

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2023, AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 2828 SHERIDAN ROAD, ZION, ILLINOIS

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Mayor McKinney called the meeting to order.

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

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

Mr. Bremner led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

AGENDA CHANGES

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

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

SPECIAL PRESENTATION/ILLINOIS SOLAR FOR ALL PROGRAM

Sharon Durling, Illinois Aggregation Consultants, presented the Illinois Solar for All Program. She noted that in September 2021, Governor Pritzker signed CEJA into law which enables Illinois Solar for All, an initiative giving income-eligible residents the opportunity to easily access low-cost renewable energy. Only income-qualified ratepayers may subscribe to the community solar program which can earn them savings up to 50% off their electric supply. There is no fee to subscribe, no solar panels to be installed, and income-eligible apartment dwellers, renters, and homeowners may participate. A large portion of Zion lies within an eligible area. Solstice is an Approved Vendor offering a partnership with the City of Zion to establish a campaign to invite qualified residents to subscribe. The development is moving quickly and Solstice has a goal of fully subscribing the project by July, 2023. They are asking the City to engage in an MOU to launch the offering. Solstice would present a \$50 Visa gift card to each subscriber and also offer a contribution of an additional \$50 to the City. The project would continue for 20 years, and there is no early termination fee. Solstice will provide notices (at their expense) to be mailed to residents and support the City in educational programs, social media, and/or other communications. This is an opt in program. The City continues to operate an electrical aggregation savings program, which has been enormously successful for residents. The current fixed rate is 6.179¢ per kWh vs March's ComEd rate of 10.091¢ per kWh. The aggregation is a shorter term and set for renewal this July.

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. Mayor McKinney thanked ESDA for all they do.

Melissa Siegel, Zion, stated it has been 8 months since her son's murder. She continues to be harassed on the internet by community people. She voiced her concerns over the safety of children in Zion and would like to know what the City is doing about it. She noted a recent child abduction near her house.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on February 21, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.; approval but not release of Closed Session Minutes of a meeting held on February 21, 2023 at 7:47 p.m.

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

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

- (b) **BILLS:** Vouchers 142596 through 142801 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$449,995.10.

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

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that the Proclamation be approved as follows:

- (c) **PROCLAMATION:** Vietnam Veteran's Day – March 29, 2023

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

ABATING TAX/GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS - SERIES 2017

A memo (23-DOC-15) was received from Director Conway regarding an ordinance abating the General Obligation Bonds Series 2017 principal and interest payments for tax levy year 2022. Director Conway stated that Bond issues are secured by the tax levy the same way a house is used as collateral for a mortgage. Should the City not be able to make the payments using an alternate revenue stream, they would be required to levy for the funds to insure payment. Since the City is in a position to make the payments without adding the burden to homeowners, the bond can be abated and will not appear on the levy for the 2022 tax year. By passing the ordinance, the debt service payments for the Series 2017 bonds will not appear on the real estate tax bills.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Holmes that an Ordinance (23-0-9) be passed abating the tax heretofore levied for the Year 2022 to pay the Principal of and Interest on \$3,140,000 Taxable General Obligation Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2017, of the City of Zion, Lake County, Illinois. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

PATROL OFFICER HIRES/POLICE DEPARTMENT

A memo (23-DOC-16) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval to hire two (2) police officers. Chief Barden stated that Officer Barber has provided in writing his intention to retire effective May 3, 2023. The Board of Fire & Police Commissioners has already released a final eligibility list for this testing cycle for new officer hires. The appointment of a new officer will replace the position Officer Barber is vacating. The hires will bring the department to full staffing.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to approve the hiring of the next two (2) qualified candidates from the Fire & Police Commissioner's Patrol Officer Eligibility List. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners; McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Ianson stated that the City was taking applications for the seasonal lawn crew positions. There is one position available for Supervisor for those 18 and older and 2-3 for the grass crew for those 16 and older. Applications are available online on the City of Zion website. Mayor McKinney asked if they are working with the schools to get the information out. Director Ianson stated that they have reached out to all the schools including CLC.

Director Roberts stated that they recognize that there are potholes around the City, but they will not be filling them right now unless they are really deep. They have been compiling a list of reported potholes but the hot-mix plant does not open until April 15th. Mayor McKinney stated during the last rain public works crews spent the day clearing the storm drains as it was causing flooding issues. He asked how residents can help. Director Roberts stated that residents can help by raking out the storm drains of all debris and by not allowing leaves to collect in the streets.

Chief Stried stated that they responded to 4 fires over the past few weeks and Director of ESDA, Mary Lou Hiltibran, came out to all 4 fires. He thanked her and ESDA for their assistance. Additionally, they responded to a high amount of overdose calls. He sees a problem with drugs creeping up with bad stuff in them. The Lake County Health Department is also trying to help as well by offering free Narcan. They will provide Narcan to anyone who needs it as this nasal spray could help save someone's life. It was also noted that Library is also offering it. They will be advertising it on social media that residents may take some home with no questions asked. Mayor McKinney asked how closely the fire department works with Nicasa. Chief Stried stated the hospital refers them and they have strong ties with the police and fire departments. He noted that they do have referral cards available.

Chief Barden commented on the following:

- He confirmed the recent amount of drug overdose fatalities and is very concerned. They don't know what's out there or where people are getting it. They will be doing a campaign showing the dangers of these drugs and how to get help. They too will be providing Narcan.
- He feels that the grass cutting program in the building department is good for the youth in the community.
- He responded to an earlier citizen comment regarding the "Child Abduction".

Mayor McKinney asked if there were any updates on the Flock Cameras. Chief Barden stated that IDOT has gotten through the permitting process and Flock will be working on installing the gunshot detection system any day. Mayor McKinney asked for a brief explanation of the Flock cameras. Chief Barden stated the cameras are not always about catching criminals. They can be used to verify information as was the case with the alleged "Child Abduction". It is the number one piece of technology developed within the past 20 years that can help solve crimes faster. The cameras have helped to solve multiple homicides. The audio detection device detects gunshots, locates the source, and works in tandem with the Flock Safety License Plate Reader camera by alerting law enforcement to the scene. Cameras collect suspect vehicle leads at the perimeter and deliver them in simple, map-based view for faster case resolution.

Director Conway noted vehicle stickers will go on sale April 3, 2023. Mayor McKinney asked if there are special rates for seniors. It was noted that for those 65 and over the stickers are half price and for those 70 and over they are free. Information is available on the City's website.

Administrator Knabel commented on the following:

- He noted that social media can be a great thing but often times causes more drama. He asked that residents be aware of what they read on social media. He stated that City personnel is always available for questions. He would like residents to get facts from City staff rather than off of social media as you cannot always believe what you read.
- He shared a press release put out by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announcing that more than 50 localities and municipal entities will receive Energy Transition Community Grants – an initiative under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) that provides funding for communities that have been impacted by fossil fuel plant or coal mine closures or significant reductions. Agreements are anticipated to be executed starting in July 2023, with \$40 million available per year for the Energy Transition Community Grant Program until 2045. The award list includes Zion Nuclear Plant taxing bodies, which is allotted funding according to a statutory formula in CEJA. The grant amount specified will be available for Zion Nuclear Plant taxing bodies to apply through an upcoming separate NOFO process. Grant awards were calculated based on economic impact of plant or mine closure, specifically, property tax losses and jobs lost due to the plant transition. This will result in \$14 million of compensation. DECO is still working on the provisions and grant process along with the timing to release the funds. He will keep the Council updated. Mayor McKinney stated it was terrific news and thanked Administrator Knabel and State Reps for all their hard work. He noted that they continue to fight the federal government on the Stranded Act.

Commissioner Fischer reminded residents of Early Voting beginning on March 20, 2023.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 21	6:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting Cancelled due to Early Voting
	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting Cancelled due to Early Voting
April 4	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting
April 7		City Offices Closed for the Holiday

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:55 p.m., pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 “Open Meetings”, for the discussion of filed, pending and/or probable or imminent litigation, sale or purchase of real estate, collective bargaining, legal counsel and personnel. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Holmes to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:23 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, it was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 8:24 p.m. Motion carried.

City Clerk