

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2025 AT 7:03 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, Economic Development Director Bronson and City Attorney James Vasselli.

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

**AGENDA CHANGES**

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

- Table Item 8d: Consider approval of ambulance billing contract with Paramedic Billing Services, Inc. per Chief Stried.

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

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

William Bremner, Zion, stated that he received a suspicious phone call about a \$269 transaction on a Western Union account, despite never having used Western Union. After checking with the official Western Union number, he learned the call and the number provided (877-736-2330) were fraudulent. Mr. Bremner warned others not to respond to such calls and to ignore suspicious activity notifications unless they come from verified 800 numbers. He offered to provide the fraudulent number to the recording secretary for further awareness.

Kathy Champine, Zion, raised concerns about the council's compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act (OMA). She stated that the addition of an action item to appoint the recording secretary less than 48 hours before the meeting was not allowed and that topics discussed in closed session must be clearly identified during the open session vote. She also noted that a public hearing should have allowed citizens to speak and ask questions, particularly about the budget and questioned why the budget ordinance was for \$77 million when revenues and expenses balanced at \$24 million, and asked if a detailed budget was submitted as required by law.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular meeting held on August 5, 2025 at 7:00pm.; approval but not release of Closed Session Minutes of a meeting held on August 5, 2025 at 7:25 p.m. 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 149746 through 149832 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$888,971.60. 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.

**ORDINANCE/SALARY INCREASE FOR DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

A Memo (25-DOC-54) was received from Police Chief Barden requesting consideration and approval of the salary for the Director of Economic Development position effective August 5, 2025 as presented. It was motioned by Commissioner Stackhouse and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (24-O-53) be passed authorizing and approving the salary increase for the Director of Economic Development position effecting August 5, 2025. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

**ORDINANCE/THIRD AMENDMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT/IMPERIEN LLC**

A Memo (25-DOC-55) was received from Police Chief Barden requesting a three-month extension of the Imperien LLC RDA Agreement. He stated that in October 2022, the City Council approved a Redevelopment Agreement (RDA) with Imperien LLC for a 700,000-square-foot industrial development featuring outdoor storage. The plan included a 464,000-square-foot cross-dock warehousing and logistics facility, a 262,000-square-foot multi-tenant industrial facility, and a 200,000-square-foot screened storage area for materials and equipment.

In December 2024, the Council extended the RDA to September 2, 2025, to allow Imperien additional time for due diligence. Since that extension, the Chicago industrial real estate market has shifted—demand for logistics facilities has slowed, while interest in pharmaceutical and biomedical research technology facilities has grown. Given these changes, both City staff and Imperien believe it is prudent to explore broadening the project’s scope to remain competitive in this evolving market.

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner McDowell that an Ordinance (25-O-54) be passed authorizing and approving a third amendment to a redevelopment agreement with the City of Zion and Imperien LLC. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

**ORDINANCE/INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT/ZION PARK DISTRICT**

A Memo (25-DOC-56) was received from Attorney Vasselli recommending approval of an intergovernmental agreement with the Zion Park District. Attorney Vasselli stated Attorney Vasselli explained that the agreement between the City of Zion and the Park District is necessary to govern the construction of a new fire station.

It was motioned by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-55) be passed authorizing and approving an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Zion and the Zion Park District. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

**DISCUSSION/PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT/40375 KENOSHA ROAD**

A Memo (25-DOC-57) was received from Director Ianson requesting to remove the existing PUD and approve a new PUD with a Special Use Permit to allow a residential subdivision and solar farm at the property located at 40375 Kenosha Road (Docket 25-Z-8). Director Ianson stated that the site is currently zoned R-16 single family Planned Unit Development that was approved as Phase 3 of Cypress Park Subdivision in March of 2006. The petitioner is requesting that the existing PUD be removed and be considered null and void, and consider the proposed PUD which will consist of 50 single family homes to the east and a ground solar farm to the west.

This Docket was originally tabled to give the developer time to address the concerns of residents in the neighboring subdivisions of Cypress Park and Stonebridge Crossing who voiced concerns of the development being built and especially the connections of the existing roads crating more traffic. After meeting with the residents, the petitioner presented 3 options for consideration at the August 7, 2025 Planning & Zoning meeting:

1. Develop the original PUD of 82 homes
2. Proposed PUD plan of 50 homes with a solar farm
3. Proposed PUD , subject to conditions, eliminating residential use of building 50 homes and donating the land to the Park District for a park.

The Planning & Zoning Commission recommended to approve the option of allowing the development of the solar farm and eliminating the development of 50 homes, and donating the property to the Park District.

Commissioner Frierson acknowledged the long history and community concerns surrounding the development proposal, particularly about increased traffic and road conditions. He stated that eliminating all homes in favor of just a solar farm is not the best use of the property and does not address all resident concerns. He expressed a preference for a compromise option that includes both residential development and a solar farm, suggesting further discussion to find a solution that better benefits the city and the neighborhood.

Chris Khayat explained that his family has owned the property for about 30 years and has struggled to find interest from developers despite repeated efforts. He described working with Cultivate Power to propose a solar farm combined with residential development, aiming to address both city and resident concerns. Mr. Khayat noted significant opposition from neighbors, especially regarding increased traffic and road connections. In response, he offered three proposals, including one to donate land for a park and proceed only with the solar farm, despite a substantial financial loss. He emphasized his willingness to compromise and work with the community but expressed frustration at the lack of consensus and the need to resolve the property's future.

Glenn Christensen, the planner for the petitioners, clarified the options that were submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission for consideration which were: the original plan with 50 homes and a solar farm, and the plan commission's recommendation for just a solar farm with open space. He explained that the existing PUD for 82 homes remains in place unless amended.

Commissioner Frierson asked what steps the Council should take if they wanted to reconsider the matter with an amended plan. Attorney Vasselli outlined the procedure, explaining that the current motion was to deny the plan commission's recommendation, which had only included the solar farm and open space. If the Council voted to deny, the original PUD would remain in place. He added that after the meeting, the petitioner could work with staff and council to explore options for submitting an amended plan or refiling a petition should they wish to pursue a revised proposal.

It was motioned by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to deny the Planning & Zoning Commission's recommendation. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

### **ZONE CHANGE/1128 SHILOH BOULEVARD**

A Memo (25-DOC-58) was received from Director Ianson requesting a Zone Change from HB (Highway Business) to R-13 (Residential Single Family) for the property located at 1128 Shiloh Boulevard. Director Ianson stated that Carlos Vargas Dominguez & Jose Vargas Dominguez is requesting a Zone Change from HB (Highway Business) to R-13 (Residential Single Family) for the property located at 1128 Shiloh Boulevard. He stated that in 1978 the property was re-zoned to HB to allow to operate a business out of a residential dwelling. To be consistent with the residential zoning to the east, the new owners want to rehab the property and use it for residential use only. At the August 7, 2025 meeting, Planning & Zoning Commission recommended to approve the Variance.

It was motioned by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner McDowell that an Ordinance (25-O-56) be passed authorizing the rezoning of certain real property located at 1128 Shiloh Boulevard from HB-Highway Business to R-13 Residential Single Family. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

### **APPROVAL/PITNEY BOWES LEASE RENEWAL**

A Memo (25-DOC-59) was received from Director Conway stating the postage machine 5-year lease is up for renewal. This is the postage machine used by all employees working in City Hall. Director Conway recommends approval of the 5-year renewal for the postage machine.

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that Ordinance (25-O-57) be passed authorizing and approving the lease of equipment (Postage Machine) for the City of Zion. The vote on roll call

was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

#### **APPROVAL/GREEN PAY UTILITY BILLING ONLINE SYSTEM**

A Memo (25-DOC-60) was received from Director Conway stating that currently we utilize Third Millennium as the company that prints and mails our water bills. We have an opportunity to make the utility bills available for viewing and payment online. This is another step that city can take to make things easier for our residents. The use of this service will allow residents to set up an online account which will notify them when a new bill is available. All residents that utilize this program will have the option to receive the bill by email or by both email and postal mail. With the increases we've seen in postage rates, there will also be a small savings to the city for every account that chooses to receive invoices electronically.

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner McDowell that Ordinance (25-O-58) be passed authorizing and approving an agreement with Third Millennium Associates, Inc. to provide Green Pay Software to the City. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

#### **ISSUANCE OF A CLASS K RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSE/SANDHILL GAMING LLC D/B/A LUCKY JACK'S GAMING CAFE**

Mayor McKinney presented an application for a Class K Retail Liquor License from Sandhill Gaming LLC D/B/A Lucky Jack's Gaming Café located at 2256 Sheridan Road.

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to approve the issuance of a Class C-1 Retail Liquor License to Sandhill Gaming LLC D/B/A Lucky Jack's Gaming Café. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

#### **ISSUANCE OF A CLASS A-4 RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSE/SANDHILL GAMING LLC D/B/A DINA'S ITALIAN DELI**

Mayor McKinney presented an application for a Class A-4 Retail Liquor License from Sandhill Gaming LLC D/B/A Dina's Italian Deli located at 3235 Sheridan Road.

It was motioned by Commissioner Fischer and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to approve the issuance of a Class A-4 Retail Liquor License to Sandhill Gaming LLC D/B/A Dina's Italian Deli. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

#### **DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY**

Director Ransom said the high school students finished their part of the welcome sign project, which includes five signs in three variations. Public Works is now adding Mayor McKinney's name, and full installation should be completed within the next couple of weeks.

Fire Chief Stried announced that members of the vehicle committee will travel to North Carolina next week to do the final inspection of a new ambulance that's on order. The new ambulance is expected to be delivered within two to three weeks after the inspection and will replace a 2012 model that has accumulated a lot of miles. He noted that ambulances, like police cars, experience hard use over the years, so the new vehicle will be a welcome replacement.

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.

(8/19/25)

Director Bronson encouraged residents to spend their money locally, emphasizing that for every \$100 spent in the community, \$68 stays in Zion to support local organizations and businesses. She highlighted the positive impact of local spending on non-profits and community groups, and thanked residents for supporting the local economy.

Commissioner McDowell highlighted the upcoming 57th annual Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, which will be held at Zion Benton Township High School's South Cafeteria with tickets priced at \$10. Those interested in buying tickets can see him after the meeting or call 847-746-1411.

Commissioner Fischer clarified a point raised during public comments, stating that the \$77 million figure discussed refers to appropriations, not the city budget.

Attorney Vasselli responded to legal questions raised during public comment regarding the city's use of an appropriation system rather than a budget system, noting that for non-home rule and non-charter municipalities, appropriations are the legally required method. He further explained that the Open Meetings Act requires specificity only for final motions, not for every agenda item, and that appointing a recording secretary is a routine ministerial action that does not need to appear on the agenda. Vasselli assured the council that all actions were legally compliant, citing applicable statutes and case law.

Mayor McKinney invited everyone to attend the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast and the Zion Benton Labor Day parade on September 1<sup>st</sup>. He also reminded residents that the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month is when the fire department tests the emergency warning system.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

|              |                        |                                                          |
|--------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| September 1  |                        | City Offices Closed for the Holiday                      |
| September 2  | 7:00 p.m.              | Zion City Council Meeting                                |
| September 16 | 6:00 p.m.<br>7:00 p.m. | Zion Township Board Meeting<br>Zion City Council Meeting |

### **CLOSED SESSION**

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner McDowell that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:58 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 Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:46 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.

### **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 8:47 p.m. Motion carried.

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Recording Secretary