

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2017
6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held by City Council on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. over which Mayor Ashley Brady presided. Council members Ralph Atkinson, Ronald Atkinson, Michael Baker, Joseph Frazier, Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt and Tassie Lewis were present. Also present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Lakesha Shannon, City Attorney James Brogdon, Chief Dwayne Tennie and Chief Trey Cooper.

Mayor Ashley Brady called the meeting to order and Pastor Denley Caughman gave the opening prayer. Mr. Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Brady welcomed citizens, guests and the press (Hometown TV 8, WBTW News, and WMBF News).

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on October 10, 2017. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; the motion carried.

Mr. Richard Moody with the City of Marion Recreation Department was named the *October Employee of the Month*. Mayor Brady stated that Mr. Moody recently transferred from the Sanitation Department to his new position, and he is doing a fantastic job keeping the recreational facilities clean.

Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt made a motion to reappoint Ms. Betty Eskridge and Ms. Arnetha Daymond to the Tree Commission for a 2-year term. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; the motion carried.

Mayor Ashley Brady stated that the Planning Commission recently held a meeting to discuss name changes for Eutaw Street Extension and Simmons Street, and residents

of those streets were in attendance. The Planning Commission recommends that City Council consider changing Eutaw Street Extension to Clifton Street, and Simmons Street to Tomlin Street. ***Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt made a motion to approve the street name changes as recommended by the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; the motion carried.***

Mayor Brady explained that the City presently has a 2% variance for local businesses on any bids received for items less than \$10,000. He stated that a proposed amendment to Section 1-5030 of the current ordinance would allow for a 5% variance for local businesses. ***Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt made a motion to approve first reading of Ordinance 17-07 – An Ordinance to Amend Section 1-5030(4) of the Code of Ordinance. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; the motion carried.***

Mayor Brady stated that bids were advertised for fire department breathing apparatus. One bid was received from Newton's Fire & Safety Equipment for \$287, 555.40. He stated that a grant was received to purchase the equipment, and the City would have to provide matching funds at 5% of \$14,377. The matching funds are already included in this fiscal year's budget. Mayor Brady noted that the life expectancy of this equipment is 15 years. ***Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to approve the bid for the fire breathing apparatus. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt; the motion carried.***

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Ammons reported that the City has received a \$190,000 grant from SCDOT to repair driveways, sidewalks, street signs, and drainage improvements on Cherokee Street and the Harmon Park area.

Mr. Ammons stated that the City has received some calls regarding security issues at the city parks. He provided Council with a proposal to have set hours for parking and operating hours for the city parks. Mr. Ammons stated that there have been issues with cars being parked overnight at the parks. He suggested putting up signage in these areas which state no overnight parking. Mr. Ammons stated that surveillance cameras will be installed at the parks for security within the next 30 days. He asked that Council consider the proposal of set hours and signage at the parks. Councilman Michael Baker requested that this item be tabled for discussion at next month's council meeting.

Mr. Ammons reported that garbage pickup will be delayed by one day due to the Thanksgiving Holiday schedule. He also stated that commercial dumpster pickup will be delayed by one day during the week of Christmas. He noted that city offices will be closed on November 23 – 24 to observe Thanksgiving and December 22 – 26 to observe Christmas.

Mr. Ammons stated that he has information regarding the upcoming UNCF Gala on December 1st, and asked that councilmembers advise him if they wish to attend.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Mayor Brady introduced Attorney James Brogdon who will serve as City Attorney until Attorney Jim Brogdon returns from leave. Mr. Brogdon had no update at this time.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Brady stated that Departmental Reports were included in the Council packets.

DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FOR COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Brady stated that city employees are currently decorating the downtown area for the Christmas Holidays. He commended these employees for their hard work and long hours.

Mayor Brady stated that Council has been provided with a copy of the job description for the Public Works Director position. He commented that Director Winkie Fore is doing a great job of taking care of things around the city.

Mayor Brady stated that Thomas Mobile Home Park has been sold and the new owner is in the process of completing the necessary paperwork. The owner will contact Mr. Ammons with his plans once everything is finalized. The owner has been advised that the current homes would need to be removed as they are inhabitable. Any new homes placed on the lots will have to meet the current flood zone elevation and city building codes.

Mayor Brady stated that the owner of the old Coastal Oil building on Liberty Street has cleaned up the property after being contacted by the City.

Mayor Brady stated that he Mr. Ammons met with the superintendent of the new subdivision on Bluff Street regarding the flooding issues on Marshall Street. He stated that the developer has agreed to help fund a project to alleviate the ponding issue behind the homes on Marshall Street. He stated that the developer would cover the costs of the project and the city would provide the man hours.

Mayor Brady stated that the City of Marion will be distributing Christmas food boxes in December in partnership with the Department of Social Services. He asked that names of families in need be provided to city staff, as well as any contributions to this effort. The cost to prepare each box is \$40.

Councilman Joseph Frazier questioned why the City is helping with the project to correct flooding issues in the new subdivision since it is private property. He stated that taxpayer's money should not be spent to help a private enterprise. Mayor Brady commented that the majority of the water issues are coming from the streets, and the City is working to help solve the problem.

Councilman Michael Baker stated that Mr. Ammons addressed all his issues during the month.

Councilman Joseph Frazier had no additional comments.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson stated that Mr. Ammons addressed all his issues during the month.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson had no update.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis stated that The Fox84 Initiative for Boys will host a program on Friday, November 17th, at 5:00pm at Grice's Recreation Center. This event is for males ages 12-45, and public officials are invited to attend.

Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt commented on the discussion regarding the new subdivision on Bluff Street. He stated that the housing in this community has been decimated due to recent storms, and many people are becoming ill because of mold underneath their homes. He stated that Council continues to struggle with this discussion each month when it should be viewed as an effort to help citizens obtain better homes. Mayor Pro-tem Hunt noted that the developer has agreed to help alleviate the water issues on Marshall Street. He asked that Council give the process a chance, as the Mayor is making every effort he can to help the situation. He again asked that the pettiness be put aside, and the focus put on the underprivileged citizens that are working to own a home.

Councilman Joseph Frazier commented that he understands that citizens need homes; however, he is questioning the use of taxpayer money to help a private enterprise.

Mayor Brady requested to move the public comments before executive session.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Lillian Wilson presented questions and concerns regarding the flooding behind homes on Marshall Street due to the construction of the new subdivision on Bluff

Street. She stated that the residents of Marshall Street are not opposed to progress in the City of Marion; however, they are greatly concerned about the impact on their homes. She stated that each time it rains their backyards are flooded with standing water. She stated that this issue never occurred before the development began, with the exception of Hurricane Matthew. She asked if the retention pond beside the homes would be fenced in, as it is a safety concern. She also asked what would happen if the pond overflows, and if there would be a retaining wall. Finally, she asked what the guidelines are for future tenants.

Mr. Ammons commented that the retention pond will be fenced in, as required by city ordinance. He stated that a safeguard is built into the pond and any overflow would drain into the state's spillway system. Mr. Ammons stated that there is an existing 10 foot storm water system and catch basins at the back of the property which were installed about 70 years ago. He stated that according to the Public Works Department foreman, this system was stopped up when checked about 3 years ago and they have been unable to fix it. Mr. Ammons stated that the City's proposal is to bypass the old storm water system between the property lines of Marshall Street and the new development. He stated that an agreement for easement will have to be signed by both property owners for the developer to maintain the pipes and catch basins they install. The City will have the expense of the labor. Mayor Brady added that this is a collaborative effort, and these actions are taking care of a problem the City already had.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt made a motion to go into executive session to discuss matters relating to a proposed contract with the public defender, a personnel matter relating to the Public Works Department, and an Employee Agreement. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; the motion carried.

POSSIBLE ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

Returning from executive session, ***Councilman Ronald Atkinson made a motion to return to regular session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; the motion carried.***

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to allow the Mayor to negotiate with the Public Defender's office to provide services for the City court. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further discussion, Mayor Ashley Brady adjourned the meeting at 7:17 pm.

Mayor Ashley Brady

City Clerk Lakesha Y. Shannon

Taped: November 14, 2017