

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2024 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, Holmes and Mayor McKinney. Commissioner McDowell was absent. A quorum was present.

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

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

AGENDA CHANGES

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson to accept the City Council meeting agenda with the following changes:

Delete Item 5. Special Presentation – Resolution from Representative Joyce Mason

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

William Bremner, Zion, stated several months ago he presented an article from the Chicago Tribune regarding restoration of the Illinois Beach Park. He noted yesterday in the Chicago Tribune (October 14, 2024) there was an article about the breakwater things that they have put in have caused rip currents which are potentially deadly to swimmers. Fire Chiefs in the Harbor and Beach Park were interviewed about the difficulty with life-saving efforts and noted there have been quite a few deaths. Mayor McKinney noted that a press conference was held regarding the \$73 million project done on the beach by the State and the breakwaters that were designed to help restore the beachline. They have been talking with the respective fire departments about trying to get a rescue boat down there that could be shared between the departments.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

(a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on October 15, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

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

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

(b) **BILLS:** Vouchers 146905 through 146985 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$962,369.25.

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

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer seconded by Commissioner Holmes to accept and place on file the Treasure's Report for Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 2024.

(c) **RECEIVE AND PLACE ON FILE:** Treasure's Report for Fiscal Year Ending April 30, 2024.

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

RESOLUTION/TAX EXEMPTION INTERVENTION

Attorney Vasselli stated the proposed resolution gives the City the ability to contest the tax appeal exemption application for Midwestern Regional Medical Center, the former Cancer Treatment Centers of America, now City of Hope. This is the exact same procedure they followed last year when they made an application to contest their plea for tax exempt status. He noted that the City was successful last year and hopes to be successful again this year. Mayor McKinney asked what kind of impact it will have on the City. Attorney Vasselli stated they are the largest taxpayer of the City at \$5 million a year. Administrator Knabel stated the City's portion to lose is about \$750,000 but feel it could be another situation like the closing of the nuclear power plant. The tax burden would be shifted to the residents and businesses if they don't offset that with a reduction in the Levy. Mayor McKinney noted that it is one of the reasons why they have been fighting so hard with the CEJA money to convince the other taxing bodies to abate their taxes. To be able to help the residents that are struggling with property taxes or seniors that are dealing with issues of being able to afford their medications and pay for their mortgages. Commissioner Frierson wanted to confirm that the \$5 million is them in aggregate, not broken down for any properties that may not be tax exempt. Administrator Knabel stated it was the aggregate of the pins that they are applying for exemption for. Attorney Vasselli noted that they are contesting all pins.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that a Resolution (24-R-20) be passed authorizing the City of Zion to intervene in a Tax Exemption/Assessment matter concerning Real Property located within the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

ALL OTHER FUND BUDGETS/ FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

A memo (24-DOC-89) was received from from Director Conway requesting approval of the 2024/25 Budget. Director Conway stated the proposed budget includes all Funds except for Motor Fuel Tax and Street & Bridge that were already approved by Council. Highlights were as follows:

- Use of CEJA Grand funds for capital projects so there is no transfer need from the General Fund.
- Rates for the purchase of water increased which increased expenses. The revenue offset is only in effect as of October 1st so the additional cost is being absorbed by the City for six months of the fiscal year.
- Waste collection rate increase effective October 1st has the City absorbing the additional cost for the first six month of the fiscal year.
- Water and Sewer projects will occur during FY25 with funds from the increase in allocation of rates.
- Increase in TIF district incentive payments to local businesses.

Commissioner Frierson stated there is a line item adjustment/increase of \$57,000 for investigations. He asked if they got resolution on what that was for. Administrator Knabel stated this is due to grant funded type projects including the COPS grant which he believes is reflected in the grant revenue side. Chief Barden stated it was the Illinois Retail Theft Grant for about \$32,000 and the IPRF Safety Grant. Commissioner Frierson asked if there should be adjustments to revenue based on that. Administrator Knabel stated they could add \$32,000 to the Grant Revenue line item to reflect it. He noted they already did the Appropriation Ordinance for the formal approval and things are going to be over and under budget. He believes there may be other items that will be unforeseen but stated the motion could be amended to approve the budget with the increase of \$32,000. Commissioner Frierson stated he would like to include the adjustment. Administrator Knabel noted that it will increase the bottom line on income. He is happy to say they do have a balanced budget for the fourth year in a row which is a good trend.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Holmes, to approve the 2024/25 Budget with the amendment of an increase of \$32,000. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Holmes, and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Ianson stated that the demolition of the Nursing Home on 27th Street has begun and is on schedule. The process will take about 30-40 days. Mayor McKinney noted it is good to see that the project has started as they have been working the last 10 years to first try and find who the owner of the property was and then take ownership of the property to be able to demolish it to make a big improvement in the area.

Director Roberts noted the following:

- He gave an update regarding the Inventory for the Lead Line Services. They have about 200 more to go and are trying to set up times for the remaining households. They should be completed by the end of November. To date, only 40 lead service pipes have been found. He noted that they were originally going to apply for a \$5 million IEPA loan but will now be reducing that to a \$2 million loan.
- The Street Project is 80% complete. He asked that citizens be careful as the binder is down but there are manholes sticking up. They are scheduled to be done and the end of the week or the beginning of next week.
- He noted with the falling leaves, it is likely they will collect in the catch basins. He asked that residents help by trying to keep the basins clear. They have a small crew that are constantly out there clearing the basins throughout the City.

Fire Chief Stried stated in response to the article shared by Mr. Bremner, it is very difficult to prove that the break-wall work causes rip currents or problems. It is a fact that they along with their neighbors have responded to more emergencies on the water this year much more than the last few years combined. They will be looking into those details as they get ready for next season. They are all working together with both IDNR and State and Federal resources not just on a potential boat, but on other initiatives as well. They would like to see life guards, life ring and some different equipment that would help operations when they do have to respond there.

Additionally, he noted that Fire Prevention Week just wrapped up and they had a successful Open House. This year's theme was "Smoke alarms: Make them work for you!". He reminded citizens to check their smoke alarms and if their smoke alarm is over 5-10 years, they are probably due for a replacement.

Police Chief Barden noted the following

- Octoberfest is coming up on October 26th at Salem Blvd. and Jethro Avenue from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Activities will include hayrides, good and vendors.
- They are starting the preparations for Shop with a Cop and are looking for community partners that would like to participate, contribute or donate. He noted it is a great time for the young people and families in the community.
- Coffee with a Cop is coming up on October 26th at McDonalds from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Director Conway noted that although the County is open for Early Voting, the City of Zion is not. Early Voting starts at City Hall on October 21st. The City does not control Early Voting including the hours. She suggested calling the Lake County Clerk with any questions or concerns. Mayor McKinney suggested putting Early Voting information out on the City's Facebook pages.

Administrator Knabel note the following:

- He gave an update on the CEJA grant. The State just released the second round of funding for the CEJA grant. They are just starting to get the reimbursement from the first round and will be applying for the second round. He has been pushing for the funds to be used for tax abatement. He noted that when they lost the \$19 million in taxes from the closing of the Nuclear Plant, the taxes got shifted to the tax payers and businesses.
- City of Hope is again trying to go for Property Tax Exemption. While they are a good business in the City, losing \$5 million is crucial for Zion. He noted they will take the lead to make sure the burden is not shifted to the residents. They do not have a lot of authority but a lot of work and effort was put into objecting to this. He thanked all those involved in helping contest this. He restated the fact that it would have a significant impact on the community. Commissioner Frierson asked what the process was. Administrator Knabel stated the application goes to the Lake County Board of Review where the City can make their case. The Lake County Board of Review then makes a recommendation to the Illinois Department of Revenue. They will have to go through the same process to review the application. He noted that a non-profit income tax exempt is different from a property tax exempt. It is harder to get property tax exempt. Commissioner Fischer asked what the time line was. Administrator Knabel stated they submitted the application at the last minute and the hearing is the middle of November. This will be the second year having a hearing. He noted that at the last hearing there was a good showing from the taxing bodies.

Commissioner Fischer stated that this was the fourth year of having a balanced budget and it needs to be recognized. He noted that when he was first elected the City was going through some tough, tight times. He stated it's not that the City has more money, it is because of the hard work of the Department Heads and Staff of keeping costs down and squeezing out every dime.

Mayor McKinney stated they have done excellent work by finding money through grants which has been a tremendous bonus for the City. He noted that they have received so much help from their elected officials who have worked hard to get money for the City. He commended Administrator Knabel and Department Heads for their role in continuing to work hard for the City. He also acknowledged the hard work they have been doing on behalf of the residents by being fiscally responsible on a very tight budget. He noted that during the pandemic they did not cut stuff as they felt it was important to continue to maintain services.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

October 25	4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	Zion Park District Trail of Treats at Shiloh Park
October 26	2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Zion Trick or Treating
November 5	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:32 p.m., pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 "Open Meetings", for the discussion of filed, pending, possible 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; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:33 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

INDUCEMENT RESOLUTION/POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that a Resolution (24-R-21) be passed providing an Inducement to a Developer and the City in connection with potential redevelopment of certain real property located in the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, it was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Motion carried.

City Clerk