

MINUTES
MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024 AT 6:30 P.M.

MAYOR/COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

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

Mayor Ashley Brady 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	
James Brogdon, City Attorney	

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt.

2. PRAYER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

3. WELCOME CITIZENS, GUESTS & PRESS

Mayor Pro tem Emerson Hunt welcomed all citizens and guest.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

➤ Regular City Council Meeting – March 12, 2024

A motion was made by Councilman Michael Baker, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to approve the minutes of March 12, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

5. FEBRUARY EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Mayor Pro tem Hunt named City Treasurer Patricia Brown as the March Employee of the Month. He recognized Patricia for her outstanding service to the City of Marion, as well as serving as President of the Municipal Finance Officers Clerks and Treasurers Association of South Carolina. He noted that she does an amazing job keeping the City economically sound.

6. PRESENTATIONS**➤ PDRTA**

Chestly Morris and Samantha Mack presented an update on PDRTA services. Mr. Morris announced that they are celebrating 50 years of service this year. He stated that they currently service 6 counties, and operate 38 routes in over 3,500 square miles. He highlighted new services provided across the counties they serve, and gave an overview of their 2024 Transit Study. The Express Route services began in Marion County in January 2023, and these routes have been highly utilized by citizens for local travel and workforce travel to Dillon, Florence and Horry counties. Workforce transportation makes up 52% of the PDRTA routes, and they are continually searching for ways to connect routes over the service counties. PDRTA also provides routes to assist students with transportation to school, including Francis Marion and Florence Darlington Tech. They are also working to provide bus shelters. Rural healthcare issues have been improved due to PDRTA healthcare routes. These routes ensure that patients are able to get to their doctors' appointments as needed. Council discussed the requirements for installing a permanent bus shelter in Marion. Mrs. Mack explained that the average cost of a shelter is \$25,000 to \$45,000 depending on

the type. PDRTA will have a new app system coming out this summer for scheduling routes.

➤ **PEE DEE COALITION**

Danyell Rogers highlighted April as National Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Mrs. Rogers noted some events that have already taken place, and announced several upcoming events that will be hosted by Pee Dee Coalition to spread community awareness of these issues. She encouraged the community to attend and support. She highlighted the “In Her Shoes” event recently hosted by Pee Dee Coalition, and shared the eye-opening experiences of the participants. This event will be held again in May and she encouraged at least 2 council members to participate. Councilman Fred Gause and Councilwoman Tassie Lewis volunteered to attend.

7. **APPROVE RESOLUTION DESIGNATING APRIL AS FAIR HOUSING MONTH**

A motion was made by Councilman Fred Gause, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson to approve the resolution designating April as Fair Housing Month. The motion passed unanimously.

8. **REQUEST TO ADDRESS COUNCIL**

➤ **Kathy Hall – Gun Violence**

Mrs. Kathy Hall Godbolt was present to address council regarding gun violence. She stated that she lost her grandson in 2022 to an act of gun violence. She asked for council’s help in bringing the community together to address this issue. She stated that there needs to be more programs for children that will occupy their time in a positive way. She commented that this issue is out of control and people are afraid to come out of their homes because of the gun violence. She further asked that the City put something in

place to help educate the youth on gun violence. She stated that she along with other affected families are willing to stand together with council to help promote change. Mayor Pro Tem Hunt stated that the City has taken measures to address this issue since Ms. Hall last spoke with council. Administrator Alan Ammons explained that cameras have been installed throughout the City which include license plate readers to help track suspects who commit a crime and leave the scene. Councilman Gause stated that the City is also researching the purchase of a shot detection system that will pinpoint the location of shot fired. There has also been a quarterly Intergovernmental Meeting established which is a collaboration of city, county and school district officials coming together to discuss community issues and ways to address them. Councilman Donny Gerald commented that the court system also needs to take measures to rightfully punish suspects rather than allowing them to be released so soon and repeating the same behavior. Councilwoman Lewis also explained several ways the City has taken a step to address this matter.

➤ **Miriam L. Dame – Dogs Kept on Premises Without Owner Present**

Mrs. Miriam Dame expressed her frustrations with dogs barking excessively all night in her neighborhood, and no one being present in the home to take responsibility. This issue has caused stress and loss to the quality of life for herself and several neighbors. She has contacted the police department on many occasions and no resolution has been made. Mrs. Dame provided council with written documentation of her efforts to resolve this matter, and the negative responses she has received. Mayor Pro Tem Hunt asked if the City's noise ordinance can be used to address this matter. Following a lengthy

discussion by council, Police Chief Tony Flowers and City Attorney James Brogdon was asked to research possible solutions to this matter.

9. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Alan Ammons commented that the renovations to the council chambers should be complete within the next 30-45 days. The lighting contractor has advised that the light installation should be completed at the Green Street Sports Complex by April 30, 2024. The City of Marion Fire Department has been recognized as a Fire Safe Community. Mr. Ammons stated that the next Intergovernmental Collaboration Meeting will be held on April 27, and the City of Marion Citizens Advisory Committee will meet on May 13 at 5:30pm. A Smoke Detector Blitz in connection with the Red Cross will be held around May 21, and smoke detectors will be installed on the spot as needed. A request for funding through Congressman Russell Fry's upcoming fiscal year appropriations has been submitted for the gunshot detection system.

10. CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney James Brogdon had no update.

11. DISTRICT AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Councilman Michael Baker:

Councilman Baker had no update.

Councilman Fred Gause:

Councilman Gause thanked everyone for attending and bringing awareness of the varies issues to council.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson:

Councilman Atkinson thanked Mrs. Hall and Mrs. Dame for their comments and bringing awareness to the issues they discussed.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis:

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis also thanked the citizens for their public comments and bringing awareness. She also asked citizens to let their voice be heard in an effort to bring the change they would like to see.

Councilman Donny Gerald:

Councilman Gerald also thanked everyone for coming and sharing the information and awareness. He commented that the renovations to the council chambers looks great. He suggested that pictures of all the previous City Mayor's would be a great addition to the chambers.

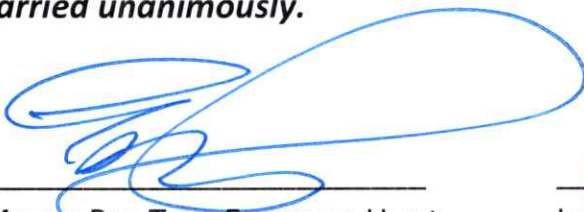
Councilman Baker commented that there has been no reports of shots fired in District 6 since Chief Tony Flowers had security cameras installed in the area. Prior to that there were 2-3 instances of shots fired weekly. He thanked Chief Flowers for this effort.

Mayor Pro Tem Emerson Hunt:

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt thanked everyone for coming, and encouraged them to get outside and exercise.

12. 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 Pro Tem Emerson Hunt



Lakesha Y. Shannon, City Clerk