

**MARENGO CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Marengo Council Chambers
132 E. Prairie St.
Marengo, IL 60152
September 27, 2010**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Donald Lockhart called the Regular Meeting of the City Council to order at 7:01 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Lockhart, assisted by David Oakes (Boy Scouts of America) led everyone present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

David attended the meeting this evening as a requirement for his communications badge.

ROLL CALL

Present for this meeting were Mayor Donald B. Lockhart; Aldermen Carole Bartman, Corey Brackmann, Michael Smith, Mike Secor, Todd Hall and Steve DiMaria. Also present were City Administrator Deborah Nier, City Attorney Carlos Arevalo, Chief of Police Martin Podosek, Building Commissioner Jayson Shull, Superintendent of Public Works Jim Craney, and Assistant City Administrator Joshua Blakemore. Present as well was Dane Checolinski with the EDC, and Bob Bradbury representing the Marengo Fire Department and Rescue Squad. Absent this evening were Alderman Erik DeBoer and Pat Signore.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Nancy Sheperd – 14208 Perkins Road – Woodstock, Illinois.

“I am a part-time dispatcher with the Marengo Police Department. I just wanted to address the City Council about the out-sourcing of the Marengo Dispatch Center. Over the weeks, we have heard several alternatives in who is going to be handling the City of Marengo – the Marengo Fire Department, the Rescue Squad, the Union Police and Fire Department. We have heard a lot of money saving options but we haven’t really talked about how the level of service might change for the City of Marengo. You really can’t put a dollar amount on the wealth of knowledge and services these 9 dispatchers that work at the Marengo Police Department, provide to the community, and what kind of service that might be lost. I just want to kind of touch on the points on a more personal note. Of the 9 dispatchers that we have employed, two of these employees were paramedics and they served for over 5 years on the Marengo Rescue Squad. We have two bi-lingual dispatchers that help us with the Hispanic community that comes in when there is a language barrier. They also help on the 911. They help the officers when they need assistance during traffic arrests or things of that nature. We have 3 dispatchers that are multi-agency level experience; meaning they have worked in several different departments so they bring that knowledge into the City of Marengo. We have one that

has actually served on the City Council. We have several dispatchers that are top rate in their organizational skills, and they keep that Dispatch Center running very smoothly. Several have grown up here and have lived in the Marengo area for most of their lives. All of these dispatchers have knowledge of the community and the citizens and the work that we do is a very vital part of this community. Dispatchers at the present time have the ability to concentrate their efforts on the well being of the citizens of Marengo, the areas of Union, the fire department, the police department, and EMS. If this Dispatch Center is out-sourced, those serviced by the Marengo dispatchers will now need to compete for the time and attention with several other agencies if we go to another department. The dispatch staff has only recently been asked to provide ideas for cost saving measures to help reduce its operating costs and we are still working on those ideas. We would like to keep the Dispatch Center here in Marengo. I do not know if we are going to be voting on this tonight or not, but we are asking you to postpone that until we can go through our options and try to help you guys balance this and make this worthwhile to keep this here in Marengo.”

Ronald Foster – 615 S. State Street – Marengo, Illinois.

“I want to address the Dispatch problem. I was 15 years a paramedic on the Marengo Rescue Squad. We ran probably 500 – 600 calls, and a lot of those were out in the country. You get out and away from this community, and into the country, a lot of the places are not marked. Now you rely on your dispatcher to get you to the proper location. I know that everybody says – well we have GPS. Well, I don’t know about your GPS, but mine would put me a half a mile from where I want to be. The Dispatch is very critical to the people in this community. You may not think it is, but I will tell you right now that if you out-source, you are putting the welfare of the people of this community and this area, in jeopardy. I also live for 6 months down in Florida. In the area that I live in, they did the same thing; they went to our-source. Since they went to our-source, it has cost 2 lives – 2 different years. One of them did hit the national papers, and that was a woman that was kidnapped out of her home, and was in the car and they were traveling down the streets, she was banging on the back windows, and people were calling it in. But because the dispatcher did not know the area they were in, they could not relay that information to the police department. The other one was a man that was going down the road. He spotted a truck that was hit against a pole. A man was laying alongside the road. It was in a desolate area and he didn’t know if it was for real or some was – you know – just setting this up. So what he did was he called it in. But he couldn’t give the actual name of the road – it was Sunset or Sunview or something like that – but he could give them a turn-by-turn description to get there. But because the dispatcher was not familiar with that area, they did not get the police there at all – or anyone. The man that called it in went back the next morning – at 9 o’clock in the morning, and the body was still lying alongside the road. Because the dispatcher did not know the area. So what I am saying is that if you outsource this and you send it to – like our phone company sends everything over the India – but you send it to somebody else, the people in this community will end up paying dearly for it, and that will be on this committees shoulder’s.”

Mike Bigalke – 213 N. Taylor Street – Marengo, Illinois.

“I for one would like to see the dispatching stay in Marengo. I know sometimes it is a dollar and cents thing – but dollar and cents versus lives – I think lives would come before with the welfare of the citizens. I know that it is always a hard decision to make. I for one would like to see our dispatching stay in Marengo. I think the service would be a lot better than out-sourcing it.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

Alderman Carole Bartman requested a correction to the Regular Meeting Minutes on page 3 under “Old Business” should read: McHenry County Sheriff currently handles Marengo’s wireless calls.

Alderman Mike Secor made a motion, seconded by Alderman Todd Hall, to approve both sets of minutes (September 13, 2010 Regular Meeting Minutes and September 13, 2010 Special Meeting Minutes) with the correction made to the Regular Meeting Minutes as noted above. The motion passed with an aye vote by Aldermen: Brackmann, DiMaria, Hall, Bartman, Smith and Secor.

Mayor Donald Lockhart deviated from the agenda.

8a. – Ad hoc Dispatch Committee Report

Alderman Carole Bartman, Chairman of the Ad hoc Dispatch Committee, introduced representatives from Fox Lake (known as FoxComm E-911). Annette Wolf, Communications Manager, introduced the rest of the persons in attendance from FoxComm E-911. They are Village Administrator Nancy Schuerr, Village Treasurer Walter Korpan, and the I.T. Manager Tom Peterson. Annette presented a video show of their FoxComm center, explaining their personnel, their operating procedures, and then the proposal to Marengo Police Department for dispatching. She did include information for including the Marengo Fire and Rescue Department and the Union Fire Department.

She clarified that FoxComm is able to answer cell 911 calls as long as the cell phone is a newer one and has a GPS. Alderman Smith asked what the cost was to go from a 2-station terminal to 8, and was advised that the cost was \$76,000 per position. Their employees are non-union and work 12-hour shifts. Alderman Todd Hall questioned if the price would change if the Fire and Rescue Squads did not go along, and was advised that the price quoted is the price it would be no matter if everyone joined in or just the Marengo Police.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. List of Bills.
- b. Zion Lutheran 5k Run Request.
- c. Marengo Fire Protection District Boot Drive Request.

Alderman Steve DiMaria made a motion, seconded by Alderman Todd Hall, to approve the Consent Agenda items. The motion passed with an aye vote by Aldermen: Bartman, Smith, Brackmann, DiMaria, Hall and Secor.

NEW BUSINESS

a. **City Logo Presentation – TSC North America.**

Penny Mann, with TSC North America, went over the new options for the City logo with the Council members, and will incorporate the ideas from this evening.

b. **Marengo Tourism Council Sign Request.**

Marlene Slavin presented a formal request to the City Council to proceed with placing gateway signs at the community's entrances in order to promote Marengo as a tourist destination. The costs associated with the construction and installation of the signs would be the responsibility of the Tourism Council. The final design for the sign will be brought before the City Council prior to production.

Alderman Michael Smith made a motion, seconded by Alderman Carole Bartman, to approve the sign request. The motion passed with an aye vote by Aldermen: Secor, Hall, Brackmann, Bartman and Smith. Alderman Steve DiMaria abstained.

c. **Ordinance Granting a Variance from Section 6.06 (4) and Section 8.04 (A-1) of the Marengo Zoning Ordinance – 109 Clark Street.**

Kim Meyers, representing the petitioner Gary Gatto, addressed the Council on this request.

Alderman Corey Brackmann made a motion, seconded by Alderman Mike Secor, to recommend that the Marengo City Council grant variations to Section 6.06 (4) and Section 8.04 (A-1) for the property known as 109 Clark Street for the construction of an addition to the existing 2nd story non-conforming structure and to permit the paving of the existing gravel driveway to be within 2' of the property line. The motion passed with an aye vote by Aldermen: Smith, Brackmann, DiMaria, Bartman, Hall and Secor.

d. **Ordinance Authorizing the Purchase of Property from Stanley J. Archer – PIN#11-26-478-024 & 11-26-478-005.**

City Administrator Deborah Nier explained that the City Attorney had reviewed the proposed ordinance. The City Attorney asked that the Council review the rider to the sales contract.

Alderman Steve DiMaria made a motion, seconded by Alderman Todd Hall, to approve the ordinance (10-9-2) authorizing the purchase of real estate from Stanley J. Archer. The motion passed with an aye vote by Aldermen: Hall, DiMaria, Smith, Brackmann, and Secor. Alderman Carole Bartman voted no on this motion.

MAYOR'S STATEMENTS AND REPORTS

Mayor Lockhart passed on comments and statements at this time.

DEPARTMENT HEAD AND STAFF REPORTS

Jayson Shull – Building Commissioner.

No written report. Next month the PZC should expect to see a special use permit come before them for consideration.

Jim Craney – Superintendent of Public Works.

Patching of streets is ongoing. Need to start getting ready for Settlers' Days. The department is finishing up on the mowing. A large amount of brush is on the streets, so they are looking at getting started on picking that up. I have asked Jay at the WWTP for help with patching the potholes for a few of days. Several trees have been marked for removal. It is very hard, but we are trying to keep up.

Joshua Blakemore – Assistant City Administrator.

TIF update was handed out for the East Side District. Tom Williams's annexation agreement was not worked out in time for this evening's agenda. His timetable has been pushed off until Spring. The hotel has been delayed for various reasons. Mike Grismer's (Seven Oaks property) information was updated. Property at 180 8th Avenue has been shown numerous times. Pre-application has been submitted for the Community Development Block Grant money for (1) a sewer for the Stevenson area and (2) sidewalks on Prairie Street. Representatives were out today looking at the areas.

Dane Checolinski – EDC.

The EDC has completed their Tactical Planning Session, and asked if the Council would like the report presented by the consultant or by the Commission. Council requested the consultant. The Commission is trying to reconfigure the way they do things, and the issue of reports came up. He questioned if the Council would like additional information beyond the agenda that they receive? Please email him with your replies.

Chief Martin Podosek – Marengo Police Department.

The Chief's report was given to the Council earlier, and had nothing further to add at this time.

Deborah Nier – City Administrator.

Deborah updated the Council on Amtrak – she has been in contact with the Executive Director of IDOT and was told that the Amtrak station is not being considered at this time because they are now conducting an additional study as to which route it (IDOT) will take (northern or southern). They are doing this study as a requirement for Federal Stimulus money, and they will not discuss the station in question until that study is complete which should be about November.

Carlos Arevalo – City Attorney.

No report.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Ad hoc Dispatch Committee Report

Carole Bartman, Chairman, stated that if any of the Aldermen have any questions or comments, please give her a call. She also suggested calling Chief Podosek, because he did not have an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of this while he was out. He does have a lot of experience in this field, and it might benefit the Council members to get his feedback.

Mayor Lockhart commented: "I felt that as of a month ago this was not moving along, progressing enough. Obviously my concern is to the employees. We have them sitting here and worried about their jobs, and rightfully so. It is my belief that we should try to move it along as quickly as possible. It is still my belief. I had said that we were going to vote on it this evening, but I wanted to have something done. In between now, Fox Lake has come in and posed different questions and so forth. But I would like to see us make some sort of decision on this within 30 more days. If you think that we can do this in that time."

Alderman Bartman agreed with him, and added the concern of some of the Aldermen that we keep Fire and Rescue with the Police and in keeping with that request, the Committee contacted Lake in the Hills and they have agreed that they would take Fire and Rescue as well as the Police. They (Lake in the Hills) are discussing the pricing with Chief Bradbury on that. They had a committee meeting on the 20th of September and 3 dispatchers were in attendance and gave a lot of feedback to the Committee.

Alderman Steve DiMaria asked if there would be a need to hire an additional dispatcher if the Fire and Rescue Squad were added. Alderman Bartman replied that, in an email, the total cost would be \$194,000 for all of the Marengo entities but did not include the Village of Union. They did not address the Village of Union.

Alderman DiMaria asked Chief Bradbury if he had an opportunity to speak with Lake in the Hills. Chief Bradbury stated that he had been over there last week. Alderman DiMaria asked if Chief Bradbury felt comfortable after the conversation, that you would be serviced correctly. Chief Bradbury answered "I think they would, yes. They would service us adequately." Alderman Bartman stated that he has people on staff that has done both. He said yes.

The Mayor inquired if there was going to be another Committee meeting. Alderman Bartman said probably not a meeting, but they needed to get together with Chief Bradbury and then will put their revisions out.

Alderman DiMaria asked again of Chief Bradbury, "Do you feel it is a viable option for you two taxing bodies?" Chief Bradbury answered, "Yes." Alderman DiMaria, "So you would definitely consider them if the PSAP Center was disband?" Chief Bradbury, "Yes." Alderman DiMaria, "OK. The reason I am directing that question at you Chief is that there was information passed on that if the City of Marengo went to SEECOM that the Fire and Rescue Districts would too. I was trying to find out if this was a viable option just like SEECOM, to go along to stay consolidated." Chief Bradbury, "Yes."

EXECUTIVE SESSION.

Mayor Lockhart advised that there was nothing to bring up in Executive Session this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Michael Smith made a motion, seconded by Alderman Todd Hall, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed with an aye vote by Aldermen: DiMaria, Secor, Bartman, Brackmann, Hall and Smith.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance J. Boxleitner
City Clerk
City of Marengo