

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 May 15, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Tricia Spencer, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter and Avery Cornett Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Deputy Clerk Samantha White, Assistant Town Manager Billy Hamm, Fire Chief Richard Keesling, IT/Engineering Assistant Flave Davis, Town Attorney Mark Fenyk, Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols; Police Chief John Clair; Economic Development Director Ken Heath.

**ABSENT:** Mayor David Helms and Suzanne Jennings.

**VISITORS:** Charles & Nancy Hayden, David Fulton, Janene Walker, Lance Van Dolson, Rose Pignataro, Blake Justice, CJ Copenhaver, Charles Wassum, Amanda Livingston.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:** Chief Clair rendered the invocation. Vice-Mayor Dr. Gates led the Pledge to the Flag.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held May 1, 2023 were approved as written. Messrs Gates, Barker, Spencer, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

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

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION:** Chief Clair welcomed Dr. Blake Justice and Dr. Rose Pignataro from Emory & Henry School of Health Sciences. They presented the E&H/Marion Police Department Wellness Initiative. This collaboration will work to improve health, wellness, and occupational issues in the police department. The results will be shared with other police departments, as well.

Amanda Livingston, Smyth County Tourism Association Director, presented the results of a recent visitor profile study. The results will be available online soon. She also informed Council that videos of the Town of Marion and Smyth County will be released on social media in the coming weeks.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Lance Van Dolson, 311 Bluff St, requested a speed limit sign be posted on North St and a dead end sign be posted on Bluff St. He asked if there was any need for volunteers in the BAUD program.

Charles Hayden, 726 S Church St, asked when the policy requiring submission of presentation materials to be placed on the agenda was implemented. Mr. Rush explained the guidelines he uses to compile agendas.

David Fulton inquired about asbestos inspection and removal protocol on the BAUD houses.

Charles Wassum, 200 Larch St, requested notices of committee meetings and asked who was on the Ordinance Committee. Mr. Barker replied that both he and Mr. Carter are on the Ordinance Committee.

Mr. Cornett noted that Caring for our Community has projects planned for June 10 and June 17.

Mr. Carter remarked that the variety of shows has greatly improved at the Lincoln Theatre. He also noted the new E&H Physician Assistant's class is the largest one to date.

Mr. Weaver invited everyone to the Farmer's Market, there are many vendors planning to participate this year.

Mr. Barker noted that the newly paved streets look good.

Dr. Gates reminded everyone of the Memorial Day celebrations that will take place on Sunday, May 29 and Monday, May 30.

Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the National Police Week 2023 Resolution was adopted.

**ACCOUNTS:** Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts were approved for payment in the amount of \$1,337,629.78. Messrs Barker, Dr. Gates, Spencer, Carter, Weaver and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Chief Clair has been accepted to the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute and will begin training soon.

Chief Keesling noted the call volume was down 9.5% for the month of April. He also thanked Council and Mr. Rush for instituting the program of training employees after they are hired.

Mr. Heath noted that many of our businesses were honored in the "Best In Virginia" Awards. The Henderson School received a LOVEworks grant.

Mr. Rush noted there will be a public hearing on June 5 for ordinance review and special use permits. Marion EDA will meet on June 7. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the Resolution In Support Of Application To Virginia Housing For Grant To Address Blight Within The Town Limits Of Marion, Virginia was adopted.

The CDBG project on Cemetery St is almost complete. Phase I of the Park Boulevard Drainage project is going well. Ogdon Park pickleball court construction continues.

**CLOSED SESSION:** Pursuant to Code of Virginia, as amended, Section 2.2-3711 (A-1) and Section 2.2-3711 (A-3), upon motion of Ms. Spencer, seconded by Mr. Weaver and vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Town Council entered into Closed Session for discussion of Personnel and Real Estate. Ms. Spencer 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 6 AYES and 0 NOES. The Deputy Clerk polled the Council Members. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Mr. Rush was granted permission to continue to engage the County in current budget discussions.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Carter and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

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Mayor

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Deputy Clerk