

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 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 Chief Justin Stried, Police Chief Eric Barden, Building & Zoning Director Richard Ianson, Finance Director Kris Conway, City Administrator David Knabel and City Attorney James Vasselli.

William Bremner led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

AGENDA CHANGES

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Fischer to accept the City Council meeting agenda with the following change.

Table Item 9 (a) Consider Zoning Docket 25-Z-7 and ordinance, requesting a Special Use Permit to Section 102-58(5) of the Zion Municipal Code to operate a Daycare at the property located at 2730 Sheridan Road

Commissioner Frierson indicated that they needed to evaluate some of the new information received from the applicant. He asked that the item be tabled until the July 1st City Council meeting as the applicant is unable to attend the June 17th meeting.

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

SPECIAL PRESENTATION/OFFICER RECOGNITION

Officer Recognition was put off until the next Council meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mary Lou Hiltibran, ESDA Director, gave a monthly report of the recent activities that ESDA performs in assistance to the City. She invited those who wish to be a volunteer and have a positive influence in the community to go to the City's website and fill out an application.

Tianna McDade, Zion, commented on violent activity going on in her neighborhood, specifically Joanna Avenue. She noted there have been gunshots fired on her street and her car was damaged as a result. It is not the first time, and there have also been issues with parties and a feared dog tied to a specific house. All were reported to the police. Her parents have owned their home for 31 years and these events have caused emotional and financial stress on her family. They have already lost a loved one to gun violence and are afraid of losing another. The neighbors on the block are concerned as they have kids, pets and a school nearby. She asked that the City take it seriously and protect those on the block.

Kathy Champine, Zion, noted that her property taxes increased 16.5% totaling \$1,050.00 and her assessment went up 20%. She does not believe any of the taxing bodies levies caused this increase. Additionally, she commented on the City's website. She feels it is outdated, the content is not current, it is not searchable or transparent. She would like to see the City review practices related to the website.

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 20, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

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

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

- (b) **BILLS:** Vouchers 149222 through 149302 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$473,304.09.

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

ORDINANCE/TOWING SERVICES AGREEMENT/ROGER'S TOWING SERVICE

A memo (25-DOC-38) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of an updated Tow Contract for the City of Zion Towing Services. He noted that the current Tow Contract was last amended in June of 2022.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fischer, that an Ordinance (25-O-34) be passed authorizing and approving a Towing Services Agreement with Roger's Towing Services on behalf of the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, nay; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

ORDINANCE/MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/ZION PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION/IAFF LOCAL 1999

A memo (25-DOC-39) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Firefighters Local 1999. Chief Stried stated by way of brief background, one of the sections of the recent collective bargaining agreement (CBA) missed one small detail regarding firefighter shift changes and hours worked. This is a simple agreement with the firefighter's union that specifies that if a firefighter does not have the same amount of time off between shifts during a deployment change (typically at City Fiscal Year change, or perhaps due to promotion) that member will work one less Debit Day later in the same Fiscal Year. Legal has reviewed the MOU and approves.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson, that an Ordinance (25-O-35) be passed authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Zion Professional Firefighters Association, IAFF Local 1999 and the City of Zion. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, nay; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

ORDINANCE/INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT FOR RECAPTURE/ORION ASSET MANAGEMENT

Attorney Vasselli stated they seek approval of an ordinance authorizing and approving and Indemnification Agreement for recapture between Orion Asset Management LLC and the City of Zion. He noted there is an attenuated recapture agreement with two bankrupt entities. They are bankrupt and dissolved entities and cannot be located to remove the recapture obligations that are outstanding as recorded against the Trumpet Park property for the Plano/Orion deal that they are doing. As part of the City's negotiations with them, they wanted clean title, which is normal for commercial deals. Because of the complicated nature of the fact that these are dissolved older entities and older agreement, the negotiated stance to get them through to the closing was to have the City enter into an Indemnification Agreement. If there were recapture obligations, they would be paid through increment or TIF. To stay true to the deal, they would donate the land to them. This has been negotiated and approved in the agreement. If it does come through, they may have to pay but it does not offset the numerous benefits including the potential purchase of water for all the IV bags that go out there. They look forward to closing on this with the approval of the agreement on June 6, 2025. Commissioner Fischer asked what the potential exposure will be with the recapture agreement if it gets triggered. Administrator Knabel stated it is based on the frontage that goes along the 21 acres and would be somewhere between \$900,000 and \$1.1 million. That is for all the infrastructure that was put in, the streets, the watermains and curbs on Trumpet Drive. The cost gets allocated to any property along there that benefits from it. He noted as previously mentioned the company is no longer in existence. They still have to go through the process to make the Council aware that there is a possibility that there may be a claim. He has knowledge that the prior owners wrote off the recapture as unrecoverable due to the timing with the Northshore Water Reclamation District. He noted that the risk is minimal, beneficial and covered by TIF.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-36) be passed authorizing and approving an Indemnification Agreement for Recapture between Orion Asset Management LLC and 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.

APPOINTMENT/PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

Mayor McKinney requested approval of the appointment of Victor Ransom as the new Public Works Director replacing Ray Roberts. He noted that Mr. Ransom has been with the City for 33 years.

It was moved by Commissioner Stackhouse, seconded by Commissioner Frierson, to approve the appointment of Victor Ransom as the new Public Works Director. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Stackhouse, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Ianson noted the annual City Clean-up will take place on August 2, 2025 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at 28th Street and Galilee Avenue. Residents can dispose of bulk items such as tires and electronics. Residents must show an ID indicating they live in Zion in order to participate.

Director Ransom noted they have begun the remodel lead and copper sampling program. In 2021 through 2024 they inventoried every service line in the City. Of the 7100 they tested, only 42 were identified as lead or galvanized. Per the EPA, they are mandatorily required to take 60 samples per the population. The 41 that are lead and copper are left over from the last program of which they are using 19. All of them are EPA registered sites and all of them are mandatory as of now. Additionally, he noted that the Water Quality Report posted on the City's website is always reporting a year behind and are not due. The 2023 report is the most current. The next report will be on the website July 1, 2025 for reporting of 2024. This report is mandated and monitored by the EPA, including monitoring of the website to make sure the most current is up.

Fire Chief Stried stated residents may have noticed that the emergency sirens activated a bit longer for the monthly test. He noted that they ended up putting it off twice as the siren on top of City Hall did not alert. They are going to try and get to the bottom of it over the next month. It has been an ongoing problem over the last couple of years. One of the recommendations may be that they have to replace one or more. The one on Green Bay Road has been replaced with new technology. The cost is about \$20,000 for each to replace. Additionally, he noted that they are starting to get ready for the season on the lakefront. They are training rescue swimmers but not a full dive team. It allows for a rescuer to get down in the water and help somebody who is in distress a little bit quicker. They are partnering with Winthrop Harbor and Beach Park Fire Departments to potentially have a small crew at the lakefront to have available resources on busy weekend days this summer. They are going to potentially split some water craft devices. Trends from the last few seasons have shown there will be a lot of activity.

Chief Barden noted the following:

- He reminded residents with the heat approaching, there are cooling center around the City, including the police department which is available 24 hours a day.
- He asked residents to check on their neighbors during hot days, especially the elderly.
- He suggested residents look at their Facebook. He noted that they have been trying to be a little more diligent about certain posts and certain timelines and getting information out on Facebook and feels as though they are getting a good reach to keep people informed.
- He promoted events coming this summer starting with Nostalgia Days

Administrator Knabel noted the following:

- They have been working on a new website and are close to launching it. He knows a lot of the documents on the current website are out of date but rather than update two websites, a lot of the information is being updated on the new one. He noted it is a much-needed update that they have been working on behind the scenes and hopes to reveal it soon.
- He received word today that Zion has been included in the State's budget for more grant money. He noted it due to the relationships with the State Legislators. They have received \$500,000 from Senator Edly Allen and \$500,000 from Representative Joyce Mason. Additionally, they received confirmation of \$800,000 from DCEO for the construction of the new fire station. This was announced a few years ago but takes time to go through the process.
- In relation to the tax bill item, he is not sure how the percentage Ms. Champine's home went up in value, but it is a case by case basis. He noted that if hers went up more than average, a lot of property values went up. The tax rate goes down to offset that. He stated that taxes are a very complicated issue and there are a lot of pieces in the formula. He suggested taking a look at the bottom left of the tax bill which shows the breakdown by taxing entity and what went up and down. Additionally, to look at the value that the

property went up. He noted the rate for Zion Elementary District is 12.689 this year which is a 9% decrease from last year. The amount that gets paid is due to increases in levies or reductions of abatements, not just a value item. He noted there are links on the City's Facebook and hopes to soon have the Dollars & Sense seminars and Town Halls they have done available. He believes everyone should be informed on how their tax bills work and offered that any resident can reach out with questions. It was also noted that the high school will be doing a seminar on June 26 regarding taxes.

Mayor McKinney stated that a few weeks ago, they had a Zoom call for residents regarding taxes and CEJA funds and about 10 people showed up on the call and 6 of them were the panelists. He stated one of the things crucial for residents is to get the information out that's available so they can get involved with knowing about these things. Since he has been on the City Council, one thing he is most surprised about is people not understanding what the responsibilities are of City government. They have tried really hard over the last 6-10 years by having community quarterly forum meetings to talk to the residents so they can ask questions and get answers in a transparent way in front of a group of people. He noted two things he has wanted to do is to hire a Grant Writer and a Communications Firm not only to get their message out but to turn the tables on the negative perception of the City of Zion.

Commissioner McDowell wished Mayor McKinney a Happy 70th Birthday.

Commissioner Frierson shared the following:

- He welcomed Vic Ransom to his position.
- He thanked Chief Stried for his collaboration with other departments.
- He thanked Staff for working on the website
- People need to get to information and they need to make it as accessible and searchable as possible in they time that they need it.

Commissioner Stackhouse noted it is important to be part of prevention on the lakefront. She thanked Chief Stried for getting things in place. They have families that visit and they need for them to be safe. Additionally, she thanked the Department Heads for their Departmental Commentary, noting that the people that work for the City are hard working people.

Commissioner Fischer welcomed Vic Ransom and wished Mayor McKinney a Happy Birthday.

Mayor McKinney stated that he appreciated the water rescue efforts. Last year they had 4-5 deaths at Illinois Beach State Park. They talked about collaborating as a community to be able to get some life-saving vessels in the community. He noted that they reached out to Representative Joyce Mason and she has worked hard to provide them with funding for this to happen. The Illinois Beach State Park is the 3rd highest tourist attraction in Illinois behind the Beam and Six Flags. A lot of people are coming into town and it's great for the City. A lot of the leaders in the community recognize the work the City has done over the last ten years to put the City in position to do some great things. He also noted that criticisms are welcome because it is how they improve. They have continued to operate in the black over the past three years. They recognize that there still needs to be improvements but they will continue to operate with transparency. He wishes they had a bigger staff as they work on getting a Deputy Clerk. There are many employees who have been doing 2-3 jobs. They have just got back into a position where they can start planning in advance. As they continue to prepare for Nostalgia Days, they work on keeping residents safe. They have made progress over the last 6 years and thanked the Council and Department Heads and great staff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

June 14		37 th Annual Nostalgia Days Car, Truck & Motorcycle Show
June 17	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting Zion City Council Meeting
July 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 McDowell and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 7:52 p.m. Motion carried.

City Clerk