

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 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, Stackhouse, Fischer, Frierson, and Mayor McKinney. A quorum was present.

Also present: Fire Chief Justin Stried, Police Chief Eric Barden, Building & Zoning Director Richard Ianson, Public Works Director Vic Ransom, Finance Director Kris Conway, Economic Development Director Sonolito Bronson and City Attorney James Vasselli. City Administrator David Knabel was absent.

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

Mayor McKinney asked for a moment of silence for former Governor of Illinois, Jim Edgar. The former Governor recently passed away due to Pancreatic Cancer. Edgar was elected the 38<sup>th</sup> Governor of Illinois and sworn into office January 14, 1991. He turned the State around from being a \$1 billion in debt to a \$1.5 billion surplus. He served as a selfless, caring man and a servant to all the people.

**AGENDA CHANGES**

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell to accept the City Council meeting agenda as presented.

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

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION/ZION-BENTON LABOR DAY PARADE AWARDS**

Sonolito Bronson, President of the Special Events Commission presented the awards from the Zion-Benton Labor Day Parade that was held on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The theme for this years' parade was "Game of Life". Ms. Bronson noted that there were 48 parade entries this year. She thanked the following people for their support:

Christine Wertman  
The Zion City Council  
Zion Park District  
Zion Police Department  
Zion Fire Department  
ESDA  
Roger Whitmore and Larry Stephens

The awards presented were as follows:

The Point Church: Best Effort Award  
I.B.E.W. Local 150: Overall Best Award  
Beach Park Queens: Most Original Award  
Zinnia & Monarch Festival...and Bees Too!: Most Beautiful Award

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There were no Citizen Comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular Meeting held on September 2, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.; approval but not release of Closed Session Minutes of a meeting held on September 2, 2025 at 7:34 p.m.

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

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

- (b) **BILLS:** Vouchers 149926 through 150013 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$372,029.14

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

#### **ORDINANCE/TIF REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT/DOMINO'S PIZZA**

A memo (25-DOC-68) was received from Director Bronson regarding a TIF Redevelopment Agreement. Director Bronson stated that on July 21, 2025, the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Board considered an Application for Assistance submitted by R & T AZP Corporation d/b/a Domino's Pizza 2880, requesting financial assistance in the amount of \$49,950 from the Sheridan Road/Route 173 Redevelopment are (TIF #6) to install a new parking lot at the property located at 1828 Sheridan Road. The TIF Board of Review recommended approval of the petitioner's application in an amount not to exceed \$49,950. Staff supports the TIF Board's recommendation and requests the approval and authorization of a Redevelopment Agreement between the City and R & T AZP Corporation d/b/a Domino's Pizza 2880.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-65) be passed approving and authorizing a Redevelopment Agreement by and between the City of Zion and R&T AZP LLC d/b/a Domino's Pizza 2880, in an amount not to exceed \$49,950. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **ORDINANCE/AGREEMENT/CURALINE LLC/EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

A memo (25-DOC-69) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of an agreement with CuraLinc, LLC for an Employee Assistance Program. Chief Barden stated that pursuant to the City's ongoing commitment to support the health and well-being of employees, Staff is recommending renewal of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contract with CuraLinc Healthcare. The proposed renewal will be a 3-year agreement effective December 1, 2025 with the following per-employee costs:

- **December 1, 2025 – November 30, 2026:** \$2.75 per employee, per month
- **December 1, 2026 – November 30, 2027:** \$2.83 per employee, per month
- **December 1, 2027 – November 30, 2028:** \$2.91 per employee, per month

CuraLinc has consistently provided reliable and professional EAP services to City employees, delivering valuable resources to support mental health, work-life balance, and overall employee well-being. Renewing this agreement ensures continuity of these services at competitive pricing with modest annual increases. He stated that it is recommended that the City Council approve the renewal of the Employee Assistance Program contract with CuraLinc for a three-year term beginning December 1, 2025, under the outlined cost structure.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell that an Ordinance (24-O-66) be passed authorizing and approving an agreement with CuraLinc, LLC and the City of Zion for Employee Assistance Program Services for a term of 3 years as presented. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **APPROVAL/ON-STREET PARKING PLAN/DUNGEON OF DOOM**

A memo (25-DOC-70) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of on-street parking accommodations for GPT Enterprises, dba Dungeon of Doom. Chief Barden stated following deliberation, the City Council has determined that limited, controlled on-street parking will be permitted in support of Dungeon of Doom's operational needs. This approval would be granted with the understanding that the business will continue to work in cooperation with City staff and public safety personnel to ensure safe traffic flow, pedestrian access, and neighborhood impact mitigation.

Staff is directed to coordinate with GPT Enterprises to implement the approved parking arrangement, including any necessary signage, enforcement parameters, and seasonal adjustments as may be required. Commissioner Frierson confirmed that it will be a seasonal 1-year agreement. Chief Barden stated they will see how it goes. They will use CSO officers as support as they work together with GPT. He feels this is a good solution. Mayor McKinney apologized for the delay in getting it done and thanked GPT Enterprises for their patience. Commissioner McDowell confirmed that there will be no parking west of the Metra line as there are no pedestrian crossings. Parking will be at the 25th, 26th, 27th and 2800 blocks of Deborah Avenue.

It was moved by Commissioner Stackhouse, seconded by Commissioner McDowell, that a Resolution (25-R-11) be passed authorizing and approving City Staff to establish an on-street parking plan for Dungeon of Doom. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

#### **PERSONNEL CHANGES/ACCOUNTS & FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

A memo (25-DOC-71) was received Chief Barden requesting to amend the Personnel Authorization regarding the Accounts and Finance Department. Chief Barden is recommending to remove the Assistant to the Finance Director position. Commissioner Fischer asked why the position was being eliminated. Chief Barden stated the duties are redundant to the duties of the Senior Accountant. Commissioner Fischer noted that they can restore the position based on the needs of the department. Additionally, he asked if there were any adjustments made to the Senior Accountant job description. Chief Barden indicated there was not.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-67) be passed authorizing and approving personnel changes in the Accounts & Finance Department. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **PERSONNEL CHANGES/PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Chief Barden is requesting an amendment to the Personnel Authorization in the Public Works Department. He is recommending adding a non-union Supervisor position overseeing the Street Department and adding a non-union Supervisor position overseeing the Water Department. Both of the positions will report to the Director of Public Works. The amendments will be retroactive to September 8, 2025

It was moved by Commissioner Stackhouse, seconded by Commissioner McDowell, that an Ordinance (25-O-68) be passed authorizing and approving personnel changes in the Public Works Department. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **RATIFYING APPOINTMENTS/PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

It was moved by Commissioner Stackhouse, seconded by Commissioner McDowell, that an Ordinance (25-O-69) be passed ratifying the appointments of Supervisors of the Public Works Department on behalf of the City. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

#### **VARIANCE/SECTION 10-12/ZION MUNICIPAL CODE/4106 STONEBRIDGE DRIVE**

A memo (25-DOC-72) was received by Director Ianson requesting a Variance from Section 10-12(a) of the Zion Municipal Code. Director Ianson stated that Jose Martinez is seeking a Variance from Section 10-12(a) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow a 6-foot fence on the street side to the front building line, Zoning Docket 25-Z-13 at the property located at 4106 Stonebridge Drive. Due to a previous break in, he is making this request to secure the rear and side yard of his property. At the September 4, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the Variance. Director Ianson confirmed that the fence would be a white vinyl fence.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-70) be passed approving a Variance to Section 10-12(a) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow a 6ft. fence on the street side to the front building line for the property located at 4106 Stonebridge Drive. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**VARIANCE/SECTION 102-128/ZION MUNICIPAL CODE/2413 JOPPA AVENUE**

A memo (25-DOC-73) was received by Director Ianson requesting a Variance from Section 102-128(6)(a) of the Zion Municipal Code. Director Ianson stated that Fidel Pineda is seeking a Variance from Section 102-128(6)(a) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow the continued use of the front off-street parking, Zoning Docket 25-Z-14 at the property located at 2413 Joppa Avenue. He is making the request for security and convenience purposes. The property was vacant more than 180 days (6 months) and must be brought up to current code, which requires that alley access off-street parking must be provided in the rear. At the September 4, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the Variance.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that an Ordinance (25-O-71) be passed approving a Variance to Section 102-128(6)(a) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow the continued use of the front off-street parking at the property located at 2413 Joppa Avenue. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**SPECIAL USE PERMIT/SECTION 102-92/ZION MUNICIPAL CODE/2804 DEBORAH AVENUE**

A memo (25-DOC-74) was received by Director Ianson requesting a Variance from Section 102-92(d) of the Zion Municipal Code. Director Ianson stated that Top Tier Repair & Towing is seeking a Special Use Permit (25-Z-15) from Section 102-92(d) of the Zion Municipal Code to operate an auto repair shop and to continue using the existing trailer on the property as the office located at 2804 Deborah Avenue. This location was previously used as an auto repair in the past. He is making the request for security and convenience purposes. At the September 4, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, they recommended to approve the Special Use Permit.

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner McDowell, that an Ordinance (25-O-72) be passed granting a Special Use Permit to operate an auto repair shop and to continue using the existing trailer on the property located at 2804 Deborah Avenue. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Ordinance passed.

**TABULATION OF BIDS/SITE UTILITIES/FIRE STATION #2**

A memo (25-DOC-75) was received from Chief Barden regarding bid results for the Site Utilities for the Fire Station #2 project. Chief Barden stated a bid opening was held on July 29, 2025 for Bid Package #2.5 – Site Utilities for the Fire Station No. 2 project. As part of the bidding process, alternate specifications were requested for both the sanitary main lining and the completion of the water main loop. After review of the bid tabulations, Staff recommends that the City Council formally accept Alternate #1 (Sanitary Main CIPP Liner) in the amount of \$83,500 and Alternate #3 (Water Main Loop Completion) in the amount of \$164,000 as part of the awarded contract with Campanella. These alternates represent the most cost-effective and efficient approach to ensure long-term infrastructure performance while meeting the needs of the project. Approval of the recommendation will allow the project team to move forward with contract award and final design incorporating the alternates.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse, that a Resolution (25-R-12) be passed awarding the bid to the lowest responsible bidder, Campanella & Sons Inc. for the Site Utilities for Fire Station No. 2 project. The vote on the roll: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

**HOTEL/MOTEL TAX GRANT/DUNGEON OF DOOM**

A memo (25-DOC-76) was received from Chief Barden requesting approval of a Hotel/Motel Tax Grant for Dungeon of Doom. Chief Barden stated GPT Enterprises d/b/a Dungeon of Doom has applied for the annual hotel/motel tax grant program which encourages advertising and promotion of events that would bring tourism to Zion and encourage overnight stays. The haunted house attraction attracts over 14,000 visitors during its short 19 days of operation. GPT Enterprises has applied for and complied with grants in prior years and Staff requests and recommends approval of the grant request not to exceed \$10,000.

It was moved by Commissioner Fischer, seconded by Commissioner Frierson, that a Resolution (25-R-13) be passed authorizing and approving a Hotel/Motel Tax Grant for GPT Enterprises LLC DBA Dungeon of Doom on behalf of the City of Zion. The vote on the roll: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

## APPOINTMENT/ADJUDICATION HEARING OFFICER

A memo (25-DOC-77) was received from Chief Barden requesting consideration of a new Adjudication Hearing Officer for the City of Zion. Chief Barden is requesting the Council appoint Mr. Theodore Potkonjak as the City of Zion's new Adjudication Hearing Officer. Mr. Potkonjak brings with him extensive legal knowledge and experience that make him well-suited to serve in this role. The position of Hearing Officer is essential to the City's administrative adjudication system, ensuring fair and impartial hearings for matters such as code violations, ordinance enforcement, and other municipal cases. The compensation for this position is set at **\$700 per month**, with the rate subject to **annual review** by the City Council. The appointment of Mr. Potkonjak will allow the City to maintain consistency, efficiency, and integrity in its adjudication process, while continuing to provide residents and businesses with a fair venue for resolution.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fischer, that a Resolution (25-R-14) be passed concurring in the appointment of Theodore Potkonjak to the position of Adjudication Hearing Officer for the City of Zion with a monthly rate of \$700.00. The vote on the roll: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried. Resolution passed.

## DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTARY

Director Ransom shared the following:

- The repair of Galilee Avenue is winding down. Final surface paving and landscaping should be done by the end of the week.
- Hydrant flushing has begun and will take place through September 26<sup>th</sup>. He noted there are 1119 hydrants in Zion.

Chief Stried noted they are finalizing the order of events for their Open House on Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. More details to come.

Chief Barden reminded residents they have a Community Police Academy. Interested individuals can contact Sgt. Many Rivera. Additionally, he noted that Movies in the Park is a great event and a way to connect with residents. Officers will be out on their bikes. Mayor McKinney noted that this gives the residents a chance to get to know the officers and that they are there for their safety and protection.

Director Bronson thanked the community for supporting the Zion-Benton Labor Day Parade. She noted that plans are already underway for 2026. They will be announcing the theme for next year shortly.

Director Conway stated that last month they decided to move forward with Green Pay which will be coming soon. Residents will be able to view their bills online. Information will be inserted in the water bills. She noted that the cost savings will not be extravagant but will benefit the residents. Additionally, she noted that the new Senior Accountant Christie Tipton started today and asked those who visit City Hall give her a warm welcome.

Commissioner McDowell shared his thoughts on the political violence happening across the country. Additionally, he noted the Christ Community Church will be holding a prayer meeting.

Commissioner Frierson reminded residents of the Movies in the Park happening on Fridays in September. He noted the Coalition invested in a new projector this year and feels it is a way to provide free family fun. This Friday they will be showing Lilo & Stitch which will begin at 7:00 p.m. He thanked all the volunteers assisting with the event.

Commissioner Stackhouse thanked City Staff for helping to keep the City running smooth. Additionally, she noted that everyone is doing a great job and she appreciates their efforts.

Mayor McKinney stated that after a recent cross country meet at ZBTHS, the visiting team commented on how beautiful the City is. He noted that they are working with the taxing bodies to beautify the City. Additionally, he noted that when the City's communication firm first visited the City, they didn't realize how nice Zion was. All the work that has been invested here is making the City a great place to live, work and play. They continue to listen to the residents to see what they can do to improve the City.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

|            |           |                             |
|------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| October 7  | 7:00 p.m. | Zion City Council Meeting   |
| October 21 | 6:00 p.m. | Zion Township Board Meeting |
|            | 7:00 p.m. | Zion City Council Meeting   |

**CLOSED SESSION**

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson, seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:50 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 McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, aye; Frierson, aye; and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

It was moved by Commissioner McDowell seconded by Commissioner Frierson to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:37 p.m. with all members present. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Stackhouse, aye; Fischer, 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 Holmes and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 8:38 p.m. Motion carried.

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City Clerk