

**AGENDA**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL**  
**TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2013**  
**PUBLIC HEARING – FIREWORKS ORDINANCE**  
**6:15p.m**

**MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**6:30 P.M.**

A Public Hearing for regarding the *Fireworks Ordinance* was held by City Council on Tuesday, March 12, 2013 in the Council Chambers at City Hall at 6:15 p.m. over which Mayor Rodney Berry presided. Council members Ronald Atkinson, Bobby Davis, Ralph Atkinson, Betsy Atkinson and Odessa Gregg were present. Councilman Michael Baker was absent. Also present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Pam Jones, City Attorney Robert Lee and several residents.

City Administrator Alan Ammons commented that the Fireworks Ordinance had been under discussion for several weeks in regards to changing some dates and times that fireworks would be allowed in the City and proceeded to read the suggested dates and times. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reading will take place in the regular meeting. Councilman Ralph Atkinson asked that the press, City paper and City signs notify the public at least a week before fireworks would be used. Regarding fireworks at FoxTrot, Mr. Ammons stated that he would continue to let Council know ahead of time and get their permission. With no further comments from Council or the public, Mayor Berry adjourned the Public Hearing.

At 6:30 p.m., Mayor Berry called the regular meeting to order and Councilwoman Gregg gave the opening prayer. Mr. Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance. All Council members were present and the media (Hometown TV) and those in attendance were welcomed by Mayor Berry.

Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson made a motion to accept the minutes from the Regular Meeting on February 12, 2013, seconded by Councilwoman Betsy Atkinson. Councilwoman Odessa Gregg asked that the minutes reflect that she was not at that meeting due to attending an MASC conference. The motion carried.

Ms. Latoria Lewis, Director of the Marion Boys & Girls Club, gave a brief update on programs and projects the club has been involved in. Approximately 65 children per day participate and more are expected during the summer months. Volunteers are always welcome. Jamal Woodberry, who was named the club's Youth of the Year, has also been awarded Youth of the Year in the Pee Dee Area and will compete in the state competition this April. Mayor Berry commented that Ms. Lewis has been an asset and is very appreciative of the job she does at the Club. Mr. Decar Brown, Area Director, thanked the Council and the City for their support and stated that this is a tremendous partnership and that the Club is very excited about the coming upgrades at Grice's.

Ms. Dionne Vance presented a program regarding computer courses that she would like to start at the Swamp Fox Higher Education Lab at CD Joyner. Ms. Vance commented that some courses are designed for beginners while others would be more advanced. There will be a reasonable charge, which will vary according to which courses are chosen. Councilman Bobby Davis made a motion to allow Ms. Vance use of the computer lab at CD Joyner, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried. Mayor Berry commented that the City would help with getting the word out with our various media outlets.

Regarding the request for a budget adjustment (Recreation Department), Mr. Ammons stated that the transformer (installed in 1972) that controls the William H. Johnson fields and the football field at Watsonia has gone out. The estimate from Progress Energy to repair this is between \$8,500 and \$12,000. Mr. Ammons requests that Council authorize Mrs. Brown to make necessary adjustments in the budget and for Council to approve repairs by Progress Energy. Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to approve the budget request as presented by Mr. Ammons, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

As to the plans and specs for Grice's pool and Grice's center, Mr. Ammons presented the final drawing/plans for the pool and center and DHEC has approved. This program has been fast-tracked and advertising will begin next week. Councilman Ralph made a motion to give approval for plans and specs to be bid out for Grice's Center, seconded by Councilman Bobby Davis; motion carried.

Regarding the CTC Funds – Drainage Project, Mr. Ammons stated that due to the magnitude of work required by SCDOT to make repairs at Grice's track field, SCDOT requested that we go CTC and ask for funds. In talking with another contractor, Mr. Ammons stated that the cost

should be around 20% less than the original estimates. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to allow the Mayor and Administrator to move forward and to apply to request funds from the CTC to complete the project as regards to the outfall ditch and the area to Liberty Street, seconded by Councilman Bobby Davis; motion carried.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to approve 2<sup>nd</sup> reading on **ORDINANCE 13-01 FIREWORKS, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION 7-2014 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE CITY OF MARION, RELATING TO AUTHORIZED DAYS FOR USE OF FIREWORKS, SO AS TO REVISE THE DAYS ON WHICH FIREWORKS ARE AUTHORIZED**, seconded by Councilwoman Betsy Atkinson; motion carried.

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Ammons stated that the City-County Cleanup would be scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup> thru April 22<sup>nd</sup> pending Council's approval. Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to participate with and follow the County's guidelines, seconded by Councilwoman Betsy Atkinson; motion carried.

There is some concern from Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church regarding a street name change. Bethlehem Street was previously Evans Street and the church would like it to revert back and allow them to rename Jackson Street as Bethlehem Street. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to refer this to the Planning & Zoning Committee and Council will take action when it is referred back to them, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

Regarding the Insurance Policy Revision, Mr. Ammons commented that Council has approved in the budget \$225 per retiree per month for the Medicare Supplement Part D drug card. Several of our retirees use a different type billing and we would like to branch out to a different drug card company; it is more expensive, the City's part would be capped at \$225. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to give approval as recommended by the Administrator and the Personnel Director, as regards to vested health care change, to remove the list bill stipulation so retirees can choose an alternate Part D drug plan to be reimbursed for the premium expense, limiting it to the cap of \$225. Councilwoman Betsy Atkinson seconded the motion; motion carried.

New Parking has been installed, striped and trees planted at Grice's track field. County will proceed with track as soon as the heavy equipment is no longer in use and all the debris has been hauled off. Handicapped and Parking signs will be in place at the track next week.

Sanitation Department employee Hezekiah Brown was named *February Employee of the Month* and was presented with a gift certificate.

## **CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE**

Attorney Lee had nothing to report at this time.

## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

Departmental reports are enclosed in each Council member's packet. Chuck Wiegert announced that the Farmer's Market would re-open April 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. on Main Street in the same location as last year.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY OF CITY OFFICIALS/COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR**

Councilman Michael Baker had no comment at this time.

Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Councilman Bobby Davis had no comment at this time.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Councilwoman Betsy Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Councilwoman Odessa Gregg commented that Mr. Frank Askins at 604 Euclid Street had spoken with her about the abandoned house at the rear of his lot (on Lodge Street). When Councilwoman Gregg attended an MASC conference, there was much discussion on abandoned buildings in an area and how it gives a negative effect to any businesses that may wish to locate there. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Ammons said he would personally look at the building and before the meeting today he told Councilwoman Gregg that he had looked into it and would get back in contact with her. Councilwoman Gregg passed around pictures of the property for Council's perusal. Mayor Berry asked if the property in question had multiple owners to which Mr. Ammons responded that it was a "life estate" and the owner, who lived out of town, was contacted last year on clearing the lot. The house is not secure and is a nuisance to the neighborhood.

Mayor Berry commented on the status of PDRTA and the possibility that it would be closed in several cities if we don't step up in some way. In the summer, as many as 2 buses per day take folks to the beach where they are employed. We currently fund them at \$2,000 and the need from Marion County and its municipalities is \$40,000. Next Thursday, area Mayors and Administrators will discuss a solution. We have all asked for it to be adjusted in the next budget, but PDRTA says the needs are more immediate. Mayor Berry announced that the City of Marion has been awarded the *Silver Palmetto*, due to our collaboration with the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. Councilwoman Gregg asked for clarification on the funding for PDRTA and how we are aligning ourselves to help with that. Mayor Berry commented that we had to find more money as they need \$40,000 and we will talk to people in the state, also some of our allies and we have got to get it done.

Councilwoman Gregg asked if this would be put in the newspaper for our citizens to know what is going on and what we are doing to help, as many of them depend on PDRTA to get to their jobs. She went on to say that so many people are suffering and is hoping that something can be done about economic development, that we can get some help here in Marion County.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Patricia Leonard gave a presentation on a Village Renaissance Grant that an area in District 4 (Godbold to Liberty Street) would like to pursue. It would help provide security lights and cameras in some areas, crime watch assistance, informative literature, preventive programs, storm water improvements and housing improvements with handicap accessibility and demolition of dilapidated property. The City must initiate the grant, which will be done through PDCOG and the City will be required to contribute 10%, which will be approximately \$2,500 toward this grant. Council members were in agreement that this would be a good project to move forward with and the Village Renaissance Grant request will be placed on the agenda to be voted on at the April 9 meeting and where this money is coming from will be addressed. Mayor Berry thanked Mrs. Leonard for her presentation.

Ms. Pamela McRae expressed her concerns about abandoned houses and safety concerns, including insufficient street lights and the crime rate as have been told to her by residents in District 3. Unemployment has a lot to do with crime; will anything be done as far as the City and Economic Development working together or finding a strategic plan to build/rebuild Marion to rid ourselves of some of the areas that need to be cleaned up? Will there be a way to address Council with issues or concerns that we have and be able to get an answer that night, or that the issue be addressed at the next meeting? Mayor Berry commented that this is not a question/answer format, but on a monthly basis about 200 citizens come to see him directly and their problems are taken care of right away. Mayor Berry further commented that with our agenda we have to conduct business here, so it's not out of any malice or disrespect, but when people want answers they don't wait, they come see Alan or myself and we address them. Ms. McRae responded that with all due respect, her calls and others were not always returned, and is there something that can be done about that? Mayor Berry encouraged her not to wait 30 days if there is a problem, but to come see him. We're in business of addressing problems very quickly. Mayor Berry thanked Ms. McRae for her comments.

Mr. William Campbell was present to address issues around City Hall. It seems when we express our concerns, suggestions or comments, we don't get any response and we should get answers. Because this is an election period all of this process could be reversed under another leadership. Mr. Campbell asked Mayor Berry for an answer on why our Police Chief (Smith) was dismissed. Mayor Berry responded that was a legal matter and he could not respond. Mr. Campbell stated that this

election will bring forth leaders that will sit in those seats and bring forth the sentiments of our citizens and our feelings and concerns, because we are deeply concerned with the welfare of the City of Marion, for the good.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Councilwoman Betsy Atkinson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Ralph Atkinson; motion carried.



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Mayor Rodney Berry

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City Clerk Pam Jones

Taped March 12, 2013