

MINUTES
MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL
TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2020; 6:30 P.M.

MAYOR/COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

STAFF PRESENT:

Alan Ammons, City Administrator	Jackie Yates, Assistant Fire Chief
Ainsley Sanders, City Clerk	Tony Flowers, Chief of Police
Cliff Wilbanks, Recreation Director	
Patricia Brown, Treasurer	
*James Brogdon, City Attorney (Absent) *	

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

Mayor Ashley Brady called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed all guest.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Denley Caughman led the Opening Prayer, and Mr. Alan Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. WELCOME CITIZENS, GUEST AND PRESS

Mayor Ashley Brady welcomed citizens, guests and the press. Mayor Ashley Brady encouraged the guest watching on TV to come out to Council Meeting as well.

4. APPROVE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 10, 2019

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, to approve minutes from December 10, 2019. The motion carries unanimously.

5. JANUARY EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – MAYOR ASHLEY BRADY

E.C. Baker of the Public Works Department was named *January Employee of the Month*. Mr. E.C. is the gentleman that drives the Grapple truck. He does a fantastic job running the Grapple truck, stated the Mayor. Mayor stated that he is not present but we will make sure that he gets his gift and tell him how proud of him we are and working hard for the City of Marion.

6. AUDIT REPORT

Mrs. Brenda Jackson from Kenneth Cobb & Company presented their Audit Report for the City of Marion. She encouraged Council to stop her at any point if there were any questions, and if after the reviewed any questions pop up later time, if Mrs. Patricia cannot answer them then she will be happy to. The City received a clean opinion from the Auditor which is the best that can be received. The City has received this for many years and Mrs. Brenda stated that she don't see no reason that we won't continue to receive that. This year there is a new line added called the Business Type Activity and that was because of the creation of the stormwater. It was created right at the end of the year so really the only activity is the Vacuum truck and the camera, and another piece of equipment and a truck stated the Auditor. The fee didn't start until the current year. It is called

the Business Type Activity because it is to be operated like a business. The fees are to support it and it's not supported by taxes, or other fees, but are supported by the fees that are generated from the citizens. Mrs. Brenda stated the first item that was looked at was cash for June 30, 2019 at \$4.7 million and it's slightly up from the prior year. The City also has some restricted cash which is about middle ways the middle section and it totaled \$ 923,000.00 over all with the two grouped together we were down about \$246 thousand this was largely because we did purchase the grapple truck and had to borrow from ourselves rather than going out and borrowing from the banks or another institution. Mrs. Brenda said that we had total fixed assets of \$ 8,000,612.00 which is up one hundred and twelve thousand from the prior year. During the year June 30, 2019, Brenda said that we added several trucks such as the grapple truck and the new fire truck. The total assets for that was \$15,293,000 which is up by one hundred and ninety five thousand from the prior year. Mrs. Brenda stated that the next section which is the liabilities and a total of liabilities of \$ 9,566,000.00. She went on to state that net is shown in three categories at the bottom invest in Capital Assets and it is basically the net of all of the fixed assets net of depreciation and net of the debt totaled at \$8,037,000.00 which is very comparable to the prior year. Mrs. Jackson stated that the next section restricted net position. This include the Hospitality Tax, Housing Rehab Funds, Drug Fund, and Cemetery Funds. The net is unrestricted and that is where we see the negative such as the General Funds and so forth. She went on to say the Modified Accrued which is the short term. This one does not have the Long Term Assets or all that Long Term Debt. She went on to explain the debt added debt was \$ 349,000.00 for fire truck and \$ 250,000 for the vacuum truck. She went on to say a lot of your numbers are the same but what she would like to point out is the bottom fund equity or fund balances this is the net equity or the health of your General Fund. Unassigned fund balance for

the General Fund was \$ 5,315,000.00 and was at \$ 5,320,000.00 in the prior year. So it pretty much breaks even but the City was planning on \$ 552,000.00 and so the City had planned on having a deficit of \$ 552,000.00 but instead had a deficit of \$ 5,000.00 so a lot of thing went right. Mayor mentioned just for clarification we were going to spend \$ 552,000.00 but instead we spent \$ 5,000.00. He stated that hats off to our departments for doing a fantastic job with the managing the budget and Mrs. Patricia for keeping us straight. Mrs. Brenda went on to say that a couple more fund balance numbers there are Hospitality Tax fund had a balance of \$ 369,441.00 of course it is shown in the restricted section because you have laws and regulations that tell you how those funds can be spent, and then other Governmental Funds there have a total of \$ 64,000.00 and those are the restricted funds like for the Housing Rehab, Drug Funds and Cemetery Fund. She also stated that on page 17 was the income statement. Total revenue of \$ 5,891,000.00 expenditures of \$ 6,171,000.00, and transfers in which included debt proceeds to purchase the Fire truck of 272 which net \$7,500.00 so this is where we talked about where you're not using as much of your fund balance. Looking back it wasn't one thing that you can look at and say ok this is why we didn't spend the \$ 500,000.00 it was across the board had a lot of departments where we didn't spend something we had planned on spending. Business License came better than you expected, Sanitation collections and you have made some changes there by cutting out some things in the landfill and got a rebate from them. Grass cutting fee's brought in more money. Sold some land and equipment, and then also a lot of the departments just had overall savings. If you would look in the back there is a page for each department, and you can see what they spent. If you look at the grand total for instance the Fire Department they had savings of \$ 23,000.00, the Recreation Department they had savings of \$ 67,000.00, Public Works had saving of \$ 174,000.00, so there is a lot of areas

that play into this overall savings of \$ 552,000.00. Those detail pages can be found on pages 60-73 if you want to take a look at those pages later on. Mrs. Brenda then stated she would just like to mention that there is another letter in the accordance to the Government Auditing Standards and we have two findings in there that we talked about last year and we have talked about for several years Preparation of the Financial Statements and Segregation of Duty, and you do have a management letter this year which points out a couple of other little things. Basically we have three levels of findings. You have material weakness, which says that your financial statement could be materially misstated, that's the worst finding, didn't have anything like that. Significant Deficiency, which are things that you need to be aware of because they could cause something to go wrong. Next is the controlled deficiencies, or other matters that is what goes in the management letter. These are just small things that you need to be aware of and that management needs to address. One item was collateralization at the bank. Investments and Deposits at the bank should be either secured by FDIC insurance or some type of security that has been pledged by the bank. Normally when you have these investments with your security company they will keep CD's at different banks and keep them under FDIC limits apparently they got a good rate and they got aggressive and decided they would put more money in that one bank well it put it above the FDIC limit so for a time period you had some money that wasn't secured. Mrs. Brenda later said as soon as she found out about it Mrs. Brown got on the phone with financial institution and it has been taken care of, and they have been told not to let this happen again. Mrs. Brenda made mention that we have talked about how that can be monitored and how not to let that happen again. The other item was deposit delays which looks like some funds were being collected with some deposit delays and not being deposited regularly and just being held. Her suggestion was

to enforce the policy if it's a dollar limit or time frame and make sure they are aware of it and that it is enforced. Mayor stated that it has already been addressed and that there is a dollar limit of \$50 and anything over it goes in the bank the next day and is deposited. Mrs. Jackson pointed out that it cuts down on thief and limits the amount that you can lose. Mrs. Jackson thanked Council. ***A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, to set the audit to report as presented tonight from Mrs. Brenda with Kenneth Cobb and Company.*** Mayor stated that he would like to commend Mrs. Patricia and all of the department heads for fantastic year we have had, for watching the budget, doing what we had to do. Mayor also said he wants to challenge everyone that if you need it get it, if you don't, don't spend it if you don't have to. Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt said that he also would like to say that he is very proud and supportive of all the efforts that the City Clerks, Mayor and everybody is taking because it is very important when you see so many Cities going under. We are a very small City and some people say we struggle but we've been able to work together without issues and we've been very involved to keep our City in a position that we are strong enough at least have privacy. We struggle to be a municipality sometimes, but we've fought for many hundreds of years to be this municipality and it is a good thing that we have the leadership to keep insuring that we have that great. Mayor Pro Tem applaud the employees of our City and the leadership. The motion carries.

7. COMPUTER UPGRADES POLICE DEPARTMENT AND CITY HALL

Mayor stated that what is happening is that all of our computer systems are using Microsoft Windows 7 as the operating system, and at the end of last this year Microsoft is no longer supporting the security features of that operating system so we are having to upgrade not only at City Hall but at the Police

Department, anybody that is running Windows 7 is having to upgrade the computer systems especially at the Police Department because it is a SLED mandate that says we can't use Windows 7 anymore. The estimated cost to do all this is going to be about \$30,000.00. Mayor stated that we are going to start at the Police Department first because there are certain vendors that we have to use for the Police Department that are certified by SLED because of the sensitivity of the data. Mayor stated that what we need to do is if we can make motion for Mrs. Patricia to find the money in the budget so the different departments can make this upgrade to our computer systems. Mayor stated that we have no choice we have to do it. ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker to allow the Mayor and Patricia and Financial Departments to find the funding necessary so that we can upgrade our commute system to an adequate system that will support what the Federal Government has mandate.*** The motion carries.

8. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

o LED Streetlights

Mr. Ammons stated that he contacted Duke Energy and they are doing an audit of what we have and they reported back not long ago how many street lights that we had. Mr. Ammons stated that it's just an estimate and Council can look at it budget time and see if it is something that we would like to pursue it. He just wanted to bring it to the attention that Duke is saying that we are looking at \$11,000.00 up front one time cost. The increase per month will be about a \$600 increase per month. The upfront cost will be \$11,000.00 up front and that will upgrade every street light in the City of Marion and some are doing it all at one time and some are faze it over one year or two year. Mr. Ammons stated also that anything that we are replacing are going to the LED lighting. He mentioned the

section that we did on Jones Ave, and some other places like Strawberry St. we are going to be doing in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Ammons stated that there may be some areas that we may actually have maybe three lights and may not need but two lights, and we could actually save.

- Police Department Sidewalks

Another thing Mr. Ammons stated was the front walk way and we are having some deterioration on the foundation on that concrete sidewalk and it is starting to settle. We did have a little accident and had a contractor give an estimate and it is about \$6,000.00 so what we will do is bid it out and bring the bids back to you next month. He stated that he would get with Mrs. Gray and get the information back next month.

- Miscellaneous

Mr. Ammons stated that the last thing he wanted to bring up was our LED lighting for the City. He also stated that we are 95% complete. They are kind of working on a punch list now. The lighting that they may have missed or something that needs a little extra attention. They were here last week and got the Recreation and the Recreation was the one with the most on the punch list and Mr. Ammons thinks they have gotten most of that taken care of, so probably by next month we should be 100% complete. Finally there was a brief discussion between Councilman Ralph Atkinson and Mr. Ammons to further discuss the LED contract and savings.

9. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Mayor stated that our Attorney had scheduling conflict and he had to be in South Georgia at 8:00 a.m. the next morning of the meeting for a deposition and the Judge would not let him out of the deposition.

10. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady: The biggest thing we have dealt with in the last week or so which is not unusual to our Council nor to our Citizens is our trash service. Prior to Christmas stated the Mayor we had made arrangements to have two containers at our disposal so that we could take care of boxes and picking up the trash that people put out after Christmas. So Mayor stated that we were prepared then after Christmas; however, trash services got delayed. AWS, Jim Heustess and his contractor had a truck to go down, and another truck got totaled in an accident, and so he lost two trucks in two days. Also a combination of the landfill being closed for the Christmas Holiday and a day for the New Year's Day they did get behind. Mayor also mentioned that he and Mr. Alan were in constant contact with him on a daily basis finding out where we were at and what we are going to do to get this trash picked up. We were not happy with the services stated the Mayor, and he also said that he was getting phone calls and he was sure Council were as well. Mayor stated that what happened was they relayed the information to Mr. Heustess that we were not happy with the services. Mr. Heustess assured us that he was doing everything that he could to do that, but he had to go to Cleveland Ohio to rent two trash trucks when those two trash trucks went down. Mayor stated so if we see the red looking trucks those are the ones they had to get to do the service. Now what the City was doing, mentioned Mayor Brady we we're going around and picking up with our guys bags beside the carts and at least trying to take a bag or two out of the top of the cart's so that we could at least close down the lid, because Mayor said you nor I would like to see garbage on the side of the road nor a dog getting in it. Mayor stated hats off to the guys that work Public Works because they will do anything that they ask them to do. Mayor also mentioned that one night AWS was picking up trash of one of our employees Mr. Jackie Yates at 11:48 at night. Mayor stated that as of last Friday

they got back on schedule and we hope they stay on schedule. Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt elaborated on having a lot of people calling him about the garbage as well and he stated that it is important that the Citizens know that we will do everything necessary to make sure that garbage is picked up and taken care of. He also stated that it's just a business thing where company it can get behind but a City that is as big as ours is not going to be acceptable to the public for very long, and if they want to be in the garbage business they have to have that back up plan in place. He also stated that those things are going to happen sometimes and hopefully it will never happen again.

Mayor mentioned Mrs. Marilyn Woodberry is here from Bethel Church and we helped her with some contributions with the back to School program and she wanted Mayor to know and relay that she has been under the weather and could not get on the agenda but she wants to thank the Council for everything that they have done and appreciate everything that is done for the community.

Mayor said when you all came in you saw the boat outside well we are being prepared in the City in case we have flooding events again. Mayor stated that it was presented the high water rescue trucks and the Humvee's but there is always components to how are we going to get them out of the water, so the Fire Department and Rescue Squad were able to secure a grant and the grant paid for the boat that you see outside and the side by side UT vehicle. He mentioned that all that equipment that you see outside cost \$78,000.00 and we received USDA grant for 55% of that \$78,000.00 and the Rescue Squad with their funding picked up the other 45% so everything that is outside is paid for and did not cost the City of Marion a dime. Mayor stated hats off to the Rescue Squad for all that they do and taking care of the citizens.

Mayor stated that we got slowed down with the stormwater project we have been working on, because it has been raining so. Had to pull off of Strawberry Street because it got a too wet, but we will be back over there as soon as it dries up. Mayor said we were working on a project on Ashley Ave. and it got to wet also.

Mayor wants to remind of a few announcements that the Monday after the Council meeting was Martin Luther King Day and so he stated that we would be having our Martin Luther King Celebration that day with the walk starting at the Methodist Church at 9 a.m., and a program at the Door of Hope at 10 a.m. and he encouraged everyone that can make it to try and make it because it is a very good event, inspiring so please mark your calendars for the event.

Councilman Michael Baker: Councilman Baker mentioned that as soon as Alan let him know what was going on he stated that he went through various areas to let them know individually that it was not going to be picked up immediately and the additional aid that the City was going to supply and they could see that and they were satisfied, and that kind of deterred some of the calls and so that helped out a lot.

Councilman Frazier: Nothing at the time.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson: Nothing at the time.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson: Nothing at the time.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis: Nothing at the time.

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt: Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt stated that he just want to express something about the budget when we think about the equipment to keep us from flooding it's a really minor expense when you look at the investment you will get back in return to save property, to save millions in

savings. He stated that he would just like to applaud the City again in trying to make certain that in the event it will come again where we have that we are preparing for the eventuality of it. He would also like to say Mrs. Marilyn Woodberry that has been a mother to him as long as he has known her in this world that he would like to applaud her dedication to the children. He expressed that in any way that we can be of assistance to her please call on him. Mayor stated that he would like to make an example on Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunts comment on equipment. Mayor stated that we brought the grapple truck and you may say how that save us money? Mayor stated that we were having to take our C & D debris to our local landfill and we had container bins in there that we had to put that C & D in there and it had to be picked up by the waste hauler to County Landfill and since we have got the grapple truck we can haul the C & D directly to the landfill ourselves and we are saving \$23,000.00 in container fees by having a piece of equipment that we can control it ourselves and can haul it to the landfill ourselves. So all that \$178,000.00 in Public Works in savings was because we didn't have the containers that we were having to pay somebody and we can do it ourselves.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker to go into Executive Session to discuss Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works, and Recreation Department, Economic Development, Tilghman Park, and Legal Advice and Sanitation Services.

12. POSSIBLE ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson to return to Regular Session. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded

by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to allow Mayor and Administrator to move some funding for two Recreation jobs to move to the Public Works to facilitate grass cutting in all year working in the Public Works Department as opposed to just seasonal in the Recreation Department. The motion carries.

13. ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to discuss, ***A motion was made to adjourn by Councilman Ralph Atkinson, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson.*** The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Ashley Brady

City Clerk Ainsley Sanders
Taped: January 14, 2020