

**MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022**  
**6:30 P.M.**

A regular meeting was held by Marion City Council on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in which Mayor Ashley Brady presided. Council members Ronald Atkinson, Michael Baker, Joseph Frazier, Donny Gerald, Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt and Tassie Lewis were present. Staff present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Lakesha Shannon, City Attorney James Brogdon, Police Chief Tony Flowers, and Fire Chief Jeremy Bass.

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

**APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 12, 2022:**

Councilman Ronald Atkinson made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting held on April 12, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt; motion carried unanimously.

**APRIL EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:**

Employee of the month was Lieutenant Derrick Ray with the City of Marion Police Department. Mayor Brady thanked Lt. Ray for always working hard and keeping the best interest of the city at heart.

## **PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL:**

### **Ms. Tamarah Williams – Director of Marion County Mental Health Center**

Ms. Tamarah Williams introduce herself to council and noted that May is Mental Health Awareness Month. She announced the upcoming May 17<sup>th</sup> Mental Health Awareness Day hosted by the Marion County Mental Health Center. She highlighted the services offered by her agency which includes: individual therapy, and mobile crisis services throughout the community. She stated that the agency's focus is make their presence known in the community because it is much needed, and to help end the stigma of mental health. Ms. Williams commented that many mental health issues go untreated because the individual does not want to talk about it for fear of being called crazy. She further commented that her agency is here to support the community mental health needs.

### **Mrs. Michelle Brewton – Smith & Ms. Linda Adams – Pee Dee Coalition**

Mrs. Michelle Brewton-Smith and Ms. Linda Adams with Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault also shared information regarding Mental Health Awareness Month. They expressed that there is a desperate need to get information out to the community, and be there to meet the needs of victims. The agency will be hosting an upcoming workshop on mental health education. Ms. Adams shared some detailed information on how domestic violence and sexually assaulted victims can be impacted mentally.

**1<sup>st</sup> READING OF ORDINANCE 22-03 AN ORDINANCE TO SET MILEAGE FOR RAISING FUNDS TO ADOPT THE BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MARION FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2023**

Councilman Ronald Atkinson motioned to approve 1<sup>st</sup> reading of Ordinance 22-03 **An Ordinance to Set Millage for Raising Funds to Adopt the Budget for the City of Marion Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023.** The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, and carried unanimously.

**1<sup>st</sup> READING OF ORDINANCE 22-04 AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE HOSPITALITY REVENUES FOR THE CITY OF MARION FOR THE 2022-2023 FISCAL YEAR**

Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approve 1<sup>st</sup> reading of Ordinance 22-04 **An Ordinance to Appropriate Hospitality Revenues for the City of Marion for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year.** The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and carried unanimously.

**1<sup>st</sup> READING OF ORDINANCE 22-05 AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE AND ESTABLISH STORMWATER UTILITY REVENUES FOR THE CITY OF MARION FOR THE 2022 – 2023 FISCAL YEAR**

Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approve 1<sup>st</sup> reading of Ordinance 22-05 **An Ordinance to Appropriate and Establish Stormwater Utility Revenues for the City of Marion for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year.** The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and carried unanimously.

## **RESOLUTION FOR COMMUNITY POLICING GRANT – DOJ**

Mayor Brady explained that the Community Policing Grant Resolution will allow the City to apply for a 100% funded grant to hire a community police officer for 3 years. After the first 3 years, there would be a decrease in the grant funding and the City would be responsible for 6 years total. Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approve the Resolution for Community Policing Grant (DOJ). The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis; motion carried unanimously.

### **REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL:**

#### **Mr. Wilbert Legette**

Mr. Wilbert Legette, a 45-year resident of Reaves Street, addressed council regarding his concerns of excessive speeding and illegal passing of vehicles on Reaves Street. He is afraid that a child may be hit by a vehicle due to these actions. Mr. Legette stated that he would like to see alternatives to protect the area, and suggested a few to include: speed bumps, sidewalks to keep the children out the street, cameras to view offenders, and more lighting on the street. Mayor Brady stated that the issue of lighting will be addressed immediately. Mr. Legette stated that police officers do monitor the area; however, the offenders resume the activities once the officers leave.

Police Chief Tony Flowers asked for more details about the speeding violations, and stated that he will have radars setup and more police presence in the area immediately. Mayor Brady stated that he will contact SCDOT to discuss options for installing a sidewalk.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis suggested that some of the yellow signs that read "Slow Down" be placed along Reaves Street in an effort to resolve the issue of speeding.

**ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

City Administrator Alan Ammons reported that complaints have been received regarding parking on Clifton Street. He stated that the area of concern is located on the SCDOT right of way. There have been continued calls and complaints of noise and cars parked there while congregating at a residence during the evenings. Mr. Ammons requested to install "No Parking" signs in the area of concern. Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approve the installation of the signs. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt; motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ammons provided an update regarding the old abandoned Coca Cola building on Manning Street. He stated that he recently met with the property owner; however, the owner is not interested in allowing the City to tear down the building walls as previously discussed by council. The owner stated that he may use the walls in the future. Mr. Ammons recommended that the City hire an engineer to come survey the walls, and determine if they are safe. If they are determined unsafe, the City may have options to move forward with removing them. Councilman Ronald Atkinson motioned to move forward with hiring an engineer to come survey the walls. Mr. Ammons stated that the cost of the inspection will be \$500-\$600, and can be done within 2-3 weeks. Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt expressed concerns with a pit of water located on the property. Councilman Michael Baker seconded the motion made by Councilman Atkinson. Mr. Ammons stated that the property owner will be

notified by certified letter regarding the engineering survey, and the concerns with the water. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Ammons provided an update on the grass ordinance letters that are currently being mailed out to address overgrown grass. He stated that the letters have been delayed this year due to a new process in which the code enforcement officer goes out and takes a photo of the properties in violation. The photo is included in the certified letter that is mailed to the property owner. This takes about an additional week for the owner to receive the letter and respond. He stated that about 300 letters have been mailed out so far.

Mr. Ammons commented on concerns of basketball goals located in the public right of ways. He updated council on a recent issue in which a resident stated that the City's grapple truck hit their basketball goal. Mr. Ammons stated that the City replaced the goal, and they are working with the police department to address this issue.

Mr. Ammons recommended May 25, 2022 for the budget workshop meeting. Council agreed to meet at 5:30pm.

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

There was no legal update.

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

**Mayor Ashley Brady** provided an update on a recent officer involved shooting in the City of Marion in which a death occurred. He stated that SLED was called in to investigate the

incident and all questions should be referred to that agency. Mayor Brady noted that the officer's entire body cam video was released to the media the day following the incident.

Mayor commented that the City of Marion is currently hiring, and asked that anyone seeking a job please apply.

Mayor Brady announced upcoming events in the City to include an outdoor concert at the Main Street Commons on May 14 from 7:00-10:00 pm, the Annual Foxtrot Festival on May 21, and the unveiling of the Iraq-Afghanistan War Memorial on May 26 at 1:00 pm at the Veterans Square.

Mayor Brady reported that 9 sets of the new fire department turnout gear have been received, and the remaining sets will be coming in. He also reported that Tru Green Nursery has replaced the flower planters on the front steps of City Hall, and installed flowers.

**Councilman Michael Baker** no update.

**Councilman Joseph Frazier** reiterated his request for a digital sign in his district.

**Councilman Ronald Atkinson** thanked Mayor Brady and Mr. Ammons for their help in renaming Ransome Street. He noted that the family was so happy about the street name honoring their father.

**Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt** welcomed Councilman Frazier back and stated that he has been missed. He then commented on the importance of mental health and celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month. In closing he encouraged everyone to get outside, enjoy life and be healthy.

**Councilwoman Tassie Lewis** thanked staff Patricia Brown and Lakesha Shannon for their recommendation to replace the flower planters and flowers in front of City Hall. She also expressed her condolences to the Gurley family, and wished a speedy recovery to the officers involved in the recent incident. She also thanked everyone who presented information to council during the meeting.

Councilwoman Lewis stated that she has been looking for ways to excite people to be more community minded, and be the change they would like to see. Over the next 2 weeks she plans to do a presentation called "Ordinary People Who Do Extraordinary Things". She will provide further information to council, and any support provided will be donated back to the community. She provided her contact information for anyone who wants to submit a nomination.

**Councilman Donny Gerald** commented that he has received some complaints regarding employees and business owners parking on Main Street, and asked if it could be addressed. He also commented on the area at the corner of Allen Drive and Oakenwald Ave that is utilized a lot for parking. He requested that the area be monitored due to complaints of inappropriate activity taking place there. Councilman Gerald thanked the presenters for providing information on mental health awareness.

**Councilman Joseph Frazier** commented on the fishing dock at Catfish Creek on Bobby Gerald Parkway, and asked if the City owns it. Mayor Brady explained that the current dock located there is privately owned; however, the City will be installing one there at a later

date with funding from a grant that was applied for. He stated that a dock will also be installed at the Catfish Creek area behind the old Blumenthal building.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Councilman Ronald Atkinson made a motion to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter with the Police Department, and an Employee Retention Policy. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier, and carried unanimously.

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

### **ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS:**

Councilman Joseph Frazier motioned to authorize the City of Marion to offer a one-time signing bonus of \$3,500 to any new police officer hired that resides in Marion County, and \$2,500 to any new police officer hired that resides outside of Marion County. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, and carried unanimously.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson motioned to give all current city employees a bonus equal to \$250 per years of service up to 20 years, and beginning next year to increase all employee salaries by \$250 per year. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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Mayor Ashley Brady

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City Clerk Lakesha Y. Shannon