held March 6, 2023 were approved as written. Messrs Gates, Barker, Spencer, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held March 16, 2023 were approved as written. Messrs Gates, Barker, Spencer, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

**AGENDA:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION:** Rose Likins, 812 Chinquapin Road, Smyth County Public Library Representative thanked council for their support specifically for the directional signage recently implemented. She reviewed the programs the library is offering.

Anna Leigh DeBord, Smyth County Historical Museum Representative, reviewed recent research of the Royal Oak Cemetery. She distributed an informational document which included a list of persons buried there. She noted a larger book about the cemetery will be prepared at a later time.

Dr. Gates reported the Finance Committee met and reviewed the proposed 2023-2024 budget.

Ms. Spencer reported the Community & Economic Development Committee met and reviewed the budget requests. This will be forwarded to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Weaver reported the Personnel Committee and Water/Sewer Committee met.

Mr. Carter reported District III met Thursday. Mr. Carter reported the Buildings & Grounds Committee met. Mr. Rush reviewed the proposed recommendations from this committee. The committee proposes to remove and replace the overgrown bushes in front of the Town Hall and the Art Gallery building next door. The Tree Committee could make recommendations for replacement shrubbery. The Public Works Department could remove, stabilize and replant with grass until replacement decisions are made. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the recommendation to remove and replace the overgrown shrubs in front of Town Hall and the Art Gallery next door was approved. Dr. Gates noted the Garden Club may be willing to assist and there may also be the need for a landscape architect. Mayor Helms requested to wait until after Memorial Day. Mr. Rush reviewed the need to replace the shingled roof on the Art Gallery building. He estimates this to be approximately $5,000. Upon motion of Mr. Cornett, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the replacement of the shingled roof on the Art Gallery was approved. Dr. Gates recommends to move this project to next year’s budget if painting is also required. Mr. Carter reported the Sanitation Committee met and discussed the need to replace the Sewer Vactor Truck. The approximate cost is $450,000. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, authorization is given to staff to begin the procurement process for a new Sewer Vactor Truck. Mr. Rush reviewed a proposal to purchase a mini paver, approximately $57,000. He also reviewed another option for an attachment for the skid steer which would work for patch paving, approximately $20,000-$25,000. The recommendation is to purchase a mini paver up to $50,000 funded by CIRP. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, staff is to explore the purchase of a mini paver up to $50,000. The last recommendation from this committee was to increase the garbage bills by $3.00. The Finance Committee considered this proposal at their meeting and did not accept, it was tabled in the Finance Committee.

Mr. Cornett reported the Recreation Committee met and discussed Water Park adjustments, pool parties and lifeguards. There were no motion able items.

Mayor Helms noted Round Hill Cemetery clean-up week is April 3-7. He also noted the Mayor Essay Program had 40-50 students to participate. There were 5 essays selected and 3 were sent on to Richmond. Marion College Reunion will be March 23, 2023 at the museum.

**ACCOUNTS:** Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts were approved for payment in the amount of $1,644,132.97. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Carter, Weaver and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Chief Clair reminded everyone of the Officer of the Year Awards April 6, 2023 at 6:00 pm. Crisis Intervention training will be held in relation to the Marcus Alert.

Chief Keesling reported there were 208 Fire/EMS calls in February. He distributed the Summary of 2022 Annual Report. There were 3,041 calls last year. Jim Talley reviewed the report. It was originally estimated that Atkins would run approximately 300 calls, after this data analysis it appears to be closer to 530 calls. Mr. Talley would like to recommend the town implement a recruiting, retention and recognition program for the Fire/EMS Department.

Mr. Heath noted Student Government Day will be April 20, 2023. There will be a Public Hearing April 3, 2023 for consideration of Community Development Block Grant Funding. Mr. Heath reviewed an RBEG loan application for Amber Hanks. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the RBEG loan application was approved for $15,000 at 2% interest for 60 months for Amber Hanks for the Farmhouse Kitchen.

Mr. Long reviewed plans to update the Zoning Ordinance. Dell will be onsite tomorrow to assist with the new server install.

Mr. Rush noted the EDA demos are underway. Generators will be delivered Thursday.

**CLOSED SESSION:** Pursuant to Code of Virginia, as amended, Section 2.2-3711 (A-3) upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Weaver and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Town Council entered into Closed Session for discussion of Real Estate. Dr. Gates moved that Town Council return to Open Session and identified it be known that only those matters legally exempted from Open Session and identified in the motion were discussed during Closed Session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Spencer and carried by a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES. The Clerk polled the Council Members. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Carter and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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Mayor Clerk