

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 November 6, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Suzanne Jennings, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter and Avery Cornett Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Assistant Town Manager Billy Hamm, Town Clerk Cindy Stanley, Senior Deputy Clerk Samantha White, Town Attorney Mark Fenyk, Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols, Police Lieutenant Rusty Hamm, Fire Chief Richard Keesling, Economic Development Director Ken Heath, IT/Engineering Assistant Flave Davis and Director of IT Todd Long.

ABSENT: Tricia Spencer.

VISITORS: David Fulton, Delphia Little, Janene Walker, Charles Wassum, Dennis Johnson, Reverend David Sizemore, Teri Owens, Robert Pike, Leslie Vanover, Alice Neel, Terri Neel-Kinder and Rex Anders.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Rev. Sizemore 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 October 16, 2023 were approved as written. Messrs Gates, Barker, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

AGENDA: Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed with one correction, closed session number 2.2-3711. A-1.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION: Leslie Vanover, Farmer's Market Manager, gave an update on the Farmer's Market season. She reported the market had a record breaking year.

Mayor Helms presented Alice Neel with an Extra Mile Certificate. She joined the Marion Life Saving Crew in 1970. Mayor Helms reviewed some of her accomplishments.

Mayor Helms presented Dennis Johnson with an Extra Mile Certificate. He represents East End Baptist Church. Mayor reviewed some of Mr. Johnson's contributions to the community.

Mr. Wassum, Wassona Circle, thanked Ms. Vanover for her work with the Farmer's Market. Mr. Wassum read a scripture passage from Leviticus regarding tattooing.

Rex Anders, Iron Street, inquired about the traffic light situation at Commerce and Pendleton. Mr. Anders also expressed his concern regarding a local business promoting a scavenger hunt and the disruptions to private property.

Mr. Barker noted the Fire/EMS department had a busy week.

Dr. Gates reported the Halloween activities went well.

Mrs. Jennings inquired about the Park Blvd. entrance.

Mr. Weaver commended Ms. Vanover for doing a great job with the Farmer's Market.

Mr. Carter noted leaf pickup is going smoothly.

Mr. Cornett noted the Downtown Halloween events were wonderful.

Mayor Helms reminded council of the Annual Chamber of Commerce Dinner Thursday November 16, 2023. The Smyth Animal Rescue request was reviewed. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, a funding match of up to \$2,500 to Smyth Animal Rescue was approved. Mayor Helms noted Smyth County voted against the last proposal for the Fire Chief position under the Marion/Smyth County EMS Agreement. The Board of Supervisors wants to change some of the qualifications. That board will review at their next meeting. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the updated Fire Chief job description was approved as submitted and the costs for this position will be split 50/50 with Smyth County. Mayor Helms recommended closing town offices half day Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, town offices will close at noon on Wednesday, November 22, 2023.

Ms. Stanley noted the continued need for the completion of COIA/FOIA training for council. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the Town Attorney will facilitate the training before the second council meeting in January.

Lieutenant Hamm reported Oak Point Pre-K will visit the Police Department Thursday for a field trip. Shop with a Hero will be December 16, 2023. Officers Medlen and Brown will graduate from the Academy December 7, 2023 at 11:00 am.

Chief Keesling noted Halloween events were very well attended this year and the department provided an ambulance and staff at 6 football games.

Mr. Heath thanked staff and volunteers for helping with the Halloween events and reviewed upcoming events.

Mr. Long noted Mr. Davis is now a Certified Building Inspector. There will be a Joint Public Hearing with Planning Commission November 20, 2023.

Mr. Rush reported the EDA is finishing 9 house demolitions that will comprise the Virginia Housing Grant. He also noted there will be an EDA meeting Wednesday, November 8, 2023. Request #1 for Callen Drive Recreation Park Grant has been submitted for \$88,000. Engineering Services has been re-advertised with VDOT language. Park Blvd Drainage Project should be completed in the next couple weeks. Three State of Good Repair applications 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 Dr. Gates 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, Barker, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the job descriptions for Full Time Town Manager Administrative Assistant, Engineering Technician, Assistant Director of Water Treatment Plant and Assistant Director of Wastewater Treatment Plant were adopted for addition to the job description list.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Carter and a vote of 6 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk