



MINUTES

City Council Work Session

4:00 PM - Tuesday, May 6, 2025

City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

The City Council of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met in informal work session, Tuesday, May 6, 2025, at 4:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

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

ABSENT: None

Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

PROCLAMATIONS/OATHS

Proclamation - Building Safety Month (May 2025)

Councilmember Strnad read and presented the proclamation referenced above to Building Official Gary Hansen.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation regarding Community-wide Wayfinding System Master Plan

Communications Manager Amber Bisinger and Kene Okigbo with RDG Planning & Design provided an overview of the process and proposed plan as referenced above. Bisinger stated that this plan will be phased across several years and funding will be evaluated as part of the CIP process. Councilmember Harper stated he likes the cohesiveness of the plan. Mayor AbouAssaly stated he would prioritize entrance and gateway signs. He stated specific destination signs would be secondary in his opinion.

Presentation regarding the Lowe Park Arts & Environment Center and Greenhouse Plans

Parks Director Seth Staashelm and Paloma Chapman with RDG Planning & Design provided an overview of the design plans for the addition at Lowe Park. Councilmember Jensen stated we need to take into consideration that the parking lot may eventually be expanded. He also shared concerns about parking for events and routing people around the building to the amphitheater. Councilmember Harper stated the storm shelter should be looked at with and without FEMA funding in case there are changes to the availability of funding.

OTHER DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION

Discussion and direction regarding Monarch Research's Planting Forward 2.0 and

Native Oasis programs

Parks Director Seth Staashelm provided information about the above referenced plans and asked Council if they would like staff to work with Monarch Research. Council was in support of developing a formal proposal.

Discussion regarding Native Planting and Landscaping on private property

Deputy Parks Director Brent Neighbor provided an overview of the proposed ordinance and outlined its purpose. Councilmember Miskimen asked how residents will know what properties are enrolled in this program when calling about potential violations. Neighbor stated a part of this program includes a no cost permit. He stated staff will be in regular communication with permit holders about maintenance and be able to communicate with residents that submit complaints.

Presentation regarding the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget amendment

Deputy Finance Director Brian McKenzie reviewed program areas of the budget and outlined each of the areas where an amendment is needed.

Mayor AbouAssaly left the meeting and relinquished the gavel to Mayor Pro Tem Miskimen at 5:15 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Miskimen presided over the meeting.

McKenzie continued to review the program areas of the budget and outlined each of the areas where an amendment is needed.

Discussion regarding a proposal concerning vehicle decals

Councilmember Miskimen spoke about his request to add 988 suicide and crisis lifeline decals to City vehicles. Councilmember Harper agreed with normalizing this number. Councilmember Jensen and Brandt were in support of this idea.

Discussion and direction regarding Walk Your Wheels signs for bicycle regulations

Public Works Director Mike Barkalow provided an overview of the Walk Your Wheels plan including what the signs would look like and placement of the signs.

Update regarding Tower Terrace Road Project

Public Works Director Mike Barkalow provided an update on the Tower Terrace Road Project including the four sections remaining, total cost and next steps.

UPCOMING AGENDA REVIEW

City Council review of the May 8, 2025 agenda - Council discussed the Thursday agenda with no action taken.

CLOSED/EXEMPT SESSION

Motion to adjourn to closed session regarding real estate transactions as permitted under Section 21.5(1)(j) of the Code of Iowa and an exempt session regarding collective bargaining as permitted under Section 20.17(3) of the Code of Iowa. (Two separate measures)

Moved by Jensen, seconded by Harper, to adjourn to closed session as stated above. City Attorney Kara Bullerman stated that she has reviewed the subject matter to be discussed and found it to be an appropriate topic for closed session. A roll call vote was taken.

Approved unanimously

Moved by Jensen, seconded by Mentzer, to adjourn to exempt session.
Approved unanimously

ADJOURN

Mayor Pro Tem Miskimen adjourned the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
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