

August 12, 2020

The City Council of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met in special session, Wednesday, August 12, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. in the council chambers of City Hall with Mayor AbouAssaly presiding and the following council members present: Harper, Atkins, Jensen, Brandt and Strnad. Absent: Gadelha.

Mayor AbouAssaly read a proclamation declaring a state of emergency regarding the August 10, 2020 storm. The proclamation also declared a curfew from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Moved by Jensen, seconded by Harper to support the proclamation. Council Member Harper asked if this curfew was consistent with Cedar Rapids. Police Chief Mike Kitsmiller confirmed it was. Council Member Harper asked how it affects people who need to access essential services. Police Chief Mike Kitsmiller said accessing essential services between those hours is okay. This would be to help prevent people from out of town or people looking at all the damage. All in favor, motion carried.

Public Services Director Ryan Miller provided an update to Council regarding cleanup efforts to date, traffic signal concerns, damage to public services facility and efforts going forward. Staff is currently working on getting heavy equipment and out of state contractors in to help with cleanup. They are also working on preparing a site to accept all the storm debris. Council Member Brandt asked if there will be several rounds of storm debris pickup as there is not much space in the right-of-way. Ryan confirmed there would be multiple rounds and asked residents to be patient as this will take multiple months to clean up. Ryan stated they are maintaining garbage collections and asked residents to keep storm debris and yard waste in separate piles. Council Member Strnad asked about collection of spoiled food. Ryan stated spoiled food can be set out with garbage.

Council Member Jensen asked how communication will be made to residents without access to internet or power. Mayor AbouAssaly stated Facebook seems to be accessible intermittently. He recommended updates continue being made there as well as City website. Council Member Strnad recommended to keep in touch with radio stations. Library Director Hollie Trenary stated that library staff can be stationed throughout City to share information. Fire Chief Deb Krebill recommended gas stations or grocery stores would have high traffic.

Fire Chief Deb Krebill provided an update to Council regarding the Fire Department response. Chief stated they received over 100 calls on Monday, over 40 calls on Tuesday and several calls already on Wednesday. Normally the department receives 12 calls on average a day. Fire Chief Deb Krebill wanted to remind residents to make sure fire hydrants are accessible. She also reminded residents about safety when using candles.

Library Director Hollie Trenary provided an update to Council regarding damage to the Library. She stated about 20% of collection is lost due to water damage. First floor and basement is wet and daylight is coming through portions of roof. The current goal is to dry out books in place but the building will need to be gutted. Library staff is currently investigating setting up a temporary location that will be used until new Library is complete.

Building Official Gary Hansen provided an update to Council regarding damage assessments. Building inspectors and fire officials are currently going through commercial buildings and assessing damage. Buildings are being tagged based on severity of damage. An application has been created to track total damage which will be used when reporting to FEMA. Gary estimated over 80% of City structures will be inspected.

City Manager Lon Pluckhahn stated that the water is safe to drink in Marion. He also stated they will be working with the City insurance provider to submit claim.

Police Chief Mike Kitsmiller provided an update to Council regarding damage to the Police Department building. He stated overnight shift personnel has been doubled.

City Manager Lon Pluckhahn asked if Council would consider postponing Council meetings for a week. Council Member Harper asked if another special work session could be held to keep Council informed. Moved by Strnad, seconded by Brandt to postpone the August 18 and 20, 2020 work session and regular session to August 25 and 27, 2020 and to hold a special work session on August 19, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Council Member Harper asked what the plan was in regards to open burning. City Manager Lon Pluckhahn stated another proclamation could be declared to ban recreational burning.

Mayor AbouAssaly thanked City staff for all their efforts in response to this storm. He reminded everyone that we will get through this.

Council Member Strnad thanked City staff as well as the public. He witnessed a lot of citizens helping each other. He asked the public to have continued patience while we recover from this storm.

Mayor AbouAssaly adjourned the meeting at 11:26 a.m.

Nicolas AbouAssaly, Mayor

Attest:

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk

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

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk