

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 February 7, 2022 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 (arrived 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, Fire Chief Richard Keesling, Firefighter/EMT Alex Taschereau and Economic Development Director Ken Heath.

ABSENT: None.

VISITORS: Charles Wassum, Charles Hayden, Rex Anders, Susan Ferraro, Pete Mowbray, Erwin Roland, Bill Bassinger, Jeff Pease, Danny Parks, Michael Perry, Jackie Perry, Deana Landers and Bill Hurlebus.

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 Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held January 18, 2022 were approved as written. Messrs Barker, Gates, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver and Carter voted affirmatively.

AGENDA: Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed moving the Urban Archery Overview to Chief Clair's report.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS: Susan Ferraro 770 Meadow Drive, Smyth County Free Clinic representative, reviewed the history, services and demographics of the free clinic. She noted during COVID-19 Marion had reduced the funding for the clinic from \$15,000 to \$7,500. She is requesting the funding allocation be reinstated to \$15,000 for the 2022-2023 budget year. There are 5 full-time staff and 2 part-time staff, all medical providers are volunteers. The Town of Chilhowie and Smyth County help fund the clinic also. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the request to fund the free clinic at \$15,000 was referred to the Budget Committee. Mr. Cornett arrived.

PUBLIC HEARING HUNTING IN TOWN LIMITS ORDINANCE: Chief Clair introduced Bill Bassinger and Jeff Pease with the Department of Wildlife Resources. Mr. Pease noted they are here as a resource for information and not to sway council's opinion. Hunting is recognized as a tool to manage the deer and wildlife populations. Mr. Bassinger reviewed the 3 options for reducing the deer population; hire a contractor, allow it to be done by town officers or allow town citizens to hunt in town. He noted Urban Archery is the most economical. This would allow bow hunting from September 1 until the end of March for antlerless only deer. There are 56 other Virginia municipalities that participate in Urban Archery. Since 2007 there have only been 5 reported incidences in Virginia involving archery accidents. Virginia hunters are required to have a hunter safety course and be required to have a current hunting license. Mayor Helms opened the public hearing. Pete Mowbray, 218 Ridgeway Avenue, spoke in favor of reducing the deer population. Erwin Roland, 739 Park Blvd, asked if the public hearing was announced properly. Mr. Rush provided confirmation of the correctly advertised notice. Mrs. Roland spoke against

deer hunting in town and Urban Archery should not be allowed. With no other public comments, Mayor Helms closed the public hearing. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, hunting in town limits ordinance was referred to the Ordinance Committee and Planning Commission for further study.

PUBLIC HEARING CIRP – VDH: Mr. Rush reviewed the authorizing resolution for Phase 6 water project. Mayor Helms opened the public hearing. With no public comments, Mayor Helms closed the public hearing. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Resolution Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of a General Obligation and Water and Sewer Revenue Bond of the Town of Marion in an amount not to exceed \$871,900 and providing for the form, details and payment of the Bond was adopted.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Mr. Barker	AYE
Dr. Gates	AYE
Ms. Spencer	AYE
Mrs. Jennings	AYE
Mr. Weaver	AYE
Mr. Carter	AYE
Mr. Cornett	AYE

Chief Keesling introduced Firefighter/EMT Alex Taschereau. He has been hired full-time in the Fire/EMS Department. He is a Firefighter II and EMT Intermediate. There were 278 calls in December. The year-end total is 2,696 compared to 2,018 in 2017. The department averaged 9 calls per day in December.

Mayor Helms reported the next council meeting will be Tuesday, February 22, 2022 due to the holiday. He noted VML Legislative Day was productive, including meeting the newly elected Governor Glenn Youngkin. Mayor Helms read the Black History Month 2022 Resolution. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the resolution recognizing February 2022 as Black History Month was accepted. Mayor Helms reviewed a letter from Brian Morris regarding safety concerns on Henry Street. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, safety concerns on Henry Street was referred to the Street Committee.

Mr. Heath reviewed a RBEG Business Loan Application for Velma McGrady. Upon motion of Mr. Cornett, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the RBEG Business Loan Application for Velma McGrady for BAG Leasing for \$15,000 was approved.

Chief Clair noted the department is nearing the end of the accreditation process. Chief Clair and Lieutenant Hamm are in the process of becoming VACP certified. Graduation for the Police Academy is tentatively set for May 20, 2022 at 2:00 pm.

Mr. Rush noted no decision has been made on the BAUD Director yet. He reviewed the pool renovation progress. Callen Drive Outdoor Recreation Grants have been submitted.

CLOSED SESSION: Pursuant to Code of Virginia, as amended, Section 2.2-3711 (A-1), upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver 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 Clerk polled the Council Members. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively

Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk