



MINUTES

City Council Work Session

4:00 PM - Tuesday, January 5, 2021
City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue

The City Council of the City of Marion, Linn County, Iowa met in informal work session, Tuesday, January 5, 2021, at 4:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 1225 6th Avenue, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Grant Harper, Colette Atkins, Nicolas AbouAssaly, Will Brandt and Randy Strnad

ABSENT: Steve Jensen and Rene Gadelha

Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

AGENDA

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

Council Member Gadelha arrived at 4:04 p.m.

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

Mayor AbouAssaly relinquished gavel to Mayor Pro Tem Atkins at 4:57 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Atkins presided over the meeting.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Atkins relinquished the gavel to Mayor AbouAssaly at 5:00 p.m. Mayor AbouAssaly presided over the meeting.

OTHER DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION

Human Resources Director Kirsten Fisher provided an overview regarding compensation philosophy statements. This is a statement that explains the "why" behind employee compensation. Statements allow for consistency in application, a mechanism to attract talent and a means to retain employees and drive engagement. Some decisions to be made include if a pay for performance model is best and if the City wants to lead the market, be at market, or lag the market for pay. Other consideration items for creative compensation strategies include signing bonuses, discount programs, flexible schedules

and more. City Manager Lon Pluckhahn stated staff would like feedback from Council on if there is anything that they feel needs to be included. He stated Marion is different than it was 15 years ago and promotional opportunities aren't available like they used to be. The City needs to be more creative so that we can attract and keep people. Council Member Harper stated there are some standard models to gauge and evaluate how sophisticated we are in managing compensation. Once we understand our capabilities, that may point us to one or more of the strategies that was brought forward. These items are related but staff must use caution and not look at any one in isolation. Kirsten agreed and stated whatever is implemented must be scaled for growth. Council Member Strnad agreed and also stated he is not a big fan of the pay for performance model. He also stated he'd like to see what the compensation plan is before giving direction on compensation philosophy. Kirsten stated staff is not looking for feedback tonight but still wanted to present an overview of what discussions will be going forward. City Manager Lon Pluckhahn stated this will be a long process and we also still need to look at what is feasible for the City. Council Member Strnad stated we also need to take into consideration the strength of the budget. Council Member Atkins stated as we move forward, staff should look at more than just salaries and look at the entire package. The City needs to provide benefits that are different than pay increases and may be different by individual and what matters to them. Council Member Gadelha stated some people have different needs and want more salary or some may desire more offered for professional development, and some may want more flexible schedules or remote work. She would like to have a menu of how employee's compensation is put together. She also stated when Council looks at budget every year, each department has a different pool of money for professional development and she would like more consistency across the board. Kirsten agreed and said compensation is very personal and what is important to people varies. Kirsten also stated the City used to provide total compensation statements to employees and she would like to start that back up again so employees can see their total compensation and not just their base pay.

Council Member Gadelha left the meeting at 5:26 p.m.

Community Development Director Tom Treharne provided information regarding non-conforming structures and uses. He stated questions have come forward because of the rezoning process and structures that received damage from derecho. Tom reviewed the purpose of non-conforming uses, building and structures, and provided definitions and standards of applicability. The concern that has been brought up in recent weeks is related to damage that would exceed 50% of the total cost to reconstruct. However, in the Zoning Code it states that the Zoning Board of Adjustment will hear cases for reconstruction of non-conforming structures under special exceptions. Council Member Strnad asked if rezoning can diminish the fair market value of non-conforming property. Council Member Brandt stated that it could. Assistant City Attorney Ryan Tang stated the two codes do not sync up and would need to be reviewed. Council Member Harper stated once valuation language is balanced between codes it does appear that there is a path to resolve some of the issues brought forward at previous meetings. Tom confirmed and stated when a case comes to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, public interest and benefit is considered. Council Member Brandt asked if the Zoning Board of Adjustment could review expansion requests. Tom stated the code was only for reestablishment of businesses. Council Member Strnad asked if a request that came forward was for a self-

storage project that did not have outside storage and damage was incurred to the storage facility, if they chose, could they convert that damaged portion to outside storage and still meet the standards in the code. Tom stated outside storage is considered an accessory use so it would only be accepted if that zoning district allowed that type of use.

City Manager Lon Pluckhahn provided a COVID-19 Update. He stated they are waiting to see if there is any post-holiday increase in cases. If there isn't, staff will look to move into phase 2 of the reopening plan which would include more in person meetings and allowing people in City buildings by appointment only. Council Member Harper asked how Linn County is tracking the more transmissible variant of COVID. Lon stated he hasn't received an update but anticipates it will be included in the call on Friday. Mayor AbouAssaly asked if there has been discussion regarding making the vaccine available to first responders. Lon stated it is available already.

CLOSED/EXEMPT SESSION

Motion to adjourn to exempt session regarding collective bargaining as permitted under Section 20.17(3) of the Code of Iowa.

Moved by Atkins, seconded by Harper, to adjourn to exempt session as stated above. Assistant City Attorney Ryan Tang stated that he has reviewed the subject matter discussed and found it to be an appropriate topic for exempt session. A roll call vote was taken.

Approved unanimously

ADJOURN

Mayor AbouAssaly adjourned the meeting at 5:57 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 Marion Times on the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Rachel Bolender, City Clerk