

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 October 18, 2010 at 5:15 p.m.

PRESENT: Vice-Mayor Dr. James Gates; Jane Hale, Jim Owens, Suzanne Jennings, Bill Weaver and Jim Barker, Council Members; Town Attorney Mark Fenyk; Town Manager John E. B. Clark, Jr.; Town Clerk/Director of Finance Susan Clark.

Due to the untimely death of Town Councilman Mel Leaman, and upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, this meeting was continued to October 25, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

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 October 25, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor David Helms; Jane Hale, Jim Owens, Dr. James Gates, Suzanne Jennings, Bill Weaver and Jim Barker, Council Members; Town Attorney Mark Fenyk; Town Manager John E. B. Clark, Jr.; Community and Economic Development Director Ken Heath; Police Lieutenant Rex Anders; Town Clerk/Director of Finance Susan Clark.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Mrs. Jennings read a memorial in honor of Councilman Mel Leaman and rendered the invocation. Mayor Helms led the Pledge to the Flag.

VISITORS: Mary Ann Hubble, Nelson Huff, Chris Gilley, Helen Hutton, Doug Armbrister, Barbara Armbrister, David Rice, Vickie Rice, Ann Saufley, Samantha Archer, Stacey Ely, Lindy White, Ann Fleming, James McDowell, James Patterson, Joanne Groseclose, David Bear, other members of the Smyth County Community Hospital Board of Directors.

MINUTES: Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and vote of 6 AYES, 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held October 7, 2010 were approved as written. Messrs Owens, Barker, Weaver, Dr. Gates, Mrs. Hale and Mrs. Jennings voted affirmatively.

SMYTH COUNTY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL-CLOSURE OF OB UNIT-LINDY WHITE, CEO: Ms. White explained the factors leading to the decision to close the Obstetrics Unit at Smyth County Community Hospital:

- 1) Declining demand of services. 21% decline in delivery volume in the past 3 years with only 230 deliveries last year.
- 2) Financial concerns due to operating loss of \$400,000 annually for F/Y 2010. Revenues regarding deliveries minus expenses for deliveries and care.
- 3) Limited resources due to out-dated equipment.
- 4) Obstetrics clinics will be in Marion and Rural Retreat, staffed by Dr. Clary.
- 5) GYN services and surgeries in Marion and Rural Retreat staffed by Dr. Humsi and Dr. Clary.
- 6) Obstetric emergencies will be attended to by the emergency room staff.

Council members expressed their concerns about the closing of the unit. Mr. Barker questioned why the decision to close was withheld from the public. Dr. Gates stated that the elimination of one physician should make up the OB profit loss. He added that Johnson Memorial Hospital will be benefiting from Smyth County's loss and their facilities are not any better than SCCH or the planned new facility. Dr. Gates was concerned that young professionals would not consider moving to Marion because of the OB services that would not be offered.

Discussion ensued.

Several citizens also expressed their concerns that this is a financial decision made without consideration of the community. The citizens will respond by not using any services offered by SCCH. Mrs. Jennings added that eliminating the OB services could hinder a business from locating in our community. Mr. Weaver is concerned that citizens will leave or not even consider moving to Marion and we, as a community, need to grow. Mayor Helms added that the SCCH Board is approximately 3

months late in informing the public. The citizens may have better understood the reasons, if they had been informed sooner. Mr. Heath stated that, in his experience with economic development, the first concern of new business and relocation is public schools and what services the hospitals provide.

Ms. White explained that if the announcement had been made sooner, physicians, nurses and other staff members would have possibly quit and left the hospital unstaffed. Current employees have the opportunity to transition to other jobs that are opened throughout the hospital.

UPDATE ON FIRE CHARGING RESOLUTION: Mr. Clark stated that he and Billy Hamm had attended the Board of Supervisors meeting and the Board voted to charge for fire calls in the County. Staff hopes that the Town will begin charging by January 1, 2011.

DELIVERY OF SURVEY ON ANDERSON AVENUE, GOOLSBY STREET AND NAPOLEON STREET GARBAGE: Mr. Clark explained that thirty-five (35) letters were delivered, with (21) not responding, (7) yes and (7) no votes. Upon motion of Mr. Owens, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, this item was tabled for more information.

UPDATE ON PEARL/BUCHANAN CDBG HOUSING REHABILITATION PROJECT-CHRIS GILLEY, MRPDC: Ms. Gilley explained that when the grant was written there were 21 units, title issues caused one unit to be removed, changing the number of units to 20. A Rehab Specialist determines which houses will be rehabilitated. The town will contribute \$36,000 towards the project.

TERMINATION OF LEASE FOR APPALACHIAN SPIRIT GALLERY AT 144 WEST MAIN STREET: Mr. Clark informed Council that a new lease will be presented to Appalachian Spirit Gallery and he will present the lease for approval in the near future.

PLANNING COMMISSION VACANCY: Mr. Clark stated that Planning Commission recommended appointing Dan Surface to the Planning Commission to fill the vacancy left when Mr. Barker was elected to Council. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mr. Weaver and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Council approved appointing Dan Surface to the Planning Commission. Mayor Helms recommended that Mr. Barker be appointed as the Council representative to Council due to the death of Mr. Leaman. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Owens and vote of 5 AYES, 0 NOES and 1 ABSTENTION (Barker), Mr. Barker was appointed as the Council representative to the Planning Commission.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Council approved budgeting approximately \$4,500 in the 2012 Budget for costs associated with updating the Comprehensive Plan through Mt. Rogers Planning District Commission.

BAUGHMAN AVENUE BRIDGE PROPERTY: Mr. Fenyk informed Council that the attorney for the property owners asked the Town to make an offer. The owners want fair market value for the property. The property will not be donated. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Hale and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, this item was continued.

SIGNALIZATION PROJECT: Mr. Clark received final plans from VDOT on the intersections at the signals. Eight (8) parcels of land must be acquired. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, this item was referred to the Finance and Street Committees.

RIVERBEND AMPHITHEATER: Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, this item was continued to acquire more information.

OLD SCHOOLHOUSE PROJECT/STREETSCAPE PROJECT: Mr. Heath reported that the contractor is approximately 2 months behind.

FARMERS MARKET: Mr. Heath stated that bids were received for construction of the toilet facilities. The low bid is from Branson Construction in the amount of \$58,269. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Owens and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the bid was approved.

SMYTH COUNTY ENTERPRISE ZONE: Mr. Heath stated that the Enterprise Zone currently ends at Wal-Mart. Recommendation is to expand the Enterprise Zone 70.5 acres. This will include Medical Arts and

Commercial Property around the hospital and Callan Drive. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Council recommends expanding the Enterprise Zone 70.5 acres.

ACCOUNTS: Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Owens and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts in the amount of \$771,053.28 were approved for payment. Messrs Owens, Weaver, Barker, Mrs. Hale, Mrs. Jennings and Dr. Gates voted affirmatively.

INVESTMENTS: Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the Investment Report was approved.

TRANSITION OF PROGRAM ASSISTANT/ SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER: Mr. Clark reported that due to the transition of Program Assistant Paula Holmes to the Recreation Department, there is an opening at the Senior Citizens Center. This will be a permanent part-time position with 20-30 hours per week, as opposed to the old full-time position. Ms. Holmes will help when needed at the Senior Citizens Center until the position is filled.

STREET LIGHT REQUEST-CORNER OF GRAYBEAL AND CATRON STREETS: Ms. Mary Ann Hubble thanked Council for upgrading the lumens at the light at the intersection of Carton and Wolfe and for the addition of the light at the corner of Catron and Clark Streets. She is still concerned about the problems that have arisen due to Graybeal Street not being well lit. She would like Council to reconsider installing a light at the corner of Graybeal and Catron Streets. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, this item was referred to the Street Light Committee.

SMYTH COUNTY WATER WHOLESALE CONTRACT: Dr. Gates explained that a letter had been written to Smyth County stating the concerns and justifications for increases in the wholesale water rates and for increases in the fees for collecting the county sewer payments. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Council approved sending the letter to Smyth County.

AUTO DECALS: Dr. Gates stated that Town of Marion auto decals will be sold in March, 2011 at a reduced rate.

RESOLUTION HONORING COUNCILMAN MEL LEAMAN: Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, staff will write a resolution honoring Mr. Leaman to be presented to his family

Upon motion, duly seconded and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor

Clerk