

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021, AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 2828 SHERIDAN ROAD, ZION, ILLINOIS

Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer called the meeting to order.

On call of the roll the following answered present: Commissioners Holmes, Frierson, McDowell, and Fischer. Mayor McKinney was absent. A quorum was present.

Also present: Police Chief Eric Barden, Fire/Rescue Chief Justin Stried, Public Works Director Ray Roberts, City Administrator David Knabel, Building & Zoning Director Richard Ianson and City Attorney Michael Muthleb.

AGENDA CHANGES

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Holmes to accept the City Council meeting agenda as presented.

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING/TAX LEVY

Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer opened the public hearing for the 2021, payable in 2022, City of Zion tax levy at 7:02 p.m.

The levy is the amount asked for from the taxpayers; businesses and residents to fund the City’s operations and the pension funds. This amount is submitted to the County, put on the tax bills and remitted to the City. The Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) limits the amount of tax extensions (total taxes billed) for non-home rule taxing districts. As a non-home rule unit, the City is limited by the consumer price index (CPI) currently 1.4% or 5% whichever is lower. The PTELL allows a taxing district to receive a limited inflationary increase in tax extensions on existing property, plus an additional amount for new construction. The City’s total levy is \$8,072,338 which represents a \$272,311 increase over the prior year extension. A 2% factor is built in for potential valuation changes from the County that will be settled after levy filing is required to be done. Based on historical, Administrator Knabel expects the extension to be \$7,914,057 or less. However, the City is not allowed to increase, only decrease, after filing, so a cushion for the unknown final valuation is factored in. The City’s tax rate would go from 2.3141 to 2.2491, which is a decrease of approximately 2.81% (4.72% without the 2% factored in). The effect on the City’s portion of taxes on a \$150,000 house (assuming a 6% increase in value from the prior year) would be an increase of \$35 annually (\$12 without the 2% factored in). Administrator Knabel reminded residents that although the tax rate goes down, it does not mean the taxes will go down. The total levy is allocated among 9 different functions and the revenue is allocated as follows.

	2021 Levy	2020 Extension	Increase (Decrease)
Corporate	398,303	416,045	(17,742)
Street & Bridge	219,486	219,486	-
Fire Protection	756,242	756,242	-
Ambulance Service	547,819	547,819	-
IMRF	106,623	506,761	(400,138)
Liability Insurance	1,106,195	1,128,986	(22,791)
Social Security	365,318	152,523	212,795
Police Pension	2,795,436	2,547,893	247,543
Fire Pension	1,776,916	1,524,272	252,644
Total	8,072,338	7,800,027	272,311

- Fire pension levy amount proposed is \$1,776,916. This is the statutory minimum requirement and represents a \$252,644 increase over the prior year. The recommended actuarial levy amount is \$2,077,354. The plan is currently 44% funded.
- Police pension levy amount proposed is \$2,795,436. This is the statutory minimum requirement and represents a \$247,543 increase over the prior year. The recommended actuarial levy amount is \$3,509,936. The plan is currently 48% funded.
- It is project that, as 4/30/22, the social security fund will have exhausted its fund balance. The levy was reduced in the prior period to utilize that balance. Therefore, we are restoring the levy to the amount necessary to cover payroll tax expenses.
- Liability insurance levy is decreasing by \$22,791 due to renewal premium savings in workers compensation insurance and addition of lines of insurance over initial projections.
- IMRF levy is decreasing by \$400,138. As with the social security levy in the prior year, we have a fund balance that we will utilize in the next fiscal year and therefore are able to reduce the levy to generate some savings. However, note that the 2022 levy will need to resume normal funding levels (estimated to be \$375,000) and will therefore increase by \$250,000 in the subsequent period.
- Fire Protection and Ambulance Service were kept at the same levels as prior year. These funds are transferred to the general fund to offset the costs of these services.
- Street & Bridge was kept at the same level as prior year in this proposal. The MFT fund will continue to have additional funds available for road projects due to the increase in the State MFT tax as well as the Rebuild Illinois Bond Grant funds.
- The general fund levy is a remainder available after all of the other funds have been accounted for. Unfortunately, due to the items above, this only leaves \$398,303 in the general fund for operations, which represents a \$17,742 decrease in revenue from the prior period. This includes a 2% cushion that likely will not come to fruition and actuals will be \$240,022 when it comes time to budget (a \$176,023 decrease in revenue).

Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer called for comments from the public.

Mr. William Bremner asked if what was presented was solely the City's share of the levy. Administrator Knabel stated yes, all taxing bodies will present their own levy. Mr. Bremner asked if the other taxing bodies have a cap of 1.4%. Administrator Knabel stated he was unsure as he believes school districts are different. The police and fire pensions are not included in the PTELL cap as some funds are outside the PTELL cap. Mr. Bremner asked if new construction is exempt for life. Administrator Knabel stated the property will come onto the cap the next tax year.

Kathy Champine asked how the \$15 million grant from the State will impact the City. Administrator Knabel stated anything written into the State grant will not be in the State budget until the 22/23 budget year. Additionally, the value of the fuel rods won't come until the 2023 tax levy. He is not projecting any funds for the next budget year and expects to receive something for the 2023/24 budget year. He will know more when the details of the grant are available. Ms. Champine asked if the City does receive money, could they apply the money towards the pension funds. Administrator Knabel stated that would be a Council decision. He believes there will be a lot of discussions regarding where to apply the money. Additionally, he stated

they will be pushing harder for the legislators to look at refinancing the amortization amounts for a longer term as the State tries to figure out with to do with the pension crisis. The State has consolidated the Fire and Police pension funds and will have one large downstate pension fund. The management of the money will now be at the State level. Many small towns in the State are not able to put the minimums into their pension funds and this will help them. The City is currently in the mid-range of funded pensions and may not save Zion any money. This may change the actuarial contributions down the road. Commissioner Frierson asked why the pension funds are less funded that a few years. Administrator Knabel stated there has been an increase in duty disability and Retirees pensions and they are paying benefits longer. Commissioner Frierson asked if the analysis can be re-evaluated. Administrator Knabel stated there is a cost and time to get that done. By the time it would be completed, they would be close to the next years calculations. He is not sure statutorily if it can be done. It would all have to be completed before the levy is passed. Commissioner McDowell asked if the solution is to tweak the actuarial tables and extend the time periods. Administrator Knabel stated these requirements are not set by the City but by the State of Illinois. He believes the solution is to set a longer amortization period and pull the pension funds out the PTELL cap so as not to increase so much every year. Commissioner McDowell stated they need to make an appeal to the legislators as they do not know how long they can survive with out making any changes. Administrator Knabel stated if the pensions go up \$500,000 or more next year, there will be no money going to the general fund and they will have to come up with an extra \$250,000. Commissioner McDowell stated he has to believe that Zion is not the only municipality in Illinois that is experiencing this. Administrator Knabel stated once the levy is adopted, they will forward it to the legislators. Commissioner McDowell asked regarding the 2% cushion, if the EAV goes up and they use the cushion, would the plan be to reduce the levy to the 1.4%? Administrator Knabel stated it will automatically go to the 1.4% by the County. Commissioner McDowell commended Administrator Knabel for the decrease in the City's rate. In looking at the funds, they are either kept flat or reduced and the only increase is in the pension funds.

Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:35 p.m.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mary Lou Hiltibran, Zion ESDA Director, gave a monthly report of the recent activities that ESDA performs in assistance to the City. She invited those who wish to serve as a volunteer with ESDA to go to the City's website and fill out an application.

William Bremner, stated he spoke with Director Roberts regarding the leaf pick-up. As he was driving up Elim, Elizabeth and Edina, he noticed there were a lot of leaves piled on the parkway that have not been picked up. He requested that the City Council do one more run for leaf pick-up before the end of the season.

Jerry Callaghan, stated he and John Mengel are present to answer any questions relating to Item 10 (a) on the agenda.

Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer reminded citizens that today is the 80th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor asked that they take a moment to recall the lives lost. Additionally, he noted the passing of the late Senator Robert Dole and suggested the public read the book "What is Takes".

CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that the Minutes be approved as follows:

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on November 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.; and approval but not release of Closed Session Minutes of a meeting held November 16, 2021 at 7:55 p.m.

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner McDowell that the Bills be approved as follows:

- (b) **BILLS:** Vouchers 139283 through 139426 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A.
Total: \$906,298.33

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION/CDBG APPLICATION FOR SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT/ADA RAMPS

A memo (21-DOC-117) was received from Director Roberts requesting that the City Council consider passing a resolution authorizing the application to the Lake County Community Development Block Grant Program for assistance from Lake County for public sidewalk replacement and installation of handicap ramps at various locations throughout the City. If the grant is approved, it will provide \$80,000 towards an estimated \$115,000 project. Staff recommends approval of the resolution.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that a Resolution (21-R-12) be passed authorizing the application to the Lake County Community Development Block Grant Program for assistance for sidewalk replacement and installation of handicap ramps at various locations throughout the City. The vote on the roll: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

ORDINANCE/TAX LEVY – CORPORATE PURPOSES

It was moved by Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that an Ordinance (21-O-79) be passed providing for the levy of taxes for corporate purposes in the total amount of \$8,072,338 for the tax levy year 2021 to be collected in the year beginning January 1, 2022 and ending December 31, 2022 for the City of Zion, Lake County, Illinois. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

A memo (21-DOC-118) was received from Director Roberts, regarding the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for the traffic signal maintenance on State highways. Director Roberts stated the current IGA expired in June 2021. The new IGA period will be effective from July 2021 to June 30, 2031. Maintenance costs are based on the Districts Electrical Maintenance Contract's related bid cost and may vary from contract to contract. Included in the agreement is a list of traffic signal locations in the City. Staff recommends approval of the IGA. Commissioner Frierson asked if expenses can still be recouped for the debt period if the contract is expired. Director Roberts stated they will as long as the agreement is approved tonight.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Holmes that an Ordinance (21-O-80) be passed approving and authorizing an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation for the maintenance of traffic signals on State Highways within or near the Corporate Limits of the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**ORDINANCE/EXTENSION/ADULT USE CANNABIS INFUSER & PROCESSOR
VARIANCE/3101-3199 16TH STREET**

A memo (21-DOC-119) was received by Director Ianson stating that Elevated Organics, LLC is requesting a 180-day extension for the Variance for an Adult Cannabis Infuser and an Adult Use Processor at the property located at 3101-3199 16th Street. Commissioner Frierson asked if there has been an update on approvals for licenses from the State. Director Ianson stated he believes they will hear something sometime this month. Commissioner Fischer stated the reason they have to keep extending these ordinances is because the State is incapable of how to determine to give out the licenses.

It was moved by Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (21-O-81) be passed approving the extension of a Variance for an Adult Use Cannabis Infuser and an Adult Use Processor for the property located at 3101-3199 16th Street in Zion, Illinois from December 16, 2021 to June 16, 2022. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**ORDINANCE/EXTENSION/ADULT USE TRANSPORTATION VARIANCE/3101-3199 16TH
STREET**

A memo (21-DOC-120) was received by Director Ianson stating that Elevated Organics, LLC is requesting a 180-day extension for the Variance for an Adult Use Cannabis Transportation Organization at the property located at 3101-3199 16th Street. Commissioner Frierson stated there are 3 different elements for this business and asked if there have been any changes to the design. Director Ianson stated no changes have been made.

It was moved by Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that an Ordinance (21-O-82) be passed approving the extension of a Variance for an Adult Use Cannabis Transportation Organization for the property located at 3101-3199 16th Street in Zion, Illinois from December 16, 2021 to June 16, 2022. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**ORDINANCE/EXTENTION/SPECIAL USE PERMIT/ADULT USE CRAFTGROW/
3101-3199 16TH STREET**

A memo (21-DOC-121) was received by Director Ianson stating that Elevated Organics, LLC is requesting a 180-day extension for a Special Use to operate an Adult Cannabis Craft Grow at the property located at 3101-3199 16th Street.

It was moved by Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that an Ordinance (21-O-83) be passed extending a Special Use Permit for an Adult Cannabis Craft Grow in the HB (Highway Business) Zoning District for property the located at 3101-3199 16th Street in Zion, Illinois from December 16, 2021 to June 16, 2022. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

ORDINANCE/SPECIAL USE PERMIT/3355 SHERIDAN ROAD

A memo (21-DOC- 122) was received by Director Ianson requesting a Special Use Permit for a self-storage facility. Director Ianson stated JSM Venture/Zion Storage Properties, LLC is requesting a Special Use Permit for a new owner for the self-storage facility located at 3355 Sheridan Road. Extra Space Storage, LLC is the current operator and contract purchaser and will require a new Special Use Permit to operate.

It was moved by Commissioner Holmes, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that an Ordinance (21-O-84) be passed granting a Special Use Permit to Extra Space Storage, LLC to operate an indoor climate controlled self-storage facility for property located at 3355 Sheridan Road. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

PATROL OFFICER VACANCIES/POLICE DEPARTMENT

A memo (21-DOC-123) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval to fill four (4) police officer vacancies and request the next two (2) qualified candidates from the Police and Fire Commission Lateral Eligibility List and the next two (2) qualified candidates from the Police and Fire Commission Patrol Officer Eligibility List. He stated the hiring is necessary to replace officers who have resigned and/or taken employment with other agencies. Currently the Zion Police Department is down five sworn officer positions. Two lateral candidate names and two original entry candidates have been released by the Board of Fire & Police Commissioners. Lateral hire candidates will fill two of the five open positions. Additionally, two police academy slots are reserved for two original entry police candidates in January, 2022. The department will be fully staffed once at forty-five (45) upon sworn officers. Once a police academy opening becomes available, he will approach the Council to fulfill the final available position.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to approve filling four (4) police officer vacancies and request the next two candidates from the Police and Fire Commission Lateral Eligibility List and the next two candidates from the Police and Fire Commission Patrol Officer Eligibility List. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDIC HIRING/FIRE/RESCUE DEPARTMENT

A memo (21-DOC-124) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval to hire three (3) full-time firefighter/paramedics. Chief Stried stated upon thorough evaluation and discussion with Administrator Knabel he is requesting approval to hire three full-time firefighter/paramedics from the eligibility list. This would not require an amendment to the 2021/22 Personnel Authorization, but would require a budget amendment to include three additional positions. He provided Administrator Knabel's email detailing various related discussion points. Additionally, he provided some of the more beneficial reasons that it would increase service delivery to the City, as well as better support the men and women of the department:

- Reduce overtime work for our already taxed firefighter/paramedics;
- Having an additional position on some duty shifts would allow us to occasionally staff a fire vehicle with three, which is industry standard as a minimum;
- Our hiring list, established August 10 of this year, is already at #10 of 16 after filling the previous three vacancies. The hiring pool across the suburbs is shrinking, and hiring now will potentially alleviate a lengthy delay when hiring in the future, as well as eliminate the need to test sooner than every two-year standard (which is a City expense);
- After Administrator Knabel's budget analysis based on numbers so far this FY, the net budget impact of these hires is approximately \$23,000.

The request sets duty shift levels at eight: six full-time (one Battalion Chief, one Lieutenant, four Firefighter/Paramedics), and two part-time (Paid-on-Premise) Firefighter/Paramedics. The current labor agreement with Local 1999 stipulates a minimum of seven be on duty each day, which would mean in many instances sick time or other Benefit Time use would not create an overtime need. Commissioner Frierson stated there has been a lot of discussion regarding pensions and asked how this hire would make sense. Administrator Knabel stated it will still have a pension impact. Ultimately, they are adding three bodies to

the pension pool and there is no way around that. They look at the City contracts when doing the actuarial calculations so part of it is included in the numbers. Currently the MOU is a 24/72 which allows them to use more POPs. The actual contract does not allow the use of more than one POP per shift. Until next year's negotiations to see if they decide to make that part of contract they will still anticipating this staffing level. This is actually 8 per shift under a 24/48 schedule allowing only one to be part-time. They will still be at 24 potential full-time firefighters for the actuarial calculation.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to approve hiring three (3) full-time Firefighter/Paramedics. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Ianson stated he has been keeping the public updated on the status of the demolition on Galilee and he is happy to report that it is 100 % complete.

Director Roberts stated there has been much discussion regarding leaf pick-up. The City contracts with Waste Management and they hire additional personal for the program. They have already delayed the program for one week to help with the leaves that were still falling. He provided addresses to the company for those what were not previously pick up. He and Director Ianson recently had a meeting with Waste Management regarding garbage pick-up and leaf pick-up. The current contract is up in 2023 and they will sit down and go over all the issues for the new contract. He also spoke with the contractor about adding one more pick-up but this would cost an extra \$30,000-\$35,000 to which the City cannot afford. The fund balance is already running in a deficit. Residents can bag up the leaves and store them for the spring pick-up or there are places available for residents to take their leaves for a charge. He also noted that Public Works does not have the means to pick up the leaves in the parkway. The leaves have already created issues for the City sweeper. It was noted that the cost for the leaf program is built into the garbage pick-up fee which is \$24 annually. Administrator Knabel stated there is an issue with the leaf pick-up every year. Residents still put leaves out even after the program has ended and complain. Director Roberts also reminded citizens there is no parking on City streets from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. and with the snow coming this will be an issue with plowing. He directed citizens to visit the City website to review the parking ordinance and other information regarding snow removal.

Chief Stried thanked the Council for their support for the purchase of the new CPR device which has been used with much success numerous times. He stated it is a valuable piece of equipment and hopes they can purchase another one soon.

Chief Barden reiterated Director Roberts comments regarding parking on City streets. He stated they will be issuing citations. Anytime there is a snow event Public Works calls the police department so they can either issue citations or have cars towed. Additionally, he reminded residents with the weather getting colder, if they choose to start their cars to be sure and lock them as the rate of stolen cars has increased. He also thanked the community members that came out for the Shop with a Cop event. He stated forty families were selected to participate. They are considering expanding the event next year as the community volunteers and partners have grown.

Administrator Knabel reminded residents to keep their utility bills current. As the weather gets colder water shut-offs can lead to the bursting of pipes. Additionally, they continue to push for the Stranded Act and encouraged citizens to contact their Congressman Brad Schneider and Senator Tammy Duckworth to urge them to help push the bill forward.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 21	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting Zion City Council Meeting
December 23, 24, 30, 31		City Offices Closed for the Holiday
January 4	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Holmes that the Council recess to Closed Session at 8:10 p.m., pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 "Open Meetings", for the discussion of filed, pending and/or probable or imminent litigation, personnel, collective bargaining and real estate. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by McDowell to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:45 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

WAGE CHANGES/POLICE DEPARTMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Holmes to approve the wage changes in the Police Department as presented. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Holmes, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, it was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Holmes, and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 8:46 p.m. Motion carried.

 City Clerk