MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 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, Stackhouse, Frierson, McDowell, and Mayor McKinney. A quorum was present.

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

Mayor McKinney led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

AGENDA CHANGES

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to accept the City Council meeting agenda as presented.

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Debby Ramsey, Zion, noted that April is Donate Life Month. This is a time when Donate Life organizations across the country strive to make Life possible by educating and motivating individuals to register their decision to be an organ, eye and tissue donors. She shared that she has benefited from organ donation and asked that others consider it in the future.

Virgil Bates, Zion, stated that he had few issues of concern.

- He asked if the City was paying dog catchers. He noted that he was bit by a dog in August and had to go through a series of shots. He stated that the dog catcher came but the dog was not taken in for quarantine to see what the dog had. He went and got rabies shots and ended up going through some issues with antibiotics which ended up costing him \$20,000. He noted that he was on a public sidewalk next to his house when he was bit. Mayor McKinney noted it was not the time to answer questions but could talk to the Police Chief after the meeting.
- He noted that he fell into a sink hole about 4 months ago in an alley way. The main break busted in the alley and he came down the alley and his truck dropped down in the sink hole. He questioned if the City has been notified about the incident.

Linda Bates, Zion, stated that regarding the dog bite, they were told to talk with the Chief of Police. She spoke with Gina Roberts and she contacted the Chief of Police and he was supposed to get back to them but it never happened. She would like to know what is going on. She was told Lake County was supposed to take care of the dog issue but Lake County told her it was a Zion issue. She asked who is supposed to take care of it. She has found out that Zion does not have a contract for animal control. Additionally, she asked if anyone checks the streets and alleys for deterioration. She questioned how the alley could just cave in. They had a water main break outside their house and water was everywhere. She stated something needs to be done and would like some answers. Mayor McKinney offered Ms. Bates to talk with Public Works Director Ray Roberts after the meeting about alleyways and water main breaks.

Kathy Champine, Zion, stated last month she asked several questions regarding the towing contract. She noted that the owner of the towing company, Roger Whitmore, contacted her and they had a conversation about business costs, inflation and the dangers a tow driver faces. She noted the City sets towing prices when they go out for bid and feels towing bills should match the contract. She does not believe there should be extra fees which can be achieved by negotiating prices and bringing it to the Council for approval. She understands that prices change and there is inflation. Mr. Whitmore informed her that cars are equipped with license plate readers and it is possible for officers to pull someone over if the plate shows past offenses. She was also informed that it is possible to pick up an impounded car on Saturday but there would be an administrative fee of \$350 on behalf of the City.

Mr. Whitmore also informed her that her friend was uninsured and driving with expired tags. She noted according to public r ecords the charges were dropped which would be expected if one has insurance and the tags are paid for. She also asked the following:

What are the policies requiring a car to be impounded as opposed to having a family member come pick it up? What are the policies governing the use of license plate readers?

Are officers pulling over cars because of prior citations against a driver?

Why is there an administrative fee of \$350 during non-City business hours?

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 March 4, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.; approval but not release of Closed Session Minutes of a Meeting held on March 4, 2025 at 7:50 p.m.

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

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

(a) **BILLS:** Vouchers 148093 through 148745 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$1,197,241.63

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

RESOLUTION/MAINTENANCE UNDER THE ILLINOIS HIGHWAY CODE/MFT FUNDS/GENERAL MAINTENANCE

A memo (25-DOC-16) was received from Director Roberts requesting approval of a resolution required by Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for utilization of Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Funds for general maintenance programs. Director Roberts stated that maintenance operations included are: Salt -State Joint Purchase, HMA Patching and Traffic Signal. The estimated cost for the general maintenance operations is \$340,000 and is a budgeted item in the FY26 MFT Fund. He recommends approval of the appropriate amendments to the FY26 MFT, Street & Bridge budgets and resolution.

It was moved by Commissioner Stackhouse and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that a Resolution (25-R-1) be passed for Maintenance Under the Illinois Highway Code in the amount of \$340,000 and to approve the amendments to the FY26 MFT and Street & Bridge Budgets. The vote on the roll: Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

RESOLUTION/CORRECTING SCRIVENER'S ERROR/PUD START EARLY

Attorney Vasselli stated there was a small error regarding the effective date of the PUD for Start Early in the previous resolution passed by the Council. This resolution is to correct the error.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that a Resolution (25-R-2) be passed Correcting a Scrivener's Error in a Resolution approving a Development Plan/Planned Unit Development for Start Early property located between Zion Central Middle School and Shiloh Park Middle School. The vote on the roll: Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

MEDICAL/DENTAL/LIFE/VISION/VOLUNTARY BENEFITS RENEWAL

A memo (25-DOC-17) was received from Administrator Knabel regarding the renewal for Medical/Dental/Life/Vision/Voluntary Benefits. Administrator Knabel stated that the City's Insurance Brokers, Assurance (Marsh & McLennan), negotiated the renewals for the City's health, dental and life insurance as well as the voluntary benefits package, which are set to expire on April 30, 2025. The renewals are as follows:

Health Insurance: Remain with Blue Cross at a 7.79% increase (\$159,022 annually) Dental Insurance: Remain with Guardian at no increase (rate guarantee until 5/1/26) Life Insurance: Remain with Blue Cross at no increase (rate guarantee until 5/1/28)

Vision Insurance and other Voluntary Benefits: Remain with existing providers at no increase (rate guarantee until

5/1/28)

He feels it is a relatively good renewal as most of the industry has seen a 10% increase in renewals.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-15) be passed authorizing Marsh and McLennan Agency LLC to provide Insurance Brokerage Service and renew certain insurance policies (medical, dental, life, and voluntary options). The vote on the roll: Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

ORDINANCE/ELIMINATION OF CITY VEHICLE STICKERS

Administrator Knabel stated at the last meeting they talked about the pros and cons of City vehicle stickers. After discussion regarding the stickers, the attorney was given the directive to prepare an ordinance eliminating the City vehicle stickers.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that an Ordinance (25-O-16) be passed amending various sections of the Zion Municipal Code to eliminate vehicle stickers in the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

ORDINANCE/INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT/LAKE COUNTY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

A memo (25-DOC-18) was received from Director Roberts requesting approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (LCSMC) and the City of Zion. Director Roberts stated that Staff is continuing to work with Burke Engineering and Lake County Stormwater Management Commission with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Grant for the proposed 20th Street Drainage Improvement Project Phase 1. The proposed agreement provides each entity's role and responsibilities, funding obligations and project coordination. The proposed project is submitted in two (2) phases. The Grant funding maximum for each phase is \$2,750,000.00. Although the project is funded by a grant from DECO, the City is responsible for all construction costs, which will be reimbursed by LCSMC with the exception of the non-eligible water and sanitary improvements. The non-eligible improvements will be funded through the Water Fund. The spreadsheet provides an estimation of the funding obligations for the City and eligible amounts from LCSMC. The City will be required to pay the Project Expense Match (\$116,201.00) within 120 days of the agreement execution. Commissioner Fischer asked when they can expect funding for Phase 1. Director Roberts stated by the end of the year and noted that the package has already been approved. They can move forward with going out to bid which they hope to do by May.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Frierson that an Ordinance (25-O-17) be passed authorizing and approving an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission and the City of Zion. The vote on the roll: Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

ZONING CHANGE REQUEST/917 W. 17th STREET

A memo (25-DOC-19) was received from Director Ianson requesting a Zoning change from R-10 to R-8 for property located at 917 W. 17th Street. Director Ianson stated that Raechelle Reid is seeking a Zoning change from R-10 to R-8 for property located at 917 W. 17th Street, Zoning Docket 25-Z-2. In 2004, the property was annexed in the City under R-10 Zoning. In 2005, a house was built on the property under Zoning R-8, but the Zoning was never changed from R-10. Staff is recommending to approve the Zoning change to meet the bulk regulations of R-8 Zoning and to be consistent with the surrounding zoning areas. At the March 6, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the Zoning change.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-18) be passed rezoning certain real property (R-10 Residential District to R-8 Residential District) located at 917 W. 17th Street. The vote on the roll: Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

CONSOLIDATION OF PARCELS/LEWIS AVENUE

A memo (25-DOC-20) was received from Director Ianson requesting to consolidate parcels on Lewis Avenue. Director Ianson stated that Shelly McKinney Swansey is seeking to consolidate the parcels located at 1809, 1811, 1813, 1815, 1817, 1819, 1821, 1823, 1825, and 1827 Lewis Avenue into one parcel for the purpose of development. She was granted a Special Use Permit to operate a daycare center with the condition that she consolidate the parcels. At the March 6, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the lot consolidations. Commissioner Fischer asked if the lots were vacant. Director Ianson confirmed that they were vacant.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner McDowell that an Ordinance (25-O-20) be passed approving a Plat of Consolidation for property in the City of Zion (1809, 1811, 1813, 1815, 1817, 1819, 1821, 1823, 1825, and 1827 Lewis Avenue). The vote on the roll: Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

STATION ALERTING SYSTEM

A memo (25-DOC-21) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval for the purchase and installation of a Fire Station Alerting System. Chief Stried stated this quote was for the purchase and installation of a new Station Alerting System by Digicom Installations, Inc. in the amount of \$52,345.18. Funding for the project is from the dispatch JETSB/E911 fund, which is in the process of being phased out as they transition to LakeComm for the fire/police dispatch and telecommunication needs. The purchase and installation is for upgrading Station 1. Station 2 will be handled in conjunction with the building project that is currently ongoing. Additionally, he requests that the City Council waive the bid process and recognize this as a single-source vendor of the specialized technology equipment; furthermore, it is funded in full by E911 funds and has no budget impact.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-19) be passed authorizing an approving the purchase and installation of essential equipment (Fire Station Alerting System from Digicom Installations, Inc.) for the City of Zion. The vote on the roll: Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

GENERATOR MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT/FIRE STATIONS/ESDA

A memo (25-DOC-22) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval of a maintenance agreement for generators located at Fire Station 1, Fire Station 2 and the ESDA Center. Chief Stried stated service and ongoing maintenance is very much needed on each unit, and GenServ has been recommended to continue providing generator service to City equipment. The total amount of the maintenance agreement for all three generators is \$2,775 and is included in each department's Building and Grounds budget.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-21) be passed authorizing an approving a power maintenance agreement with Genserve LLC for generators at Fire Station 1, Fire Station 2 and the ESDA Center. The vote on the roll: Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS 2025 APPOINTMENTS

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to appoint the following members to City Boards and Commissions:

Accident Review Board

Fire and Police Commission

Lt. Derek Zaloudek Kris Conway Officer Peter Jamka Debbie Lewis

Electrical Commission

Liquor Control Commission

Rich Ianson Justin Stried Dave Geer John Hucker Pat Buchanan Chris Szymanski William Worthington

Planning & Zoning Commission

Gerald Riley Desiree Johnson Jennifer Smith

Special Events Commission

Christine Wertman Sameia Charity Chris Kubic

Police Pension Board

Mariann Carlton

TIF Review Board

Colette Davis Cynthia Moreno

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. Information is available on the City's website.

Director Roberts noted the following:

- Yard waste collection started today. He asked that residents that have piles of leaves that are still in the right of way bag them and leave them for the contractor to pick up.
- The Union Pacific Railroad has a planned closure for the crossing on Shiloh Blvd. for Monday, April 14th to Tuesday, April 22nd for repairs. The alternate route will be down 27th Street to Deborah and back around for that period of time. Information will be posted on the City's Facebook page.
- Mayor McKinney asked how they go about detecting main breaks and maintaining the roads. Director Roberts stated since November of 2024, they have had 47 main breaks. They have an aging system and have no way of predicting when or where a main break will happen. As soon as they acknowledge a main break happens, they get to it as quickly as they can. Regarding the Bates incident, the Public Works Superintendent talked with Mr. Bates that night. He was told that any damages go through the Finance Department and insurance.
- Regarding potholes in the alleys, they continually go all year round noting where the potholes are at. They either try to repair them in house or are part of the maintenance package performed by a contracted bid to for large patching. During the winter they can only due temporary patches as asphalt plants do not open until May 15th. Crews will go through the primary roads first followed by the secondary roads, then the alleys. They usually get to the alley patching by the end of July or early August depending on how bad the potholes are. Ms. Bates asked why the infrastructure is so old and why are they only patching. Director Roberts stated the repair costs for a typical block of 600ft of a water main is \$350-\$400 per foot. There is also a cost to repair the road with a typical block costing between \$70,000 to \$100,000. He noted that they have 116 miles of water mains, 28 of which are from 1926 and the cost to repair that 28% would be \$56 million, following by the water mains that are 70-80 years old which would cost another \$40 million. They are doing the best they can to keep providing a high-quality amount of water for everyone.

Mr. Bates noted that he did not fall through a pothole, but a sinkhole. Director Roberts stated this was because the water underneath was breaking through. He confirmed that the crew was onsite as soon as possible. He suggested he call the Finance Department to get the insurance number in order to get the process started. Mayor McKinney asked how much grant money they have received to help repair the roads so that they are able to deflect the costs away from the tax payers. Director Roberts stated that since 2015, they have used \$1.8 million in tax money but made \$18 million in repairs with grant the aide of grant money. They are constantly seeking out grants, federal funding and opportunities from other entities to be able to pay for repairs to the roads. They would not be able to keep up with the repairs if they had to rely on local money only. Mayor McKinney noted that this is an issue that is happening with every municipality in trying to get money from the federal government to help with road repairs. For the City to complete total repairs on all the streets in Zion, it would cost \$100 million. They continue to try and minimize costs to the residents. He noted they will be receiving money from the state government for the spent fuel rods and property taxes in Zion should be going down between 5-20% depending on the area starting in 2026. The City is very mindful about the property taxes that people pay. It has been one of the issues that they have been working on over the last ten years to try and get money for the spent fuel rods when the nuclear plant closed. They found a way to do it to be able to help the residents by getting their taxes lowered. This was a City initiative that they took on because they were listening to the residents talking about high taxes. He suggested that residents look at their tax bill to see how it is divided. About 15% goes to the City and a large portion; 77% goes to the school districts.

They have to work on a very limited budget which is why they continue to fight and go for grants to minimize costs to the taxpayers. They continue to try and educate the residents about the cost of repairs. He noted they are one of the few communities in the area that even attempt to deal with repairing the alleys. One of the reasons the garbage was moved from the alleys to the streets was because the garbage trucks were deteriorating the alleys at a much faster pace because of the weight of the trucks.

Fire Chief Stried noted that over the weekend they dealt with 2 possible house fires, one turned out to be a car that was burning and one was caused by burning of leaves in someone's back yard. He reminded residents that burning is not permitted in the City. They do allow campfires but they cannot contain yard waste as it both a safety hazard and potential medical hazard from the smoke. He asked that residents take care of yard waste carefully and legally.

Police Chief Barden noted the following:

He wanted to address the comments made by the citizens. Regarding the Bates family, he did respond to Gina Roberts. The owner was issued 3 citations for the dog bite incident but he cannot speak to the Lake County process. They do have a contract with Lake County for animal related incidents. He clarified that Zion does not have an Animal Control Officer. Through the Department of Agriculture, they are not permitted to have pound or a normal holding facility. They only use CSOs that work in that capacity. He offered to speak with the Bates' after the meeting.

Regarding the Tow Contract, last meeting it was mentioned there was a concern that the traffic stop stemmed from a DWH (Driving while Hispanic) incident. The Hispanic officer that stopped the vehicle cannot tell who is in the car while they are driving in front of them. They do have license plate readers in some of the cars and often times the license plate readers will read the plate in front of them or the officer will type it in or run the plate. He did look into this particular case because the statement was concerning to him that someone was worried that Zion officers are working with ICE agents and working to deport people. He stated they follow the Voices Act and the Trust Act set forth by the State of Illinois. In this particular incident, the plates were suspended and that vehicle is not permitted to be operational on the road, regardless of an insurance issue or not. In the event the person can prove they have insurance, often times a magistrate would dismiss the ticket.

Regarding tow fees, Roger's Towing is an independent business and he does not get copies of invoices for fees they issue to individuals so he cannot speak to what he charged in the case. As for the Admin fee, it is a City of Zion ordinance pertaining to violations of certain law. One of those is operating a vehicle without proper registration. This is not a Roger's Towing fee, they collect the fee on the City's behalf because he is the one who holds the vehicle and the fees are paid in one location to make it more convenient for the individual.

Administrator Knabel noted that he did an in-depth series regarding Public Works costs in a Dollars and Sense presentation showing shocking numbers on taxes that actually go to the City for services. The amount collected is roughly \$750 to a \$1,000 a year. It would take roughly 930 years if they put 100% of the taxes to replace a street in front of a resident. Due to the fact of sharing the street with others on the block, that would bring the number down to 75, therefore, it would take 75 years to have enough funds to pay for the street in front of a resident's house. Out of that amount, they also have to fund police, fire and other City services which is why 100% does not go to just streets. It is still the City's responsibility to maintain the streets and that is why they need grants and federal funding. In the past 5,6,7 years, they have gotten 10 times the return on the dollars they spend in the form of grants. Although they spend \$1 million, they use it for matching on federal and state grants and Motor Fuel Tax dollars to get \$10 million worth of projects done. They hear high taxes a lot but there is no perceivable way to have taxes cover the costs of infrastructure. They look at each street and each water main and prioritize them and do as much as they can. He noted that property tax funding is a problem across the nation which is why there is so much aging infrastructure across the board. They will continue to try and stretch the dollars and make sure the services are still there and functional for everyone.

Commissioner McDowell noted that one of the most significant Christian holidays is coming up; Palm Sunday, Easter and in between those two is Good Friday. Typically, the Zion Benton Ministerial Association on Good Friday hosts a community Good Friday Service. This year it will be hosted at a new church; Nueva Vida which is the former Lakeview Church on Sheridan Road. It will be a bi-lingual service on Good Friday, April 18th at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioner Frierson thanked the Department Heads for all their responses and encouraged them to keep up the good work.

Commissioner Stackhouse also thanked the Department Heads for their great work.

Commissioner Fischer noted it was Election Day and hoped everyone got out to vote. He encouraged people to watch the meeting on YouTube or to come out and attend in person to see their tax dollars at work. Additionally, he thanked the residents in attendance for coming out.

Mayor McKinney thanked the citizens for their comments and sharing their concerns. He noted City Staff is always willing to meet with residents to address their concerns. He noted that he gets a lot of phone calls that pertain to different departments that are responsible for certain issues. He has learned that people don't always know who to call but they try and direct them to the correct department. He noted that some issues are civil matters rather than a City matter. He understands there are issues with dogs running wild. When people have pets, they have a responsibility to control their pets. It is a violation if a dog is not on a leash or if an owner does not clean up after their pet. He encouraged residents to take care of their neighborhood and call the PD if neighbors are violating City laws. Residents can be part of the way the Council can learn of issues.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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
April 18		City Offices Closed for the Holiday
May 6	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fischer that the Council recess to Closed Session at 8:06 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 Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frireson to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 9:06 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Frierson, aye; McDowell, 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 9:07 p.m. Motion carried.

City Clerk