

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 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 McDowell, Fischer, Frierson, Holmes and Mayor McKinney. A quorum was present.

Also present: Fire Chief Justin Stried, Police Chief Eric Barden, Building & Zoning Director Richard Ianson, Public Works Director Ray Roberts, 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 McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson to accept the City Council meeting agenda as presented.

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no Citizen Comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on November 19, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.; approval but not release of Closed Session Minutes of a meeting held on November 5, 2024 at 7:44 p.m.

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

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

- (a) **BILLS:** Vouchers 147182 through 147259 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$349,269.56

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

RESOLUTION/TRUTH IN TAXATION

Director Conway stated the Truth in Taxation law requires a taxing body to compare the amount of its proposed aggregate property tax levy, to the amount of taxes extended for the district in the prior year. A notice must be published in a newspaper and a public hearing must be held if the proposed levy is more than 5 % greater than the previous year's tax extension. The City will be underneath the threshold of the 5% but is passing the Resolution anyway in the eye of transparency.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that a Resolution (24-R-23) be passed estimating that the proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2024 are \$9,168,140 which represents a 4.99% increase over the previous year. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

ORDINANCE/DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS PROPERTY/PUBLIC WORKS

A memo (24-DOC-92) was received from Director Roberts requesting a vehicle and equipment be declared as surplus property. Director Roberts stated that the Council has previously approved within the FY25 Budget, the purchase of a Front-End Loader. Included within the purchase agreement is the trade-in value of \$12,000 for the existing PWD 1998 Volvo Front-End Loader. This piece of equipment is required to be placed in a surplus status in order to be utilized as a trade-in for the new equipment purchase. Additionally, the Fleet Maintenance Department has inspected and deemed the Public Service Van to be too costly to repair and is longer safe for operation. Staff requests and recommends that the Public Service Van and Front-End Loader be declared surplus and that the Public Service Van be scheduled to be sold at auction “as is” with a minimum bid price to be determined by Staff and the City Administrator.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (24-O-89) be passed to authorizing and approving the disposal of surplus property in the Public works Department. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

ORDINANCE/AMENDING ZION MUNICIPAL CODE/SECTION 70-128

A memo (24-DOC-93) was received from Director Ianson requesting A Text Amendment to Section 70-128(2) of the Zion Municipal Code, Zoning Docket 24-Z-21. Director Ianson stated that now that electronic signs are more common, Staff is recommending the Text Amendment to eliminate a Special Use requirement in commercial zoning districts. The Special Use Permit will still be required in residential districts. At the November 7, 2024 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended approval.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer, that an Ordinance (24-O-90) be passed amending Section 70-128 of the Zion Municipal Code regarding Electronic/Digital Signs located within the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**ORDINANCE/MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD
COUNTERDRUG TASK FORCE**

A memo (24-DOC-94) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and agreement with the Illinois National Guard. Chief Barden stated that the agreement outlines terms for the National Guard to provide an analyst to work directly with the Zion Police Department in a support function to better deter and combat drug and violent crime. Staff continually seeks out ways to aid with drug crime suppression. Commissioner Fischer asked how many personnel they will be receiving. Chief Barden stated just 1 person and they will be in a support role only sitting behind a desk. They will help build cases and connect and manage the social media. Commissioner Fischer asked what the person’s schedule will be and how long they will be here. Chief Barden stated they will have a year to year contract and will partner with the task forces. Commissioner Fischer asked if it will be an analyst role looking at the material collected during investigations. Chief Barden stated the person will be providing help to the department. Commissioner Fischer asked if they will be collecting information for active investigations. Chief Barden stated the agreement is with the National Guard and will not be active military, they will simply be a support person and not in the field. Commissioner McDowell asked if there will be a cost to the City. Chief Barden stated there will be no cost to the City. Commissioner Frierson asked who they will be reporting to. Chief Barden stated both the PD and the National Guard.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fischer, that an Ordinance (24-O-91) be passed authorizing and approving a Memorandum of Understanding with the Illinois National Guard Counterdrug Task Force and the City of Zion through the Zion Police Department. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, nay; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

APPROVAL/INSURANCE RENEWAL/2024-2025

A memo (24-DOC-95) was received from Administrator Knabel stating the City’s insurance broker Marsh McLennan Agency went out to market to get quotes for insurance coverage for general liability, law enforcement liability, automobile, equipment and excess umbrella.

He stated that the industry as a whole has been seeing premium increases as follows:

- Property rates 2-10%
- Automobile rates 9%
- General Liability rates 4% or higher

The proposed renewal represents a 2.43% overall increase., which is lower than the above averages. While there are rate increases affecting the property & casualty lines, there are also increases in exposures. Property values have been increased by 4% to meet inflationary guidelines, equipment values are up by 17%, and the vehicle count is up by 4%. Workers Compensation rates have come down, so even though payrolls are up by 4%, the decrease in rate results in a net decrease of premium leading to better-than-average overall result. He noted that having a single Underwriter for all lines gets them better rates. Taking all those factors into consideration, the proposal is reasonable and he recommends renewing the lines of coverage as proposed.

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 12/1/24 to 11/30/25. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye, Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

BUDGET AMENDMENT/CAPITAL FUND/PURCHASE OF SQUAD CARS

A memo (24-DOC-96) was received from Chief Barden requesting a budget amendment to Capital Fund. Chief Barden is requesting the amendment in the amount of \$240,000 to allow for the purchase and equipment outfitting of three new squad cars. Commissioner Frierson asked what the immediate need is and thought that they had recently purchased new cars. Chief Barden stated during COVID the ordering window changed. Due to a small opening in the ordering window, they are trying to get back into the ordering rotation. They have had a few vehicles totaled this year reducing the fleet. If they order the vehicles now, they will probably arrive in May, but if they lose the window, then the soonest they may be able to order vehicles would be next fall taking delivery in 2026. They did purchase some cars from Highwoods which was good for the interim but those vehicles are also aging. Commissioner Frierson asked if this will mean there will be no cars put in next years' budget. Administrator Knabel stated if they come in before the next budget year, they will need to include them in the current budget.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (24-O-92) be passed authorizing and approving the reallocation of funds for the purchase of vehicles and related equipment for the City of Zion in the Police Department. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners: McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

VARIANCE/ZION MUNICIPAL CODE/SECTION 103-32/3005 ELIZABETH

A memo (24-DOC-97) was received from Director Ianson requesting approval of a Variance from Section 103-32(a)(6) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow a 16ft set back instead of the required 18ft at the property located at 3005 Elizabeth Avenue as petitioned by Richard Kimbrough, Zoning Docket 24-Z-20. Mr. Kimbrough is a disabled Veteran and the additional 2 feet on the existing patio would give him the wheelchair access he needs to enter his garage and vehicle. At the November 7, 2024 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended approval of the Variance.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (24-O-93) be passed granting a Variance from Section 103-32(a)(6) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow a 16ft set back instead of the required 18 ft for property located at 3005 Elizabeth Avenue. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried Ordinance passed.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT/1800 23RD STREET

A memo (24-DOC-98) was received from Director Ianson requesting approval of a Special Use Permit from Section 70-128(2) of the Zion Municipal Code. Matt Laska of North Shore Sign is seeking a Special Use Permit to retrofit the existing sign at Our Saviors Lutheran Church with a full color electronic sign. At the November 7, 2024 Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting, they recommended to approve the Special Use Permit.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell that an Ordinance (24-O-94) be passed granting a Special Use Permit to Section 70-128(2) of the Zion Municipal Code to retrofit the existing sign for the property located at 1800 23rd Street. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried Ordinance passed.

RESOLUTION/PUD/START EARLY

A memo (24-DOC-99) was received from Director Ianson requesting approval of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) for Start Early, Zoning Docket 24-Z-24. Director Ianson stated that Start Early would like to develop an early childhood education center that will encompass professional development in multi-purpose community spaces designed to accommodate various events and meetings. The PUD will cover the Special Use Permit and sub-division of the property. According to Section 102-158 of the Zion Municipal Code, a PUD may be located in any zoning district, subject to the standard in the said section subsequent in the issuance of a Special Use Permit. At the November 7, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the PUD with the condition that if the closing of the property doesn't occur in 2 years, the PUD is revoked. Mayor McKinney stated this will be a great addition to the community as there is a lack of a program in the area. They worked closely with District 6 on the project with input from Diana Rauner. He noted with the old Helia building coming down, the new building will look nice in the area. Commissioner McDowell addressed the Start Early representatives thanking them for choosing Zion for their program.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell that a Resolution (24-R-24) be passed approving a Development Plan/Planned Unit Development for Start Early for the property located between Zion Central Middle School and Shiloh Park Middle School. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Ianson stated they are making progress on the demolition of the Helia building and are 25% complete. They hope to be done in the next couple of weeks.

Director Roberts noted that they are close to closing out the Lead Service Line project. They have just 30 residents left to which they have been making calls and leaving flyers. The next step would be to identify the line by digging on the curb line if they do not receive a response. They have only identified to date 40 service lines of galvanized/lead. Due to the low amount discovered, they will be reducing the amount of the loan request to \$1.5 million, of which 80% could be forgiven. The first part of next year they will go out to bid for a company to fix the lines. Mayor McKinney noted that the Midwest has the highest inventory of lead pipes remaining. Director Roberts stated that in the 1960's the Councils disallowed lead pipes. The City of Chicago has between 400-500 thousand and Waukegan has about 100,000. Mayor McKinney noted that the process to determine if you have lead pipes is very quick, taking less than 5 minutes. Director Roberts reminded residents that the City is only looking at the service lines. Homeowners will need to test the interior pipes on their own. He noted that if residents have pipes prior to 1980 or faucets prior to 2014, they may contain lead.

Fire Chief Stried shared the following:

- He reminded residents that with cold weather coming, they should make sure their furnaces, chimneys and flues have been cleaned and checked as they can cause carbon monoxide problems.
- He expressed public appreciation for Firefighters. They have seen a rise in call volumes and are looking to fill an open position. They have had some injuries and a long-term illness and lots of coverage is needed.
- He reminded citizens to be mindful of mental health issues during the Holiday Season.

Police Chief Barden reminded residents to check their vehicles for safety and too slow down with the weather changing. He noted people often forget to check their windshield wipers and to keep their headlights on.

Administrator Knabel shared the following:

- When the Lead Service Line program began, it did not include a funding mechanism. They tried to figure out a way to alleviate the financial burden from the homeowners. The homeowner would still be responsible for getting it done, but not have to pay for it. The City talked about many different options and determined that a loan was the best way with the City bearing the total costs. The loan program will allow up to an 80% forgiveness leaving the City with 20% of the costs which will cost them less and be no cost to the residents.

- The City of Hope is again submitting an application for property tax exemption. He has reviewed 200 pages of the application. The City will be intervening on behalf of the taxing bodies. It would be a loss of \$4.8 million in taxes and could be a tax increase for businesses and homeowners of about \$1,000. The City was successful last time and hopes to be again this time. The hearing is this Thursday at 3:00 p.m. at the County Building. He is looking for anyone and everyone to attend for support.

Commissioner McDowell noted that on the Saturday after Thanksgiving (November 30th) Santa will be escorted by Zion Fire Service to the Shiloh House for an appearance from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Frierson wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. He questioned if Sheridan Road would be opened on November 22nd. Director Roberts stated he had no update but that the City’s portion was complete. Mayor McKinney asked what the delay was. Director Roberts stated the weather has most likely delayed the project. A project of this magnitude has to consider of lot of factors. Replacing the culvert is 55 ft deep and is a main ravine. It is a big trench and has to be filled with backfill which is a mixture of gravel and dirt. If this fill was brought in, it would be very costly so they utilized what was dug up. Due to the rain, it had to be dried out, as it cannot be put back wet. Mayor McKinney noted that the process is necessary to go through to make everything safe.

Commissioner Frierson noted that some residents are still not aware that that the leaf vacuuming program has been discontinued. Leaves can be placed in a 32-gallon container or put in lawn bags. They will continue to be picked up until the end of November with regular garbage pick-up.

Commissioner Fischer wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor McKinney wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and reminded citizens that they should not take for granted their blessings in their lives and to be more thankful for the positive things in life. He noted that good things are happening in Zion and we should not forget to celebrate the good things. He reminded citizens that in government progress is slow and everything is done with the residents in mind. Zion has a great City Council and employees. They must appreciate the Staff for what they do to try and make Zion better. He encouraged residents to attend meetings to get better educated on the role of local government. Each taxing body has their own role in government. They have to continue to find ways to get citizens engaged. They enact programs to keep people safe and update ordinances from time to time to amend them to fit today’s codes and residents needs. He reminded residents that the Council and Department Heads are accessible and approachable. The only way to improve the City is to get the input from the residents and with 25,000 residents, they need to help provide solutions not just complaints.

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

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, it was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Motion carried.