MINUTES
MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2024 AT 6:30 P.M.

MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Ashley Brady
Councilman Ronald Atkinson
Councilman Michael Baker
Councilman Donny Gerald
Councilman Fred Gause
Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt
Councilwoman Tassie Lewis

STAFF PRESENT:

Alan Ammons, City Administrator
Patricia Brown, City Treasurer
Lakesha Shannon, City Clerk
James Brogdon, City Attorney
Tony Flowers, Police Chief
Kevin Hammond, Fire Chief

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 – February 13, 2024

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Fred Gause to approve the minutes of February 13, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

5. FEBRUARY EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Mayor Brady named Chandler Tisdale with the City of Marion Fire Department as the February Employee of the Month. He thanked Chandler for his many years of service with the fire department, and all that he does for the City of Marion.

6. PRESENTATIONS – CITY OF MARION FIRE PROMOTION CEREMONY

Fire Chief Kevin Hammond recognized two officers for their recent promotions. Chandler Tisdale was promoted from Lieutenant to Captain, and Brian Long was promoted from Firefighter to Firefighter Engineer. Both officers were presented with a promotion pin, and administered the oath of office. Council congratulated the officers, and Mayor Brady thanked them for their dedicated service.

7. APPROVE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Council approved the following committee appointment:

- **Citizens Advisory Committee** – Jerjuan Kenney Page and Tara Woods

  A motion was made by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to approve the Citizens Advisory Committee member appointments as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

- **Employee Safety Committee** – Chief Kevin Hammond

  A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, and seconded by Councilman Fred Gause to approve the Employee Safety Committee member appointment as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

8. APPROVE CONTRACT AGREEMENT WITH G&G LOCAL GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS

Mayor Brady explained the City's agreement with G&G Local Government Solutions. The company currently writes grants for submittal on behalf of the City of Marion. Mayor Brady noted that they have been very successful in

helping the City obtain grant funding over the past year. ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to approve the contract with G&G Local Government Solutions. The motion passed unanimously.***

9. APPROVE PURCHASE FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT V-SAFE GRANT

Mayor Brady stated that the City received a V-Safe Grant in the amount of $9,499.68 to purchase three sets of fire department turnout gear. He noted that this will be a local purchase from Wally's Fire & Safety Equipment. ***A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Fred Gause to approve the purchase of fire department turnout gear in the amount of $9,499.68 with the V-Safe Grant funding from Wally's Fire & Safety Equipment. The motion passed unanimously.*** Mayor Brady stated that the V-Safe Grant will also be used to purchase a Positive Pressure Ventilation System Fan for the fire department in the amount of $5,356.80. ***A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to approve the purchase of a Positive Pressure Ventilation System in the amount of $5,356.80 from Newton's Fire & Safety Equipment using V-Safe Grant funding. The motion passed unanimously.***

10. LAWNMOWER BID FOR GREEN STREET SPORTS COMPLEX

Mayor Brady stated that a dedicated lawnmower is needed for the Green Street Sports Complex, and recommended that ARP funding be used for the purchase. There were 2 quotes received for a zero-turn riding lawnmower – a John Deere from Quality Equipment in the amount of $16,630.34 on state contract, and a Ferris from Barry's Outdoor Power in the amount of $18,576.00. ***A motion was made by Councilman Fred Gause, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker to***

approve the purchase of a 72" commercial zero-turn John Deere lawnmower from Quality Equipment using ARP funds. Council discussed the benefits of purchasing a zero-turn lawnmower versus a tractor. ***Following discussion, the motion passed unanimously.***

11. HATE CRIME RESOLUTION

Mayor Brady commented that is a great thing for the City of Marion to adopt the proposed Hate Crime Resolution in support of the Clementa C. Pickney Hate Crimes Act H-3014. ***A motion was made by Councilman Fred Gause, seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis to approve the Hate Crime Act in support of the Clementa C. Pickney Hate Crime Act as presented. The motion passed unanimously.*** Councilman Gause explained that South Carolina is one of 2 states in the country that does not have a hate crime act. The SC House of Representatives have passed the proposed Hate Crime Act Resolution, and it is currently before the SC Senate for approval. He added that many municipalities in SC are in support, and passing this ordinance assures our community that the City of Marion stands behind this act 100%.

12. REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

- **Lawrence Leary - Citation**

Mr. Leary was not present to address Council.

13. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Alan Ammons commented on the request for appropriations that the City of Marion submitted to Congressman Russell Fry's office for the upcoming budget year. This request included funding for a 2-year lease on the Flock Safety System in the amount of $210,000, and 2 new fully equipped police cars in the amount of $110,000. The total requested amount of $310,000 will be

submitted by this coming Friday. Mr. Ammons stated that renovations are still in progress at city hall, and the new carpet installation in the council chambers will begin this week. The lighting contractor has advised that the light installation should be completed at the Green Street Sports Complex by April 30, 2024.

14. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney James Brogdon had no update.

15. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady:

Mayor Brady commented on the recent Proclamation presented at St. John AME Church in honor of Mr. Henry E. Smith and the Orangeburg Massacre. The City of Marion police department received a $14,000 grant to purchase additional bullet proof vests. A RIA Grant in the amount of $275,000 was also applied for to clean the area from Smith Swamp to Rose Hill Cemetery. Mayor Brady stated that the City of Marion public works department has been working with SCDOT to remove beaver dams from under the bridge on Bluff Road. The public works department has also cleaned up the overgrown shrubbery and installed black mulch on Liberty Street near the Circle K convenience store. In addition, they have worked with Duke Energy to remove large trees on Oak Street and in front of the post office that had grown through the power lines. A tree was also cut down on Cooper Street to prevent any potential damage. The storm drains were cleared in the Blake Circle housing area to allow for better storm drainage. The Garden Club has placed pine straw throughout the City and beautified the fountain area on Bobby Gerald Parkway. Mayor Brady also mentioned upcoming events in the City to include an Easter Event at Mt. Pisgah Baptist and Bethlehem Baptist Churches, and the Annual Denim Day at city hall.

Councilman Michael Baker:

Councilman Baker commented that the RIA Grant is much needed for cleaning the swamp areas and addressing the issue of the beaver dams. He also noted an upcoming event on March 25, 2024 at 6:00 pm at Marion High School hosted by Marion County as a whole, and Long-Term Recovery. Information will be presented on VA and USDA Loans for housing and repairs. There will also be assistance available with completing the application packet. He stated that more announcements will be forthcoming, and requested that the information be shared to the community through all outlets.

Councilman Fred Gause:

Councilman Gause congratulated the recently promoted fire officers. He also congratulated City Treasurer Patricia Brown for being elected as the President of the South Carolina Municipal Finance Officers Clerks Treasurers Association through MASC. He thanked all city employees for all they do.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson:

Councilman Atkinson also congratulated Patricia Brown.

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt:

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt thanked everyone for coming, and encouraged them to take care of themselves as respiratory illnesses have increased over the last month. He also commented on the recent program honoring Mr. Henry E. Smith and stated that City agrees to purchase some property to develop a historical monument for minorities. He stated that it will take a community effort to make this project a success. He also noted that he was asked why the City does not host an event to honor Black History Month. This year the City supported the

event at St. John AME Church and will make a commitment to honor Black History month as an entity in the future.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis:

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis also agreed that the City will commit to honoring Black History Month. She encouraged everyone to be vigilant in reporting any suspicious activity in their neighborhoods. She recognized members of the Ministerial Alliance that was present at the council meeting. She announced a new initiative called Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things. This would be a quarterly recognition for an individual or group that does something that positively affects the community as a whole. Any nominations can be submitted to Councilwoman Lewis or City Clerk Lakesha Shannon.

Councilman Donny Gerald:

Councilman Gerald commented on the proposed historical marker area for minorities and stated that this project will happen. He stated that there are many people that could be honored; however, it should be thought through very carefully so that it is meaningfully done. He believes that the required funding can be raised. He also suggested assistance from outside sources to help with the design layout, as well as a committee to help with the selection process of deserving honorees. This will be a very serious project that needs first class planning and presentation to respect the overall meaning of it. Councilman Gause recognized Presiding Elder Cole for being in attendance.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Personnel Matter – Police Department
- Personnel Matter – Fire Department
- Contractual Matter – Land Acquisition

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker to go into executive session to discuss a Personnel Matter regarding the Police Department and Fire Department, and a Contractual Matter regarding Land Acquisition. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and carried unanimously.

17. 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, the following action was taken. ***A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to approve an increase of the Police Department budget in the amount of $97,357. The motion was seconded by Councilman Donny Gerald, and carried unanimously. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt to approve an increase of the Fire Department budget in the amount of $31, 974. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and carried unanimously.*** Police Chief Tony Flowers commented that he received reports of an individual walking through a yard on Jones Avenue carrying an assault rifle. He has reached out to the solicitor's office for assistance, and was advised that no action can be taken regarding the carrying of the gun. However, they are working on further clarification on handling these type issues as it pertains to the new gun laws. Chief Flowers will continue to follow-up on this issue.

18. 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