

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING 6:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL
TUESDAY JULY 10, 2012

A regular meeting was held by City Council on July 10, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. over which Mayor Rodney Berry presided. Council members Ronald Atkinson, Ralph Atkinson, Betsy Atkinson, Odessa Gregg, Bobby L. Davis and Michael Baker were present. Also present were Mr. Alan Ammons, Mrs. Patricia Brown, Ms. Pam Jones, and Attorney Robert Lee.

Mayor Berry called the meeting to order. Councilwoman Gregg gave the opening prayer and Mr. Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Berry welcomed all guests and the press (Hometown TV and the Star/Enterprise).

Councilman Bobby Davis made a motion to move number 6 – Resolution for Bethea Transport, to number 4 on the Agenda, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker, Councilman Ralph Atkinson inquired as to whether the Agenda could be changed during the meeting. Councilman Davis responded that nothing could be added to the Agenda, but the order could be changed if Council voted to do so, with which Attorney Lee concurred. Motion carried.

Councilman Davis, along with Mayor Berry, presented a Resolution of Appreciation to Bethea Transport thanking them for their generous contributions to the residents of Marion. City Clerk Pam Jones read the Resolution, and Bethea Transport owner Veronica Bethea, along with many of her family of employees, accepted the Resolution to much applause from the galley.

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to accept the minutes from the regular meeting on June 12, 2012 and the special meeting on June 25, 2012, seconded by Councilman Bobby Davis. Motion carried.

Ms. Ashleigh McKinney and Ms. Nancy Kay from the Coastal Conservation League (CCL) addressed the Council on I-73 and the CCL's opposition to it. The CCL is trying to get support for an alternate route which would incorporate the existing corridor of Hwy 38 and Hwy 501. Their goal is to move away from I-73 which has no funding plan, no permits and not likely to be built any time soon, and toward upgrading corridor Hwy38/501 and meeting the needs of an inland port. The southern part from I-95 to SC-22 has been dubbed the "Grand Strand Expressway" and would cost \$150 million, which is 1/10th the cost of I-73. They explained that research had been conducted in numerous entities and locations and the research was favorable to upgrading corridor Hwy 38/501 rather than building I-73. Mayor Berry commented that he disagreed with most of the presentation,

but that it was important to keep an open dialogue because you may find out information you didn't know. He then thanked the Coastal Conservation League for their presentation.

Mrs. Debbie DeMarco was present to request a Resolution for the B. N. Duke Scholars Summer of Service. She explained the tremendous impact this program had on the community, as well as the impact it had on the students who worked here during the summer. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to approve the Resolution of Appreciation to the B. N. Duke Scholars Summer of Service program as presented, seconded by Councilman Bobby Davis; motion carried. Mayor Berry commented that they had been a valuable asset in every way and hoped to have them back.

Councilwoman Odessa Gregg made a motion to request to a Resolution for William Humphrey for his accomplishments in Marion, including being awarded a scholarship to Brown University, seconded by Councilman Bobby Davis; motion carried.

Regarding setting a date for the Re-Districting Workshop, Councilwoman Gregg commented that after reading the information and saw that it was approved by the S.C. Budget Control, she questioned why we needed a workshop. Mayor Berry responded that there may or may not be City Council members that would want to adjust their district and that's all part of a workshop. Mayor Berry commented that we have a say as Council, about our particular districts, but not him as he is at-large, and any Council member could question their district. Councilman Davis stated that the only thing he sees in this is that he looked at all plans, the first plan was not correct and Mr. Bowers' staff went back and made corrections. From what Councilman Davis read into the report and through the Justice Department, he (Mr. Bowers) followed all the guidelines, and Councilman Davis doesn't see where we could make more well adjustments; that is his personal opinion and wanted to make certain that he expressed that. Councilman Davis further stated that he (Bowers) followed the guidelines of the Justice Department and we have the last say as to whether we approve it or not, but thinks if we start trying to adjust, we're going to run into some problems. Councilman Baker commented that he agreed with Councilman Davis. Councilman Ralph Atkinson commented that he would like to have a workshop as he had some questions. He may not change anything, but does not know if he is fully bought in to the plan as presented. Mayor Berry asked for dates that would suit Council to hold the workshop. Councilman Baker commented that whatever date suited other members as he did not see the need for the workshop and did not plan to attend. The workshop was set for Tuesday, July 24 at 9:00 a.m. in Council chambers.

Regarding bids on 4 separate projects, Mr. Ammons stated that on the Driveway Replacement project, Palmetto Paving was the low bid. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to accept the bid from Palmetto Paving, seconded by Councilwoman Betsy Atkinson; motion carried. Regarding

the Sidewalk Replacement Project, the low bid was from Benton Concrete. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to accept the bid from Benton Concrete, seconded by Councilwoman Atkinson; motion carried. Regarding the N. Withlacoochee Drainage Project, the low bid was from King Construction. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to accept the low bid from King Construction upon their accepting the contract, seconded by Councilwoman Atkinson; motion carried. Regarding the Bobby L. Davis Blvd. Drainage project, the low bid was received from Herrington Construction. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to accept the bid from Herrington Construction, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ammons updated Council on the tremendous amount of damage during the recent storm. The City's cost estimates for the overtime is \$8,500 and the 2 contractors is approximately \$20,000 for a total of \$28,500 as of today. This does not include costs for tree replacement or the 150,000 cubic yards of debris. Mayor Berry thanked the City of Dillon and the City of Mullins for coming to our aid and the tremendous amount of help they provided, including equipment and man power. The Street and Sanitation Departments worked 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. last week, but are back on regular schedule. Mr. Ammons will keep Council updated. Councilman Ronald Atkinson asked if we had gotten the new truck and was informed by Mr. Ammons that we had not, but we did get the truck that Council had approved repairs for.

Mr. Ammons asked that the summer schedule for the Street and Sanitation Departments be changed to 6:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to approve the schedule change, seconded by Councilwoman Atkinson; motion carried.

Mr. Ammons would like to schedule a Sensitivity Training Workshop. Trinity is prepared to come before the next regular meeting and need 30 – 45 minutes. Mr. Ammons and Mayor Berry met with some consultants regarding the Stormwater Study Workshop and they would like to make a presentation to Council. Due to Councilman Ralph Atkinson's concern over adding an item to the agenda, Mr. Ammons will discuss and ask for approval of the Sensitivity Training Workshop at the next regular meeting. Mr. Ammons will apprise Council of the dates for the Stormwater Study Workshop.

Anthony Mason from the Sanitation Department was named June Employee of the Month and presented with a gift certificate.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney Robert Lee had no update at this time.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Departmental Reports are included in each Council member's packet. Copies of the Police Report are provided for the public and placed on the lectern. Chuck Wiegert reminded everyone about the Farmer's Market located on Main Street, downtown Marion, Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF CITY OFFICIALS/COMMENTS FROM CITY COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Councilman Baker commented that District 6 will have their community party on August 18 from 2 – 7 p.m. at Pop Dorsey Park. Dianne will put the announcement in the Swamp Fox Scene, along with Star-Enterprise coverage.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson thanked the City employees for all their hard work cleaning up after the storm and also thanked Dillon and Mullins for their assistance.

Councilman Davis also thanked the municipalities for their assistance with storm clean up. He thanked Mrs. Smith and staff of the RISE program for the golf clinic they provided for between 89 and 100 kids, some of whom picked up a golf club for the first time. Regarding the community gardens, Councilman Davis commented that beans and peas are ready; and stated that as Council members and Mayor, they are asking that people **use** what's there, it is not to be sold. If you plan to go to the garden, please call Pam at City hall and let her know so we will know who's going and what they're doing. Councilman Davis commented that we need the help of the community in working these gardens and we would like for you to enjoy the fresh vegetables.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Councilwoman Atkinson stated that she would like to donate some of her FoxWatch money to Watsonia Recreation Center for the back-to-school bingo, as this would serve the kids in her district. Mayor Berry responded that she should get with Patricia about how much she wanted to donate.

Councilwoman Gregg thanked Mrs. Smith and Chief Smith for the outstanding and hard work they are doing with the young people in Marion and was very impressed to see the number of children and parents out today on such a hot day.

Mayor Berry commented that he also thought it was a wonderful thing and the kids are what it's all about. Mayor Berry also commented on the success of the David Bennett Football Camp recently held in Marion, courtesy of Anderson Brothers Bank, and hopes people are getting excited about what we're doing for the kids. Mayor Berry stated that the City of Marion received an achievement award from MASC on the efforts put into education through our Swamp Fox Education Center. Dianne will reprint the article in the City newspaper so everyone will be able to read it there.

Councilman Davis inquired as to the \$600 that was designated to each district, was it not designated for the districts' cookout or party? Councilman Davis stated he was not against that in any way, his question to the Attorney is "since this is a budget item that we're talking about, should we go

back and say this money can be used for other activities, other than the party itself. Can we do that as a Council?” Attorney Lee commented that we probably need to because some of Council offered to shift some of their funds to other districts. Councilman Ralph Atkinson commented that he offered to shift some of his to feed the children in the summer program. Attorney Lee stated that needs to be clarified, otherwise we’ve created restrictive funds. Mayor Berry commented that originally it was for FoxWatch, which incorporated our block parties and it is for the districts. Councilman Bobby Davis made a motion that the Council members from each district have the authority to transfer some of those funds to back-to-school programs. He commented that was what Mr. Atkinson, Mrs. Atkinson and Mrs. Gregg planned to do, as well as himself. Councilman Davis wanted to make sure he was doing what was right before moving forward. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ralph Atkinson; as a point of discussion, Councilman stated that when he did his, the whole Council went along with it. Councilman Davis commented that it was a budget item and was not voted on, so we need to vote on it to make sure it’s legal. Attorney Lee suggested that Council make a motion that the \$600 allocated to each district be spent at the discretion of the Council member for that district. That way it’s not tied to a particular project and Council members can give it to different districts if they so desire. Councilman Ralph Atkinson thinks there should be some restrictions, it shouldn’t be used for just anything that anybody wants to do. The program he donated to had been supported by the City in the past and was discussed with full Council present and Councilman Atkinson further stated that his district didn’t need the FoxWatch money and he was willing to donate his full amount to the summer feeding program. Council agreed it was a good program and we needed to fund it but didn’t have it in the budget, it was just a matter of shifting from one budget item to another program that was worthwhile. Councilman Bobby Davis amended the motion to say that the \$600 allocated to each district be spent at the discretion of the Council member for that district, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Berry invited County Council Chair Elista Smith, County Councilman John Atkinson, the County Attorney and County Administrator to join the Executive Session where Marion County Contractual Matters consisting of E-911, Fire Protection, Weeds & Vegetation Fee, and C & D Landfill would be discussed. Councilman Davis made a motion to enter Executive Session seconded by Councilwoman Atkinson; motion carried. Mayor Berry asked the audience to excuse themselves from Council chambers as the Executive Session would be held in chambers due to the number of participants. Mayor Berry stated that the door would be unlocked at the end of the Executive Session if anyone wished to come back in. Mayor Berry stated that no action was taken. Councilwoman Atkinson made a motion to enter Open Session, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; motion carried. Mayor Berry commented that he would like to appoint a committee to work with the County on the issues discussed and expedite this with a meeting this week, which he would also attend.

Mayor Berry asked that Mr. Ammons spearhead this committee and also would like for Councilman Ralph Atkinson and Councilman Bobby Davis, as they have seniority, to serve on the committee, to which they agreed. Councilman Baker made a motion to pay the County the money that is due for E-911 (\$16,682.50 for F/Y 11 and \$9,265 for F/Y 12), seconded by Councilman Davis; motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Councilwoman Atkinson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, motion carried.

Mayor Rodney Berry

City Clerk Pam Jones

Taped July 24, 2012