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 September 18, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Tricia Spencer, Suzanne Jennings, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter and Avery Cornett Council Members; Assistant Town Manager Billy Hamm, Town Clerk Cindy Stanley, Smyth County News Representative Linda Burchette, Police Chief John Clair, Police Lieutenant Rusty Hamm, Economic Development Director Ken Heath, Director of IT Todd Long and Purchasing Receiving Agent Mandy Wolfe.

**ABSENT:** Jim Barker.

**VISITORS:** David Fulton, Janene Walker, Charles Hayden, Rex Anders and Greg Rashad.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:** Chief Clair 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 September 5, 2023 were approved as written. Messrs Gates, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

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

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION:** Charles Hayden, 726 South Church Street, made a request for the Town of Marion to hire an Animal Control Officer. He reported Smyth County refused to respond to a call to his residence. Mayor Helms noted he will discuss at the next Smyth 12 meeting.

David Fulton, Pearl Avenue, also spoke about animal control, noting a dog attacked people on Cherry Street and no action was taken. He also noted his concern regarding not enforcing on street parking violations restricting large town vehicles from access.

Greg Rashad, Juneteenth Committee Representative, asked for an update on their request for funds. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, a grant of $2,500 and a matching grant of up to $2,500 was approved.

Ms. Spencer reminded everyone of the Town and Country Dinner October 5, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Mr. Cornett expressed his concern for the increased homelessness in the downtown area. Chief Clair reported he has met with Adult Protective Services and Officer Wagoner will lead the department in delivering service to those in need.

Mayor Helms reminded council and staff of the VML Conference October 8-10 in Norfolk. Mayor Helms noted the next Jobs Corps meeting will be this Wednesday. He noted the need to discuss the on street parking issue and will address with Mr. Rush. Mike Wolfe, VFW Commander, noted there will be a dance at the VFW Saturday, September 30, 2023 from 6:00 until 10:00 pm. Tickets will be $10 and includes a $2 discount on your meal. September 23, 2023 will be the 100th Anniversary of the VFW Nationwide. There will be a cook-out September 23, 2023 from 1:00 until 4:00 pm and Gary Adams, VFW State Commander, will be attending the cook-out.

**ACCOUNTS:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Carter and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts were approved for payment in the amount of $2,016,055.77. Messrs Dr. Gates, Spencer, Jennings, Carter, Weaver and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Chief Clair reviewed a request for a road closure for the Homecoming Parade. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Main Street will be closed on Thursday, October 12, 2023 from 5:00 until 7:00 pm for the Homecoming Parade. Retired K-9 Cooper passed away last night. Chief Clair presented Lieutenant Hamm with a plaque as a Commonwealth of Virginia Certified Command Executive.

Mr. Heath reviewed an RBEG Loan application for Amy Thomas/EXP Realty. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the RBEG Loan application for Amy Thomas/EXP Realty for $15,000 at 2% interest for 60 months was approved pending confirmation of the DUNS number. A Fallen Firefighter Memorial will be held Monday, October 2, 2023 at 5:00 pm at Town Hall. Round 23 of Pop Up Marion will begin October 19, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the Henderson School. The Chili Cook-Off will be October 14, 2023. Halloween Madness will be October 28, 2023. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Broad Street will be closed on October 28, 2023 from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm for Halloween Madness.

Mr. Long noted Ben Reedy’s term on Planning Commission expired on August 1, 2023 and he is willing to serve another term. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, Ben Reedy was re-appointed to Planning Commission. Mr. Long noted Tom Hower’s term on the Board of Zoning Appeals expired on September 13, 2023 and he is willing to serve another term. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, council recommends Tom Hower for appointment to the BZA by the judge. Mr. Long noted 4 citizens who are willing to serve the unexpired term of Kimberly Austin on Planning Commission; Mark Archibald, Rex Anders, Shannon Naff and Mark Firestone. Upon motion of Mr. Cornett, seconded by Mr. Carter and a vote of 5 AYES and 1 NO, Rex Anders was appointed to Planning Commission to fill Kimberly Austin’s unexpired term.

Mr. Hamm noted a Marion EDA meeting will be held October 4, 2023. The Town Hall generator is ready for startup by the manufacturer. The Highway 16 entrance to the Smyth Crossing Shopping Center will be closed for a couple weeks in October for the Park Blvd Drainage project. Temporary signage will be in place and Little Caesar’s drive through will be re-routed. Ogburn Park Basketball Court has been striped. The Pickleball Court is still under construction.

**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 6 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 6 AYES and 0 NOES. The Clerk polled the Council Members. Messrs Dr. Gates, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mayor Clerk