

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 5, 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 Council Members; Cameron Wolfe and Alice Freeman Planning Commission Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Assistant Town Manager Billy Hamm, Town Clerk Cindy Y Stanley, Town Attorney Mark Fenyk, Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols; Police Chief John Clair, Fire Chief Richard Keesling, IT Director Todd Long (left early), IT Contractor Chris King (left early) and Economic Development Director Ken Heath.

ABSENT: None.

VISITORS: Charles Hayden, Michael Kravitz, Marie Lord, David Fulton, Delthia Little, Curtis Crawford, Shawn Utt, Joe Naff, Shannon Naff, Phillip McElraft, Jim Talley, Tim Cline, Trey Wyatt and Alex Taschereau.

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 Ms. Spencer and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held November 21, 2022 were approved as written. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

AGENDA: Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS: Mayor Helms displayed a framed collage that Jim McGregor, former Marion Mets baseball player, gave to the town last week.

JOINT PUBLIC HEARING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Mr. Rush reviewed the Comprehensive Plan draft noting the Planning Commission has worked on it the last several months. It represents the direction the town wants to take moving forward. Mrs. Freeman expressed the need to edit for typos and grammatical corrections. Mayor Helms opened the public hearing. Michael Kravitz, 809 Hickory Lane, requested withholding adopting until the public has time to review. He believes it wasn't posted timely enough to allow public to review. With no other public comments, Mayor Helms closed the public hearing. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Comprehensive Plan draft adoption was tabled until January 3, 2023 council meeting to allow time to re-advertise and reschedule another public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING VDH – CONSIDERATION OF FINANCING PACKAGE: Mr. Rush reviewed the next phase of continuation of the CIRP program, Phase 7 and 8 Water. Mayor Helms opened the public hearing. With no public comments, Mayor Helms closed the public hearing. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings 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 \$1,044,800 and providing for the form, details and payment of the Bond was adopted.

The roll call vote was as follows:

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

Planning Commission members left.

Curtis Crawford reviewed Smyth County's proposal for Marion to enter the county's Auto Aid Agreement. This agreement would invoke multiple agencies to be toned out simultaneously to respond structure fires throughout the county. Equipment needed will be predetermined and toned out by dispatch per the individual call. Mr. Crawford reviewed the number of calls last year noting, had Marion been participating in the automatic aid program, they would have had assistance 20 times from other agencies and would have assisted other agencies 7 times out of their own service area. Mr. Barker indicated members he spoke with were in support of the program. Mr. Barker made a motion to approve the auto aid agreement. The motion did not get a second. Mr. Crawford will provide a copy of the agreement to council for review and consideration.

Todd Long, Director of IT, reviewed the need to upgrade the servers and storage, noting they are currently at the end of life. This upgrade should be good for the next 7-8 years. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the necessary equipment for the IT upgrade is approved with allocation from ARPA funds of \$100,000.

Phillip McElraft spoke about the recent attack on the power supply in North Carolina. He also noted the sidewalk on South Main Street is covered in rock, debris and leaves. Mr. Rush reviewed the town's protection systems.

Mr. Barker thanked everyone for such a great weekend with the Christmas Parade and events. Mr. Barker reported he does not like the utility cuts not being paved after completion and would like to purchase a mini paver to be able to pave as the utility cuts are completed. Mr. Rush noted that piece of equipment would cost approximately \$50,000.

Dr. Gates addressed inflation being up again this year and would like to consider increasing the employee Christmas bonus package to \$500 total. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Christmas bonus package will be increased for all full-time and permanent part-time employees to \$500 total between the gift cards and bonus check.

Mrs. Jennings reported there were great events held at the Lincoln Theatre this weekend.

Mayor Helms presented a Key to the City to Ricky Skaggs this past weekend.

Ms. Stanley thanked council on behalf of all staff for the increase of the Christmas bonus package.

Chief Clair thanked council for the Christmas bonus increase. He also reviewed upcoming events for the Police Department.

Chief Keesling thanked council for the Christmas bonus increase. He also noted there were 14 calls yesterday. Engine 1 is back in service.

Mr. Heath thanked everyone for the help with this past weekend's events. He reported a company from Great Britain will be here December 17, 18, and 19 to do a television program in Marion. There was an EDA meeting November 30, 2022 with some major funding agencies represented. Mr. Heath reviewed some grants that have been awarded.

Mr. Rush reviewed ARPA projects. Park Blvd Sidewalk/Drainage project will begin after the holidays. Composting project to begin production in March. Mr. Rush reviewed a proposal for work on the Crying Tree. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the proposal from Historic Tree Care was approved for \$1,417.00 for assessment and work on the Crying Tree.

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 matters. 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.

Mr. Weaver reported Mr. Rush's evaluation has been completed and as Personnel Chairman he will review with Mr. Rush.

Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk

