

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 20, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, 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 Stephanie Porter-Nichols; Police Lieutenant Rusty Hamm, Officer Amber Eades, Fire Chief Richard Keesling and Purchasing Agent Billy Hamm.

ABSENT: Mayor David Helms and Tricia Spencer.

VISITORS: Charles Wassum, William and Brenda Haga, Michael Johnson, Charles Hayden, Dalton Pennington and Jordan Propst.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Mrs. Jennings rendered the invocation. Vice-Mayor Gates led the Pledge to the Flag.

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 December 6, 2021 were approved as written. Messrs Barker, Gates, Jennings, Weaver, Carter 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: Charlie Hayden addressed the issue of Urban Archery as a means to control the deer population. He presented a signed petition. He also distributed a packet of information regarding Urban Archery to council members. Mr. Fenyk noted the town can choose to enter an Urban Archery Program. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the Urban Archery request was referred to the Planning/Ordinance Committee.

Michael Johnson expressed his concerns regarding speed and parking problems on Strother Street. Mr. Johnson distributed a letter signed by citizens. Mr. Johnson has an appointment to speak to John Graham regarding court employees utilizing the parking garage. Lieutenant Hamm reported a VDOT traffic study has been requested for that street and the results should be available after the first of the year. Discussion ensued regarding other possible solutions. Mr. Johnson also inquired about a traffic mirror being placed at the intersection of Cherry and Chestnut Streets. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, these two items were referred to the Street Committee.

ACCOUNTS: Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts payable were approved for payment as submitted in the amount of \$1,425,411.55. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Lieutenant Hamm introduced two new Policar Officers, Jordan Propst from Marion and Dalton Pennington from Chilhowie. Vice-Mayor Gates swore in the two new officers. They will begin the Police Academy January 6 which will last for 20 weeks.

Chief Keesling reported there were 227 Fire/EMS calls in November, which takes the yearly total to 2,418. The newly advertised Fire/EMS position has been posted internally. Mr. Barker reported Chief Keesling is now a member of the Virginia Association of Fire Chiefs board.

Mr. Rush reviewed the unwinding process for the series of LLCs that were in place for the 2015 tax credits process. This process will be completed in January 2023. Mr. Rush reviewed two members of the Marion EDA that would like to serve again and two other citizens willing to serve. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, James McNeil and Bob Shults are re-appointed to the Marion EDA and Corky Sheets and Clegg Williams are appointed to the Marion EDA. Public input has been solicited by social media outlets on the BAUD Program. Mr. Rush reported there has been no negative feedback. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, council authorized the advertisement and hiring of a new position for a Zoning Administrator/Planning Administrator/BAUD Director. Mr. Rush prefers council see all actions of the BAUD Program. Mr. Rush will schedule an EDA meeting in January. Smyth County has formed an ARPA Committee. The next county meeting is January 20. Council can submit proposals or ideas.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk