

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 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 McDowell, Frierson, Fischer, and Mayor McKinney. Commissioner Stackhouse 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, Administrator David Knabel and City Attorney Eric Stach.

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 McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION/POLICE DEPARTMENT/FIRE/RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Mayor McKinney presented Zion Police Officers Haley Pacholsky, Tai Coggins, Connor Lima and Dante Burchfield along with Fire Department Lieutenant Nick Urbanik with Resolutions of Commendation for their exceptional service and commitment to the health, safety, and well-being of the community members.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Kathy Champine, Zion, shared that she feels that the City's Towing contract could use some improvements as it does not benefit residents. She noted some discrepancies in the contract and wondered why they have not been caught. She would like to see the contract reviewed and adjusted. Additionally, she believes the City should go out to bid every few years.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on February 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; 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 147760 through 148092 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$1,347,498.90

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

APPROVAL/STREET & BRIDGE/MOTOR FUEL TAX BUDGETS

A memo (25-DOC-14) was received by Director Conway requesting approval of the Street & Bridge and Motor Fuel Tax Budgets. Director Conway stated that in the interest of moving forward with necessary IDOT paperwork and the bid process, she is presenting both the Street & Bridge budget and the Motor Fuel Tax budget for FY2026 for consideration in advance of the remainder of the City funds. As these funds are standalone funds and have no impact on the General Fund or other fund budgets they can isolate and approve accordingly.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner McDowell to approve the Street & Bridge and Motor Fuel Tax Budgets for FY2026. The vote on the roll: McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried.

ELIMINATION OF VEHICLE STICKERS

Administrator Knabel stated they have been talking internally for a while about the idea of eliminating City stickers. Processing stickers every two years has become very costly between sticker costs and staff time. Revenue has dropped due to the fact that residents are not purchasing the stickers. They used to collect \$350,000 every two years and now it is down to \$85,000. There have been both pro's and con's to having vehicle stickers but now there are not really any pro's but plenty of cons. The only pro is revenue and that is to a much lesser degree than it has been in the past. They have a lot more advanced technology for databases to identify vehicle owners, so there is not a need to track that through vehicle stickers any longer. Parking issues are also managed more on a case by case basis. Due to the negligible net effect it would have on revenue that they would get every couple of years, he is asking for feed back on amending the Code to eliminate the vehicle stickers. Given the fact that they are trying to move forward with additional revenue streams he would like to see the additional charges on the residents eliminated. The ordinance will go on the April 1st meeting for approval if the consensus is to eliminate the stickers. Commissioner Frierson asked Chief Barden if he foresees this impacting the way they enforce overnight parking. Chief Barden stated overnight parking is specific to 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. and one of the reasons for revenue drop is officers are no longer able to go on to private property to enforce the local ordinance. He noted that he does not see any change in it and hopes that it encourages more overnight parking enforcement so they can clear up the streets at night. Commissioner Fischer noted that they have not had the resources to enforce the ordinance as it stands for a number of years and there is no penalty or incentive for people to participate so they have been ignoring it. Administrator Knabel stated when they were understaffed, they were not always able to enforce it because other things became a priority. It then became an enforcement issue for the sake of following the Code. He feels it utilizes City resources for something that is not really needed. When asked how much the cost of materials were, he noted that it was \$10,000 for just the forms and stickers, not including staff time. Additionally, it was noted that many residents did not even obtain the stickers. Commissioner McDowell noted that he is glad that the City has developed other revenue streams so that they can reduce costs to residents.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to approve eliminating vehicle stickers and authorize the City attorney to amend the Zion Municipal Code. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried.

PROMOTION/RANK OF LIEUTENANT/POLICE DEPARTMENT

A memo (21-DOC-15) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of a promotion for sergeant to the rank of lieutenant. Chief Barden stated the promotion would result in the elimination of one sergeant position and the creation of a new lieutenant position within the department. The promotion of a sergeant to lieutenant will provide and opportunity to enhance the administrative oversight of the department. As they strive for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the operations, this position change will allow for more strategic management at the leadership level, helping to improve day-to-day supervision, resource allocation, and departmental coordination. It is important to note that while he is seeking approval at this time, the promotion would not take effect until the start of the next fiscal year. Gaining early approval would allow for the necessary procurement of equipment and changes to office space within our facilities, ensuring a smooth transition when the promotion is implemented. Commissioner McDowell asked if there was a current list available for the position and who the next candidate would be. Chief Barden confirmed there was a list available and the next candidate is Sergeant Jon Meyers. He noted that a few years ago he met with Sgt. Meyers and went over the framework and structure of how he wanted things to go. He didn't know how they were going to get there but told Sgt. Meyers it was going to be his job. They worked together and tried and changed things along the way and it has proven to be very successful. They have received several million dollars in grants and overhauled and made the Zion Police Department training a focus for the County. He noted that other agencies can also mirror what they are doing. Additionally, the transfer to Lake County is going to be a big change for them. Currently, Sgt. Meyers manages the CSOs that are working the desk and he will continue to manage this with the move to LakeComm. If the Board of Fire and Police approves his promotion, he will be managing the records division and be part of the implementation of new software that comes with the LakeComm transition. It is a big responsibility that comes with a lot of administrative tasks that will be transferred to him. A lieutenant rank helps him out with necessary authority.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fischer to approve the police department promotion of the rank of sergeant to lieutenant. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Ianson noted that they are accepting applications for the seasonal grass crew. The season runs from May through October. Grass cutters must be at least 16 years old and the Supervisor must be at least 18 years old.

Director Roberts noted that April 1st begins yard waste collection. Information is available on the City's website.

Fire Chief Stried thanked the Council for the recognition of staff and believes it should be done more often. Additionally, he reminded residents with Spring coming to check their grill connections prior to using them.

Police Chief Barden noted that officers wear body cameras and they do spot checks on the videos to identify if there are issues for see if there are training needs. Additionally, he too appreciates the Council recognition of staff.

Director Conway noted there will not be a second meeting in March due to Early Voting at City Hall that begins on March 17th. Information is available on the Lake County Clerk's website. She reminded citizens that the City does not have any control over early voting and that everything is handled by the County.

Administrator Knabel stated employees do a great job dealing with the community and believes they go above and beyond everyday but do not always get the recognition. He shared that he appreciates all City employees.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 18		Meetings Cancelled Due to Early Voting at City Hall
April 1	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting
April 8	6:00 p.m.	Annual Town Meeting
April 15	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting Zion City Council Meeting

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:50 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, legal counsel and personnel. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:17 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

APPROVAL/UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to approve the unpaid leave of absence for a City of Zion employee. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, 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 Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 8:20 p.m. Motion carried.