

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 March 18, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Tricia Spencer, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter and Avery Cornett Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Assistant Town Manager Billy Hamm, Town Clerk Cindy Stanley, Town Attorney Mark Fenyk, Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols, Police Chief John Clair, Police Officer John Blevins, Police Sergeant Rick Billings, Fire Chief Rusty Hamm, Community & Economic Development Director Ken Heath, Purchasing/Receiving Agent Mandy Wolfe and Director of IT Todd Long.

**ABSENT:** Mayor David Helms, Suzanne Jennings and Jim Barker.

**VISITORS:** David Fulton, Janene Walker, Jim Talley, Rose Likins, Danny and Rebecca Parks, Bucky Blevins, Susan Williams, Dr. Charles Wassum.

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

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held March 4, 2024 were approved as written. Messrs Gates, Spencer, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held March 5, 2024 were approved as written, with one amendment, due to a typo, to change the date from February 20 to March 5. Messrs Gates, Spencer, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

**AGENDA:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the agenda was approved as distributed with the addition of closed session for possible litigation/legal counsel.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION:** Chief Clair introduced two Emory & Henry College of Health Sciences students. The students reviewed the results of an Officer Wellness Program assessment that twelve of our police officers participated in. The students will meet with the participating officers and review their individual assessments.

Bucky Blevins, Commonwealth Attorney, presented Police Officer John Blevins with an Above the Blue Line Challenge Coin and certificate as recognition for his efforts in assisting with a crime he witnessed off duty.

Shelly Brown, United Southeast Federal Credit Union representative, reported they have merged with the Mt Empire Federal Credit Union in Marion. She reviewed some challenges of the merger and also noted there will be expanded products and services offered.

Rose Likins, Smyth County Public Library representative, gave an update on the library and upcoming programs. The Library of Virginia on the Go van will be onsite April 20, 2024.

Danny Parks, 633 Henry Street, noted his property had been cleaned up by the town. He disagrees with the amount charged and is requesting the town to replace some porch railing that was removed from his yard.

Rebecca Parks, 633 Henry Street, also spoke about the condition of their property and reports that Danny works on equipment at this location.

Mr. Cornett attended the Chamber of Commerce board meeting last week.

Mr. Carter noted District III will be meeting Thursday.

Dr. Gates noted Senator Tim Kaine's staff "Kaine Contacts" will be at the Marion Library Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 1:30 pm.

**ACCOUNTS:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the accounts were approved for payment in the amount of \$1,301,705.40. Messrs Dr. Gates, Spencer, Carter, Weaver and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Chief Clair distributed the Police Department's Annual Report.

Chief Hamm noted the department is extremely busy and they are filling the mission and getting the calls answered. He reported Rebekah Salyer has achieved her EMT Advanced. The Forestry Grant submitted has increased to \$10,000.

Mr. Heath reviewed upcoming ribbon cuttings. He also reviewed a request from Marion Automotive to rename Harwood Drive to One Chevy Way. Upon motion of Ms. Spencer, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, Harwood Drive will be renamed One Chevy Way subject to no copy right infringement and no public hearing required.

Mr. Long distributed renderings of proposed signs for the new car wash. The signs are slightly over the allowable square footage and the request is not unreasonable. Upon motion of Ms. Spencer, seconded by Mr. Carter and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, Mr. Long is authorized to issue the sign permit for Dragon's Edge Car Wash. Mr. Long noted the footers for 3 EDA homes have been poured. Discussion ensued regarding property cleanup. Mr. Rush will review previous pictures from 633 Henry Street and come back to council with a recommendation for replacing the railing referred to earlier.

Mr. Rush reviewed the development of the EDA homes. Mr. Rush reviewed Phase II of Chatham Hill Drainage Project noting the next section could impact businesses. The STP had an influx of some bio media filters Thursday. The Scope of Work for the Cemetery has been advertised.

**CLOSED SESSION:** Pursuant to Code of Virginia, as amended, Section 2.2-3711 (A-7), upon motion of Ms. Spencer, seconded by Mr. Weaver and vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, Town Council entered into Closed Session for legal counsel for possible litigation. 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 5 AYES and 0 NOES. The Deputy Clerk polled the Council Members. Messrs Dr. Gates, Spencer, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

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Mayor

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Clerk