

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 2828 SHERIDAN ROAD, ZION, ILLINOIS

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Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer called the meeting to order.

On call of the roll the following answered present: Commissioners Frierson, Stackhouse, and Fischer. Commissioner McDowell and Mayor McKinney were 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 Eric Stach. 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 Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to accept the City Council meeting agenda as presented.

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Virgil Bates, Zion, voiced his concern of an incident regarding police officers going to the wrong address. He noted that this wasted a lot of time.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on May 6, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

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

- (b) **BILLS:** Vouchers 149040 through 149153 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$805,528.56.

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that the Proclamation be approved as follows:

- (c) **PROCLAMATION:** Memorial Day – March 26, 2025

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

RESOLUTION/TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE/NOSTALGIA DAYS

A memo (25-DOC-33) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of a resolution requesting permission from the Illinois Department of Public Works & Buildings to close Sheridan Road for the Annual Nostalgia Days Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show. Chief Barden stated the Special Events Commission is sponsoring the 37th Annual Nostalgia Days Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show in the City of Zion on Saturday, June 14, 2025.

The show will require the temporary closure of Sheridan Road from 21st Street to 31st Street from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Section 4-408 of the Illinois Highway Code authorizes the Illinois Department of Public Works and Buildings to issue permits to local authorities to temporarily close portions of State Highways for such public purposes or needs including parades and local celebrations.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that a Resolution (25-R-4) be passed requesting permission from the Illinois Department of Transportation for the temporary closure of Sheridan Road on June 14, 2025, as requested between 6:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M., for Nostalgia Days. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

RESOLUTION/TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE/LABOR DAY PARADE

A memo (25-DOC-34) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of a resolution requesting permission from the Illinois Department of Public Works & Buildings to close Sheridan Road for the Labor Day Parade. Chief Barden stated the Special Events Commission is sponsoring the Labor Day Parade in the City of Zion on Monday, September 1, 2025. The parade will require the temporary closure of Sheridan Road from 23rd Street to 31st Street from 12:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Section 4-408 of the Illinois Highway Code authorizes the Illinois Department of Public Works and Buildings to issue permits to local authorities to temporarily close portions of State Highways for such public purposes or needs including parades and local celebrations.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that a Resolution (25-R-5) be passed requesting permission from the Illinois Department of Transportation for the temporary closure of Sheridan Road on September 1, 2025, as requested between 12:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., for the Labor Day Parade. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

ORDINANCE/LEASE AGREEMENT/MARTHA'S DAYCARE INC./1225 27TH STREET

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-31) be passed authorizing a lease between Martha's Daycare Inc. and the City of Zion for property at 1225 27th Street for use by the daycare facility for an outdoor playground. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

APPROVAL/PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES/CHRISTOPHER BURKE ENGINEERING/STAFF ENGINEER

A memo (25-DOC-35) was received from Director Roberts requesting approval of a proposal from Christopher Burke Engineering Services for an agreement for Professional Engineering Services. Director Roberts stated with the upcoming staffing changes within the Public Works Department they have identified a need for engineering assistance. Burke Engineering will assist City Staff as requested, in the representation, resolution, interpretation, and oversight of contracts and transactions with other governmental agencies and contractors. Additionally, assist with project MFT, IDOT BLR required documentation and grant applications. Staff requests and recommends approving the Agreement for Professional Engineering Services from Christopher Burke Engineering Services for one (1) year not to exceed \$90,000.00. Funding for these services are a proposed budget item in the FY26 Water Fund and General Fund. Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer noted there were two options listed on the estimate of fees and asked which one they want to go with. Director Roberts stated he left it open-ended as they may need more hours in the beginning and lessen towards the end of the contract.

It was moved by Commissioner Stackhouse, seconded by Commissioner Frierson, that an Ordinance (25-O-32) be passed authorizing and approving a proposal for Professional Engineering Services from Christopher Burke Engineering for a Staff Engineer for one (1) year not to exceed \$90,000.00. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT/2730 SHERIDAN ROAD

A memo (25-DOC-36) was received from Director Ianson requesting a Special Use Permit to Section 102-58(5) of the Zion Municipal Code to operate a Daycare Center located at 2730 Sheridan Road. Director Ianson stated Ms. Diane Cooper of Precious Angels Daycare Learning Center is seeking a Special Use Permit to operate a Daycare Center at 2730 Sheridan Road. Ms. Cooper is licensed through the State of Illinois DCFS and has been operating a daycare out of her home for the past 20 years. She is also requesting to operate 2 shifts from 6:30 a.m. until 11:30 p.m.

Parents will pick-up and drop-off in the City parking lot behind the building only, not on Sheridan Road. The DCFS representative has informed her that she is allowed to have a play area inside the daycare, along with allowing her to utilize the local park as well. At the May 1, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the Special Use request.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, to table the item until the complete Council is in attendance at the next Regular City Council meeting. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried.

APPROVAL/UPDATES/EMS BILLING STRUCTURE

A memo (25-DOC-37) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval of ambulance billings adjustments. Chief Stried stated the City's ambulance provider has recommended the proposed updates to their EMS billing structure based on multiple factors: the biggest being that the current rates do not align with recent GEMT (Ground Emergency Medical Transport – a federally funded Medicaid program) program rates. Furthermore, in some areas, audits reveal that the GEMT rates and amounts billed do not match, so some insurance carriers are requesting refunds based on this. The City's third-party vendor recommends updating the rates to reflect these amounts, and to make charges the same for everyone, regardless of residency. City residents would be considered a "soft collection" and invoiced for whatever insurance/Medicare/Medicaid does not cover, but they would not be sent to collections if they cannot pay. Non-residents would be handled differently since they do not pay taxes to the City for services. He requests and recommends approval of the update to the following EMS billing structure:

A0429 BLS E - \$2,317.63
 A0427 ALE E - \$2,545.45
 A0433 ALS 2 - \$2,745.45
 A0425 Mileage – \$18.00/mile

This will be effective as soon as the billing vendor can make the updates in their system. Commissioner Stackhouse asked when residents in Zion call for an ambulance, are they transported to Waukegan Vista and not the City of Hope. Chief Stried stated most of the transports are to Vista in Waukegan. If it is not something super critical and a doctor is up north at St. Catherine's or Aurora they will take them there. They go there between 15 and 20 times per month. If it meets certain trauma criteria they can go to Condell, but they cannot go there on simple requests because they cannot take their ambulances out of service for that long. Commissioner Stackhouse asked if the determination is based on the injury of the individual. Chief Stried stated a little bit of both but usually the quickest way to get professional medical help. Commissioner Frierson noted that City of Hope does not have emergency services so patients could not be taken there. Chief Stried stated years ago a large percentage of patients were taken there, but they have downgraded their ER over the years and no longer accept ambulances for emergency services. Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer noted on page 5, under the collection of fees, it is noted that for hardship or special circumstances, the Fire Chief or designee is authorized to waive on an individual basis, fees charged to the patient not paid by Medicare, Medicaid, public aid or insurance. He asked what the criteria was to determine a hardship. Chief Stried stated that that section in the ordinance goes back a long time. He has not had to invoke it in his time as Chief. He noted in the past a Chief would work with a vendor on waiving the fee or setting up a small payment plan. He noted that residents do not pay but if they do receive a bill, it is a smooth process to work it out.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-33) be passed amending Section 34-16 of the Zion Municipal Code Regarding Ambulance Fees. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Roberts noted that this would be his last meeting as he is retiring May 30th after 19 years of service. He appreciates the support he has received from the Council and colleagues. Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer stated it has been great working with Director Roberts and he wishes him the best of luck.

Fire Chief Stried congratulated Director Roberts on his retirement and thanked him for his assistance throughout the years. He noted it will be a big loss to the City. Additionally, he stated they are expecting a busy summer down by the lakefront. Even though Zion does not have a major beach, as they are responsible for helping their neighbors in Beach Park and Winthrop Harbor when there is an emergency. They are preparing a lot harder than in the past with some partnerships with those agencies training some additional rescue swimmers and getting some equipment they hope they don't need this summer. If the last couple summers are any indication, they are going to be down there for some distressed swimmers and boaters and they will be ready, of which he will speak to at future meetings.

Commissioner Frierson noted there has been a shortage of lifeguards over the years and asked if there have been any discussions about bolstering them in Zion. Chief Stried stated there have been discussions but it is the DNR and State's call but they have deemed it not feasible to put lifeguards on their beaches. They do have life rings available now, which is better than nothing. He noted that other cities and their fire department along the lakefront actually put on the programs with lifeguards and jet skis with crews down there on the weekends. It is a municipal thing they do because it is not a State Park. He hopes to discuss at future meetings to partner with their neighbors to have some crews down there during busy times on weekends. If they as a City can put some pressure on the State and DNR, he would be all for it and potentially budget for it or plan for it.

Chief Barden noted the following:

- They have already responded twice this year for distress of people in the water.
- He noted the help and partnership Director Roberts has brought to the City and he has enjoyed working with him.
- He asked that citizens be sure to turn their lights on during rainy weather or as dusk approaches to more visible.
- He asked that those who wish report a crime or provide information anonymously to call Crime Stoppers at 847-662-2222.

Commissioner Frierson noted that he has had the pleasure of working with two Public Works Directors and he appreciates the experience he has brought to the position. He covers a lot of areas and has really made a difference in the Public Works Department. Additionally, he appreciates the efforts (and sometimes sarcasm) Director Roberts has brought to the job and noted he will be missed. He offered his congratulations and best of luck on his next endeavor.

Commissioner Stackhouse stated she hopes the best for Director Roberts in all his endeavors and although she has only known him a short time, she has enjoyed getting to know him.

Mayor Pro-Tem Fischer asked that citizens be careful and safe with the Memorial Day weekend approaching. He noted Mayor McKinney will be reading the Proclamation at the Memorial Day Ceremony and the Veterans Memorial at 10:00 a.m. on Monday.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 26		City Offices Closed for Memorial Day
June 3	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting
June 14		Nostalgia Days Car, Truck & Motorcycle Show
June 17	6:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting
	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 Stackhouse and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 7:38 p.m. Motion carried.

City Clerk