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 April 3, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Tricia Spencer, Bill Weaver and Larry Carter (arriving late) 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, Director of Economic Development Ken Heath and Director of IT Todd Long.

**ABSENT:** Suzanne Jennings and Avery Cornett.

**VISITORS:** Charles Harrington, Janene Walker, Philip McElraft, Rex Anders, Sue Helms, James McNeil, Pam Farless, John Farless, Linda Jennings, Ed Fouts, Karen Fouts, Dr. Charles Wassum, Brian Reed and David Fulton.

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

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 4 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held March 20, 2023 were approved as written. Messrs Gates, Barker, Spencer, and Weaver voted affirmatively.

**AGENDA:** Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 4 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed. Larry Carter arrived.

**PUBLIC HEARING CDBG ANNUAL PUBLIC HEARING:** Brian Reed, Mount Rogers Planning District Commission Representative, noted this is the first of two required public hearings for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which are federal funds that pass through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for local governments. The second public hearing will be scheduled once specific projects have been identified. There is approximately 18 million dollars’ state wide that is competitive grants and then applications are scored. Projects funded have to be Low to Moderate Income, or Slum and Blight Removal or Urgent need for Community. The due date is June 1, 2023. Mr. Reed entertained questions during his presentation. Philip McElraft suggested tiny homes for the homeless, which was a project in St. Louis where he used to live. He also suggested recreation projects. Mr. Reed noted recreation projects are extremely hard to get funded. Mr. Wassum asked about the low to moderate income indicators. Mr. Reed noted they vary by county. Mayor Helms opened the public hearing. With no additional comments, Mayor Helms closed the public hearing. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the first public hearing for the Annual CDBG Public Hearing requirements has been held.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:** Mr. McElraft noted visibility is poor near the entrance of RiverBend Park. He inquired about the possibility of a stop light or crosswalk being installed. Mr. Rush noted VDOT has done a traffic study in that area.

Mr. Barker noted the Tree Commission wanted to thank the town crews for trimming the trees on Main Street. He recommends setting Arbor Day for April 18. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, Arbor Day is set for April 18 at the Marion Middle School.

Dr. Gates noted the Garden Club may ask for some funding to assist with the town entry signs flowers.

Mayor Helms noted he is hearing positive comments about the BAUD Program. The speaker at the Memorial Day Program at the VFW will be Phil Davis, instructor at Emory & Henry College of Health Sciences. He is an Orthopedic Physician Assist. Round Hill Cemetery renovations are underway and this is cleanup week for cemetery. Mayor Helms attended the Marion College Class Reunion.

Mr. Fenyk noted during a Mount Rogers Planning District Commission audit, it was found that a house on South Church Street had been sold and the lien against the deed needs to be released.

Chief Clair noted Office Eades has been partnering with the New Traditions Quilting Guild to assist with baskets for traumatized children. Thursday will be the Officer of the Year Awards at the VFW.

Mr. Long reported the new IT equipment at the Police Department has been installed and there may be an issue with keeping the equipment cool. The equipment for Town Hall will be installed soon. Flave Davis has received the certification of Certified Virginia Maintenance Official. He has won his first court case. The Ordinance Committee on March 13 on amendments to the Town Code. A public hearing has been set for April 17 for consideration of these amendments. Mr. Long reviewed his vision for the updated Zoning Ordinance and Matrix.

Mr. Rush noted an EDA meeting is tentatively set for April 19. The cemetery retaining wall is underway. A survey of the cemetery will be coming soon which will marry the GIS with the new cemetery software. The Park Blvd Phase 1 Project will hopefully be completed before the drive-in opens. There is a VDOT Corridor Study in the agenda packet for the area of Terrace, Sayers, Groseclose and Park Blvd which will continue to be assessed. The STP Composting Project should be operational in the next 30 days. Dr. Gates submitted a grant to Smyth County Foundation for a 50/50 matching grant for Ogburn Park. The Auto Aid draft agreement has been received from Smyth County. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the Auto Aid draft will be submitted to the Police/Fire/EMS Committee for review.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

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Mayor Clerk