

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 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 Stackhouse, Fischer, McDowell, Frierson, 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.

Mayor McKinney asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Amos Monk, a former Commissioner for the City of Zion. Additionally, for the husband of District 6 School Board President Margie Taylor.

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

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION/OFFICER RECOGNITION**

Mayor McKinney presented Officers Daniel Jeffery and Haley Pacholsky with a Resolution of Commendation for their exceptional honor and bravery in the community by subduing and detaining an armed man in crisis who threatened to harm himself and others.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Brian Dixon, Zion, commented that there needs to be more better paying jobs in Zion as prices are going up. He feels there has not been any big growth in Zion. Additionally, he feels there are too many slot machines in the City and they are not needed. He would also like see a movie theater in Zion. He asked Mayor McKinney if he goes to Springfield to talk about what is going on with legislators. Mayor McKinney noted that not only does he go to Springfield, but he talks with the local officials on a regular basis.

Raymond Gilmore, Cyprus Park, Zion, commented on a new Developer that wants to put in houses and a solar farm. He indicated that he did not know much about it and came to a second meeting at City Hall to get more information.

**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 June 3, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, 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 149303 through 149336 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$567,786.13.

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

**ORDINANCE/INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT/VILLAGE OF WINTHROP HARBOR/BEACH  
PARK FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT/PURCHASE OF WATERCRAFTS**

A memo (25-DOC-40) was received from Chief Stried requesting approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Beach Park Fire Protection District and the Village of Winthrop and the City of Zion regarding the sharing of apparatus. Chief Stried stated that agreement is in line with the plan to jointly operate personal watercrafts (PWCs) to better respond to Lake Michigan emergencies and beyond. The three jurisdictions have already jointly purchased two Yamaha VX Cruiser units (Zion's part was approved and covered by the Foreign Fire Tax Fund, resulting in no impact to City finances). As briefly discussed at previous meetings, they also plan to implement a rescue swimmer program in conjunction with this PWC detail, and also plan to place a small crew at the lakefront on busy weekends through the summer season. Furthermore, official ownership of the PWCs for title, registration and insurance lie with the Village of Winthrop Harbor and Beach Park Fire Protection District; the City of Zion commits to helping with staffing and jointly covering maintenance and repair needs when necessary. Legal from all three organizations have reviewed this IAG and approves. He noted that there was a water incident right before the meeting but is not sure of the outcome. He feels this one of the reasons why this MOU is necessary. Commissioner Stackhouse stated she feels it is good to have the five-year agreement with the 3 communities to iron out kinks and to have a collaboration and work together to prevent and not just react to what happens on the waterfront. There will be a lot of activities down there this summer and people will not always practice safety. She thanked Chief Stried for bringing it to the communities. Commissioner McDowell asked if any of the watercrafts were utilized that evening. Chief Stried noted that they are not in the water yet but hope to have them operational within the next couple of weeks.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson, that an Ordinance (25-O-37) be passed authorizing and approving an Intergovernmental Agreement between the Village of Winthrop Harbor, Beach Park Fire Protection District and the City of Zion for the purchase and maintenance of watercrafts. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**ORDINANCE/MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/RAM DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

Administrator Knabel stated that they tried an agreement similar to this about five years ago, but the pandemic hit and there was no development during that time. The proposed MOU with Ram Development Partners, LLC relates to the ballfield property and the 7-acre property across from Walmart next to Real Wheels. Rather than contracting with a broker for the sale of the property, transferring it or selling it to a third party with no real control over what goes there, Ram will act as the developer and handle everything to market the property at no cost to the City. They will receive commission on any development that they bring in. Any leads that they have would have to go to them. The added benefit is that any use has to be mutually agreed upon by the City and the Developer. The City still has control over what goes on the property. It gives them the rights to market the property on behalf of the City. He noted it is a sister company of Retail Strategies who handles the City's demographic marketing and deal making. They know the City well and know what they are looking for. The MOU is for a one-year term at no cost to the City. Mayor McKinney noted that they chatted with the group at the ICSC. The corner with Starbucks, the new Dollar Tree store, McDonalds and the south side of Zion near the Popeye's have become hot for development. They have developed the infrastructure by Popeye's and have seen a lot of interest in the property. Administrator Knabel noted that they met with a couple dozen companies that fit the demographics of Zion. They are looking at the corridor beginning to grow and getting more attention. There has been a lot of good feedback from businesses and a lot of them have said it's not a matter of if they come to Zion but rather when. This has been a result of building relationships over the years and getting the City out there to the businesses. It has also helped bring jobs to Zion and there are a lot of good things on the horizon.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner McDowell, that an Ordinance (25-O-38) be passed authorizing and approving a Memorandum of Understanding for an exclusive option between Ram Development Partners, LLC and the City of Zion for the properties on the Northeast Corner of Route 173 and Green Bay Road and the Corner of Route 173 and Kenosha Road. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**VARIANCE/SECTIONS 102-239 & 102-32/ZION MUNICIPAL CODE/2903 GILEAD AVENUE**

A memo (25-DOC-41) was received by Director Ianson requesting a Variance from Sections 102-293(a)(3) and 102-32(b) of the Zion Municipal Codes. Director Ianson stated Veronica Martinez is seeking two Variances from Sections 102-239(a)(3) and 102-32(b) of the Zion Municipal Codes to allow the existing 22.7-foot setback instead of a 30 foot and a 0.5-foot setback instead of a 3-foot, Zoning Docket 25-Z-9 for the property located at 2903 Gilead Avenue. This property has been vacant for many years which made it necessary for a City inspection which required that it be brought up to current code. At the June 5, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the

Variances. Commissioner Stackhouse complimented the Building Department for a compliment she received from a resident about the quality of service they received while they were there and how professional and friendly the staff was. Mayor McKinney stated the property has been vacant for quite a while and it is good to see that someone is going to renovate it.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-39) be passed approving a Variance to Section 102-239(a)(3) and 102-32(b) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow the existing 22.7-foot setback instead of a 30-foot and 0.5-foot setback instead of a 3 foot for the property located at 2903 Gilead Avenue. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

### **POWER-LOAD AMBULANCE STRETCHER/MAINTENEANCE PLAN**

A memo (25-DOC-42) was received by Chief Stried requesting approval of a quote for a maintenance plan for the Stryker Power-LOAD ambulance stretchers. Chief Stried stated the proposed quote is for a five-year maintenance plan for the stretchers in the amount of \$35,411 and is a budgeted item in the FY26 EMS Equipment Fund. Stryker has agreed that this could be paid in five annual installments instead of everything upfront. For many years they have used a third-party ambulance stretcher maintenance firm; some of the older Stryker stretchers along with the newer equipment in their newest ambulances will be much better served with official manufacturer-trained technicians using Stryker products as part of the maintenance and repair process. The ambulance stretchers are among the most used and critical pieces of equipment in the fleet. Though the FY26 budget has not officially been passed yet, the Finance Director has agreed that this time-sensitive service quote should be approved and implemented.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-40) be passed approving the quote from Stryker for a five-year Procure Service maintenance plan for the Stryker Powerload Ambulance Stretchers in the amount of \$35,411.00. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

### **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 the corner of 28<sup>th</sup> Street and Galilee Avenue. Residents can dispose of bulk items such as tires and electronics. Mayor McKinney noted that the program has been very successful and the Building Department does a great job.

Fire Chief Stried stated with summer here, he feels it is a good opportunity to remind residents to be safe. He understands the lake can be beautiful, but it can also be dangerous. Additionally, he asked that residents be careful with their campfires; to keep them small and have water nearby.

Chief Barden noted the following:

- He thanked the community for the success of Nostalgia Days as it went off without a hitch. They had a great attendance and thanked Sonolito Bronson for organizing it.
- He asked residents to check on their neighbors during hot days, especially the elderly.
- He asked residents to keep an eye on pets in the neighborhood and make sure they have water and have plenty of shade. If they notice something call the police department and they will come and investigate.

Director Conway stated in the next few weeks, the front doors at City Hall will be replaced. Accounts and Finance will still be open for water bill payments. Residents will need to use the Sheridan Road entrance and exit.

Administrator Knabel noted the following:

- He encouraged residents to check the website for updates on local construction projects.
- He noted the State does take into consideration the wage issues and cost of living. The State of Illinois minimum wage is actually double that of the federal minimum wage. It is getting phased in as increases annually.
- He noted the Solar Farm and Housing Development project is still in the Planning & Zoning process. There was already an initial hearing where a lot of people came out and voiced their concerns. There is still more discussion to be had and was tabled until the July 3<sup>rd</sup> Planning & Zoning meeting. He encouraged the residents to go to the P & Z meeting to share comments and concerns. He noted that a Developer is looking to do a project in Cypress Park as Phase 2 that was initially platted out there and is about 30 acres.

- He noted that they are making some final tweaks to the new website and it should be available soon to launch to the public. They had a meeting to review some last-minute changes to the design but are close to the finish line.

Commissioner McDowell acknowledged the birthdays of Chief Stried and Gibbie Buchholtz.

Commissioner Frierson noted that at the last Planning & Zoning meeting there were a lot of people that came out to express their opinions and there were a lot of mixed views. He encouraged the residents to come out and hear what the Developer has to say. He is very open to working with the community and trying to hear their feedback. It is one of the reasons it was tabled so he could get out in the community and talk with more people. Additionally, he noted that a lot of new businesses have been brought into town. Out of Waukegan there is a lot of grant work through CEJA where they are retraining people to upskill and reskill in solar related jobs or jobs related to clean energy. He will leave flyers in the lobby for people to take advantage of. They are well-paying union-based jobs with paid training. Mayor McKinney noted that the Building Department has been working with the people and the Developer in Cypress Park that has some land that has not been maintained. They have received some calls from the residents and have been addressing the issue.

Commissioner Stackhouse encouraged residents to have a fun, safe summer.

Commissioner Fischer thanked ESDA, Public Works and the First Responders for their work at Nostalgia Days.

Mayor McKinney noted the following:

- They had a nice turn out for Nostalgia Days. There were 337 cars registered compared to 500 last year.
- He attended the Juneteenth event at the Lakefront after the Nostalgia Days event.
- He reminded residents that sometimes they forget how good they have it in Zion. They have been able to avoid major incidents. There are a lot of great things going on in Zion and they are on the upswing.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

July 1	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting
July 4		City Offices Closed for the Holiday
July 15	6:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting

### **CLOSED SESSION**

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:47 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 Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson seconded by Commissioner McDowell to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:45 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; McDowell, aye; Frierson, 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 8:46 p.m. Motion carried.

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City Clerk