

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 20, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Tricia Spencer, Suzanne Jennings, Bill Weaver, Larry Carter and Avery Cornett Council Members; Town Manager Bill Rush, Town Clerk Cindy Stanley; Town Attorney Mark Fenyk; Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols; Police Chief John Clair, Police Officer Harrison Wheeler, Police Officer Mason Wagoner; Purchasing Agent Billy Hamm and Economic Development Director Ken Heath.

**ABSENT:** None.

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG:** Mr. Heath rendered the invocation. Mayor Helms led the Pledge to the Flag.

**VISITORS:** Joe Naff, C. B. Gwyn and Cathy Cooper.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held June 30, 2020 were approved as written. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

**MINUTES:** Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held July 6, 2020 were approved as written. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Carter and Cornett voted affirmatively.

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

Mayor Helms read a letter of commendation for the Police Department on the recent rallies, from James Bangle.

Chief Clair introduced Police Officers Mason Wagoner and Harrison Wheeler, noting they recently graduated from the Police Academy.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS:** None.

Mr. Rush reviewed three Housing Authority Board members that need re-appointments, Malcom Brown, Don Wampler and Regina Roberts. These members have agreed to serve another term. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Malcolm Brown was reappointed to serve on the Marion Redevelopment Housing Authority Board. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Don Wampler was reappointed to serve on the Marion Redevelopment Housing Authority Board. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Regina Roberts was reappointed to serve on the Marion Redevelopment Housing Authority Board.

Mr. Carter noted District III met last week.

Mr. Cornett noted there is some controversy about process for downtown businesses to enforce the Governor's Executive Order #63 in regards to people with medical issues preventing them from wearing masks. Mr. Heath noted there are provisions for those with disabilities, such as curbside service. Mr. Fenyk noted he can further research for Mr. Cornett.

Mayor Helms reported a Virginia General Assembly special session will be held in August and hopefully some more directives will be addressed regarding the concern of the mask mandate. He noted we are trying to follow the Governor's orders. Mayor Helms attended a Tourism meeting and a recommendation was made to amend the agreement. This recommendation is on the agenda for tomorrow's meeting of the Smyth 12.

Mr. Fenyk reported a rate increase request has been submitted by the natural gas company to the State Corporation Commission.

Mayor Helms noted the local Comcast offices have closed permanently. Mr. Rush noted the old franchise agreement expired in 2016 and there is a clause stating the old one remains in effect until a new one is written. Mr. Rush noted there is a local office, however no customer services are offered.

**ACCOUNTS:** Ms. Stanley noted there are 5 community agencies that remain excluded from the regular accounts list. Discussion ensued regarding the operational status of these agencies. Mr. Rush noted meals tax reduction of approximately 14% this month and to add these 5 in for payment would be approximately \$7,500. Upon motion of Mr. Cornett, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the current accounts payable, excluding those 5 agencies, will be considered for payment. Discussion ensued. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the current accounts payable were approved for payment as submitted in the amount of \$612,775.34. Messrs Dr. Gates, Barker, Spencer, Jennings, Weaver, Cornett and Carter voted affirmatively. Upon motion of Ms. Spencer, seconded by Dr. Gates, a motion was made to pay the Lincoln Theatre, Song of the Mountains and Library. Discussion ensued. Upon a revised motion of Ms. Spencer, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the July monthly payment will be made to the Lincoln Theatre and the Song of the Mountains for \$2,083.33 each, which is the new monthly budgeted amount for 2020-2021.

Chief Clair reported K-9 Officer Cooper will be retiring. A replacement will be considered later. Chief Clair reviewed a Demonstration, Parades and Processions Permits General Guidelines. The format was developed using ACLU guidelines and has been reviewed by our current insurance provider. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Demonstration, Parades and Processions Permits General Guidelines was accepted.

Mr. Heath reviewed a \$500 grant for the Farmers Market, a \$10,000 grant from Virginia Tourism and a \$100,000 grant from USDA.

Mr. Rush noted a night leak study will begin Sunday.

Upon motion, duly seconded and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm.

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Mayor

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Clerk