

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 16, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Tricia Spencer, Suzanne Jennings, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter and Avery Cornett Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Town Clerk Cindy Stanley; Town Attorney Mark Fenyk; Smyth County News Representative Linda Burchette; Police Chief John Clair; Purchasing Agent/Fire Chief Billy Hamm; Assistant Town Manager/Town Engineer Cecil Hicks; Economic Development Director Ken Heath and Economic Development Deputy Director Alexandra Veatch.

**ABSENT:** None.

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

**VISITORS:** Joe Naff, Charles Hayden, CB Gwynn, Charles Wassum, Cathy Cooper, and Ralph Price.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held March 2, 2020 were approved as written. Messrs Barker, Dr. Gates, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

**AGENDA:** Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:** Ralph Price spoke in reference to the Mount Rogers Community Services request for rezoning. Mr. Price purchased residential property on Culbert Drive several years back with plans to convert into a doctor's office and was denied rezoning by council. Mr. Price noted he is in opposition of the Mount Rogers rezoning.

Upon motion of Ms. Spencer, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Alice Freeman was re-appointed to Marion Planning Commission.

Upon motion of Mr. Cornett, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, an advisory Greens Committee for the Golf Course will be formed consisting of Avery Cornett, Tricia Spencer, Terry Jennings, Marvin Leslie, Robert Valentine, Mikkie Landis and Vickie Hale, from now until July 1, 2020, then the first one year term will begin from July 1, 2020 until July 1, 2021.

Mayor Helms noted departments have met about COVID 19 (Coronavirus). Billy Hamm is handling the situation as the Fire/EMS Chief, Mr. Heath is sending out information as the Public Information Officer and the town is waiting on other directives from the Governor. A schedule for March Committee meetings is on iPads. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, A Resolution in Recognition of Vietnam Veterans Day 29 March 2020 was accepted. This will be presented to the VFW at a later date. A ribbon cutting is scheduled for March 24, 2020 at 10:00 am for the Department of Corrections new program. This may change, if so everyone will be notified. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, a Letter of Support for continued funding for the Blue Ridge Job Corps was accepted. A reception for the new president of Virginia Highlands Community College was held in Chilhowie last week. Mount Rogers Planning District Commission's annual meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2020 at the Holston Hills Community Golf Course and council will be notified if this changes.

Mr. Fenyk thanked council for their continued support of the Drug Recovery Court Program. Mr. Barker attended the last graduation where two more citizens completed this program.

**ACCOUNTS:** Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts were approved for payment in the amount of \$1,046,907.36. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Mr. Rush reviewed Public Works report for Mr. Muncy noting leak detection/repair program continues to make progress with 16 leaks detected and repaired over the last two weeks.

Chief Hamm reported a RSAF 80/20 Grant was submitted today for a new ambulance and additional equipment. Chief Hamm gave an update on COVID 19 noting Dr. Bruzzo has implemented some directives on appropriate response to Code 1 calls (potential Coronavirus patients). As of noon today there were no reported cases in SWVA.

Chief Clair noted all trainings and meetings have been cancelled. He met with the Smyth County Dispatch Supervisor and plans are being implemented with clear directives.

Mr. Heath noted his department will continue with public information. The Henderson has limited programming at this time. The Summit Center is still open.

Mrs. Veatch is working with restaurants to establish curbside pickup if dine-in is restricted.

Mr. Hicks reviewed a need for repairs on an influent pump and digester refurbishment at the Sewer Treatment Plant. Mount Rogers has awarded \$35,000 toward this project. The repairs are estimated at \$144,000 of which 17.65% will be Smyth County's responsibility. Mr. Rush reviewed the scope of work for this project. He also reviewed the staffing of both Water and Sewer Treatment Plants should any of those personnel be affected by the Coronavirus.

Mr. Rush noted the Planning Commission met and discussed the Mount Rogers Community Services rezoning request. They referred it to council to set the Joint Public Hearing for April 6, 2020. The property owner at 1254 Matson Drive has offered this property as a donation to the Town of Marion. Mr. Rush began the discussion of the current health care crisis due to the Coronavirus noting the 6 critical services of the Town of Marion are water, sewer, garbage, police, fire and EMS. Mr. Rush recommended the following for the Recreation programs; cancelling adult volleyball, delaying soccer and cancelling all scheduled events at the Golf Course. The current numbers of consideration for gatherings are no more than 50 by CDC recommendation, no more than 100 mandated by the Governor and no more than 10 suggested by the President. Mayor Helms suggested we follow the guidelines of what the schools are doing to guide our Recreation Program. The Golf Course will continue to allow play and no food or alcohol served. The Summit located in the Henderson Building is closed for operations except distance learning and the Guitar workshop. Jam and other programs at the Henderson will be postponed. The Town Hall Building will be closed to the public effective Wednesday morning. Research will be done to determine how to conduct future council meetings.

Upon motion, duly seconded and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 pm.

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Mayor

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Clerk