

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 July 6, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Tricia Spencer, Jim Barker, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter, Avery Cornett and Suzanne Jennings Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Deputy Clerk Samantha White; Town Attorney Mark Fenyk; Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols; Police Chief John Clair, Lieutenant Andrew Moss, Lieutenant Rusty Hamm; Economic Development Director Ken Heath, Economic Development Deputy Director Alexandra Veatch.

**ABSENT:** None

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:** Mr. Heath rendered the invocation. Police Chief Clair, Lt. Moss, and Lt. Hamm led the Pledge to the Flag.

Mayor Helms expressed his appreciation to Chief Clair, Lt. Moss, and Lt. Hamm for their planning and execution of those plans to keep the protests on Friday, July 3 well organized and safe for all those who were downtown that day. He also noted that he had heard many comments from citizens and visitors who were impressed with how well the day went. Mayor Helms went on to thank all the Police Officers who were there, Community and Economic Development Department, Fire/EMS staff, Public Works staff, and all other town staff members who helped in many ways. All council members agreed with Mayor Helms and expressed their appreciation, as well.

**VISITORS:** Joe Naff, Shannon Naff, CB Gwyn, Carolyn Cooper.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held June 15, 2020 were approved as written. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Weaver, Carter, Cornett and Jennings voted affirmatively.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Carter and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the Special Called meeting held June 18, 2020 were approved as written. Messrs Dr. Gates, Weaver, Cornett, Barker, Spencer, Jennings and Carter voted affirmatively.

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

**APPOINTMENT OF VICE MAYOR:** Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES, 0 NOES, and 1 ABSTENTION, Dr. Jim Gates was reappointed as Vice Mayor. Messrs Carter, Barker, Cornett, Weaver, Jennings and Spencer voted affirmatively.

**APPOINTMENT OF TOWN MANAGER:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Bill Rush was reappointed as Town Manager. Messrs Dr. Gates, Carter, Barker, Cornett, Weaver, Jennings and Spencer voted affirmatively.

**APPOINTMENT OF TOWN CLERK/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Cindy Stanley was reappointed as Town Clerk/Director of Finance. Messrs Dr. Gates, Carter, Barker, Cornett, Weaver, Jennings and Spencer voted affirmatively.

**APPOINTMENT OF POLICE CHIEF:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, John Clair was reappointed as Police Chief. Messrs Dr. Gates, Carter, Barker, Cornett, Weaver, Jennings and Spencer voted affirmatively.

**APPOINTMENT OF TOWN ATTORNEY:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Mark Fenyk was reappointed as Town Attorney. Messrs Dr. Gates Carter, Barker, Cornett, Weaver, Jennings and Spencer voted affirmatively.

Mr. Carter reported that District III had hired a Director and an announcement will come soon on who will be filling that position. Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 6 AYES, 0 NOES, and 1 ABSTENTION, Larry Carter was reappointed to serve as the Town of Marion representative on the District III Board.

Mr. Cornett requested the cost to the Town for the July 3 protests.

Mayor Helms reported that the town continues to follow the Governor of Virginia's guidelines regarding COVID-19. Mr. Helms will be meeting with Chilhowie representatives about use of the Bonham House for Tourism and Chamber of Commerce. Ron Thomason has retired from his position as Director of Smyth County Tourism. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Committee Assignments were approved for Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022.

Chief Clair distributed a draft document on Town of Marion permit processes for public gatherings and events. Chief Clair and Economic Development Director Ken Heath have been working on the policy and will continue to do so, seeking guidance from other agencies and municipalities.

Mr. Heath reported that the Henderson School has received Virginia Commission for the Arts Artists in Education Grant and the Creative Communities Partnership Grant. Mrs. Veatch is working with Virginia Tourism on a grant opportunity. USDA is considering additional funding of \$100,000 to the Town's RBEG Small Business Loan Pool program. Following COVID restrictions, no large scale events will be held downtown through the end of September. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Broad Street Cruise-Ins and Concerts on the fourth Fridays of July, August, and September will be held as scheduled. The VFW has postponed their Spirit of '45 event and may combine it with their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in October, dependent on COVID restrictions.

Mr. Rush expressed his appreciation to all Town staff who helped with protests held on July 3. Spring paving is complete. The Leak Detection program is continuing as water accountability rate is at 33%. Mr. Rush reviewed the option to purchase the Callen Drive property from the EDA. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Cornett and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Town of Marion Council will exercise the option on the purchase of the 60 acre parcel on Callen Drive for the purchase price of \$500,000. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the

Town Pool will not open for the 2020 season due to COVID restrictions in Phase III. Fall paving will be completed on streets in CIRP projects. The VDOT State of Good Repair application has been submitted.

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 6:47 pm.

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Mayor

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Deputy Clerk