

**City of Marine City
City Commission
January 15, 2015**

A regular meeting of the Marine City Commission was held on Thursday, January 15, 2015, in the Fire Hall, 200 South Parker Street, Marine City, Michigan, and was called to order by Mayor Skotarczyk at 7:00 pm.

After a prayer offered by Pastor Wenturine, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Skotarczyk.

Present: Mayor Skotarczyk; Commissioners Avery, Hendrick, Lovett, Meli, Simpson, and Turner; City Manager Gabor; and, City Clerk Baxter.

Absent: None

Communications

The following communication was received:

- USDA Rural Development Bonds ~ Audit Review

Motion by Commissioner Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Lovett, to accept the communication and place it on file. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Public Comment

John Sapienza, 426 Broadway, said he is very unhappy with the direction Marine City is taking. Mr. Sapienza said he has been treated unfairly by the Marine City Police for 15 years. He said that if Chief Tillery were to become the new City Manager, perhaps he would bring the issues with Marine City Police to the forefront.

Pat O'Brien, 251 N. William, said the City Manager and Police Chief jobs should not be combined as there would be a conflict of interest. He asked why the City Manager's job wasn't classified as part-time years ago to save the city money.

Tim Solack, 613 N. Main Street, said he chose to live in Marine City and was encouraged with the direction the city was heading. Mr. Solack said he would like to see the City

Manager's position filled with someone who is qualified. He said now is not the time, as Marine City has turned a corner, to place an unexperienced person in this position.

Melissa Blanchard, 622 Alger, said the two most important positions in the city government should not be combined into one. Mrs. Blanchard said that by saving a few dollars now, what kind of position does it leave the city in when they need to replace the City Manager or the Chief of Police.

Kathy Vertin, 420 S. Water Street, asked the Commission what their vision was for the future of Marine City. She said by combining the City Manager and Chief of Police positions doesn't show the residents and business owners the Commission's vision of future growth.

John Stewart, 341 S. Water Street, thanked City Manager Gabor and the City Commission for their contributions to the community. He said there was good momentum going and a buzz about Marine City. Mr. Stewart said he believes the City Manager position should be a full time position as it benefits residents and business owners.

Robert Blanchard, 622 Alger, thanked City Manager Gabor for all the work he has put into the city. Mr. Blanchard said he doesn't believe that the City Manager and Chief of Police positions should be combined as Chief Tillery has a full plate already. He said this is a great opportunity to choose someone to move Marine City forward into its next chapter.

Tom Vertin, 420 S. Water Street, said Marine City should "notch it up" in its next chapter. By combining the City Manager and Chief of Police positions, would "notch it down" going forward. He said Marine City needs to continue the momentum.

Approve Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Lovett, seconded by Commissioner Turner, to approve the Agenda, as presented. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Approve Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Lovett, seconded by Commissioner Avery, to approve the Minutes of the Regular City Commission Meeting held December 18, 2014, as presented. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Consent Agenda

The following Consent Agenda items were presented:

- Departmental Activity Reports
- Marine City Area Fire Authority ~ Run Report & Activity Report
- Special Event ~ Marine City Music Festival

Motion by Commissioner Lovett, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, and place it on file. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board Vacancies

TIFA Board

The City received an application from the following resident:

- Charles Seigneurie ~ 224 N. Elizabeth

Motion by Mayor Skotarczyk, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to appoint Charles Seigneurie to the TIFA Board for a term expiring June 30, 2017. Ayes: Skotarczyk, Avery, Lovett, Meli, Simpson, Turner. Nays: Hendrick. Motion Carried.

Historical Commission

The City received applications from the following residents:

- Jennifer Urick ~ 253 S. William Street
- Raymond Urick ~ 253 S. William Street

Motion by Commissioner Lovett, seconded by Commissioner Hendrick, to appoint Jennifer Urick to the Historical Commission for a term expiring December 31, 2016, and Raymond Urick to the Historical Commission for a term expiring December 31, 2015. Ayes: Skotarczyk, Hendrick, Lovett, Meli, Simpson, Turner. Nays: Avery. Motion Carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution #01-15 SAW Grant Designee

The proposed change to the existing Resolution was to amend the authorizing designee from John Gabor to Mary Ellen McDonald. Motion by Commission Simpson, supported by Commissioner Avery, to approve Resolution #01-15, as presented. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Audit Engagement Letter ~ McBride-Manley & Company, PC

Motion by Commissioner Lovett, seconded by Commissioner Turner, to approve the Audit Engagement Letter with McBride-Manley & Company, PC for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, not to exceed \$28,360. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

City Manager Position ~ Discussion

Commissioner Hendrick said that she would prefer to leave the two positions separate and go outside to look for a replacement. She said she doesn't want the conflict that combining the positions would do. She said it would shift the focus to the conflict instead of where it should be.

Commissioner Simpson said that he sees a problem procedurally for such a drastic change. With these two very important positions, he said a better process should be implemented. He suggested a vetting of applicants which would prove candidacy and qualifications.

Commissioner Lovett said that the decision poses a dilemma as they haven't been able to look at next year's budget. Procedurally, she would like more time to investigate full time vs. part time, but would ideally like to have both positions full time. Commissioner Lovett made the recommendation that Chief of Police, Don Tillery, would be an excellent candidate for Acting City Manager.

Commissioner Meli said that the Chief of Police position requires a lot of time and he doesn't see how the two jobs could be combined. He said he also saw a conflict of interest if one person was doing two jobs. Mr. Meli said he strongly opposes the combination of City Manager and Chief of Police positions.

Commissioner Turner said it was not a question of Chief Don Tillery's ability to do the job as he has proven himself. He said John Gabor has set the bar high and he doesn't see how

the two positions can be combined. He further said he hopes Chief Don Tillery would help them out in the interim, but he cannot support combining the two jobs.

Commissioner Avery said he was leaning towards keeping both jobs full time. But, because money is an issue in the city, we should look at the budget before making a decision. He said he wouldn't like combining the jobs, but it would be a financial decision. He said we like the idea of having full time jobs, but can we afford them?

Mayor Skotarczyk said the combination of the City Manager and Chief of Police positions initially sounded like a good idea with our current money situation. But he said, they were here to represent citizens, business owners and property owners of the city who want more out the City Manager, not less. Mayor Skotarczyk said that his vision for the city is "pro-growth" and he wants to do everything he can to make the city prosper.

Chief Tillery said that he appreciated the support and respect of the Board and agreed with the objections of combining the City Manager and Chief of Police positions. He said he was not interested in the City Manager position, but would step up and help the Board out in any capacity.

A discussion ensued on how to conduct a search for a new City Manager. It was agreed that a sub-committee would be formed to do an initial cut and work with the Acting City Manager. The sub-committee is to consist of Mayor Skotarczyk and Commissioners Lovett and Hendrick. Mayor Skotarczyk made the suggestion that a citizen-at-large be chosen, with a human resources background (if possible), to work with the sub-committee.

Mayor Skotarczyk then made a recommendation of appointing Chief Don Tillery as Acting City Manager due to his budget experience, his familiarity with departments within the city, as well as with on-going projects.

Motion by Commissioner Lovett, seconded by Commissioner Turner, to go forward with appointing Chief Don Tillery as Acting City Manager.

Commissioner Hendrick said it was a tough job being a Chief in a small community. People either love you or hate you. To avoid any conflicts, she said she can't support the recommendation and made the recommendation to look outside for Acting City Manager.

A discussion ensued on the process to go outside for an Acting City Manager. Commissioner Turner said all avenues should be explored with such an important decision.

Commissioner Simpson said he is in favor of the motion as Chief Tillery is familiar with the staff and wouldn't have to be brought up to speed.

Commissioner Turner said the only objections he heard are due to combining the positions, not Chief Tillery, personally. He said he supports the recommendation.

Commissioner Avery said he supports Chief Tillery as Acting City Manager because of his experience, especially since we are coming up on budget time.

Mayor Skotarczyk said he supports appointing Chief Tillery as it would cause the least amount of interruption to business in the city.

Commissioner Lovett said Chief Tillery has done an excellent job budget-wise in his department and has the city in his heart. She said he has her full support.

Commissioner Meli said he would like to table this discussion until the next meeting.

At this time, Mayor Skotarczyk read, out loud, Resolution #02-15 that was prepared by City Attorney, James Downey, and would appoint Donald G. Tillery as Acting City Manager.

Motion by Commissioner Lovett, seconded by Commissioner Avery, to adopt Resolution #02-15 which would appoint Donald G. Tillery as Acting City Manager for the City of Marine City. Roll Call Vote. Ayes: Skotarczyk, Avery, Lovett, Turner. Nays: Hendrick, Meli. Motion Carried.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS

Disbursements

Motion by Commissioner Lovett, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to approve total disbursements, including payroll, in the amount of \$640,851.57, as presented. Roll Call Vote. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Motion by Commissioner Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Lovett, to accept the Preliminary Financial Statements for December, 2014, and place them on file. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Gabor provided updates on the following items:

- Completed ISO audit for fire protection which qualified City of Marine City for better property insurance rates.
- WINS up and working; putting fliers in water bills and will soon start alerts for the city.
- Last City Commission meeting; final day with City of Marine City to be January 30th, taking a job with Hamtramck. Mr. Gabor said he enjoyed serving the City of Marine City for the past 7 ½ years.

Commissioner Privilege

Commissioner Turner thanked the citizens who attended the Board meeting for coming and expressing their concerns and opinions. He also thanked City Manager Gabor for his service and said that Water Street is a testimony to what he has done for Marine City.

Commissioner Avery also thanked City Manager Gabor and said he has seen a big change in Marine City. He also said that it was a pleasure to see useful, courteous discussions from citizens.

Commissioner Hendrick asked everyone to keep in mind the budget workshops are coming up soon and they need input from Marine City residents and business owners. She also thanked John Gabor for his service to Marine City.

Commissioner Meli thanked City Manager Gabor and said it was a pleasure being on the Board with him. He also said it was great to hear voices from the community.

Commissioner Simpson said it says a lot about Marine City that they were able to have polite opinions on the topic of combining the City Manager and Chief of Police positions. He reminded citizens that budget workshops were coming up which would pose difficult decisions. Mr. Simpson praised City Manager Gabor for his service and said he was a great fit for the City of Marine City.

Commissioner Lovett said it was great to see all the citizens in attendance which portrayed democracy in action. She thanked City Manager Gabor for always being open to questions and guidance, as well as keeping the city on a fiscally sound note.

Mayor Skotarczyk thanked City Manager Gabor and said he enjoyed working together with him over the years. He urged residents and business owners to attend upcoming budget workshops to hear about what the city is planning, what its vision is, and what it is spending money on. He said the Board needs their input.

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Hendrick, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, to adjourn at 8:41 pm. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen Baxter

Kristen Baxter
City Clerk