

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE ZION CITY COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 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: Building & Zoning Director Richard Ianson, Fire Chief Justin Stried, Police Chief Eric Barden, Economic Development Director Bronson, City Administrator Knabel and City Attorney Eric Stack

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

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Lou Hiltibran wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and stated that a Food Bank will be available at Zion Benton East on November 22, December 13 and December 27th beginning at 10:00 a.m. for those who are in need.

Nate Williams expressed interest in obtaining his drivers license now that he has completed community service.

Janet Wates shared her experience of being attacked by two pit bulls in her yard, with her neighbor and husband intervening. She said her husband fired a gunshot into the ground to stop the dogs and was later charged with four felonies. She expressed frustration of how the authorities handled the situation and with bystanders' inaction during the attack.

Virgil Bates shared his observations of Mrs. Wates attack. He also expressed his frustration with the police's lack of attention to the community concerns and commented on the need for better animal control and the consequences of not addressing dangerous dogs in the community.

CONSENT AGENDA

- (a) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** a Regular meeting held on November 4, 2025 at 7:00pm. It was motioned by Commissioner Stackhouse, seconded by Commissioner McDowell 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 150565 through 1506622 drawn on Huntington National Bank, N.A. Total: \$2,960,733.37. 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.

RESOLUTION/LOCKBOX ACCOUNT FOR AMBULANCE BILLING

A Memo (25-DOC-90) was received from Fire Chief Stried requesting approval to establish a Wintrust Bank Lockbox account. He stated that with the change to our new ambulance billing vendor, establishment of a Wintrust Bank lockbox account is necessary to aid in collecting revenues as part of the invoicing process. It was motioned by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Resolution (25-R-18) be passed authorizing and approving the opening of a lockbox account for the collection and payment of ambulance bills on

behalf of 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.

ORDINANCE/AMENDING MUNICIPAL CODE/AMBULANCE FEES

A Memo (25-DOC-91) was received from Fire Chief Stried requesting approval to update ambulance billing rates to reflect what our Medicare GEMT (Ground Emergency Medical Transportation) cost report details each year. These new rates are very similar to the rates we updated to earlier this year, and they fall in line with what data shows are true costs for our ambulance service when transporting patients.

It was motioned by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-83) be passed amending Section 34-16 of the Zion Municipal Code regarding Ambulance Fees. The vote on roll call was: Commissioners McDowell, aye; Frierson, aye; Fischer, aye; Stackhouse, aye and Mayor McKinney, aye. Motion carried.

ORDINANCE/LEASE OF 1800 27TH STREET/START EARLY

Administrator Knabel stated that Zion Elementary District #6 is conveying land to the City of Zion so the city can establish a 99-year lease with Start Early for an early intervention school—something schools themselves cannot do due to shorter lease term restrictions. This arrangement ensures the school project's long-term viability and capital investment. The lease contains legal language to protect the city from liability and financial responsibility, making these the sole responsibility of Start Early. If the school stops operating, the land will revert to Zion Elementary District #6. The lease approval is primarily an administrative step to formalize the city's cooperation in this community project.

It was motioned by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that an Ordinance (25-O-84) be passed approving and authorizing the lease of real property (1800 27th street) to Start Early for their early childhood services 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/ INSURANCE POLICY RENEWALS/GENERAL LIABILITY

A Memo (25-DOC-92) was received from Administrator Knabel requesting approval to renew our general liability insurances as well as our workers compensation insurance, our workplace violence policy and our cyber liability insurance negotiated by Marsh & McLennan. He explained that the general liability insurance renewal came with a 13% increase, which is mainly driven by recent claims, the rising cost of vehicle replacements, and broader industry-wide risks—especially those connected to auto insurance, distracted driving, and natural disasters across the country. He noted that even risks outside their city can affect their premiums due to the way large insurers pool costs. Commissioner Frierson asked about using telemetry for fleet insurance discounts. Administrator Knabel expressed uncertainty due to the specific nature of emergency response vehicles but agreed to investigate the possibility and discuss it with their brokers.

It was motioned by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-85) be passed approving and authorizing the Renewal of Certain Insurance Policies (General Liability, Law Enforcement Liability, Auto, Public Officials Liability, Property, Inland Marine, Equipment Breakdown, Crime & Excess Liability) 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/ INSURANCE POLICY RENEWALS/WORKERS COMP

It was motioned by Commissioner McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Fischer that an Ordinance (25-O-86) be passed approving and authorizing the Renewal of Certain Insurance Policies (Workers Compensation, Workplace Violence and Cyber Liability) 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.

TEXT AMENDMENT/FOOD PANTRIES

A Memo (25-DOC-93) was received from Director Ianson requesting a Text Amendment to section 102-31(6) of the Zion Municipal Code to allow food pantries within a residential district with the issuance of a Special Use Permit. There has been interest at some of the local Churches to operate food pantries, but we currently do not regulate them. There was concern from the Zoning Commission of the type of food pantries, what they would offer and the hours of operation, which can all be regulated through a Special Use Permit. At the November 6, 2025 Planning & Zoning Commission they recommended to approve of the Special Use Permit with a vote 4 to 3.

Commissioner Frierson clarified that the zoning amendment is specifically intended for “standing” food pantries—those requiring permanent infrastructure within residential districts—and does not affect temporary food events (like Northern Food Bank pop-ups) or community pantries/drop boxes. He emphasized the goal of ensuring such pantries are properly regulated in terms of location, operation hours, and facility standards, without impacting other local charitable initiatives.

It was motioned by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner McDowell that an Ordinance (25-O-87) be passed authorizing the amendment of Section 102-31 of the Zion Municipal Code regarding Food Pantries located within 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.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT/0 21ST STREET

A Memo (25-DOC-94) was received from Director Ianson recommending denial of a Special Use Permit to operate a construction & demolition processing facility for the property located at 0 21st Street, PIN Numbers 04-17-300-004 and 04-18-400-012. Staff does not support this request with the concerns of the noise and dust that it will produce within the surrounding community. At the November 6, 2025 Planning & Zoning commission they recommended a denial of the Special Use Permit.

It was motioned by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to deny a Special Use Permit to operate a construction & demolition processing facility for the property located at 0 21st Street, PIN Numbers 04-17-300-004 and 04-18-400-012. 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 reminded residents that waste management services will accept mattresses that are wrapped in plastic but will not take tires and electronics. To discard tires and electronics, please contact SWALCO.

Fire Chief Stried reminded residents to prepare for colder weather by ensuring their furnaces and wood-burning stoves are properly inspected, including the flue, for safety. He also advised that real Christmas trees should be kept watered to prevent fire hazards as the holiday season approaches.

Police Chief Barden highlighted several important community matters. He announced the upcoming Shop with a COP event, encouraging donations from local businesses and community members to support families in need. He reminded residents to keep vehicle lights on because of earlier sunsets for road safety. He informed everyone about ongoing fire station construction, warned about increased construction vehicle activity, and stressed the need for careful driving near the site as well as scheduled road cleanups. Police Chief Barden also supported leash laws by sharing his perspective as a dog owner and emphasized the importance of responsible pet ownership and public safety.

David Knabel expressed appreciation for those who attended the recent "dollars and cents" presentation covering property taxes and various civic topics. He emphasized the value of community education, plans to offer these sessions quarterly with rotating topics, and encouraged residents to attend and suggest additional subjects of interest. Knabel highlighted the importance of understanding city finances and decision-making processes, and welcomed increased community engagement.

Director Bronson wished everyone an early Happy Thanksgiving and encouraged residents to do their holiday shopping at local grocery stores in Zion to help support the community.

Commissioner McDowell wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and confirmed that Santa Claus will be escorted by the city at an upcoming event, as mentioned in the last city council meeting.

Commissioners Frierson, Fischer & Stackhouse wished everyone a safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor McKinney expressed his sympathies to Mrs. Wates and reinforced the importance of responsible pet ownership. He noted that the Police Chief Barden would follow up after the meeting and thanked the Mrs. Wates and Mr. Bates for raising concerns. He also encouraged the community to focus on the positive aspects of living in a supportive city and emphasized that speaking up is essential for addressing issues and improving the community.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

November 22	10:00 a.m.	Northern Illinois Food Bank Zion Benton East High School
November 27 & 28		City Offices closed for the Holiday
December 2	7:00 p.m.	Zion City Council Meeting
December 13 & 27	10:00 a.m.	Northern Illinois Food Bank Zion Benton East High School

CLOSED SESSION

It was moved by Commissioner Frierson and seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse that the Council recess to Closed Session at 7:45 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 Frierson seconded by Commissioner Stackhouse to reconvene the Regular Council meeting at 8:13 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 McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Frierson and unanimously approved the meeting be adjourned at 8:13 p.m. Motion carried.

Recording Secretary