



MINUTES

City Council Work Session

4:00 PM - Tuesday, January 18, 2022

City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

The City Council of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met in informal work session, Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 4:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Grant Harper, Steve Jensen, Colette Atkins, Nicolas AbouAssaly, Will Brandt, Sara Mentzer, and Randy Strnad

ABSENT: None

Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation Regarding Funding Request for Additional Sponsorship Funds (Marion Chamber of Commerce / Marion Arts Festival)

Chamber of Commerce President Jill Ackerman provided information regarding the history of Marion Arts Festival which is held the third Saturday in May. Marion Arts Festival Director Deb Bailey stated the request is for an additional \$4,000 to help with the publication of an insert in the Cedar Rapids Gazette. They would like to add four pages to the insert that would highlight the work being done in Uptown Marion and highlight Marion businesses. Mayor AbouAssaly asked how many years the festival has been around. Bailey stated this will be the 30th annual festival. Mayor AbouAssaly spoke in favor the request. Council Member Mentzer asked about additional promotions regarding the event. Bailey stated a third of the budget is used for promotions. Council Member Atkins asked about the hotel/motel budget. City Manager Ryan Waller stated he will work with Finance Director Lianne Cairry to provide that information. Council Member Harper asked if there was planning in place to make sure all impediments are worked out prior to the event. Ackerman stated they have been in contact with staff from the Engineering Department.

AGENDA

Council discussed the agenda items for Thursday night's meeting with no action taken.

Mayor AbouAssaly relinquished the gavel to Mayor Pro Tem Brandt at 4:40 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Brandt presided over the meeting.

Council discussed the agenda items for Thursday night's meeting with no action taken.

Mayor Pro Tem Brandt relinquished the gavel to Mayor AbouAssaly at 4:41 p.m. Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

Council discussed the agenda items for Thursday night's meeting with no action taken.

OTHER DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION

Discussion Regarding Emergency Planning

Fire Chief Deb Krebill provided information regarding the current emergency plan and the need for an update. Training is currently scheduled for Linn County agencies on February 12th. Council Member Strnad asked what the training will be about. Krebill stated each jurisdiction is responsible for their own emergency plan before requesting resources. The training will be outlining what is required by each entity.

Presentation and Direction Regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

Assistant to the City Manager Amal Eltahir provided an overview of the above referenced funding program, eligible use categories and Marion's guiding principles. Eltahir provided information regarding the community input received regarding how funds should be used. Council Member Jensen stated money could be used for premium pay for essential workers and asked why Marion didn't have any allocations for that purpose. Eltahir stated we did not have any related costs association with the COVID response. Council Member Jensen asked why Linn County and Cedar Rapids are asking other entities to submit their needs for funds. City Manager Ryan Waller stated it is related to being an entitlement versus non-entitlement entity. Council Member Atkins asked if there was any funding planned to be put towards the non-profit and impacted industry assistance category which was highly rated on the community survey. Eltahir stated there was not. Community Development Director Tom Treharne provided more information regarding the partnership with East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG.) Council Member Brandt asked about the funds recommended to be used for transit. Waller stated this will be addressed during the next presentation regarding Marion Transit. Council Member Brandt asked about funding recommended for sanitary sewer improvements. City Engineer Mike Barkalow stated there are alternate projects that funds could be used for if Marion is awarded funds from the Linn County ARPA Program. Waller stated staff will look for entities that would fall into the non-profit or impacted industry assistance category and will look into using the funds similar to the local option sales tax breakout of 70% for street and sewer construction, reconstruction, repair and improvements and 30% for community projects consisting of any general or essential purpose.

Presentation and Direction Regarding Marion Transit

Community Development Director Tom Treharne reviewed the current transit service in Marion and a proposed on-demand option. Council Member Atkins asked what the cost for riders would be. Kelzye Bedwell with NTS stated they are looking at charging \$3.00 per ride. Bedwell stated Cedar Rapids Transit is currently free however they are planning to charge a fee similar to NTS. Council Member Atkins asked if current rides have indicated an interest. Bedwell stated she is working with Associate Planner Kesha Billings on a transit survey. Council Member Jensen stated the on-demand option sounds like a more flexible program. Council Member Strnad asked about high-volume times and how ridership is managed. Bedwell stated NTS will utilize the company Via to schedule rides and that system is very flexible. Council Member Mentzer asked if the service is only app based. Bedwell stated rides can be booked by phone, email or through a website. Council Member Mentzer asked how people in the community will be aware of this service. Bedwell stated there will be outside support to help with promotion including

branding on the vehicles. Council Member Brandt asked where buses would be housed and who would be responsible for maintenance and operations. Bedwell stated the buses, maintenance and operations would be handled by NTS. Council Member Jensen asked about the size of the buses. Bedwell stated they are looking at 14 passenger, wheelchair accessible buses. Council Member Atkins asked how the service will be promoted to non-residents or visitors. Bedwell stated the City of Arlington, Texas has been a great case study as they have moved to a completely micro-transit system. Council Member Harper asked about travel east of Highway 13. Treharne stated this on-demand service would travel anywhere in City limits.

Library Building Project Update

Library Director Bill Carroll provided an overview of the project timeline and stated the anticipated opening date is April or May 2022 depending on Library Board discussions. Foundation Director Amy Geiger provided an update regarding the capital campaign for the project and stated there is \$292,679 left to raise. Geiger thanked Mayor AbouAssaly for his contribution in helping raise over \$200,000.

Discussion regarding Community Design Standards

Community Development Director Tom Treharne discussed current design review processes.

Mayor AbouAssaly relinquished the gavel to Mayor Pro Tem Brandt at 6:09 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Brandt presided over the meeting.

Treharne continued the discussion of current site plan review and design review processes.

Mayor Pro Tem Brandt relinquished the gavel to Mayor AbouAssaly at 6:11 p.m. Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

Treharne provided information regarding a recommended process going forward. Council Member Atkins asked if drive-thru standards would be included. Treharne stated that would be under a separate ordinance. Council Member Atkins is in favor of moving forward. Council Member Mentzer spoke in favor of design standards and how it relates to wellbeing. Council Member Harper was also in support. Council Member Jensen asked if this would be based on zoning. Treharne stated these would be baseline design standards for the City. Council Member Brandt shared concerns that he does not want to push people out of Marion because design standards are too high to attract new development.

ADJOURN

Mayor AbouAssaly adjourned the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Nicolas AbouAssay, Mayor

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk

The undersigned City Clerk of Marion, Iowa certifies that the minutes shown immediately above were published in the Gazette on the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk