

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025, 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 Fischer, Frierson, 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, and City Attorney James Vasselli. Finance Director Kris Conway and City Administrator David Knabel were absent.

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:

Amend Item 7 (b) - The Total for the bills should read \$1,465,366.32

Remove Item 12 - **CLOSED SESSION** – for discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, performance and/or dismissal of the City prosecutor pursuant to Subsection 2(c)(1) of the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1))

Move Item 13 up to 9 (c)

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

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Mayor McKinney presented the Zion Queens:

Teen Miss Lake County Rachel Harvey  
Junior Miss Dior Wilson  
Miss Zion Emily Ortiz

The Queens each introduced themselves and their platforms. Little Miss Nia Avella Arias was unable to attend.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There were no Citizen Comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

(a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on December 17, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Frierson, 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:

(a) **BILLS:** Vouchers 147440 through 147600 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$1,465,366.32

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

### **ORDINANCE/AMENDING SECTIONS 34-1 AND 50-1/ZION MUNICIPAL CODE**

Chief Stried stated the main reason for the ordinance is to amend language in the Code for both the Fire/Rescue Department and the Police Department to match the City's Personnel Authorization. He noted that the attachment includes numbers that reflect the current numbers that they operate under and some potential needs. The numbers reflected in the Authorization are not necessarily what they employ but what could potentially could be allowable based on budget availability and potential needs throughout the year. Commissioner Frierson asked what the emphasis was to do it annually. Chief Stried noted that it is a new change added by Legal and he is not sure why it has been added. Chief Barden stated it keeps them up to date so they are reviewing their staffing levels in relation to the grant funded positions. This is so they know where they are at and know how to appropriate the dollars that they need for salaries. Commissioner Frierson questioned the separate line item in the budget for the grant funded positions that they open up when they come through. Chief Barden stated that is the case but they still need to keep the Personnel Authorization updated as to allow for extra positions in the event they know someone is going to retire using the example of bringing someone in that may overlap due to getting them into the academy. Additionally, it gives the Department Heads an opportunity to annually look at where they should be for staffing needs. Chief Stried noted his authorization is for adding one additional firefighter position as they are anticipating one possibly two retirements later this year in addition to operating short two positions right now due to sickness, injury and illness. By bringing on an additional position it will allow them to make up some of that loss while essentially being a net equal for budgetary purposes. Commissioner Frierson stated he understands it is disconnected from the budget piece and feels it has always been kind of a stop-gap. It gives them the threshold to make sure things don't inflate outside what is covered in the union contracts because there's nothing that comes back to the Council on those amounts. Chief Barden stated those number are always approved by the Council and noted the contract does not contain any staffing numbers. Commissioner Frierson stated if they approve this ordinance there is nothing that will come back to Council for new hires as they would all go through the Board of Fire & Police. Chief Barden stated the City Council has to authorize the number of personnel that they hold. The Board of Fire and Police manages the hiring/onboarding process.

It was moved by Commissioner Holmes and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-1) be passed amending Sections 34-1 and 50-1 of the Zion Municipal Code regarding authorized personnel for the Zion Fire and Rescue Department and the Zion Police Department on behalf of the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

### **ORDINANCE/MOU/JAG GRANT**

A memo (25-DOC-1) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Waukegan, the County of Lake and the City of Zion regarding the 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). Chief Barden stated the grant is awarded annually by the U.S. Department of Justice. The City of Waukegan completes the application of the grant on behalf of the signed parties and funds are distributed to the parties through the City of Waukegan. The MOU is necessary for the City of Waukegan to act as the fiscal agent for the grant. The City of Zion has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$10,270.00. The police department has used this grant in the past to pay for equipment to include standing backdrops for photo opportunities, ballistic shields and associated items, and lock boxes for the rear of squad cars.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-2) be passed authorizing and approving a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Waukegan, the County of Lake and the City of Zion regarding the 2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

### **ORDINANCE/SIREN MAINTENANCE CONTRACT RENEWAL/FULTON SIREN SERVICES**

A memo (25-DOC-2) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval of a renewal contract for the City's outdoor emergency notification system. Chief Stried stated the City's contract is up for renewal and is recommending approval of the contract with Fulton Siren Services in the amount of \$1,709.80. This is an increase of approximately \$65 from last year. It is a budgeted ESDA item in the Emergency Notification line 102-170. He noted that after a few months of struggles with the siren system, he is happy to report that the last 3 months have gone smoothly.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-3) be passed authorizing and approving an agreement with Fulton Siren Services for outdoor warning siren system maintenance. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **ORDINANCE/FINALSITE/BLACKBOARD CONNECT/RENEWAL**

A memo (25-DOC-3) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval of a renewal contract for communication services for the City of Zion. Chief Stried stated the current agreement with BlackBoard Connect ends 3/25/25. He is recommending approval of the renewal in the amount of \$14,624.00. Per previous approved agreements, the City will pay the invoice, and half of the amount (\$7,312) will be reimbursed from the Joint Dispatch Board (JETSBS), and the other half is a budgeted figure from fund 10-67-102-170 (ESDA Emergency Notification Line). Additionally, he noted that since the JETSBS with Gurnee is ending soon, they may end up having to budget the full amount next year. As mentioned at a number of previous City Council meetings; he urges all residents of Zion to register with BlackBoard Connect to receive noteworthy messages from City Staff. Easy instructions can be found on the homepage of the City's website [www.cityofzion.com](http://www.cityofzion.com) or residents can contact the Chief via email or phone (847-746-4042) for assistance with registering or to check numbers/email addresses for accuracy. Commissioner Frierson asked if it may be time for an assessment of the program and determine if they are getting their money's worth with the site and the way it has been adopted by residents. Chief Stried stated it is a valid question as it is pretty pricey and generally only use it only a handful of times per year. He feels it will be up to the Council to determine if they feel they are getting their money's worth. He noted the few times a year that they do use it, he feels it is worthy to get the word out there. Additionally, he noted that it is important to check the registered numbers and emails. They do receive a recap when they send out a notice noting they have roughly 10,000 people registered and the amount that are successful is only about 25% indicating there are a lot of faulty numbers, emails and disconnected numbers. He noted they could evaluate the information to determine if the program is necessary. He feels it is a good expense but understands without a large number of uses throughout the year, it is a good question to ask. Mayor McKinney asked if there has been an uptick in registration and questioned how they can continue to market the program to the residents. Chief Stried stated when they do have public discussions regarding BlackBoard they tend to have a small number of people registering or contacting him for assistance but does not see a large uptick. Mayor McKinney noted that he recently attended a Lake County Municipal League meeting, and one of the the discussions was about emergency communication systems with residents. He stated one of the focuses for all of the County Mayor's is making sure they could participate in being able to give them the information so that they can disseminate important information to them. Chief Stried noted that it does seem as though social media is bigger these days than phone calls.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-4) be passed authorizing and approving an agreement with Finalsite/BlackBoard Connect for communication services for the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **AMENDING ZION MUNICIPAL CODE/FIRE PREVENTION CODES/REGULATIONS**

A memo (25-DOC-4) was received from Chief Stried regarding an update to City Ordinance 34-43, Codes Adopted, effective February 1, 2025. Chief Stried stated for many years they have operated under the International Fire Code 2006 version which is coming up on 20 years old. Version 2021 updates many different sections of the code due to the different areas of research that has been conducted over the past 20 years. He shared a few of the updates and noted they are keeping the same wording from the last time they were updated to be consistent with how they have handled other building projects. They are trying to be consistent and keep some of the same regulations that they follow. He noted the 2021 International Fire Code request brings the codes that they follow up to current standards. Commissioner Fischer stated a number of sections are being deleted and asked if they are covered under the new standards. Chief Stried stated most of it is essentially the same wording. He believes the reason for the strike outs is that it has all been posted on the website under the Code of Ordinances. Every one of the sections is contained in the International Fire Code 2021 book. Commissioner Fischer asked how the public can access the information. Chief Stried stated they can contact him as they have the book available and he can facilitate any questions the public may have.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-5) be passed amending Section 34-43 of the Zion Municipal Code regarding Fire Prevention Codes and Regulations for the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**ORDINANCE/VARIANCE/2273 GALILEE AVENUE**

A memo (25-DOC-5) was received from Director Ianson requesting a Variance from Section 102-206(b)(2) of the Zion Municipal Code to continue Single Family Use for the property located at 2273 Galilee Avenue. Director Ianson stated Antioco and Yolanda Flores are seeking a Variance to continue Single Family Use for their property, Zoning Docket 25-Z-1. Currently it is zoned Local Business, but the majority of the surrounding area is zoned Single Family. The only business within that district are located at the 2100 block of Galilee and the corner of Salem and Galilee. The remaining properties within that district are all residential. At the January 9, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the Variance. Commissioner Frierson noted that he appreciates the investment made to clean up the blight.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Holmes, that an Ordinance (25-O-6) be passed granting a Variance from Section 102-206(b)(2) of the Zion Municipal Code to continue Single Family Use for property located at 2273 Galilee Avenue. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**APPROVAL/PURCHASE/RECORDS STORAGE SYSTEM/POLICE DEPARTMENT**

A memo (25-DOC-6) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of a Records Storage System in the Police Department. Chief Barden stated that as part of the continued effort to remain compliant to records retention laws, Staff has researched and recommends the purchase of a movable and lockable High-Density Records Storage System built by Wolter Inc. The purchase is a budgeted capital purchase for this fiscal year. The vendor for the product in this region is part of the coop purchasing agreement under the Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS-USA) of which the City of Zion is a member. Through this coop the purchasing discount is 42% of retail pricing. The total cost of this project is \$44,392.79. Commissioner Frierson asked how this will be implemented. Chief Barden stated they will come out and measure and it is built specific to the department's use. The entire system is movable so it can be moved to a new building if needed. In order to follow records retention laws, they must be able to lock and secure all their records. They are growing out of their current system and losing space so they need something that will hold and house all their records. This system gives them that solution while complying with retention laws. Mayor McKinney asked if the records will be protected from fire or water. Chief Barden stated the system is not fireproof but they could move the records if there is a water issue. Mayor McKinney asked if there were any other ways to store the records if the files are damaged. Chief Barden stated they have long term storage in the basement but do not have an elevator and they need to be cognizant of the needs of staff. Commissioner Frierson noted that it looks like a track system that is expandable. Chief Barden this was one is not expandable because they are going to fill out the space that they have but they can add to the system down the road if they have a bigger space to put it in.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Holmes, that an Ordinance (25-O-7) be passed authorizing and approving the purchase of a Records Storage System from Wolter, Inc. for the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**APPOINTMENT/CITY OF ZION PROSECUTING ATTORNEY**

Mayor McKinney presented Dough Roberts for the appointment of the City of Zion Prosecuting Attorney.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson, that Doug Roberts be appointed as the City of Zion Prosecuting Attorney. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Holmes, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

**DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY**

Director Ianson gave a few tips on how to keep pipes from freezing during the extreme cold weather. Residents can turn on their faucets to a slow trickle, open their cabinets where pipes are located, or put insulation on their pipes. He also noted that residents often forget to disconnect their garden hoses.

Director Roberts stated that they have responded to 17 water main breaks since Christmas. They are trying to do the repairs as fast as they can. He noted that people have been calling about cloudy water. He suggested running water a little longer and checking all faucets in the house to see if the water is the same. If a color change or odor is noticed, he suggested calling Public Works.

Fire Chief Stried reminded residents not to use their stoves to heat their homes as it can be a carbon monoxide hazard. If a fire occurs he urged residents not to try and put out the fire but rather call 911 and exit the home and let firefighters do their jobs.

Police Chief Barden noted the PD is a 24/7 warming center. There are a number of additional warming centers in the City; the Library, Park District and City Hall during business hours. He also urged those with emergencies to call the Police Department as they have worked with local businesses to get emergency equipment if needed. A list of warming centers can be found on the City Facebook pages.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

February 4	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting
February 18	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 Holmes and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 7:45 p.m. Motion carried.

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City Clerk