

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 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, Stackhouse and Mayor McKinney. A quorum was present.

Also present: Finance Director Kris Conway, Building & Zoning Director Richard Ianson, Public Works Director Vic Ransom, Fire Chief Justin Stried, Police Chief Eric Barden, and City Attorney James Vasselli.

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

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to nominate Sonolito Bronson as the Recording Secretary. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

AGENDA CHANGES

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson to accept the City Council meeting agenda with the following changes:

- Add Item 7 (a). **CLOSED SESSION** – (Pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 “Open Meetings”) for the discussion of threatened and/or probable or imminent litigation, collective bargaining, purchase or sale of real estate and personnel

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

PUBLIC HEARING/APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE

Mayor McKinney opened the Public Hearing.

A memo (25-DOC-51) was received from Director Conway stating the City needs to pass an Appropriation Ordinance annually in order to have the legal authority to spend money. The Ordinance uses the City’s operating budget as a guideline. There are contingency line items in the different funds within the Appropriation Ordinance in the case there should be an unknown or emergency situation in which additional funds must be used. The total of the Appropriation is typically higher than the amount of funds that will actually be expended unless there is a major emergency situation. The total amount of the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Appropriation Ordinance \$77,103,957. The ordinance has been on file and available for viewing in the Clerk’s Office.

Mayor McKinney asked for any comments from the Council and there were none. Mayor McKinney closed the Public Hearing.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION/SWALCO

Walter Willis, Executive Director of Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO), received grant funding from the US Environmental protection Agency to lead a targeted recycling education effort within Lake County. SWALCO has hired Frank Pettis, founder of environmental consulting firm GreenLit Solutions, to focus on improving recycling practices in North Chicago, Waukegan & Zion. Mr. Pettis stated that residents will receive a post card in the mail notifying them that their team will be checking and tagging recycling carts to provide real-time feedback and promote proper recycling habits. Team members may be looking in and tagging resident’s recycling carts. Feel free to engage the team member in conversation.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

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

Peter Koklamanis, owner of GPT Enterprise LLC operates the Dungeon of Doom Haunted House and Edge of Escape Room located at 629 29th Street. Mr. Koklamanis said that since 2014, GPT Enterprises has used the city owned parking lot for customer parking. In early 2024, the parking lot was reassigned to a city department without giving GPT Enterprises prior notice. He stated that potential parking solutions for 2025 were discussed with Administrator Knabel, however, they are less than 60 days from starting their season and still do not have any formal parking arrangements in place. Mr. Koklamanis requested a timely resolution, clarity on future support, and an update on the status of a possible rezoning for long-term parking needs for GPT Enterprises.

William Bremner, Zion, presented the Council with a newspaper editorial regarding about the Lewiston City Council's discussion on electric vehicles, stating his intent was not to mock their council but to highlight the contrast in topics being addressed in Zion compared to Lewiston.

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:25 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 and legal counsel. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:05 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular meeting held on July 17, 2025 at 7:00pm.
It was motioned by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to approve as presented. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.
- (b) **BILLS:** Vouchers 149659 through 149745 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$1,591,918.73. It was moved by Commissioner Fischer seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to approve as presented. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.
- (c) **PROCLAMATION:** Thomas Fortner: It was motioned by Commissioner Stackhouse and seconded by Commissioner Fischer to approve the proclamation as presented. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner McDowell that an Ordinance (24-O-47) be passed making Appropriations, totaling \$77,103,957.00 for all funds, for the City of Zion, Illinois for the Fiscal Year beginning May 1, 2025 and ending April 30, 2026. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE/MUNICIPAL GROCERY RETAILERS OCCUPATION TAX & MUNICIPAL GROCER SERVICE OCCUPATION TAX

Attorney Vasselli stated that in late 2023, Governor JB Pritzker proposed a change in legislature that allowed municipalities to adopt a grocery tax, which is currently being paid by shoppers in Zion. The tax helps offset real property taxes and maintains a revenue stream for the city.

It was motioned by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-48) be passed authorizing and approving the implementation of a Municipal Grocery Retailers Occupation Tax and a Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE/PURCHASE OF ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES/MOTOROLA RADIOS AND STARCOM PROGRAMMING

A Memo (25-DOC-52) was received from Fire Chief Stried requesting approval of the purchase of Motorola radios and StarCom programming needs in the amount of \$65,128.86. These radios would be for ESDA and Zion Public Works use, and would replace the current VHF radio systems that have become unreliable over recent years. Zion still has E9-1-1 funds available from our Emergency Telephone System Board (ETSB) and that is what would pay for this radio upgrade. Similar to police & fire, ESDA and Public Works will need to budget a small amount for monthly user fees to be a part of the StarCom network. Fire Chief Stried also requested that City Council waive the bid process and recognize this is a single-source vendor of this specialized radio/technology equipment.

It was motioned by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-49) be passed authorizing and approving the purchase. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE/EXPRESS SERVICES INC.

A Memo (25-DOC-53) was received from Director Conway requesting approval to enter into a contract with Express Employment Services to help find qualified candidates to fill the role of the Senior Accountant position.

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-50) be passed authorizing and approving the agreement with Express Services, Inc. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE/CREATING OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It was motioned by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-51) be passed authorizing and approving the creation of the office of Director of Economic Development. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE/CREATING OFFICE OF DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that Ordinance (25-O-52) be passed authorizing and approving the creation of the office of Deputy Administrator. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Mayor McKinney requested approval of the appointment of Sonolito Bronson to the position of Director of Economic Development. He noted that Ms. Bronson has been with the City for 20 years.

It was motioned by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that a Resolution (25-R-9) be passed approving the appointment of Sonolito Bronson to the position of Economic Development Director. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT/DEPUTY CITY ADMINISTRATOR

Mayor McKinney requested approval of the appointment of Eric Barden to the position of Deputy City Administrator. He stated that with Administrator Knabel out on medical leave, this appointment will ensure the efficient administration of municipal affairs and assist Administrator Knabel in the implementation of strategic initiatives when he returns.

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that a Resolution (25-R-10) be passed approving the appointment of Eric Barden to the position of Deputy City Administrator. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Ianson said the Cleanup Day held on August 2nd was very successful. He said that they were able to fill ten (10) dumpsters. He thanked the Mayor, Commissioners and staff members for their support.

Director Ransom said the resurfacing of Galilee Avenue from 21st to 33rd Street has begun and asked residents to be mindful of construction crews. He also noted that phase one of the 20th Street storm project started on July 28, is progressing on schedule, and the first water hookup was completed on July 30.

Fire Chief Stried read an informational release on behalf of the Fire Chiefs of Beach Park, Winthrop Harbor & Zion addressing safety concerns at Illinois Beach State Park, noting that local fire departments are under-resourced to manage rising lakefront emergencies. He highlighted the four recent drowning victims to underscore the urgent need for improved safety measures.

Police Chief Barden reminded the community that school is about to start and urged the use of caution around school buses and students walking to nearby schools. He noted that bus routes may change each year and that some drivers may still be learning their routes and asked for drivers to be alert and be patient.

Commissioner Frierson invited the community to the Fore R Youth Golf Outing on August 8, hosted by the Coalition for Healthy Communities, and thanked staff for their work in cleanup efforts, project management, lakefront collaboration, leadership, and economic development. He highlighted the Zion Benton Leadership Academy, part of the Coalition Friendly Communities initiative, which includes both adult and junior programs. The junior program, held every Saturday in February for 8th–12th graders, provides leadership training, mentorship, financial education, and activities like mock trials, with some alumni returning as peer mentors.

Commissioner Fischer congratulated Deputy Administrator Barden & Director Bronson on their appointments.

Commissioner Stackhouse thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Mayor McKinney emphasized the importance of exposing youth to career opportunities, connecting them with mentors, and highlighted Chris Cubic's role in bringing external mentors to schools. He credited Director Bronson and City Administrator David Knabel for inspiring his run for mayor and expressed gratitude for working with dedicated city staff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

August 8	2:00 p.m.	Coalition for Healthy Communities Fore R Youth Golf Outing
August 16 & 17	1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Zinnia & Monarch Festival & Bees Too! - Zion Park District Band Shell
August 19	6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Zion Township Board Meeting 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 8:45 p.m. Motion carried.

Recording Secretary