

MINUTES
MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CONFERENCE CALL / SHANNON WILKERSON GYM
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020 AT 6:30 P.M.

MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Ashley Brady	Councilman Joseph Frazier
Councilwoman Tassie Lewis	Councilman Ronald Atkinson
Councilman Ralph Atkinson	Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt
Councilman Michael Baker	

STAFF PRESENT:

Alan Ammons, City Administrator	Tony Flowers, Police Chief
Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk	Trey Cooper, Fire Chief
Patricia Brown, City Treasurer	
James Brogdon, City Attorney	

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ashley Brady.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor led pledge and prayer.

3. WELCOME CITIZENS, GUESTS & PRESS – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

Mayor Ashley Brady welcomed the attendee's online.

4. APPROVE MINUTES – REGULAR MEETING –JULY 14, 2020 & SPECIAL MEETING – JULY 6, 2020

A motion was made by Councilman Joseph Frazier, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried.

5. **JULY EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY**

June Employee of the Month is Christian Tisdale. Mayor stated that Christian has been with the fire department for a number of years. He has done a great job. We thank you for what you are doing for the City of Marion.

6. **HMRA – Update – STEPHANIE RIZZO**

Mayor stated that Stephanie Rizzo was going to give an update through call in, but apparently she's not on so we are going to move to item number six.

7. **BIDS ON LED SIGN**

Mayor mentioned that we had budgeted replacing the sign up on Bobby Gerald Parkway to LED visual. We had put in our budget for the hospitality tax \$35,000.00 to replace both sides of that sign with visual. It was put out to bid. A group out of Lake City; Watchfire was the low bidder and we have two different size of pixels 8mm and 10mm. The smaller the size of the pixel the better quality of the picture so the Mayor's suggestion is to go with Signs Ltd of Lake City 8mm sign at \$27,420.00, and that's double sided stated the Mayor. ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier.*** A brief discussion was held. The motion carried.

8. **BIDS ON TENNIS COURT**

Mayor stated that as most know our tennis court and track field were innovated with water and have since replaced the sand clay on track field and grated it out. The one last item to be repaired is the tennis court.

We've received some FEMA funding for those repairs. This is not us spending our money, this is FEMA money. We put it out to bid and we have four bids. A group out of Sullivan's Island came in and low bid at \$23,772.00 and that's for resurfacing the tennis court. Mayor also stated that at the bottom of the sheet are double asterisks and whoever it's awarded to we have got to get FEMA's approval on it. Mayor made mention "you may ask why," he responded FEMA wants to tear it up and start all over. The crowd that we got to come and look at it said no just need some resurfacing it so we will be spending less money. So if we approve item number two Carolina Sport Surfaces we still got to get approval from FEMA. Mayor does not anticipate any changes or challenges. ***A motion was made to accept bid \$23,772.00 Carolina Sport by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier.*** The motion carried.

9. **AUDITOR'S AGREEMENT**

This is an agreement we have with Kenneth Cobb and Company. They have been our auditor for a number of years. Brief discussion question was discussed on tape. ***A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to accept auditor's agreement letter dated August 3.*** The motion carried.

10. **CHIEF FLOWERS - UPDATE**

Chief Tony Flowers gave update. He also mentioned shooting at Shell station and elaborated that it was gang related. Arrest have been made and they are still working with sled.

Question was brought up about Jones Ave and brief discussion went on about that as well. Chief elaborated on the specifics. Brief discussion more from Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, and other Councilmembers about the same location of concern that Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt had mentioned in his discussion.

11. REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL – CANDICE TAYLOR – MARION FITNESS GROUP (CD JOYNER ROOM)

Candice Tyler represented Marion Fitness Group and stated that the group started out at Watsonia then moved into classroom at CD Joyner. March 17 the pandemic occurred and they listened to CDC guidelines and stopped. Candice went on to plead her case concerning how safe they will be if they are let back in the room at CD Joyner. She also explained that they will follow all guidelines. Mayor concluded that Council will be in touch and see what they can do.

12. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

CTC Projects – Update

Mr. Ammons reported that we were successful in getting CTC funding for Huggins from Main St. to Bobby L. Davis Blvd, and we've been approved for Museum Drive. Mayor mentioned that they have started doing work this week as far as drainage. Mr. Ammons mentioned that we have had stormwater problems in the past. They are replacing that line all the way across the property. Dozier St. was discussed and was replaced in the past.

HMGP

On the Hazard Mitigation Grant that was discussed last month. Mr. Ammons mentioned we have had several meetings, and so everyone will know where we are at now. Mr. Ammons met with County Administrator Mr. Harper, also engineering firm online. We are going to submit a grant for the entire County; Marion, Mullins, Sellers, Nichols had stuff coming from Hurricane Matthew's. That is to be incorporated into the entire County plan. They have agreed to survey the entire City. We have a lot of pictures of bad places and that's one thing they need any pictures or documentation. The two main things are Catfish and Smith Swamp and needs a lot of attention. Senator Williams feels really strongly. It probably anywhere from about \$600,000.00 to \$800,000.00 in engineering studies. Then we can go after CDBG grant for repairs that we need.

Stormwater Grant

If you remember after Hurricane Florence we had to use A.C. Tollison Gym and Shannon Wilkerson. A.C. Tollison Gym we had Citizens from all over the County, and back then we decided we'd apply for generators. In the packets what we have list of two generators. What we need is for Council's approval. 75% is going to be from Federal assistance and the other 25% we are going to have to pick up. The generated amount here for A.C. Tollison Gym is \$ 68,250.00 and the grant is only going to cover \$ 51,187.50, and so we need to match \$ 17,063.00. Shannon Wilkerson is a bigger facility and requires a bigger generator at \$89,250.00 and 75% is \$66,937.50 our percent that we'd have to come up with is \$ 22,313.00. We are at the stage now that we have to make a commitment that if we get money we are going to be able to provide the match. ***A motion was made by Councilman***

Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt that we fund both the AC Tollison and Shannon Wilkerson as presented by the Administrator. The motion carried.

Miscellaneous

13. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney mentioned that Mr. Ammons handed him some papers that where served on the City where someone complained. He stated that it looks to be incident that occurred in July of 2018. It was actually the Sheriff's department. Attorney just wanted to make aware.

14. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady: Mayor mentioned that we are continuing to work on cleaning Catfish behind Blumenthal. We have installed five or six benches they are being utilized by individual for fishing activities. We have taken our mini mulcher to clean up all that area. We are going to go across 76 to behind/beside Thomas Trailer Park and put more benches and so that will be more recreational activity in that area as far as Catfish.

We did meet with Tim Harper and Kent on Catfish and DNR had allocated \$30,000.00 for us to use mitigation to clean it and we are going to use \$30,000.00 by a gentleman somewhere in the dynamites. He had to return home but \$30,000.00. It's not going to solve everything, but it's a start. Randy Brown along with some of the guys from the County; last week, actually took track hoe to a sight (behind English Park) that they have been trying to get into and use track hoe to bust it up. They were not successful

because they couldn't get close enough to the edge without tipping over a \$300,000.00 track hoe. We are going to work on doing the blasting for it though.

We are still working on Congressman Tom Rice as far as finding funding. Have met with Kent and Tim with that. Mayor mentioned every time he meets with someone whether it be Kent or Congressman, DNR, County we talk about Catfish Creek and Smith Swamp. That's why we are working on that Hazard Mitigation grant, and if we get that stormwater plan then we can go after that big money. Mayor stated that we have to spend a little bit of money so we can go after big grants such as CDBG grant, and fix up somethings whether it be Catfish or other issues in town.

Chief Flowers gave us the update on shootings and that's very tragic and we do not need that happenings in the City of Marion. Mayor stated that he was on vacation that particular night, but was notified as soon as he could about what happened the next morning. Mayor stated that he got up with Alan and Chief and they brought him up to speed, and said that they have already identified all the shooters. We do need to make sure our officers to understand that we are not going to tolerate congregation of individuals they need to go on down the road somewhere else that this will not be tolerated in the City of Marion. We are working on that and in doing so Mayor, Alan, Chief Flowers, Bishop Blue, Adam Works had a conversation for about an hour or two to discuss what can we do as a City, and how we can get the Church involved. If you see something say something. The Wednesday after Council meeting or Thursday will be the

meeting with the above mentioned names and if anyone would like to be in the plans everyone is more than welcome.

Mayor also met with Sheriff and Tim again regarding these shootings; and they are not just in Marion, it's happening in Mullins, Rains, and Marion and unfortunately it's the same group. We just got to figure out what we can do to coordinate with all of our law enforcement officers to rain this in. This is not something we want in our area. We are in this together.

Mayor stated that another things we did last week at the end of Phillips and Pickens at Rosewood public housing. There was a lot that was over grown and we took our mini excavator with mulching head and cleaned that area up pretty good. We are having a new LED lighting installed in that area, and that's just to keep from some of the neighbors from talking because there is a lot activity that hangs up in that area. We are not going to say that's the cure of it but at least we are trying to clean off that little section and hopefully that will help with that.

St. John Church had a great food give away last week and appreciate the opportunity to be there and help them out on that. Mayor mentioned that he thinks they are working on another and Rev. Hemingway. Councilman Baker mentioned that it will be on the 21st and later in the evening about 6:00. Mayor stated that if Councilman would let us know we'd come by and help pass out.

The hospital will have free COVID-19 testing Friday after council meeting. Anyone who would like to be tested and are not feeling well they will be having those as well.

Public Works is still cutting grass and trying to catch up with these nuisances with cutting grass. The rain needs to stop so the grass can stop growing.

Councilman Michael Baker: Councilman Michael Baker stated that St. John in collaboration with Rev. Hemingway was able to give out 500 boxes of food at St. John last Friday. Councilman Baker also mentioned they have the pleasure to do it again on the 21st so if anyone would like to come out and help. Mayor was there from start of it which was about 10:30 and only last about a couple hours. Also they gave boxes to the sick and shut in, those who were not able to come out. Fire Department and Police Department were very helpful.

Councilman Joseph Frazier: Councilman Joseph Frazier mentioned speaking about testing. Councilman said that he was at the County meeting and they said that they are going to be doing it every Friday. Mayor mentioned that, that's something we can get on our signage as well. Councilman said it needs to be publicized because he doesn't know how folks going to know if they don't. Councilman asked what happened to that down there he said. The grass is growing up and the kids can't get down there and he sees that there is a chain on the gate or something. Mr. Ammons said the gate always stays chained because of the landfill. Councilman stated that he is not talking about the landfill part. Mr. Ammons stated that he will get them to clean it up. Brief discussion more concerning the cable on tape.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson: Councilman Ronald Atkinson stated he don't have anything.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis: Councilwoman Tassie Lewis stated that in regards to all of the shooting initially Rosewood and Middleton St, (Councilwoman added she was just speaking in the history.)She contacted Alan, and Councilmembers that she could contact and shared her vision open to reach someone and curb the crime in the City. We met with Council and Clergy here before, and she said she didn't see a whole lot forwardness from that. She said she do believe in prayer and so say that she is a Christian woman, believe in the Lord and try's to do the right thing. She felt that there was still a gap there between Clergy and community. With this crime there has got to be an additional approach. Councilwoman says that because many of the kids or grownups are not going to any of these Pastors they are going to other gang members. She mentioned that she is not saying they do not have a relationship with the Lord because she replied that she doesn't know, but they are not numbers of Bishop Blue's church or Pastor Adam Works, or St. John so her approach would be something at the Rec field. It wouldn't have to be a large crowd, but us taking a visible stand with a prayer and doing something a little different. There are some children that are just lost and some of them may never be found, but it's worth taking an approach and doing something different. We are not going to get those kids at an assembly with the Pastors they may not come today but are probably more apt to come today but they may show up. Councilwoman said she's looking at 22nd which is Saturday at

Grice's field are welcome or donate. We are going to practice social distancing, and are not going to be out there that long. Mayor stated that it sounds good and we will do what we need to do to help. Councilwoman said starts 4:00 p.m.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson: Councilman Ralph Atkinson stated that he didn't have anything.

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt: Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hun stated that to reiterate what Councilwoman Tassie Lewis said obviously we have all been bombarded with complaints, and so it's nobody specific specially his good friend Tony at the Police department. Mayor Pro Tem stated that we as a body have the ability to move on an Ordinance that would prohibit people from loitering in our district and be strictly enforced because "I know for a fact that loitering causes problems," he said. When you look at a person who has a club or a bar they have a responsibility of keeping the parking lot clear of loitering. If anyone knows anything about kids, they want to sit in the parking lot and cause trouble. Mrs. Lewis is saying and what I'm getting from her is that we can pray, but we have got to take some action that we have not taken before. That maybe a more aggressive approach in keeping our city safe, because if the people that are attacking our City are taking a more aggressive approach towards us, and the only way we can balance it out is to take an aggressive scants when it comes to loitering in our City. When it's something that's needed to make the general public to feel more safe, and as our responsibility to provide public safety. No one's here to put

any blame or put anyone down. Everyone is here for the same cause to find a better way to find our citizens to feel safe to go to the store, to walk down street, because what if someone's mother, child get killed and it's not going to be any of our fought but we have a duty to put in our guidelines that would better protect our citizen's, and I think we as a body are able to do that. Especially when Councilwoman Lewis has been reaching out. We got to help her in her district just like we would ask help all of us in our districts. We have helped each other's to see our mission's through. We all should be a part of it whether we feel like we need to be a part of it or not.

15. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to enter into Executive Session to speak on Solid Waste Agreement, Personnel Matter-Police Department, and Employee Agreement.

16. **POSSIBLE ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS**

A motion was made to come out of Executive Session back to Regular Session by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier.

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to accept the Employee Agreement. The motion carried.

17. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker. The motion carried.

Mayor Ashley Brady

Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk
Taped: August 11, 2020