

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 December 7, 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 (arriving late) Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Town Clerk Cindy Stanley, Town Attorney Mark Fenyk; Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols; Police Chief John Clair and Police Officer Amber Eades and Economic Development Director Ken Heath.

ABSENT: None.

VISITORS: Joe Naff, Margaret Linford, Rose Likins, Brian Reed and Dr. Charles Wassum.

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 Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held November 16, 2020 were approved as written. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver and Carter voted affirmatively.

AGENDA: Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed with the addition of Closed Session for Personnel.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS: Margaret Linford, Smyth County Library Board representative, thanked council for the support of the library. She introduced Rose Likins as the new Library Director. Ms. Likins worked for the US State Department for 32 years and she has a master's degree in Library of Science. She began her new position with the library December 1, 2020. The library is providing curbside service only, after the rise in COVID-19 cases recently.

Brian Reed, Mt Rogers Planning District Commission representative, reviewed a Wastewater Grant Program. He noted the Town of Marion has received these funds each year since 2006. This is a competitive grant and the town's request was for \$100,000. The award was for \$60,000 jointly for the Town of Marion and Smyth County for upgrades to the Sewer Treatment Plant. He also reviewed a DEQ B.A.D. grant application regarding abandoned and dilapidated buildings. This is a Pilot Program the Environmental Protection Agency is assisting localities with populations under 30,000. This is a joint effort with Marion, Chilhowie and Saltville. The grant application is due Friday. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, a Joint Resolution in Support of an Application for Brownfields, Abandoned, & Dilapidated Buildings Program was accepted. (Mr. Cornett arrived.)

Mr. Barker noted the Fire Chief position had been advertised and closed last Friday. A letter from Senator Mark Warner was received congratulating the Town of Marion for earning Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation, for the 18th time. Mr. Barker reviewed a proclamation for Arbor Day. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, a Proclamation Declaring April 24, 2020 Arbor Day was accepted. Mr. Rush reviewed the Litter Grant. Mr. Rush also

reviewed an Arbor Day/Tree City Grant for reclamation of outdoor projects due this month for \$20,000 which will provide trees and shrubbery.

Dr. Gates gave an update on the Golf Course. Mr. Rush noted the final details will be worked out this week on the agreement. In order to accommodate the operational transition, the Golf Course will close on December 23, 2020 and remain closed until January 2021.

Mr. Fenyk disclosed that the Foundation asked for his assistance.

Mrs. Jennings reported Friends of the Lincoln had raised \$8,000.

Mr. Carter noted the new officers were installed for District III.

Mayor Helms noted Mr. Heath shares updates on the Governor's Guidelines on the Coronavirus. Ms. White works hard on virus issues on the HR level with the employees. Blue Ridge Job Corps will hold its winter Community Relations Council meeting virtually on Wednesday, December 16, 2020 from noon until 1:00 pm. Mayor Helms reviewed a Retirement Resolution for Ron Thomason. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, a Resolution in Recognition of Ron Thomason upon his Retirement as Smyth County Director of Tourism was accepted.

Mr. Fenyk noted Officer Billings and Mrs. Catron continue to work on the liens for blighted properties. There will be 12 liens filed Thursday.

Ms. Stanley gave an update on Round Hill Cemetery noting a software management program will be purchased for records management. There is also a mapping component available with the software which may be utilized later.

Chief Clair reminded council of the Shop with a Hero event at WalMart Saturday, December 12, 2020 beginning at 9:00 am.

Officer Eades gave an update on the accreditation process. There were two major factors affecting the process; virtual meetings due to COVID and the protest created more standards. The Executive Order 13929 report has been completed and submitted for federal pass through funds.

Mr. Heath noted the new website will hopefully be live by the end of December. Wednesday, December 16, 2020 is the deadline for the RFP's for 555 South Main Street.

Mr. Rush gave an update on the CARES Act funding, noting the report is due to Smyth County December 15, 2020. He noted the VDOT State of Good Repair grants will now be administered by VDOT Bristol office and a federalized program. The Prater Pump Station generator should be here in February 2021. The Army Reserve has interest in assisting the town with 3 projects; trails at Callan Drive Recreation Park, shelters, and grading composting pads at the Sewer Treatment Plant. Callan Drive Recreation Park option is being reviewed by Mr. Fenyk. The tax sale has been rescheduled until January.

CLOSED SESSION: Pursuant to Code of Virginia, as amended, Section 2.2-3711 (A-1) upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Dr. Gates and vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Town Council entered into Closed

Session for discussion of Personnel. Mrs. Jennings 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 Mr. Weaver and carried by a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES. The Town Clerk polled the Council Members. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Richard Keesling is appointed as Fire/EMS Chief effective December 8, 2020.

Upon motion, duly seconded and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 pm.

Mayor

Clerk