

**MINUTES**  
**MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2023 AT 6:30 P.M.**

**MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mayor Ashley Brady

Councilman Fred Gause

Councilman Ronald Atkinson

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt

Councilman Michael Baker

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis

*\*\*Councilman Donny Gerald was not in attendance*

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Alan Ammons, City Administrator

Tony Flowers, Police Chief

Patricia Brown, City Treasurer

Kevin Hammond, Fire Chief

Lakesha Shannon, City Clerk

Chasity Samuels, Rec. Director

James Brogdon, City Attorney

**1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ashley Brady.

**2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Ashley Brady led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

**3. WELCOME CITIZENS, GUESTS & PRESS**

Mayor Ashley Brady welcomed all citizens and guest.

**4. APPROVE MINUTES**

➤ Regular City Council Meeting – January 16, 2024

***A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to approve the minutes of January 16, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.***

5. **JANUARY EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

Mayor Brady named Officer Patrick Hurley with the City of Marion Police Department as the January Employee of the Month. He thanked Officer Hurley for all that he does for the police department and the citizens of Marion.

6. **PRESENTATIONS – CITY OF MARION RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

Recreation Director Chasity Samuels congratulated the 12U Soccer Team on winning the 2023 Eastern District Championship! Director Samuels recognized the players and presented them with a certificate of appreciation and a sweatshirt.

7. **APPROVE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Council approved the following committee appointment:

➤ **Citizens Advisory Committee** – Chess Stepp

*A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, and seconded by Councilman Fred Gause to approve the Citizens Advisory Committee member appointment as presented. The motion carried unanimously.*

8. **SET DATE FOR ANNUAL CITY EMPLOYEE BANQUET**

*A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to schedule the Annual City Employee Banquet for March 26, 2024 at Woodhaven Banquet Hall. The motion passed unanimously.*

9. **AMEND CITY OF MARION FOIA REQUEST FEE SCHEDULE**

Mayor Brady stated that the FOIA Fee Schedule is being amended to reflect the current staff rate for providing requested information. *A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Fred Gause to amend the City of Marion FOIA Fee Schedule. The motion passed unanimously.*

**10. UPDATES FROM POLICE CHIEF TONY FLOWERS**

Police Chief Tony Flowers stated that a meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2024 with Flock Safety to obtain more information, and receive a demonstration on the requested gunshot detection system. Chief Flowers recommended that Council postpone discuss of this matter until the demonstration takes place. Councilman Michael Baker stated that the City of Myrtle Beach has recently applied for a grant to purchase this system. He asked that Chief Flowers contact the City of Myrtle Beach and the Marion Housing Authority for their feedback. Mayor Brady explained that the gunshot detection system is new technology that allows law enforcement to detect the direction of gunshots fired. Agent Bobby Davis with the Marion Police Department recommended that the system only be purchased if it is feasible in helping officers determine the specific vicinity of gunshots. Council discussed seeking grant funding to purchase this system if it is pursued.

Chief Tony Flowers provided an updated on previous concerns from Council regarding the City of Marion Noise Ordinance. Chief Flowers stated that he does not see any issues with the current ordinance as it is written. Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt feels that the concerns with loud music is a matter that is difficult to enforce, and would cause unnecessary burden on police officers if additional enforcement measures are pursued. Agent Bobby Davis stated that most noise violations with loud music involves teenagers. Once in court, it becomes a matter of what is considered to be loud. Agent Davis stated that when he pulls over teenagers for loud music he gives them a warning, and further uses the interaction as an opportunity to provide some life lessons on respect for others rather than making it a negative experience. Lt. Derrick Ray shared his

experience with loud music violations. He stated that most people recognize his vehicle and turn their music down before he can approach them for a moving violation. If he encounters loud music in non-moving vehicles he has issued some citations.

**11. REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL**

➤ **Peggy Gunter - Recreation**

Ms. Peggy Gunter thanked Council for placing the traffic sign on Gurley Street, and commented that their response in taking care of that matter shows that they care about the community. Ms. Gunter also stated that she has volunteered with the City of Marion Recreation Department for the basketball season. She has witnessed the challenges parents face with transporting their children to out of city games. She recommended that Council explore grant funding to purchase a recreation bus to transport the children to out of town recreation events. Recreation Director Chasity Samuels agrees that grant funding for recreation resources to include transportation is needed. She is currently working on a mission statement and logo for the recreation department that will meet the requirements for applying for grant funding. She is also working with local businesses to explore more diverse programs for the children.

**12. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Administrator Alan Ammons provided an update on the city hall renovation project and stated that construction is ongoing. He noted that the old clock on the top of city hall is being restored and will be reinstalled in its original location. Mr. Ammons stated that he and Councilman Baker has discussed asbestos surveys following a recent meeting at the City of Mullins. He stated that Mullins has identified over 200 homes that have asbestos issues. He estimated that

there are around 40-50 homes affected in Marion. Mr. Ammons provided an overview of the options they discussed in the meeting for hiring certified employees to help address the asbestos issues. He wants to further explore the costs of hiring and funding training for certified employees for asbestos abatement. He and Councilman Baker will further discuss this matter with Council following an update from the City of Mullins and their experience. Council also discussed the risk of employees being diagnosed with mesothelioma from asbestos exposure.

**13. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE**

Attorney James Brogdon had no update. Councilman Fred Gause stated that he recently attended the MASC Hometown Legislative Action Day in Columbia, and there was discussion on a Hate Crime Resolution that is currently being adopted by cities in SC who stand against hate crimes. Attorney Brogdon stated that he will obtain the language for the resolution for drafting. A letter of support will also be provided to Senator Kent Williams from Council. Chief Flowers will also request a letter of support from the Director of the Police Chief's Association. Councilman Gause also stated that there was discussion on language that allows enforcement of unkept properties by placing liens on the properties. Mr. Ammons stated that we already have language in our current ordinance to address this issue with property liens.

**14. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR**

**Mayor Ashley Brady:**

Mayor Brady stated that demolition has been completed on the delapidated home on Godbold Street. He stated that DHEC approval has been received for demolition of the burned property beside the old Southside School. Mayor Brady

stated the City Public Works Department has cleaned up the overgrown shrubbery at the post office, and he was able to get a donation of two pounds of sod to place back in the cleared areas. He is also working with the post office to replace lighting outside the building. The owner of the fallen mural in downtown Marion has been contacted and advised that the City will be clearing that area next week. Mayor Brady commented on the recent Father Daughter Dance hosted by the recreation department. They are also up and running with online sports registration and payments for all sports and events.

**Councilman Michael Baker:**

Councilman Baker had no comments.

**Councilman Fred Gause:**

Councilman Gause thanked Recreation Director Chasity Samuels on a fantastic job with the children. He also thanked all city departments for the work they do for the city in keeping it beautiful and running smoothly.

**Councilman Ronald Atkinson:**

Councilman Atkinson asked if anyone is familiar with what is taking place on West Highway 76 near Catfish Creek where construction cones are located. Mr. Ammons stated that issues with the bridge in that area are being addresses, and the project could take up to 2 years.

**Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt:**

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt thanked everyone for coming, and encouraged them to take care of themselves.

**Councilwoman Tassie Lewis:**

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis commended Recreation Director Chasity Samuels on a job well done with the progress of the department. She also thanked Ms.

Peggy Gunter for her comments. She encouraged everyone to use the police department app and be vigilant in reporting any suspicious activity in their neighborhoods.

**Councilman Donny Gerald:**

Councilman Gerald was not in attendance.

**15. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

➤ Personnel Matter – Police Department

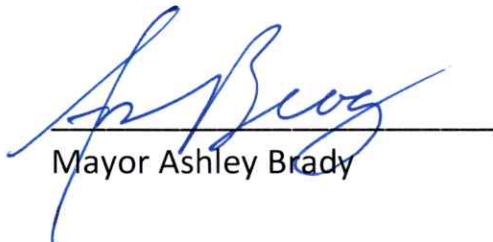
***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to go into executive session to discuss a Personnel Matter Police Department. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, and carried unanimously.***

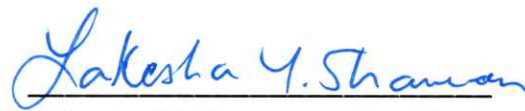
**16. POSSIBLE ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

***A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, and seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to return from executive session. The motion carried unanimously.*** Returning from executive session, Mayor Brady stated that there was no action taken.

**17. ADJOURNMENT**

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

  
Mayor Ashley Brady

  
Lakesha Y. Shannon, City Clerk