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 April 5, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Tricia Spencer, Suzanne Jennings, Bill Weaver, Avery Cornett, and Larry Carter (arriving late) Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Deputy Clerk Samantha White; Town Attorney Mark Fenyk; Smyth County News Representative Linda Burchette; Lieutenant Rusty Hamm; Economic Development Director Ken Heath; Fire Chief Richard Keesling.

**ABSENT:** None.

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

**VISITORS:** Joe Naff, Charles Harrington, Harry Howe, James McNeil, Charles Wassum.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held March 15, 2021 were approved as written. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, and Cornett voted affirmatively.

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

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:** Charles Harrington, Marion Housing Authority Director, provided an update on a planning grant of $15,000 to be used on a new housing study and on several improvements being made at the Housing Authority units. Mr. Harrington presented Mr. Rush with the 2021 Housing Authority payment in lieu of taxes.

Harry Howe, Marion Housing Authority Board Chairman, submitted Kenny Edwards as a candidate for appointment as a member to their board. Upon motion of Mr. Cornett, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Kenny Edwards was appointed as a member to the Marion Housing Authority Board. Mr. Howe reminded everyone the RAM Clinic will be held May 15 & 16, 2021.

Mr. Barker asked that Council adopt a Resolution to observe Arbor Day on April 22, 2021. He suggested planting trees at the dog park this year. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and with a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the Arbor Day Resolution was adopted.

Mr. Cornett reported a Recreation Committee meeting was held last week. They will be doing a playground inventory soon. Recreation Director Jamie Hall is currently working on starting the youth soccer season. (Larry Carter arrived.) Mr. Rush provided an update on opening the pool this summer. Lifeguard training is scheduled for May at the Lifetime Wellness Center. Pool maintenance and cleaning will begin later this week.

Mayor Helms reminded everyone Spring Cleanup Day will be April 22, 2021. The VFW is deciding whether or not they will have Memorial Day activities this year.

Lieutenant Hamm reported that the accreditation policy mock has been scheduled for the end of April. The Police Department is in both the hiring and promotion processes and both are going well. The recent homicide investigation has required much staff time and staff has done an excellent job on the case.

Mr. Heath noted his department is now issuing a monthly newsletter and citizens can sign up to receive it on the town website. Mr. Heath met with representatives from Congressman Griffith’s office requesting their support on relocating the Marion VDOT facility to a place more centrally-located to allow them to update and better serve their area. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Barker and with a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Request for Funding for VDOT Relocation Resolution was adopted. Mr. Heath gave an update on the BAUD housing project he has begun working on recently. Mr. Muncy has been making updates on the King Street Bridge area and it should be operational by Memorial Day. Mr. Muncy and the public works crew are planning to put a new roof on the Farmer’s Market soon.

Mr. Rush provided an update on Cares Act funding and purchases, noting it is substantially complete. The American Rescue Plan includes more funding to localities, but the amount the town will receive has not been determined. A new leak study will begin next week. Mr. Rush is reviewing the Atmos Franchise Renewal. Prater Pump generator should be set this Wednesday. Mr. Rush explained a new Cigarette Regional Authority will be formed. The town may join or continue to oversee its own cigarette tax. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Ms. Spencer and with a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Mr. Rush will set a Public Hearing for review of the Cigarette Regional Authority. Mr. Rush received a request from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to renew the lease for the U.S. Army Reserve Center with the current terms and conditions. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mr. Carter and with a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Mr. Rush is authorized to renew the lease for the U.S. Army Reserve Center.

**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 Deputy Clerk polled the Council Members. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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Mayor Deputy Clerk