

**MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2021**  
**6:30 P.M.**

A regular meeting was held by City Council on Tuesday, August 10, 2021 6:30 p.m. Mayor Ashley Brady presided. Council members Ralph Atkinson, Ronald Atkinson, Michael Baker, Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt, Joseph Frazier, Ronald Atkinson and Tassie Lewis were present. Staff present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, Vickie Nichols, Cliff Wilbanks, and Chief Bobby Crawford. City Attorney James Brogdon joined by telephone.

Mayor Ashley Brady called the meeting to order, gave the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Brady welcomed citizens and guests to the meeting. No press was in attendance.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes of the Public Hearing held on July 13, 2021, the regular City Council Minutes held on July 13, 2021, and Special City Council Minutes held on July 28, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried unanimously.

**JULY EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

Aundry Bowens was named the July Employee of the Month. Mayor Brady expressed his thanks to Mr. Bowens. Aundry Bowens has been a member of the Marion Fire Department since 1974. He was employed fulltime at City Hall from 2006 to 2013 and currently serves as a crossing guard with the Marion Police Department. The City really appreciates his efforts to maintain services at City Hall while William Sanders has been out on leave.

**PROCLAMATION – National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month**

Mayor Ashley Brady explained the Proclamation was to acknowledge that Childhood Cancer is the leading cause of death in children. Mayor Brady stated that he

would like to encourage all Council Members to observe Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and support this cause that so deeply impacts families in every community across the country. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to approve the Proclamation. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried.

### **REQUEST TO APPEAR BEFORE COUNCIL**

- a) Bob Henry appeared before Mayor and City Council to ask for the fees to be waived for the use of CD Joyner Auditorium. He requested that they be waived for the use of the auditorium for the time period of December 5 – December 18, 2021. Mr. Henry stated that they have several plays in mind but nothing has been finalized at this time. Questions were asked by Councilman Hunt and after a brief discussion Mayor asked Mr. Henry to come up with a proposal and council would get back with him. A motion was made for council to take this request under advisement and was seconded. No decision was made.
- b) Joana Pugh, through her attorney Jakob Kennedy, appeared before Mayor and Council to request that Council consider donating a parcel of real estate in front of the home of Joana Pugh and her husband Larry Pugh. The city acquired this property from the railroad. The Pughs claim that off-road foot traffic and vehicle traffic affect their quiet use and enjoyment of their home and the city is not using this property for any purpose. The Pughs offered and agreed to incur all costs associated with the transfer, including a survey, deed preparation, attorneys' fees, and recording fees. In addition, the Pughs understand that the property would remain subject to all easements, setback requirements, rights-of-way, and other property rights that run with the land.

Councilman Ronal Atkinson made a motion for council to take this under advisement and seconded. No decision was made.

- c) Bennie Davis appeared before Mayor and Council to request more days for Adult Basketball Program. After a brief discussion, Councilman Emerson Hunt made a motion for Mr. Davis to get a plan for adults only, no children are allowed to play with adults. Council would look at the plan and get back with him. The motion was seconded. No decision was made.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Ammons updated Council on the progress on of the Stormwater Project on Bobby L Davis Blvd. He stated that all work has been completed. Mr. Ammons stated that we had 5 inches of rain and there was no problem with flooding. All the roads on Bobby Davis Blvd are opening. He also updated Council that the Mayor along with himself went to a meeting to secure funding for Stormwater project on Wilcox. Mr. Ammons updated Council on daily operations due Covid-19. He encourages everyone to follow all safety precautions required by CDC guidelines. He's asked all employees to please get vaccinated. DHEC will come back on September 7, 2021 to give 2nd round of shots. If there is anyone at that time who hasn't been vaccinated they can get their first shot at that time. Mr. Ammons also updated Council on suggestions concerning the Fireworks Ordinance from residents in the Godbold areas concerning the amount of time to shoot fireworks. Mr. Ammons said he heard from the family of the Jenkins Nursing Home. They have presented the City with a report with the cost to have the asbestos only removed from the facility. According to Dawn Schoolcraft of Asbestos

Inspections LLC, abatement is estimated to cost \$5-\$10 dollars per square foot, plus \$2000 - \$3000 for air monitoring. The estimated affected area is 23,510 square feet. This will be a costly expense Mr. Ammons stated.

### **CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE**

City Attorney James Brogdon had no update.

### **DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FOR COUNCIL AND MAYOR**

Mayor Ashley Brady addressed the concerns of the citizens about all the flooding areas. Mayor stated that they have identified all the flooding areas. Mayor stated he has ridden around town looking at the storm drain and said if we could keep the drain cleaned the water would flow and this would help with the flooding. The areas including Park, Ernest and Spruce Streets have issues because of the size of pipes and where the water has to travel. They have scheduled a meeting with an Engineering Firm tomorrow at 8:00 a.m. (August 11, 2021). This firm specializes in storm water drain problems. They have done a lot for Horry County with storm water drain issues and the head of the engineer firm sits on the Horry County Board as an advisor. We will sit down with him and discuss a couple of sites we know that have problems such as Spring, Bethlehem and Park Streets. We know that the problem is the pipes and how the water shifts and runs.

Mayor updated council that there are some funds available for infrastructure improvements to the stormwater drainage from Cares money. Before we can use this money, we must have a plan from an engineer. Mayor said he thinks he has an avenue where he could secure the monies needed to get engineer plans we could submit to be able to get the Cares

money. The two projects that the City is looking at are \$500,000. We are working on the stormwater drain. He recognized a group of residents from Edgewood and Cedar Street area. We haven't forgotten about that side of town and are working on the problems. Again, it's the size of the pipes and the how the water has to travel to the get to retention. We have got to keep the swamp clean so the water can flow. The pipes are 60-inch pipes and when Catfish overflows the water drains back up and overflow. Councilman Ralph Atkinson said in the City's defense we have had Senator Graham here and folks from Columbia here to see if there was any funding available and the money is just not there and we simply don't have the funds to take on such a huge project. The Corp of Engineers has been involved also. City Administrator said that the money from the Corp of Engineers has been approved and set aside for storm drains in all of Marion County which includes municipalities. He wishes we could tap into some of those funds. Mr. Ammons said he spoke with Mr. Harper about the time frame for the stormwater study and was informed that it was at least a year away because it's being handle by the State DRO recovery and the Engineers. The recovery department has created this program to secure funds for engineering.

Mayor Brady also said they met last week with Mr. Alvin Lewis and got money to pave Park and Wilcox Avenue and with talking to them found out that they won't be able to meet again until October and we have already let them know we will go back and see if we can get an estimate for McGill Street. Mayor Brady also informed council that July 31, 2021 was the Grand Opening for the Amazing Grace Park and even though it was hot it was a good day for the City of Marion. It was well attended and it is a beautiful Park. Also, in the last couple of

days the City has had two school supplies giveaways getting the children ready to go back to school by Ms. Marilyn Woodberry and Ms. Ellen Baldwin.

The Grapple truck is still down. Parts won't be available until September 1st. The grapple truck is having a computer issue. Mayor said we aren't the only ones waiting on parts. GM can't get their computer chips in for their vehicle so what they are doing is making the vehicle and setting them aside until the chips arrives. At this time, we are at the mercy of the supply chain. Hopefully the part will arrive by the 1st of September and we will be up and running. However, the other grapple truck is back online and we are trying to get caught up. The guys on the regular truck were doing things the old fashion way with pitchforks in the heat. We didn't give up, just slowed down a little. The guys worked overtime and on Saturday trying to catch up. Just want to say thank you to the hard-working guys. With all the rain grass is growing faster than we can keep it cut. The 12-foot bush hog we typical use has some damage to it. We are waiting on John Deere to get the parts we need. We called every John Deere place trying to find the parts and they don't have them. We are down employees in the Public Works Department. If anyone knows of anyone that wants to work, please send them to City Hall. We need help.

**Councilman Michael Baker** had no comments at this time.

**Councilman Joseph Frazier** invited Council to the Monthly Neighborhood Watch which is held the 1st Monday of the month. He also expressed his concerns about some things that the neighborhood committee has brought to his attention regarding The Amazing Grace Park. City Administrator Ammons stated that he had given a copy of his

concerns to the Director, Ms. Stephanie Rizzo. Mayor stated that he had contacted Senator Kent Williams and updated him with the concerns.

**Councilman Ronald Atkinson** had no comments at this time.

**Councilman Ralph Atkinson** had no comments at this time.

**Councilwoman Tassie Lewis** thanked MUSC and SC DEHC for the vaccine clinic that was held in the City of Marion. Please check the website and Facebook about the vaccine. Also, SC State has a program for housing assistance for people that were affected during Covid. If you meet the guidelines, please apply for these funds. They will pay up to one year on your mortgage. Please be safe in your neighbors, if you see something that looks suspicious please call the authorities. Crime is very terrible and we are trying to keep everyone safe, especially our seniors and children.

**Councilman Emerson Hunt** thanked Mr. Bob Henry representing the Clothing Closet for his concerns and thanks to everyone for coming and being a part of our public forums. Water is a problem and we won't stop working until we get all the storm drains corrected

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion was made by Councilman Ralph Atkinson and seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to go into executive session to discuss Personnel Matters; City Clerk, Police Department and Fire Department.

### **POSSIBLE ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SEESION ITEMS**

Returning from executive session, Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt made a motion to return to regular session and seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis; motion carried. Mayor Pro-Tem Emerson Hunt made a motion to hire Nicole Richardson as City Clerk. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier. No other action was taken.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Councilman Ralph Atkinson and seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried.

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Mayor Ashley Brady

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Interim City Clerk Vickie J Nichols

