

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 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, McDowell, Frierson, Stackhouse, and Mayor McKinney. A quorum was present.

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

Mr. 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; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Jessica Clinton, Zion, approached the Council regarding permitting chickens in the City of Zion. She indicated that she previously met with Director Ianson and felt discouraged and frustrated. She noted there are residents have shown interest and passion for raising chickens and would like to get on the agenda to discuss it.

Vicki Cardenas, Zion, shared her support for raising chickens in the City of Zion.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on February 4, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

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

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

- (b) **BILLS:** Vouchers 147662 through 147759 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$452,273.93.

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

ABATING TAX/GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS - SERIES 2017

A memo (25-DOC-9) was received from Director Conway regarding an ordinance abating the General Obligation Bonds Series 2017 principal and interest payments for tax levy year 2024. Director Conway noted 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 2024 tax year. By passing the ordinance, the debt service payments for the Series 2017 bonds will not appear on the real estate tax bills. Commissioner Fischer noted the bonds were for the ballfield property issued in 2014 and refunded in 2017 and asked how much longer they will have to pay on this. Administrator Knabel stated it goes another 5-6 years.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that an Ordinance (25-0-10) be passed abating the tax heretofore levied for the Year 2024 to pay the Principal of and Interest on \$3,140,000 Taxable General Obligation Refunding Bonds (Alternate Revenue Source), Series 2017, of the City of Zion, Lake County, Illinois. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

APPROVAL/ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR CLOSED LANDFILLS

A memo (25-DOC-10) was received from Director Roberts requesting approval of a proposal for the Environmental Engineering Services for the City's closed landfills. Services will include groundwater monitoring and reporting, landfill inspections and reporting that is required by the IEPA closed landfill permit. Staff requests and recommends approving the proposal for Environmental Engineering Services for the City's closed landfill from Deigan and Associates of Libertyville, IL in the amount of \$30,000.00. The proposed contract is for the FY26 and will be a budgeted item within the Waste Fund. Commissioner Fischer asked if the amount is the same as last year. Director Roberts stated the cost is about \$5,000 less. Along with monitoring, Deigan and Associates has been applying to diminish the amount of required testing and reporting. They are trying to get it to annually but were able to get it quarterly which has reduced some of the current cost. He noted this will continue for another 15-20 years but the goal is to get it annually which would be a minor cost to do all that.

It was moved by Commissioner Stackhouse and seconded by Commissioner that an Ordinance (25-O-11) be passed authorizing and approving a proposal and work agreement with Deigan and Associates LLC and the City of Zion for groundwater monitoring, reporting and landfill inspections. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE/RIGHT-OF-WAY VACATION/EBINEZER AVENUE

A memo (25-DOC-11) was received from Director Roberts requesting a right-of-way vacation of the unimproved Ebenezer Avenue between 27th Street and 28th Street. Director Roberts stated the Zion Park District has previously purchased the adjacent lots of Ebenezer Avenue from the City to construct a maintenance facility and will utilize the right-of-way as an access to the new facilities. Survey, legal and recording fees shall be paid by the Zion Park District.

It was moved by Commissioner Stackhouse, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-12) be passed vacating real property (Ebenezer Avenue from 27th Street to 28th Street) in the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/PROTECT LAKE COUNTY

A memo (25-DOC-12) was received from Chief Barden regarding Protect Lake County. Chief Barden stated in 2023 representatives from DePaul University, the University of Illinois at Chicago and Loyola University approached Police counterparts in Lake County about participating in a pilot project funded by a U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant. The project's goal is to establish a Behavioral Threat Assessment Management (BTAM) Team in Lake County, IL. The proactive approach intends to help ensure community safety by identifying and mitigating potential threats before they escalate. This initiative is part of the broader Illinois Targeted Violence Prevention and Intervention initiative. In April 2024, an informational meeting hosted at the Lincolnshire Village Hall drew over 75 attendees from diverse fields, including mental health, law enforcement, education, healthcare, veterans' affairs, and public health. He provided the Composition and purpose of Protect Lake County and requested approval to participate in the program and enter into an agreement with the provided Memorandum of Understanding. Commissioner Stackhouse stated she feels it is a good project because it is about prevention rather than reacting and hopes the project takes off. She sees some collaboration and efforts in making this happen. She also sees there is some accountability and believes it is going to help all of Lake County. She thanked Chief Barden for his willingness to take on the project for not only Lake County but particularly for the City of Zion. Mayor McKinney asked if this will help identify some of the mental health issues that the police officers have to address when they are out in the community. Chief Barden noted that it is a collaborative approach and the goals are to identify and assess individuals that are displaying concerning behavior. The BTAM is to advise on prevention and intervention techniques and strategies, serve as a bit of a centralized hub for information on the training and the resources needed but noted that it is not an information gathering hub. It will help address issues with individuals before they escalate.

The goal is to foster communication, collaborate among other community partners, compiling and maintaining a resource directory for violence prevention and mitigation for people. Additionally, he noted that they do work with the Lake County State's Attorney's office and did consult with them on some concerning behaviors about an incident they had recently. Commissioner McDowell noted a few examples of real problems in the Composition. Chief Barden stated he did attend a conference on the subject and they talked about teaching local law enforcement at a Secret Service level. Commissioner Fischer asked if they have received funding. Chief Barden stated it will be at no cost to the City and the grant is already in place. Commissioner Frierson confirmed from a logistics standpoint, that they would only get involved when they received a call through 911 and that there would not be profiling or gathering of information on people. Chief Barden stated they are making it accessible to community members to be able to reach out to the police to try and address a situation and provide help. Commissioner Frierson noted that at the last meeting Chief Barden discussed an app that the police are using and asked if this would be something that would be applicable in getting information to the department. Chief Barden stated they would prefer a phone call but the app would work. Mayor McKinney stated citizens can also call 211 as they have counselors available 24/7 and can talk to them about any issues including mental health issues.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-13) be passed authorizing and approving the Protect Lake County and participating member agencies agreement on behalf of the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT/ORION ASSET MANAGEMENT LLC/PLANO PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.

Administrator Knabel stated last year Ron Lance from Lake County Partners works with businesses with large development projects that are looking to locate in Lake County. They then try and find suitable sites for the projects. He reached out to Zion who had a site within Trumpet Park that met the needs of Plano Pharmaceuticals. The company is very successful internationally and are looking to expand into the United States with a headquarters for their product which is primarily pharmaceutical IV fluid bags. With the pharmaceutical hub that they have in Lake County, it would be a natural fit. At a prior meeting they approved a purchase sale agreement for the sale of 21.7 acres in Trumpet Park to Plano Pharmaceuticals contingent on the approval of a Redevelopment Agreement. This spells out the terms and incentives and what they expect from each other on them locating here. Included in the agreement is a real estate tax incentive for being in a TIF District which allow taxes that come from the project to be invested back in and used to incentive businesses to be here. It is a big challenge being on the Wisconsin border to attract business here to Zion. This allows them to level the playing field with the higher taxes to incentivize businesses to locate here. They ultimately were able to negotiate an agreement with agreeable terms and locate in Zion. Phase 1 of the project will bring about 40-50 jobs and with expansion would increase to 300 over the next 10-15 years. They encourage the growth by scaling the incentives as they continue to expand. He believes it is a great business for the City.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that an Ordinance (25-O-14) be passed authorizing and approving a Redevelopment Agreement by and between the City of Zion, Orion Asset Management LLC and Plano Pharmaceuticals Inc. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

PROMOTIONS/FIRE/RESCUE DEPARTMENT

A memo (24-DOC-13) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval of various promotions in the Fire/Rescue Department. Chief Stried stated the City's Collective Bargaining Agreement with firefighters' Local 1999 calls for May 1 FY duty shift changes to be posted by March 1. With that in mind, he is requesting the proposed promotions be approved with effective dates of May 1, 2025. This will allow for operational continuity, as well as some shift flexibility as they continue to navigate numerous personnel situations, including a lengthy medical situation that one of the management team is going through, along with an anticipated retirement in the early fall. Therefore, he is requesting:

Battalion Chief Eric Troy be appointed Deputy Chief, effective May 1;

Lieutenant Nicholas Urbanik promoted to Battalion Chief, effective May 1;

Firefighter/Paramedic Brian Haske promoted to Lieutenant, effective May 1.

Points of note; the Deputy Chief position will remain a 24-hour shift position, along with some potential special circumstance assignments as approved by the Chief. Additionally, he does not expect that this position will be filled following the anticipated retirement later this fall. Furthermore, they are currently staffed as such that these promotions will not require additional hires.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson to approve the promotions in the Fire/Rescue Department as presented. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Roberts shared that Lake County Stormwater Management is having an open house on Thursday, February 20th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Zion-Benton Public Library. They will be discussing the Lake County 5-year plan on any drainage issues and large projects. They will be available to answer questions from residents about stormwater, drainage issues or detention basins.

Chief Stried noted that they participated in a round table discussion with Congressman Brad Schneider and about 22 Fire Chiefs from Congressional District 10 talking about different issues for the Fire & EMS service that they are facing. One item that was a key topic was the challenge on protecting the lakefront. He is hoping to get some help with resources for what they expect to be another busy summer. Mayor McKinney asked Chief Stried if he had any advice on warming centers with the freezing cold. Chief Stried stated there are warming centers in Zion and suggested visiting the City's Facebook page and website for the complete list and times of warming centers or by calling the fire department. Additionally, he advised residents not to use candles or cooking appliances to heat their homes. He suggested calling 211 for help.

Chief Barden stated they are transitioning into LakeComm Dispatch. They recently hired an Executive Director for the countywide dispatch center. There will be some changes coming forward in the next few months. The intent is to make the transition on July 1st. The Director has been working hard to staff the facility and get management in place that is needed to operate efficiently as both a call center and dispatch center for police and fire services countywide. Part of the transition is going to include some migration and changes from the way they operate. Additionally, there is going to be some opportunities that they will benefit from. Information will be posted on the Facebook page as it comes up.

Director Conway stated City Hall will again be an Early Voting location for the Spring elections. The elections are handled by the Lake County Clerk's Office and City employees cannot help with details. Mayor McKinney noted that citizens can visit the Lake County website for information.

Administrator Knabel noted the following:

- Director Roberts and the Public Works employees take a lot of heat about streets and plowing. For their safety, employees must rest after working for 16 hours straight. They try to rotate the best they can but they only have a limited number of employees to handle all duties. He asked that residents be patient with the staff as they have also been out on a large number of main breaks.
- Regarding chickens; they must consider the safety of the entire City when making decisions. They do have to look and questions and answers for a variety of concerns. He reminded residents that surrounding communities have a lot more space. Although there have been no cases of bird flu reported in Illinois, the surrounding states do have them. He noted 33% of the cases do come from backyard flock. They must look at noise as well as reasons that attract predatory animals and vermin to the area. He understands the reasons for wanting them but they must consider all aspects of allowing them. They must make decisions based on the welfare and protection of the City as a whole even if it means an inconvenience for a few.

Attorney Vasselli stated that any change to the regulations on chickens would need to start with the zoning process. There is an application process that goes through the Planning & Zoning Commission who in turn makes a recommendation to the City Council. He noted the zoning code is online for the public to view.

Commissioner Fischer thanked those that came out for citizen comments to make their point.

Mayor McKinney noted the following:

- He thanked the citizens that came in to make their points to the Council. The subject of chickens has come up before but did not make it past Planning & Zoning, but hears what they are saying.
- He welcomed Plano Pharmaceuticals to Zion noting that they try to offer incentives to businesses in order to compete with Wisconsin for business. He noted the new money they received from the State will allow them to lower property taxes starting in 2026. This will be good for Zion from an Economic Development standpoint and for all of the residents. They have been working really hard in the last several years to make sure that they are able to get the property taxes down but also to continue to bring in great businesses.
- Home ownership is up to 60% from 6 years ago.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 4	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting Zion City Council Meeting
March 18		Meetings Cancelled due to Early Voting at City Hall
April 1	7:00 p.m.	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 Fischer and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 7:50 p.m. Motion carried.

City Clerk