

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 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 Frierson, Fischer, McDowell, and Mayor McKinney. A quorum was present. Commissioner Holmes was absent.

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

William 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 with the following changes:

Table Items:

- 10. (c) Tabulation of Bids – City Hall Lobby-Building Department Project
- 10. (d) Consider waiving bid process and accepting Clear Armor proposal for Lobby-Building Department Project

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

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION/ZION-BENTON LABOR DAY PARADE AWARDS**

Sonolito Bronson, President of the Special Events Commission stated that the Zion-Benton Labor Day Parade was held on September 4, 2023 and there were 39 parade entries from throughout the Zion-Benton community. She thanked the City Council and Park District for all their support, as without them the Event would not have been possible. Additionally, she thanked Police Chief Eric Barden and Fire Chief Justin Stried for their time and effort in helping to pull it all together. She also thanked the community and Special Events Commission. The awards were presented as follows:

- 1. Best Theme Parade Entry – American Legion Zion-Benton Post #865
- 2. Mayor’s Choice - Best Parade Entry Overall – I.B.E.W. Local 150
- 3. Commissioner’s Choice - Most Original Parade Entry – Christ Community Church
- 4. Grand Jubilee Award - Most Beautiful Parade Entry – 2023 Winthrop Harbor Queens

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There were no Citizen Comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on November 7, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.; approval but not release of Closed Session Minutes of a meeting held on November 7, 2023 at 7:51 p.m.

Commissioner Frierson asked that a memo sent to the Clerk Spooner be attached to the minutes.

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

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

- (a) **BILLS:** Vouchers 144627 through 144732 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$614,914.87

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

#### **RESOLUTION/TRUTH IN TAXATION LAW**

Administrator Knabel stated every year they are required to pass an Estimate of Levy before they hold the Public Hearing on the Levy. IL Statute states, if the City if they will be going to go over more than 5% on the levy they will be required to hold a public hearing and publish notices in the newspaper. They are not proposing going over the 5% and are passing the resolution for transparency. The statute for the tax cap every year is the lower of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 5%. In past years it has not been an issue as CPI has always been less than 5% but this year it was 6.5%. This also does not take into account any new construction. Any new construction that goes on the tax rolls is allowed to be taken as taxes as well. That would put the City over the 5% but they chose to keep it at 4.99% to alleviate the burden to the taxpayers and therefore will be passing on the new construction amount. He asking adopt the Truth in Taxation Resolution with the 4.99% increase for a total of \$8,732,375. A public hearing will be held at the December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting and adoption of the levy will be on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner McDowell that a Resolution (23-R-20) be passed estimating that the proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2023 are \$8,732,375 which represents a 4.99% increase over the previous year. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

#### **ORDINANCE/LEASE RENEWAL/18TH STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY**

A memo (23-DOC-95) was received from Director Ianson stating that Lucienne Ventures, LDT, is requesting to renew the lease agreement with the City for the use of the 18th Street right-of-way containing approximately 2,430 square feet for access to tenant parking.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (23-O-63) be passed to lease certain property, approximately 2,430 square feet situated on the 18th Street right-of-way, adjacent to 1721 North Sheridan Road for the purpose of having paved access to tenant parking. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **ORDINANCE/RIGHT-OF-WAY LEASE RENEWAL/ADJACENT TO 2260-2264 SHERIDAN ROAD**

A memo (23-DOC-96) was received from Director Ianson requesting the renewal of a lease between the City of Zion and MJK Group, LLC for property consisting of approximately 1,584 square feet situated on the 23rd Street right-of-way, adjacent to 2260-2264 Sheridan Road, to provide for five (5) additional tenant parking spaces.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell, that an Ordinance (23-O-64) be passed authorizing renewal of a lease between the City of Zion and MJK Group, LLC for property consisting of approximately 1,584 square feet situated on the 23rd Street right-of-way, adjacent to 2260-2264 Sheridan Road, to provide for five (5) additional tenant parking spaces. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **APPROVAL/INSURANCE RENEWAL/2023-2024**

A memo (23-DOC-97) was received from Administrator Knabel stating the City's insurance broker Marsh McLennan Agency goes out to market to get quotes for insurance coverage for general liability, law enforcement, automobile, umbrella and equipment. The broker keeps detailed tabs on the current market and noted that many existing carriers are getting out of insuring municipalities. He presented the quotes for coverage effective 12/1/23 through 11/30/24. He noted that the industry as a whole has been seeing premium increases ranging from 10%-20%. The proposed renewal is a 23.1% overall increase, which is slightly higher than average. This is a renewal with their existing carrier because of

the would looked at other carriers it would have been a much larger increase. This is largely due to industry wide increases in automobile insurance rates coupled with the City's significant recent claims. Also, increases in budgetary expenses and reserves, pending litigation and defense are factors in the renewal rates. Taking all these factors into consideration, the proposal is reasonable and he recommends renewal of the lines of coverage proposed. Commissioner Frierson asked both Chiefs as personnel gets younger, what steps do they have in place to mitigate the automobile risks. Chief Barden stated they have developed training. They are re-implementing the EVOC training course which they have not done for the last 20 years. They have partnered with Waukegan Airport to use their concrete tarmac at no cost to do their own in-house training that is state certified. They also go over training in monthly staff meetings and promote the mindset to go slow not move fast or force a situation that is less risk to yourselves or suspects to push yourself into a situation. They have also implemented a process to do spot checks on shifts to make sure officers are following procedures. Chief Stried stated they also have training and policies in place. Every year they do a similar emergency course. As well as a certain number of hours behind the wheel of all their vehicles. and focus on speed limits. Additionally, they have spotters outside the vehicles to help guide the driver. Administrator Knabel stated now that they have a full-time HR Manager, they will be re-implementing the Safety Committee which includes representatives from each department to review accidents and discuss what can be done to cut down on accidents.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner McDowell to approve the general liability, law enforcement liability, auto and equipment insurance and excess umbrella insurance policy effective 12/1/23 to 11/30/24. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye, McDowell, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

### **PATROL OFFICER HIRE/POLICE DEPARTMENT**

A memo (23-DOC-98) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval to hire one (1) police officer. Chief Barden stated one of the Senior Sergeants is looking to retire from the police department in the first half of 2024. Additionally, he and ZBTHS District 126 have been in discussions about the ZPD providing a School Resource Officer (SRO) for the upcoming school year. Anticipating one of these events happening at a minimum will cause a negative impact on staffing. He is asking for approval to hire one additional position from the current Patrol Officer Eligibility List released by the Board of Fire & Police Commissioners. This will upstaff and manage the lag in the hiring process due to the extensive training process. If approved, the new officer will be sworn in at the December 5, 2023 City Council meeting and then attend the Police Academy in January, 2024. He has discussed the process for replacement of the officer positions and the timeline necessary to fill the positions with Administrator Knabel. Commissioner Frierson asked how far along they are in discussions with District 126. Chief Barden stated they have had good conversations on the process and what their involvement will be with the selection of the officer. The IGA has been approved by their Board but are still discussing the financial piece. He has been told it is their intent to put an IGA into effect and therefore, it seems likely it will move forward.

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

### **VARIANCE/ZION MUNICIPAL CODE/SECTION 102-128/3106 EZEKIEL AVENUE**

A memo (23-DOC-99) was received from Director Ianson requesting approval of a Variance from Section 102-128(6)(a) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow front off-street parking at the property located at 3106 Ezekiel Avenue as petitioned by Andrea Campbell., Zoning Docket 23-Z-23. The main reason for the request is for safety and security. They have had numerous security issues with vehicles in the rear. At the November 2, 2023 Planning & Zoning Meeting, they recommended to approve the Variance request. Commissioner Frierson stated in speaking with Director Ianson they are looking at this a bit more largely throughout the community. There have been a lot of requests from people who want to improve the parking in front of their homes but the current ordinance does not allow that. The current ordinance will be reviewed for any necessary changes. Mayor McKinney noted that he has talked with people over the years about security issues and about having ring cameras to minimize some of the security risks. He feels it is a good thing to examine based on the circumstances and to ensure that people aren't applying for it just so they can park on the streets.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (23-O-65) be passed granting a Variance to Section 102-128(6)(a) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow front off-street parking for property located at 3106 Ezekiel Avenue. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried Ordinance passed.

### **SPECIAL USE PERMIT/2600 LEWIS AVENUE**

A memo (23-DOC-100) was received from Director Ianson requesting approval of a Special Use Permit to Section 70-114(4) of the Zion Municipal Code. Trinity Christian Center is seeking a Special Use Permit to replace an existing sign at the property located at 2600 Lewis Avenue. Currently, Monument signs in their Zoning District, cannot exceed 8 ft. in height by 8 ft. in width. They would like to increase the sign height to 11 ft. At the November 2, 2023 Planning & Zoning Meeting, they recommended to approve the Special Use Permit.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell that an Ordinance (23-O-66) be passed granting a Special Use Permit to Section 70-114(4) of the Zion Municipal Code to replace an existing sign for the property located at 2600 Lewis Avenue. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried Ordinance passed.

### **APPOINTMENT/TIF BOARD**

Mayor McKinney presented Bob Surano from District 6 as an appointment to the TIF Board.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, and seconded by Commissioner Frierson to approve the appointment of Bob Surano to the TIF Board. The vote on the roll: Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried.

### **DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY**

Director Roberts noted that the leaf program is one week behind. Waste Management has promised that everything will be picked up in the allotted amount of time. He will be talking with Waste Management next week for an update. Additionally, he noted that he is seeing that people are shoving their leaves into the street. This will cause a flooding issue come springtime. He has also been getting complaints about neighbor's cars parking in front of resident's leaf piles and the leaves are not getting picked up. He will be trying to address that the best they can. He reminded residents that they can always bag leaves for pic-up.

Fire Chief Stried noted that Chicago Firefighter Andrew Price passed away while battling a fire this past week. Additionally, he wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and reminded those who plan on deep frying their turkeys to make sure they are thawed. Most Thanksgivings they usually respond to at least 1 fire related to turkey deep frying. He asked that people stay safe and enjoy the Holiday.

Police Chief Barden reminded residents that if they have any questions about they district they live in they should look at the map that will provide the contact information for the Sergeant in their district. He noted that the program is going well. Additionally, he noted that the "Shop with a Cop" event will take place on December 9<sup>th</sup>. He shared that any community partners can donate. This year they have about 40 families that will be participating. He stated it is a great program and is looking forward to it's continued success and looks forward to expanding it in the future.

Director Conway noted that she provided the Council with budget to actuals through September. She invited the Council to call or email her with any questions and is open to any ideas, suggestions or changes.

Administrator Knabel noted that at the last City Council meeting he mentioned that City of Hope was trying to go tax exempt and that he along with others would be attending the hearing on November 15<sup>th</sup>. He noted that they were successful in fighting on behalf of the residents as the got a denial from the Lake County Board of Review. They will continue fighting for the \$4.8 million in taxes. This was the first step as the Lake County Board of Review is only a recommending body to the Illinois Department of Revenue as they will make the final decision. Mayor McKinney stated many showed up to support this effort. He thanked the legal team and Administrator Knabel for their diligence in getting this done.

Commissioner McDowell noted that on the Saturday after Thanksgiving (November 25<sup>th</sup>) Santa will be escorted to the Shiloh House for an appearance from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Frierson wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and encouraged all to enjoy their families. Additionally, he thanked Director Conway for providing them with the budget to actuals and Administrator Knabel for his work on the hearing and his continued leadership.

Commissioner Fischer noted that Mayor Glenn Ryback of Wadsworth recently passed away. He was a former Chairman of the Board for both the IML and SWALCO. He commented that he just saw him at the last SWALCO meeting. He recently had bypass surgery and was doing well. It was very sad news and noted that he was very well liked. Mayor McKinney noted that Mayor Ryback did so much for Lake County. He always made sure that if there was money available he would work with the State to make sure they money came to Lake County. He also saw him recently and he looked healthy. He noted that he will be missed for all he brought to Lake County. He will also miss him on a personal level. Mayor Ryback was a public servant since 2007. He offered condolences to his family and friends.

Mayor McKinney wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. Additionally, he thanked the Council for their insight and the City employees for their hard work for the City. He appreciates their investment in making Zion great and never takes them for granted. He also encouraged everyone to enjoy their family and friends for the Holiday.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

November 23,24		City Offices Closed for the Holiday
December 5	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting
December 9	9:00 a.m.	Shop with a Cop
December 15		Christmas Tree Lighting at the Zion Park District
December 19	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting Zion City Council Meeting

**CLOSED SESSION**

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner McDowell that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:48 p.m., pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 “Open Meetings”, for the discussion of filed, pending and/or probable or imminent litigation, personnel, purchase or sale of real estate, collective bargaining and legal counsel. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:15 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, 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 McDowell and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 8:16 p.m. Motion carried.

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City Clerk

I thank Mr. Bradley for serving in this role over the past 4 years and note that he does have an extensive resume and experience in finance. This request for an increase in pay from 242 to 1000 per month has sparked a larger discussion about the current state of financial reporting available. Please correct my understanding on any of these points, the increase is being requested due to a significant increase in the amount of work:

1.) We do 1 or 2 check runs a month

2.) Mistakes are infrequent from the staff So this is not a every weekend duty. There by not a 4 or 5 fold increase in duties?

When looking at surrounding communities - They do pay more for the position of treasurer. However, 1 notable example is a community of similar size that pays just under 16K - For that - The city has monthly and annual reports prepared, an investment policy and transparency into the finances with bill runs being posted online.

As Zion looks to build on it's improved financial position, I proposed that we rewrite the position and requirements for our treasurer and leave the current stipend as is or at least consider raising to 500 per month instead until we can can agree on these additional deliverables.