

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 February 20, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Tricia Spencer, Suzanne Jennings, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter 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, Police Sargent April Morgan, Police Officer Dalton Pennington, Fire Chief Richard Keesling, Community & Economic Development Director Ken Heath and Director of IT Todd Long.

ABSENT: Mayor David Helms.

VISITORS: David Fulton, Janene Walker, Tim Cline, Jim Talley, Alex Taschereau, Tabbetha Haynes, Charles Hayden, Delphia Little, Greg Armstrong and Amanda Livingston.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Chief Clair rendered the invocation. Vice-Mayor Gates led the Pledge to the Flag.

MINUTES: Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held February 5, 2024 were approved as written. Messrs Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

AGENDA: Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed with two additions under public presentation for Jill Lawson and Amanda Livingston.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION: Jill Lawson, Deputy Commonwealth Attorney, presented Officer Dalton Pennington with a challenge coin for extraordinary service on a police case.

Amanda Livingston, Smyth County Tourism Association, gave an update on tourism and promotion efforts. She also thanked council for last year's allocation of \$27,000.

Greg Armstrong expressed his concern regarding immigration and the need to have a plan in place to deal with an influx, should that occur.

Tabbetha Haynes, American Legion #18, noted the building is deteriorating rapidly and is asking for support to assist with the building upgrade, specifically HVAC. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, this item was referred to the Finance Committee.

Charles Hayden, South Church Street, inquired about correct advertisements of notice of intents. He also inquired about town owned property cleanups.

Mrs. Jennings noted there will be three interviews Thursday for Executive Director at the Lincoln Theatre.

Mr. Cornett asked for clarification on the Planning Commission's duties as an advisory board.

Mr. Rush reviewed the Committee meeting schedule.

ACCOUNTS: Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts were approved for payment in the amount of \$2,523,623.26. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Carter, Weaver and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Chief Clair noted the Department of Criminal Justice Service has released an opportunity for reimbursement for ECO's.

Chief Keesling gave a Fire/EMS update and noted the exhaust system that was installed at Station 1 is working great.

Mr. Heath noted Marion has been a National Main Street Community for 29 years.

Mr. Long reminded council there is still an open seat on Planning Commission. There will be new modular homes installed by the EDA this spring.

Mr. Rush noted there will be an EDA meeting in March. The Warner/Kaine Grant will be assisting with the new modular homes. Mr. Rush reviewed a Resolution of Affirmation for VDOT. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Resolution Affirming Commitment to Fund the Locality Share of Projects Under Agreement with the Virginia Department of Transportation and Provide Signature Authority was adopted. There will be an informational Public Hearing by VDOT tomorrow from 4:00 – 6:00 pm here in the council chambers on the VDOT Pipeline Project. There will be a Public Hearing March 5, 2024 for Phase 7 Sewer.

Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk