

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2021
6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held by City Council on Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Ashley Brady presided. Council members Ralph Atkinson, Ronald Atkinson, Michael Baker, Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt, Joseph Frazier, and Tassie Lewis were present. Staff present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Lakesha Shannon, Recreation Director Cliff Wilbanks, and Police Chief Bobby Crawford.

Mayor Ashley Brady called the meeting to order, gave the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Brady welcomed citizens, guests, and Hometown TV to the meeting.

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular City Council Meeting held on October 12, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried unanimously.

OCTOBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Mr. Frank Page was named the October Employee of the Month. Mr. Page has been with the Marion Recreation Department for many years. Mayor Brady expressed his thanks to Mr. Page for all he does for the department and the children. He was not in attendance due to scrimmages being held at the Recreation Department.

1st READING OF ORDINANCE 21-07 AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE A REVISED BUSINESS LICENSE ORDINANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BUSINESS LICENSE STANDARDIZATION ACT (2020 ACT NO. 176)

Councilman Ralph Atkinson motioned to approve Ordinance 21-07 **An Ordinance to Adopt a Revised Business License Ordinance in Accordance with The Business License Standardization Act (2020 Act No. 176)**. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, motion carried unanimously. Mayor Brady noted that this ordinance will bring the City in compliance with the new statewide business license standardization law. City Administrator Alan Ammons commented that rebalancing of the City's business license rates will be finalized prior to second reading. Mayor Brady welcomed Lakesha Shannon back as City Clerk.

ENGINEERING AGREEMENT WITH ALLIANCE CONSULTING ENGINEERING FOR SPORTS COMPLEX:

Mayor Brady provided an overview of the City's agreement with Alliance Consulting Engineers to construct the new sports complex on Green Street. Council reviewed the preliminary drawings and fees for the upcoming project which will be funded by capital sales tax money, as well as other grants that the City will pursue. Mayor Brady stated that the county will release funds from the capital sales tax in January 2022, and work can begin on the project at that time. He stated that it's the City's goal to start the 2022 soccer and football season in this new complex. The complex will include soccer and football fields, playground equipment, and later adding baseball fields and a walking track. Future plans of this project

are to rehab the old Pepsi Cola building into an indoor pitching facility and batting cage. The City will seek grant funding to complete that addition. The engineering cost of the project is \$102,500 which will be paid with the capital sales tax. Councilman Ronald Atkinson asked if hospitality tax can be used to help fund this project. Mayor Brady responded that yes hospitality tax funds could be used by issuing a bond and paying it back over a period of time. Councilman Emerson Hunt stated that he is very interested in seeing indoor and outdoor batting cages added. He further stated that this has been emphasized by citizens and is much needed in this community. Councilman Ralph Atkinson motioned to hire Alliance Consulting Engineers to move forward with constructing the sports complex. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, motion carried unanimously.

BIDS ON REPAVING HENRY MCGILL STREET:

Mayor Brady stated that funding was approved to complete the paving of Henry McGill Street. Bids were received from 3 firms to complete the project, with the low bid received from C.R. Jackson of Darlington. Councilman Ralph Atkinson motioned to accept the low bid of \$108,800 from C.R. Jackson. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

City Administrator Alan Ammons provided an update on Covid operations. He reported that the City is fully operational and employees are being encouraged to get vaccinated. He noted that about 50% of the employees are fully vaccinated, and more employees have signed up to be vaccinated following the approval of the vaccine bonus pay.

Mr. Ammons presented information regarding council member salary increases as a follow-up to recent discussions. He researched the salaries of council members in neighboring cities/towns, as well as reviewed data on the Municipal Association's website for municipalities with populations of 5,000 - 10,000. Councilman Ralph Atkinson asked if the salary increase would have to be approved by council in the form of an ordinance. Mr. Ammons confirmed that yes it would. Councilman Ralph Atkinson further commented that council members do not serve for just compensation; however, it does take up a lot of time with phone calls and service constituents. He stated that he has looked into this matter for a long time and would like to recommend that the council salaries be increased.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to increase the annual salary of the mayor to \$14,500, mayor pro term to \$6,500, and council member to \$6,000, effective May 2023 which follows the next city election in April 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis. Councilman Emerson Hunt stated that he remains neutral on this matter, but will support whatever council agrees to. The motion passed 5-2 with Mayor Brady and Councilman Hunt voting no. Mayor Brady stated that he will talk to City Attorney James Brogdon in regards to preparing an ordinance for first reading at the December meeting.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

There was no legal update.

DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FOR COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady reported that several streets in the City have been paved over the last 30 days to include Wilcox Avenue, Godbold Street, Montgomery Street, and Main

Street. He noted that Grand Strand Water & Sewer has been diligent in replacing the water taps in these areas before the paving is done to prevent future issues. Mayor Brady highlighted some upcoming events in the City. A Veterans Day celebration will be held at the Veterans Memorial Triangle on Monday, November 15 at 12 noon. The Annual Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting Program will be held on Sunday, December 5 at 5:00 pm. The public works department is currently decorating Main Street with Christmas wreaths and lights.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson stated that Main Street is still dark, due to trees blocking the street lights. Mr. Ammons stated that he will take care of this matter.

Mayor Brady further commented that the City along with HMRA have reworked the fountain located in the courthouse square. It has been updated with new lining, a pump, and lighting. He encouraged council to go by and look at it. There are additional plans to redo the walkway with concrete, and add flowers to beautify the area. Mayor Brady stated that the city is also working to get quotes for redoing the fountain at the Veterans Triangle as well.

Mayor Brady reported that the city has worked out an agreement to have 2 City employees load up and remove the trashcans from the fairgrounds to a site in Darlington. Once the fairgrounds area is cleared, they will work to remove the trashcans from the old Heritage Sportswear building. The City will be reimbursed for the labor cost.

Mayor Brady provided an update on the Iraq-Afghanistan Memorial that will be located at the Veterans Triangle to honor those who lost their lives during the Iraq-Afghanistan conflict. He stated that a deposit has been secured to purchase the stone for this project. The plan is to have the unveiling of the completed monument during the 2022

Veterans Day celebration. Councilman Ralph Atkinson stated that he would like to see the funds included in the upcoming budget to complete this project if funds have not been secured prior to that time. Mayor Brady stated that the City will also be planning a fundraiser campaign to help fund this project.

Councilman Michael Baker asked Mr. Ammons if a list of the employee vaccination status by department would be provided. Mr. Ammons responded that he is working to prepare that list with the updated numbers.

Councilman Joseph Frazier thanked Police Chief Bobby Crawford and his staff for locating the suspects that destroyed his fence.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson no comment.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson no comment.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis stated that many citizens are asking about the status of mosquito spraying, and how long it will continue. Mr. Ammons commented that the spraying will continue for a few more weeks until we get into the cold weather. Councilwoman Lewis commented on the issue of flooding on Edgewood Drive. She stated that some progress has been, and some of the residents have agreed to allow digging in their yard so that the water can drain off.

Councilman Emerson Hunt encouraged citizens to get outside to walk or get fresh air daily. He stated that getting out to exercise, and to do cardiovascular and circulatory activities is helpful in preventing winter illnesses and viruses that can be triggered from staying inside

too much. He stated that the City's new gym facility and the parks should be utilized more for these activities. He stressed to the citizens to get up and keep moving.

Councilman Joseph Frazier wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor Ashley Brady

City Clerk Lakesha Y. Shannon