

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022
6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held by Marion City Council on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in which Mayor Ashley Brady presided. Council members Ronald Atkinson, Michael Baker, Donny Gerald, Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt, and Tassie Lewis were present. Councilman Joseph Frazier was not in attendance. Staff present were City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Lakesha Shannon, City Attorney James Brogdon, and Police Chief Tony Flowers.

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 AUGUST 9, 2022:

Councilman Ronald Atkinson made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting held on August 9, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt, and carried unanimously.

AUGUST EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:

Mayor Ashley Brady named the city's custodian Aaron Myers as the August Employee of the Month. He noted that Aaron does a fantastic job of maintaining city hall, the opera house and police department.

PRESENTATIONS:

PDRTA

Mr. Tavorous Collins the Urban Transportation Manger, and Mr. Jack Pickett the Rural Transportation Manager from PDRTA were present to address council. Mr. Collins thanked council for their contributions which helps to fund and increase PDRTA services in Marion County. He announced that PDRTA will hold public hearings in October to allow public input on identifying needs and barriers to public transportation. Mr. Pickett provided an update on a new service route that will run between Marion and Mullins to service key areas. There will be 10-15 stops in each city. The current Monday, Wednesday, Friday route will continue which transports residents from the Sellers, Gresham and Centenary areas. He noted that this route transports over 200 passengers during those 3 days.

Mr. Collins stated that they are also looking to establish fixed bus route stops throughout the city, and asked if this would need to be approved by the planning commission. Mayor Brady stated that he and City Administrator Alan Ammons would follow up. Mr. Collins stated that PDRTA is preparing to do rehab work on its current facility on Airport Ct. The buses that run the Myrtle Beach route are still housed at that facility. Mr. Collins further stated that there will be a need to hire personnel at that location as they work to add dispatchers, drivers and supervisors. They hope to employ Marion County residents for these positions.

Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative

Executive Director Mr. Derrick Dease, Intervention Specialist Mr. Anthony Green, and Program Director Mr. Deon Campbell were present to address council on the Man 2 Man

Fatherhood Initiative Program. Mr. Dease noted that the program was established 22 years ago and addresses the issues of father absence in families. Their goal is to help men stand up to the responsibility of being fathers. He stated that they provide services in Marion, Hartsville, Florence, Dillon, Marlboro and Chesterfield counties. Men enter the program through referrals from being incarcerated or failing to pay child support. They attend classes that address parenting, economic mobility, and healthy relationships. Mr. Dease provided information on their new program Ready for Life which is a 9-week program that teaches young men the cost of raising a child. They currently have offices in Florence and Bennettsville.

Mr. Green noted that all services are free to participants, and transportation is provided to the weekly group sessions that are held in Marion at Pleasant Grove Church every Thursday. They provide all resources to help the participants navigate the social system. He asked that the City of Marion partner with the program to help offer services here, and further requested the use of a classroom at the CD Joyner Auditorium to hold weekly 2-hour class every Thursday for participants.

City Attorney James Brogdon will check the availability of the facility and prepare a contract to allow Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative to utilize the classroom for their program.

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt motioned to allow Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative to work with Mayor Brady and council to establish a program in the City of Marion. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

PROCLAMATION FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH:

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve a Proclamation for Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, and carried unanimously.

PROCLAMATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH:

Councilman Ronald Atkinson motioned to approve a Proclamation for Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The motion was seconded by Councilman Donny Gerald, and carried unanimously.

Mayor Brady noted that some of the suicide prevention foundation members were in attendance and asked them to come forward as City Clerk Lakesha Shannon read the proclamation into the record.

PROCLAMATION FOR CONSTITUTION WEEK 2022:

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve a Proclamation for Constitution Week 2022. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION FOR HOMETOWN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT:

Mayor Brady stated this Hometown Economic Development Grant will be applied for through the SC Municipal Association. If awarded, it would be used to develop apartments in downtown Marion.

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve the Resolution for Hometown Economic Development Grant. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF BIDS:

Mayor Brady updated council on several bids that were recently received. The bids include:

➤ Police Department Firearms

There were 3 bids received to purchase firearms for the police department. The low bid of \$8,601.12 was received from Swamp Fox Outdoors which recently opened in downtown Marion.

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve the bid from Swamp Fox Outdoors. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and carried unanimously.

➤ Public Works Street Sweeper

Mayor stated that council approved \$195,000 from the ARP budget to purchase a new street sweeper. There was one bid received from Amick Equipment for \$180,471.

Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approve the bid from Amick Equipment. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, and carried unanimously.

➤ Fire Department Fire Hose Replacement

Mayor Brady noted that the firehoses have to be replaced every 15 years. There was one bid received from Wally's Fire & Safety Equipment for \$35,357.04.

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve the bid from Wally's Fire & Safety Equipment. The motion was seconded by Councilman Donny Gerald, and carried unanimously.

REQUEST BUDGET TRANSFER WITHIN HOSPITALITY BUDGET FROM DIGITAL SIGN

\$28,000:

Mayor Brady stated that \$28,000 was initially budgeted in the hospitality budget to purchase digital signs. However, council voted last month to purchase the signs from the ARP budget. He recommended that the \$28,000 now be used to fund the following projects:

- **\$3,000 Lawnmower Purchase**
- **\$25,000 Beautification and Sidewalk Around Fountain on Downtown Square**

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt motioned to approve the \$28,000 budget transfer from hospitality budget for digital signs to purchase a lawnmower, and complete the fountain beautification project on the Downtown Square. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.

Mayor Brady noted that the Garden Club will plant flowers around the fountain, and HMRA will purchase 8 benches with plaques.

APPROVE PURCHASE OF JOHN DEERE LAWNMOWER ON STATE CONTRACT:

Mayor Brady stated that a new John Deere zero turn lawnmower will be purchased on state contract for \$12,053.21.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson motioned to approve the purchase of the new John Deere lawnmower. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt, and carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

City Administrator Alan Ammons was not in attendance. Mayor Brady stated that Mr. Ammons sends his regards and thanks everyone for their well wishes for his speedy recovery.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE:

There was no legal update from City Attorney James Brogdon.

DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FOR COUNCIL AND MAYOR:

Mayor Ashley Brady updated council on the cleaning of Catfish Canal. He stated that the track hoe was used to clean out everything that could be reached in the area behind the old Blumenthal plant down to the landfill. The city may need to lease some long reach equipment to complete the cleaning and beautification of that area. Mayor Brady stated that the oak trees on Main Street are being trimmed, and grass is still being cut throughout the city. The vacuum truck is out clearing storm drains in preparation for hurricane season.

Mayor Brady stated that council previously discussed updating to an electronic timekeeping system for employees. One of the barriers was the need for internet service at the public works department. As of last week, the internet is now online at that department. He stated that City Treasurer Patricia Brown will research the types of electronic timekeeping systems used by our neighboring cities. Mayor Brady discussed the challenges with the current punch card system, and stated that an electronic system would be more efficient for the payroll staff. He further discussed the benefits of moving from the current weekly pay

period to a biweekly pay period. He recommended that these changes go into effect on January 1, 2023 to allow employees time to adjust to the new pay cycle.

City Attorney James Brogdon advised council to place these items on the October agenda for further discussion and approval.

Councilman Michael Baker stated that Councilman Joseph Frazier was recently hospitalized. He also thanked everyone for reaching out during the recent loss of his brother.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson had no update.

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt thanked the city employees and HMRA for all the beautification projects throughout the city. He also expressed his condolences to those who recently lost loved ones. In closing, he stressed the importance of exercise and taking care of our bodies.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis expressed her condolences to those who recently lost loved ones. She thanked the presenters for coming to share information with council, and stressed the importance of suicide prevention awareness and mental health. Councilwoman Lewis thanked HMRA for their beautification efforts in the downtown district which is important in attracting businesses and visitors. She also stated that she receives a lot of complaints regarding the upkeep of properties. She asked everyone be their neighbors' keeper. An anonymous report can be made if you see something that is suspicious.

Councilman Donny Gerald had no update.

ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Councilman Michael Baker and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Ashley Brady

City Clerk Lakesha Y. Shannon