

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 January 22, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

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

**ABSENT:** Bill Weaver and Bill Rush.

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

**VISITORS:** Jeff Spickard, Kathy Smith, Joe Naff, C. B. Gwynn, Charles Hayden, Leslie Vanover, John Engel, Rex Anders and Lili Cornett.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held January 7, 2019 were approved as written. Messrs Barker, Dr. Gates, Spencer, Jennings, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

**AGENDA:** Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:** Mayor Helms reviewed a Resolution of Appreciation for John Engel for his Documentary about Marion on WCYB. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, a Resolution in Appreciation of John Engel was accepted. Mayor Helms read and presented the Resolution to Mr. Engel. Mr. Engel thanked everyone.

Joe Naff, 148 Countryside Drive, noted he enjoyed the documentary on Marion. Mr. Naff noted he would like to ask some questions about the purchase of the Quarry property by the town. He first noted the town owning the Quarry is the highest and best use of the property. He would like to inquire about the sale price and was there a commercial appraisal done. Mr. Naff suggested the cost per acre was over \$4,000 per acre for rock and a pit, with the purchase price of \$350,000 for 75.60 acres. According to a list from the Realty Group, Mr. Naff noted this is 124% above the average. Mr. Naff also suggested Mr. Rush represented the seller. Town Attorney, Mr. Fenyk reported that Mr. Rush did not represent the seller on this transaction.

Mr. Carter attended the Smyth County Chamber of Commerce board meeting last Tuesday.

Mr. Cornett was appreciative of Mr. Naff recognizing the highest and best use of the Quarry property.

Mayor Helms noted VML Legislative Day will be January 23 & 24, 2019 in Richmond. Mayor Helms reviewed the formation of the EDA a few years back and noted Mr. Ed Stringer's term expired January 1, 2019. Mayor Helms reported that Mr. Stringer is willing to serve another term. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Mr. Ed Stringer was re-appointed to the EDA. Statement of Economic Interest Forms are due February 1, 2019. My Home Town series on WCYB TV received lots of positive comments. Travel basketball teams were in town over this past weekend. The Henderson School guitar class completed their guitars this weekend and held a concert Saturday night. This was the 4<sup>th</sup> class and a date has been set for the next class.

Mr. Fenyk reported the tax sale deeds have been mailed to him. These will be executed and recorded upon receipt.

**ACCOUNTS:** Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts were approved for payment in the amount of \$1,464,861.73. Messrs Barker, Dr. Gates, Spencer, Jennings, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Chief Clair distributed brochures on a Comprehensive Harm Reduction Program through the Virginia Department of Health. These will be presented to everyone arrested on a narcotics offense. The Blight Project is moving forward. The Town Manager has an expected timeline for updates to the town code

for enforcement on the Blight Project. Mr. Fenyk reported the drug court is approaching one year old. The governing entity over all the US drug courts did an evaluation and the report was very positive of our local drug court, placing it 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation of over 3,500 drug courts. They want to showcase our system throughout the US.

Chief Hamm presented the Fire/EMS year end numbers in the packet. Mr. Hamm reviewed each category.

Leslie Vanover, Farmers Market Manager, gave an update noting vendor revenues in 2018 were \$58,021. This was up from \$26,108 in 2015. Ms. Vanover is the only certified Farmers Market Manager in our region. Her future goals are to encourage citizens to grow local produce and participate in the farmers market. She also wants to showcase the JAM students at the market.

Mr. Heath noted the Farmers Market is in need of some roof repairs. He also reviewed the CDBG Sheffey Street project documents. Upon motion of Mr. Cornett, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the Program Adoption Documents were approved with an amendment to remove Jane Hale as council member listed on document. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the Appropriation of Funds for CDBG Sheffey Street Project was approved.

Mr. Fenyk noted the need for a Public Hearing to review the town code regarding the blight project. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, a Public Hearing will be set for February 19, 2019 regarding review of the town code on blighted properties.

Mr. Barker addressed Mr. Naff's public presentation noting most commercial properties are not sold based on MLS. He also noted most recently sold commercial properties have sold for between \$25,000 to \$55,000 per acre. Mr. Barker left the meeting.

Mr. Hicks reviewed the water accountability. VDOT will be revising the South Church Street Drainage Project documents.

Upon motion, duly seconded and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 pm.

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Mayor

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Clerk