

MINUTES OF A CONTINUED MEETING OF MARION CITY COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 19, 2011

The Continued Meeting of the Marion City Council was called to order September 19, 2011 at 6:30 P.M. by Mayor Butler. The City Clerk was advised to call the roll. Those present were:
Commissioners Rix, Rinella, Goss, and Patton and Mayor Butler.

Minutes of the September 12, 2011 Regular Meeting were approved with the addition of placing the name of John Goss on the re-election committee, who at the September meeting had presented Mayor Butler with a flag that had been flown over the United States Capitol.

Mayor Butler thanked all the people for coming to the Council Meeting on behalf of the Youth Football Program. Mayor Butler stated that when other towns in the football conference refer to the Marion youth football players and coaches as showing un-sportsmanlike conduct and blackball the Marion teams from play, it is un-tolerable. Mayor Butler went on to state that until this situation is straightened out, he is in favor of the City canceling any funding for the football program. Mayor Butler told the audience that anyone who wanted to was welcome to speak, but there would be no mention of names and this was not to be a personality contest. Mayor Butler said, "We are only here to clarify some of the criticism that the City has been receiving from these other communities". Mayor Butler informed the audience that later the Council would be meeting with the Recreation Board, then invited the parents and coaches to step to the microphone to make their comments heard.

Clayton Olsen, head of the Youth Football program was first to speak. He stated he had been involved with the football program for seven years. He said many of the issues that other towns have with the Marion teams have been explained to him in different ways. Mr. Olsen stated that two years ago the Marion teams were removed from the "Conference" as was Carbondale. The years prior to being removed from the conference, the Marion teams had played in the championship games three consecutive years. Carbondale had also played in the championship games those final years. Massac County was also removed, but for cheating. Mr. Olsen said he didn't believe any of the Marion players had ever cheated or played dirty in a game. Two years ago when the Marion teams were thrown out of the conference, Mr. Olsen found out after talking to the President of the Conference, Danny Gold from Murphysboro, that both Marion and Carbondale were asked to leave the conference because both had bigger and more talented players and a larger group of boys to draw from. The Marion program has always accepted every kid who wants to play football with the premise being, to first have fun, then to learn football and sportsmanship, then getting the boys ready for high school football. Every year the boys are talked to about sportsmanship and fair play. Mr. Olsen said the Youth Football program would never tell a child to cheat in a game or to applaud an injury. Mr. Olsen said none of the boys or the coaches do that and if anyone did do that, he would be extremely embarrassed. Mr. Olsen went on to say he had been embarrassed recently by the allegations that had been brought against the Marion Youth Football program, but the goals of the Marion Football League are to teach the young men football, and making them better men in this community. Since the first talk with the president of the conference, Mr. Olsen said he had heard three or four reasons why Marion was kicked out of the conference, none of them flattering to the Marion program, but he also said he didn't believe any of those allegations were true. Unfortunately with football, there is a lot of ego. As far as this recent Benton game goes, these young men went out on the field to play football. A lot of those same young men are here tonight. Mr. Olsen said he saw nothing from the Marion players that would be considered forceful. There was some pushing and shoving. There were some players ejected from both sides. Neither side can argue that. But these guys have practiced hard and they play hard, but they were not out there cheating. These boys have come a long way in their short football career already and to have someone try to bring them down because of me. Mr. Olsen said that's what he thinks this trouble is all about. Some are out to get rid of a certain couple of coaches. Not just in our program but in other programs. Mr. Olsen said he thought it was reprehensible. We say all the time, the kids come first. It's not always true, especially in other programs.

Mr. Olsen said he has been with this program a long time, coaching for five or six years prior to taking over the supervisor portion of the program. Mr. Olsen said he has coached a lot of kids in this program and he didn't think any of them would tell you that we taught them to cheat, only to love the game.

Mayor Butler told Mr. Olsen he appreciated hearing from him.

David Norris, a parent, said a lot of the parents are trying to call the game instead of letting the referee do his job. Mr. Norris said the kids are here in this football program to learn football. If the parents get out on the field and interfere with the referees calling the game, the refs are losing control of the game. These kids are not cheating. Our kids play hard football but they are not trying to cheat. Some of the parents get mad if their kid gets called for a penalty. The parents need to stay out of it.

Commissioner Rinella stated the parents need to remember football is a contact sport.

Mayor Butler told the audience that he had received a letter from a Benton woman telling of how one of the one hundred pound Benton players was thrown to the ground by a two hundred pound Marion player. She didn't think that was right. Then she went on to say in the letter that the coach on the side line was high fiving the player who had knocked the boy down. Mr. Norris said the Marion boys did not pick the Benton kid up and sling him down. They got a hold of him by his jersey and tackled him. After all football is a contact sport. Mayor Butler said the Benton woman had the perception that the Benton boy was treated rougher than was needed. And then she saw the parents and coaches on the side line high fiving one another. She didn't think that was right. Mr. Norris said he would guarantee if your child is out there on the field and makes a good play, as a parent you will be proud of your child and will be high fiving everyone around you. Those boys that played at Benton had gone for two years without winning a game, so if they make some good plays, they were proud of the plays and themselves. These boys just went to Kentucky and got beat. There wasn't anyone in Kentucky saying they played un-sportsman like. Right now there is a guy from Herrin standing in this room. His team played Benton last Saturday and he said it was the worst game they ever played because of their conduct. Mayor Butler said if everybody is engaged in misconduct, he thought they should take about a year off. Mr. Norris said he didn't think that would help. He thought the biggest thing is the kids have to learn to play football and if you get tackled you get tackled. There will be broken arms and other injuries. We don't like the injuries, but they do happen. That's football. When you hit, you have to put the other person down. If you are going to go out there and just give them a love tap, you don't need to be out there playing football.

Mayor Butler said he realized that football is a contact sport, but when a seventh grade team is expelled from playing with the other teams, something is wrong somewhere. Mayor Butler said he knew some of the coaches have been highly criticized and that the same coaches have been highly praised. The question Mayor Butler has is, "Do we in this program have some kind of overseeing board that could control the kind of activity that we have been talking about? When over exuberant parents get on the field instead of letting the referee do his job what are you going to do with the parents?" Mayor Butler said, "It seems to me that somebody has to come up with a plan. You need to have some kind of a board that you can take these problems to and get them worked out. The recreation board had been very lenient in their control aspect. This is not good. It's not good for the town, and it's not good for the kids. And certainly, it has not been good for the various relationships with the communities. There has to be a solution. The ultimate solution is for the City to withdraw the funding to the recreation board." Commissioner Rinella said that would just be punishing the children. Mayor Butler said if we can't get these problems straightened out that would be the ultimate action. Mayor Butler thanked Mr. Norris for his comments.

Sam Olsen was the next to speak. He stated that he had been a coach in the football program for seven years. In reference to the Benton game, he was the defense coordinator for the Marion team. He said he remembered the play that the woman in the letter to Mayor Butler was talking about. He apologized that

the one hundred pound boy got hit by a two hundred pound lineman, who happens to be sitting in the front row here tonight. He made a spectacular tackle. As a defensive coach, Mr. Sam Olsen said he was excited about that tackle, not because he tackled a one hundred pound kid, but because he tackled the kid carrying the football. Mr. Olsen said it is not up to him or even the Mayor to judge who carries the ball. If the boy pays his fees and shows he has the courage to run up and down that field, then he has to accept the consequence that maybe he will get tackled. That particular boy had gotten tackled a few times that day. Being a defensive coach, Mr. Olsen said, he doesn't cheer for touchdowns or completed passes, but when one of his players makes a good defensive play he does get excited. Mr. Olsen said he probably was the coach the woman was talking about who was high fiving on the sidelines. He said there was nothing dirty about the play. We do not teach dirty play. We play whistle to whistle, sideline to sideline. One of the Marion boys was thrown out of the Benton game for incidental face mask. Mr. Olsen thinks what is absurd is allowing the other teams to tell Marion how to run their league, just because Marion is a bigger and better team. Mr. Sam Olsen also thought some of the problems that have surfaced recently are directed as personal attacks on him. Mayor Butler thanked him for his comments.

Malcom Berry said his son plays for the team. Mr. Berry said he had two good things to say about these coaches. Mr. Berry said his son was not at the Benton game because he had too much homework. Coaches have always said the homework comes first. His son actually missed the game because of the coach's speech about homework. Second thing is, Mr. Berry said his son told him today, if these two coaches are removed, he is quitting football. Mr. Berry went on to say that he works for the Department of Corrections at Harrisburg which only houses troubled kids. Mr. Berry asked, "If you do away with this football program, what will all of these young boys have to occupy their time". Mr. Berry said he would hate to see any of these young people end up like the ones over at the correction center at Harrisburg. Mr. Berry doesn't want to see the football program cut and hopes that these coaches are not removed. He said he doesn't have anything against any of the coaches what so ever. If some of the people have personal problems and grudges against some of the coaches, the bottom line is, it is the kids who are going to suffer and get hurt from having the football program removed.

Paul Taylor. Mr. Taylor stated his son is on the team. His son was flunking school. He got on the football team and that is the only thing that is keeping him going. He is keeping his grades up so that he can play football. Football is what is conditioning a lot of these kids to achieve at school so they can be better kids. Mayor Butler said he appreciates that football has given the boys incentive to improve their grades so that they can play football. If you teach the boys the right way, the boys won't end up in trouble and over at the correction center at Harrisburg as Mr. Berry was saying. This is why the City has financed this program for years. This is the first time we have had this kind of problem and apparently it has been a problem for at least two years. Whenever a conference kicks three schools out of a twelve school conference, it is not good. When parents are unable to control their emotions, that is not good. Mayor Butler said he certainly appreciated Mr. Taylor's comments.

Beau Spell, coach from the Herrin Youth Football Team spoke to the Council. Mr. Spell said he came to this meeting tonight to show solidarity to these fellow coaches. The truth of the matter is, Herrin misses Marion not being in the Conference League. Marion is a good team. He said he knows nothing about the incidents spoken about tonight. However, his Herrin team just played Benton Saturday night and that was the worst game he had ever been involved with. He said he got cursed out. The referees let so much rough housing go on, that Herrin called the game. Herrin beat the Benton team 40 to 20, so it wasn't because Benton was beating the Herrin boys. The problem was the Benton coaching, the Benton parents and their referees. Mr. Spell said he couldn't speak for the Benton/Marion game, but after just witnessing the Benton/Herrin game, with the way the coaches and parents behaved, he would say that Benton was more at fault than Marion. Mr. Spell said the Benton game was disgusting. Mr. Spell said he thought it was very important that the Marion Youth Football continue, because this is for the youth. He wants to see Marion's football league continue and succeed and come back into the conference. He wants to be

able to play Marion. This program needs to continue so they can continue to mold these young men to be ready for the high school program. This seventh and eighth grade football feeder program is vital to the high school football program. If you take that away, you are harming the high school program and as we all know, football is king in Southern Illinois. Mr. Spell said he didn't know the coaches personally, but as far as he has seen, they have run a good program. Mr. Spell's suggestion to the Council is to do whatever you can to continue the program and make it better. Mr. Spell said, for him, football got him out of Chicago and got him a scholarship in Southern Illinois. He just wants to lend his support to the Marion teams. Mayor Butler thanked him for his words.

Clayton Olsen told the Council the Youth Football does have a five person board that talks with the coaches and also about incidents that have happened. Mayor Butler asked if the board talked to the Recreation Board about what is going on. Mr. Olsen replied they had talked to them a few times but mostly like earlier in the Spring, he had come to the Council to ask to use the City property for a practice field. Mr. Olsen said he didn't even know Jim Powless was the president of the Recreation Board. Mayor Butler said that was part of the problem. They were going to have to have better communications between Football board, the Recreation board and the City council. The Football Board is going to have to have a structure that means something and works. Mayor Butler said, "Much has been said about the incident that happened in Benton, but that happened two years after Marion was kicked out of the conference league. So what we are talking about, other communities have felt we have had a problem in Marion for sometime. This is what we are trying to address." Mr. Olsen said the larger schools, Carbondale and Herrin, want to play Marion, but the conferences won't let them. Mayor Butler said, "We are not going to resolve all these problems this evening. What we have to recognize is that there have been problems and the problems need to be addressed. One of the problems is there has been a lack of structure and dialogue between the football board and the recreation board. Frankly, I'm appalled that the head of the football board didn't even know the Chairman of the Recreation Board." Commissioner Patton asked, "How is the Football board appointed or formed?" Mr. Olsen answered he believed the board was appointed by Dennis Blankenship when he was over the Recreation Department and he always reported to Dennis. Mayor Butler asked if he knew who took Dennis Blankenship's place. Mr. Olsen answered, "Yes, Morgan Fuqua and that since she had taken control they had talked several times." Mr. Olsen said Morgan had done a great job and he didn't really have a problem with the Rec Board. Commissioner Rinella asked if the Youth Football had by-laws? Mr. Olsen replied that they did. They are on their web site. At the beginning of the year the parents and coaches all have to sign that they have a received a copy of the by-laws.

Mayor Butler allowed one more person to speak concerning the football. Darrel Kirk who had met with the Council a few weeks ago concerning his being removed as a coach asked to speak. Mr. Kirk told the Council that the board is made up of coaches; the coach of the seventh grade, coach of the fifth grade, etc. There needs to be a separation between the board and the coaches. The problem he sees with it is the coaches on the board are appointing coaches. If you happen to be a friend or liked by the coaches, then you can coach. Mr. Kirk said he didn't think he was treated fairly in this deal of being dismissed from being a coach. As a coach, some of the parents asked him where the scoreboard was that was purchased last year. Several of the parents had questions concerning that, so Mr. Kirk said he went to the Recreation Board. The Recreation Board did not know that the Football Board had purchased a scoreboard last year. Mr. Kirk said every since he had talked to the Recreation Board, it has become a personal thing to try to get rid of him and his coach. Mr. Kirk said it was stated that before the football season started, that Clayton Olsen said he didn't want us coaching this year because he felt like we back jumped him. Mr. Kirk said he thought he was doing what was right by going to the Recreation Board and the Recreation Board had no idea what was going on with the football program. Attorney Steve Green interjected to, "Please do not use names. Everyone was told before the meeting this was not about calling names." Mr. Kirk said when he had come to the Council the week before he did not name any names, but since that time he had been personally attacked on the computer, he had been put on topics.com by other coaches,

and he has been personally attacked on Facebook. It has turned into a personal slander on him that involves him and his kids. People are saying hurtful stuff and it is not even about coaching anymore. All Mr. Kirk said he wanted was to be re-instated as a sixth grade coach, but he has a letter that says he was let go because of an altercation with a referee. Mayor Butler told Mr. Kirk that he appreciated his comments.

Mr. Sam Olsen asked to speak again. Mayor Butler told him to keep it brief. Mr. Olsen asked for everyone to look around the room and see all the young men who have come out tonight to show support for this program and for him and the other coaches. Mr. Olsen said after all has been said, the Council should not base their opinions on what he said or what someone else said. It should be based on what is best for all of these young people.

Mayor Butler told everyone he appreciated everyone being there. Mayor Butler said he thinks this could be a very good program if it were properly structured and properly administered. From what we have heard tonight, it has been neither. There has to be dialogue between the program and the recreation board. If the Recreation Board is not going to do their job, then the Council will appoint a new Recreation Board.

Tony Windsor said everyone let these kids down; the parents let the kids down, the coaches definitely let the kids down, the Recreation Board and it comes all the way back to the Council. Mr. Windsor said he wasn't pointing a finger at the Council but he thought we have all let the kids down. Mr. Windsor said this program needs to stay alive.

Mayor Butler said he appreciated his words and he thought that was a good point to end on.

Commissioner Goss asked how many coaches were present at this meeting tonight. Mayor Butler said it appeared to be at least 3 coaches were present. Some of the other coaches were at their own football practices.

Commissioner Rinella asked to make a statement to let everyone know that the Council is not out to dismiss this football program. Coach Martin from the Marion High School contacted Commissioner Rinella today and told him he fully supports the Youth Football program. Coach Martin wanted it known that the success of the Youth Football program is directly tied to the success of his Varsity Football program. Coach Martin also wanted to pass along, that he would be glad to help in any way that he could to resolve these issues.

Mayor Butler said he thought they had gone about as far as could go with the coaches and parents tonight. The Council will be meeting with the Recreation Board later this evening, there being several things to discuss with them. Mayor Butler told everyone, "We are going to get this thing put together and we are going to do it right." Mayor Butler thanked everyone for coming.

Malcom Berry told the Mayor and Council that if the Council does decide to change the board, he would like to throw his name in the hat to be considered. He said he has only lived in Marion for two years, so it is not like he has not ties to any of the coaches.

Mayor Butler said anyone who wants to stay for the rest of the Council meeting is welcome to stay.

Mrs. Linda Holman was present at the meeting. Mayor Butler told her the amended Taxi Cab Ordinance was not ready yet, but should be ready by next Monday.

Treasurer Steve Hale stated that last week the Budget Officer Ordinance No. 2376 was discussed. There were some concerns. Those areas were addressed and changed in the ordinance. Mayor Butler said he had two Commissioners indicate to him concerns about the ordinance, so the Council is not ready to move on the ordinance at this time.

Ed Davis appeared before the Council on behalf of the Veterans on Parade Committee, the Veterans who marched, walked, and supported the veterans on the sidelines. He wanted to thank the City Council for the support the City gave to their great parade. Mr. Davis said they look forward to next year with a bigger and better parade yet.

Glenn Clarida stated on August 17, 2011 bids were taken for the Northeast Sewer project. Bids were solicited before we actually had the permit from IEPA, at the direction from IEPA because we had been told if all the paper work is not in by the end of September, we would lose the 25% grant and 1.25% interest loan. Glenn went on to say, "So we pushed it out with some 12" sewer and some 8" sewer. The IEPA then said we needed 10". Because there was a change in the plans, IEPA said we had to re-bid that section." Wiggs Excavating of Benton had the low bid the first time. This time the low bid came from KPS, Inc. at \$1,291,282.00 with Wiggs bid at \$1,308,551.30. Glenn told the Council KPS, Inc. is now located in Marion. They still have to furnish their bond and certificate of insurance. This contract cannot be officially approved until IEPA approves all the documents. The documents have to be in Springfield no later than Friday. Commissioner Rinella said he understands that the project had to be rebid, but he hated to take the work away from Wiggs over such a small amount since they are a very competent contractor. Commissioner Rinella said as Water Commissioner, he was not particularly satisfied with KPS, Inc. work on the North Court Street Project. The project was supposed to have been done in December of last year and five months later, it was still not finished. Commissioner Patton said he was very unhappy with the ways things turned out, but the City is in a position where we don't have a choice. We have to live by it. Commissioner Patton said he will be in close contact with the Sewer Superintendent and Glenn's office on a daily basis to make sure that the job is done according to spec and on time. Mayor said since we are dealing with Federal money, we have to go with the low bidder. Commissioner Patton moved to accept KPS, Inc. bid of \$1,291,282.00 with Commissioner Goss seconding the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE COMMISSIONERS RIX, GOSS, AND PATTON AND MAYOR BUTLER VOTED YES, WITH COMMISSIONER RINELLA VOTING NO.

Commissioner Rinella wanted to bring to the attention of the public that some of our Marion Water customers are still being targeted with letters asking them to purchase insurance to cover their water lines. Commissioner Rinella wanted the public to know that in no way does the City condone or sponsor this insurance program. Commissioner Rinella said it is ludicrous for anyone to even consider such insurance. The City of Marion does not sell insurance and does not endorse this insurance. Mayor Butler thought the City should run an ad in the newspaper telling the people to ignore such letters and advertisements when they receive them.

Mayor Butler announced that when he was at was at the Illinois Municipal League Conference in Chicago last week, he was elected as one of several Vice Presidents of the IMLC and that he looks forward to working with the Municipal League.

8:15 P.M.

Commissioner Patton made motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel and Real Estate and Litigation matters. Commissioner Rinella seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTED YES.

9:00 P.M.

Commissioner Rix made motion to go out of Executive session and reconvene the Continued meeting with Commissioner Goss seconding the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTED YES.

David Powless spoke to the Council about his years as the Supervisor of the Youth Football program. He told the Council that one of the coaches on the board needs to be accredited. David also told of a program from the state of Maine called "Sports done Right ". David said it's a good program that shows how a sports program should be set up and ran. David also said some states require all participants in sports to watch a 15 minute video on sportsmanship. Mayor Butler thanked Mr. Powless for coming in to speak to the Council.

Commissioner Rix presented an estimate from Barnett Electric to get the lights on Williamson County Parkway fixed and turned back on. The estimate is for \$12,449.50 but that is only an estimate. Commissioner Rix made motion to accept the estimate from Barnett Electric up to \$15,000.00 for the work on the lights at Williamson County Parkway. Commissioner Rinella seconded the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTED YES.

Commissioner Goss moved to accept the recommendation of Street Superintendent John Bradley to purchase and replace certain guard rails at various places around the City at a price of \$18,180.00 with Commissioner Rinella seconding the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTED YES.

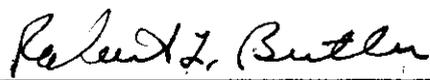
Commissioner Patton presented the recommendations from the Zoning Board to approve the five foot rear set back zoning variance for Zeller Construction at northwest corner of North Fourth Street and Orchard Street; and to approve the ten foot side yard set back variance for Mike Ponder at Radcliffe and East Reeves Street. Commissioner Patton made motion to accept the recommendations of the Zoning Board with Commissioner Rix seconding the motion.

ON ROLL CALL VOTE ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTED YES

Commissioner Goss moved to adjourn the meeting with Commissioner Rinella seconding the motion.

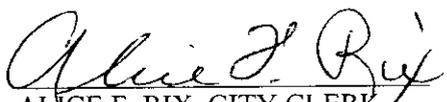
ON ROLL CALL VOTE ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTED YES.

Meeting adjourned 9:35 P.M.



ROBERT L. BUTLER, MAYOR

ATTEST:


ALICE F. RIX, CITY CLERK