

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
FEBRUARY 22, 2023, 7:00 P.M.**

1. Call to Order - Roll Call

Mayor Thom Walker called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Councilors present were Vicki Hallin, Jenny Gerold, Jack Edmonds and Jeff Reynolds. Others present: City Administrator Michele McPherson, Community Developer Planner Stacy Marquardt, Clerk Shawna Jenkins, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Todd Frederick, Wastewater Plant Manager Chris Klinghagen, Technology Services Manager Ed Yost, Attorney Damien Toven, and Public Utility Manager Keith Butcher. Absent was Fire Chief Ron Lawrence and Liquor Store Manager Dylan Donner.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Agenda Additions / Deletions

J Gerold would like to remove the license requests from Mello Fellow from the consent agenda and move it to New Business for discussion.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Consent Agenda

- 4.1. Approval of City Council February 8th, 2024, Minutes.
- 4.2. Cancellation of March 7th City Council Study Session.
- 4.3. Administrator Michele McPherson Step increase effective 3-8-24.
- 4.4. Police Officer Jace Cooper Step Increase effective 3-14-24.
- 4.5. Liquor Clerk Angelo Vita Step Increase effective 1-29-24.
- ~~4.6. Approval of Licenses for the Mellow Fellow – Pending Approval of Background Check~~
 - ~~4.6.1. Tobacco~~
 - ~~4.6.2. Cannabinoid Products~~
- 4.7. Appoint Mark Oleen to the HRA Board to fill a Vacancy.
- 4.8. Approval of Emergency Management Logo.
- 4.9. Authorize Purchase of Safco Planfile, CIP Item.
- 4.10. Approve CIP Purchase of Equipment to Improve Riebe Disc Golf Course and Disposition of old Baskets.
- 4.11. Authorize 1989 International Navistar (Former PFRD Tender #2).

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH THE REMOVAL OF THE MELLOW FELLOW LICENSE REQUEST. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Open Forum; public comment on items not on the agenda. Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes. The Council will not discuss legal matters.

6. Old Business

7. New Business

- 7.1. Wine and Spirits Grant Request from the Princeton Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

Kim Young, Chamber of Commerce and Tourism President is before the Council to request the annual Wine and Spirits Grant for \$10,000 to assist in yearly costs and events that are held for the community.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE WINE AND SPIRITS GRANT REQUEST FROM THE PRINCETON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.2. Wine and Spirits Grant Request from the Princeton Chamber of Commerce and Tourism for Light up Princeton

Kim Young requested a Wine and Spirits Grant of \$2,000 for Light Up Princeton. She reported that since it has been growing every year, it will be moving to the Mille Lacs County Fairgrounds in 2024. The grant will be used for local groups that will assist in setting up and taking the display down.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE WINE AND SPIRITS GRANT REQUEST FROM THE PRICETON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM FOR LIGHT-UP PRINCETON. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.3. Wine and Spirits Grant Request from the Princeton Ambassadors

The Princeton Ambassadors spoke about the program and how many events they attend through the year. They are requesting \$2,500 which is approximately 30% of their budget for the year.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE WINE AND SPIRITS GRANT REQUEST FROM THE PRICETON AMBASSADORS. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.4. Approval of Licenses for the Mellow Fellow - Pending Approval of Background Check

7.4.1. Tobacco

7.4.2. Cannabinoid Products

Staff reported that they would like some additional time to confirm the location and review the application as it may not meet the ordinance in terms of distance.

WALKER MOVED TO TABLE THE TOBACCO AND CANNABINOID LICENSES FOR MELLOW FELLOW. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.5. Resolution 24-08 - Accepting Donation from Twice New Clothing for the Flower Project

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 24-08 ACCEPTING THE DONATION FROM TWICE NEW CLOTHING FOR THE FLOWER PROJECT. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.6. Resolution 24-09 - Accepting Donation from Twice New Clothing for the Police Department

Frederick reported that on February 9th, the Princeton Police Department received a donation in the amount of \$7,500.00 from Princeton Twice New Clothing and Treasures. The Princeton Police Department is truly grateful for this donation. The donation will be used for police equipment, educational materials, k9 supplies, investigative tools, and training supplies for officers.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 24-09 ACCEPTING THE DONATION FROM TWICE NEW CLOTHING FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.7. Curbside Waste Solicitor's Permit request

Jenkins advised that the City received a Solicitor's application from Kidd Lacey from Curbside Waste . In the past few months, there have been several complaints regarding Curbside Waste Solicitors going door to door in Princeton without a solicitor's permit.

On November 16th, 2023, staff sent an email to their customer service email address listed on their website to let them know a solicitor's permit was required to go door to door in Princeton and included the license application in the email. No response was received.

Staff received another complaint and sent another email on December 5th, 2023, with no response. Brian from Curbside Waste had posted on the Princeton Bulletin Board regarding their garbage services, so he was emailed directly on December 12, 2023, again with no response.

Jenkins tried calling the company as well, but the automated system said the call was #20 in line, so staff sent them a letter in the mail.

Some of the comments seen on the Princeton Facebook groups, or things people stated when calling to complain:

1. The Sales rep was telling residents that their current garbage company was bought out and would no longer be serving their customers (not true).
2. The sales rep made contradictory statements, they seemed "sketchy".

In researching the Company, they have a rating of 1.4 (out of 5) on Yelp, with 108 reviews. On the Better Business Bureau's website, from March 7, 2021 to February 20th, 2024 they have 66 complaints (55 – Product / Service, 9 – Billing / Collection, 1 – Advertising / Sales, and 1 – Guaranteed / Warranty).

Following Chapter 6 of Princeton's, Section 670.04, F, Staff recommends denial of the Solicitors Permit request.

670.04 License Ineligibility. The following shall be grounds for denying a license under this Section:

F. The Applicant is found to have a bad business reputation. Evidence of a bad business reputation shall include, but not be limited to, the existence of more than three complaints against the applicant with the Better Business Bureau, the Attorney General's Office, or other similar business or consumer rights office or agency, within the preceding 12 months, or three complaints filed against the applicant within the preceding five years.

HALLIN MOVED TO DENY THE SOLICITORS PERMIT REQUEST FROM CUBRSIDE WASTE REPRESENTATIVE KIDD LACEY DUE TO THE EXTENSIVE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS THE CITY HAS RECEIVED AND WHAT WAS FOUND ON THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU WEBSITE. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.8. Fire Department Updates

7.8.1. Transition Update

McPherson reported that the transition team is comprised of retiring Chief Lawrence, Assistant Chief Vaccari, Assistant City Administrators Gerold and Frederick, and Administrator McPherson. The team has been meeting weekly to transfer knowledge and work through various processes.

McPherson's role has been to assist in the organization of meetings and meeting agendas; She has taken on the responsibility of preparing the Fire Executive Board agendas and agenda packets as well as tracking future agenda topics that the Fire Executive Board wishes to discuss. She has also developed a workplan for the development of standard operating procedures (SPOs) and standard operating guidelines (SOGs) that the Fire Executive Board would like to see developed.

Assistant City Administrator Gerold will be responsible for payroll and the budget, equipment, and supplies management. He along with Assistant Chief Vaccari met with Tom Evenson of Fire

Equipment Specialties to inspect all the personal protective equipment. Mr. Evenson will be attending the March 12 training to discuss the issues noted in his memo and to address worn-out or improperly sized suspenders with the firefighters.

Assistant City Administrator Frederick will be responsible for the Public Safety Building budget and the arrangement of repairs as needed. He and Assistant Chief Vaccari met last week on a number of issues relating to the building, requesting funds from local organizations and other items.

Emergency Manager Lawrence is now housed at City Hall. He is currently sharing an office with Senior Accountant/HR Specialist Hodge until the map room can be cleared (after purchase of the plan file) and a desk procured from Government Surplus. All keys have been turned over to the Fire Department, except the building fob so that the emergency management trailers can be accessed.

The job posting was submitted to LMC February 20, 2024, was provided to Assistant Chief Vaccari for posting at the Fire Department at the same time, and direct emailed to two parties who had expressed interest via email. The initial submission date is March 22 at 3:00 pm; this provides spacing with the current posting for the WWTP/General Maintenance II position and will give the Council time to consider the format of a hiring committee.

The team minus retiring Chief Lawrence should continue to meet weekly after March 1, until a different schedule is determined.

7.8.2. Fire Equipment Specialties Inc Inspection Results

Tom Evenson of FES met with B Gerold and Assistant Josh Vaccari on February 12, 2024. At that meeting, staff had a list of personal protective equipment (PPE, Coat, Pant, Boots) staff wanted it all inspected due to safety concerns brought forth from the Fire Department.

Evenson reported that they started the meeting off with some education on the PPE the Princeton Fire Department is using and how it relates to firefighter safety. The Princeton Fire Department is purchasing the highest level of PPE available in the market today. Not only is it the highest level of PPE, but it offers the most flex, fit and comfort available from Lion Apparel. Lastly, the garments also have the Lion Isodri Technology, which keeps the garments lighter, drier and has less potential for steam burns while fighting fires.

Evenson began to inspect the PPE that was on the list and addressed each concern that was raised. Out of all the PPE inspected, only one pair of pants needed some repair for a small burn on the left knee which also affected the liner system. All other PPE concerns raised needed no corrective action to be safely used.

One SCBA facepiece was questioned because of a flaking surface on the facepiece lens. Evenson stated he did call the local MSA representative and explained to him what we were seeing. It was his opinion that the flaking was only the anti-scratch material on the lens and that there were no safety concerns with continuing to use it.

Also noted was a Nomex hood that had some minor burn marks around the facepiece opening. It was noted that the hood did what was expected of it in preventing any injury to the firefighter. The noted hood was still safe for use. He also noted that the hood used was a particulate blocking hood which is made to help firefighters.

Areas of Improvement

All PPE needs to be washed on a regular basis and after every fire. This is an individual

responsibility and a cancer preventive measure. The department already has the equipment to do this so this would be at no cost to the city. Dirty garments also defeat the purpose of why the Fire Department purchased the Isodri Technology in the first place (lighter, drier, less potential for steam burns).

Provide PPE training to all members so they understand the importance of clean gear and how it protects you. This training would be done by the local representative and will be at no charge to the city.

If not already in place, a clear means of documenting PPE issues and concerns. A form should be used after each gear inspection to report any problems or needs.

Follow the recommendation of NFPA 1851, the cleaning and repair standard. This would be very expensive for the city and would take PPE out of service for periods of time. Each firefighter would need two sets of gear if this standard was to be followed. NFPA 1851 is a standard that is voluntary in the State of MN, but it is highly recommend to follow as best as possible for the safety and wellness of firefighters.

In summary, the Princeton Fire Department is using gear that will protect its firefighters well during emergencies. Cleaning of the gear seems to be an area where most improvement can be made. Cleaning of the gear will not only protect firefighters against cancer causing products of combustion, but it will also help the gear to make its intended 10-year service life.

7.8.3. Fire Advisory Board Information, Discussion

McPherson stated that the Fire Advisory Board (FAB) met February 7, 2024. All members were present as several members of the Fire Executive Board and the Co-Chiefs from Milaca. The meeting was held at City Hall, everyone was cordial, and the discussion varied based on the agenda topics. The Council would have received the packet including the historical billing information. I have not yet had an opportunity to do the meeting minutes.

2023 Billing

McPherson is still analyzing the numbers to determine what Wyanett overpaid for services. Their overpayment will result in the potential for others to pay additional.

During the discussion, it was discussed that the annual payments are for “current” year services based on “previous” year’s expenses. If this is in fact true, then the budget assumptions start the city behind given that current year expenses are almost always higher than previous year’s expenses.

FAB Princeton Township Representative Hiller stated during the meeting that “Blue Hill would not be paying for 2023 as they had already paid for 2023 services”. He also stated that “Princeton Township would not pay \$70,000 per year for fire services”.

Based on the above information, I have recalculated the preliminary 2023 billing removing Blue Hill from the equation:

2023 Billing Amounts			2023 Billing Amounts, No Blue Hill			Difference (Increase)
Blue Hill	\$60,245	17				
Bogus Brook	\$11,376	3.21	Bogus Brook	\$13,932	3.93	\$2,556
City of Princeton	\$110,036	31.05	City of Princeton	\$132,298	37.33	\$22,262
Greenbush Township	\$37,919	10.7	Greenbush Twnshp	\$45,763	12.91	\$7,844
Princeton Township	\$65,561	18.5	Princeton Township	\$79,006	22.29	\$13,445
Spencer Brook Twn	\$29,556	8.34	Spencer Brook Twp	\$35,624	10.05	\$6,069

Wyanett Township	\$39,691	11.2	Wyanett Township	\$47,759	13.48	\$8,069
	\$354,383			\$354,383		\$60,245

As is illustrated above, everyone's portion increases, some more than others, to absorb the portion that Blue Hill may not pay. It should be noted, no bills have been sent, so it is unclear as to what Blue Hill may or may not do. Township payments are not subtracted as revenue from the annual expenses; for 2023 staff did subtract all other revenue streams (insurance payments, pool fills, training reimbursement, donations, etc.) from expenses. In order to eliminate a significant bill increase to the remaining members, the City would need to absorb Blue Hill's portion of the billing.

Staff requests direction as to how the City Council would like to address this issue.

2024 Billing

McPherson calculated the estimated 2025 billing (based on the 2024 adopted budget) using the same percentages as the 2023 billing. The results are as follows:

2025 Estimated Billing

Based on the 2024 budget, same percentage as 2023

2024 Budget:	\$293,874	
Bogus Brook	\$11,553	3.93
City of Princeton	\$109,709	37.33
Greenbush Township	\$37,949	12.91
Princeton Township	\$65,516	22.29
Spencer Brook Township	\$29,542	10.05
Wyanett Township	\$39,605	13.48

The 2024 expense amount is calculated based on expenses minus capital costs minus revenue (other than township payments). The amount per participant is similar, if not a bit less than the 2023 preliminary billing that included Blue Hill.

Contract

The FAB agrees that the current contract needs some work. Even the MAT contract likely needs some work. At a minimum, the contract needs:

1. Penalties for failure to pay.
2. Termination language other than the 90-day opt out.
3. Clarity as to how the payments work – pay for services rendered or pay for anticipated expenses.

The MAT contract includes a third component in addition to calls/call hours and net tax capacity, it adds population to the mix. With the addition of the third component, the preliminary analysis shows that Spencer Brook and Wyanett will see a decrease in their bills while everyone else will see an increase.

The two concerns that are often voiced by some members of the FAB are the increases (which are not consistently held at 3-5 percent), and that they don't have accurate numbers for the year that they are setting their budget. While the City budgets for 2024 in 2023, the townships in 2024 are already setting their budgets for 2025. Short of using a five-year rolling average of billing amounts, setting a flat percentage annual increase and then billing for a shortfall (or refund for an overage), MacPherson said she is not sure how to resolve either of the concerns, absent becoming a city-only department. At some point in the future, even with a flat annual percentage increase, expenses are

going to get to the magic \$70,000 for Princeton Township (2027, to be precise, assuming a 3% flat rate increase starting with 2023's billing amount).

It is clear from my analysis that the MAT contract only benefits two of the six members served by the PFRD.

Toven suggested sending the bill to Blue Hill Township for what they owe, and then they can be taken to court if they do not pay. J Gerold added that Princeton taxpayers should not have to cover the cost because Blue Hill doesn't want to pay for services they received.

Toven and McPherson will work on a new contract.

7.9. Bill List

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 22, 2024, CHECK REGISTER CONTAINING CHECKS 87862 TO 87940 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$292,273.01, AND THE PAYROLL ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS AS NOTED ON THE PAY PERIOD 4 TRANSMITTAL REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$82,194.99 AND PAY PERIOD 4 CHECK REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$197,495.02. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.10. City Administrator Bi-Weekly Report

McPherson had the following observations and information to share from the last update on January 23, 2024:

Airport

Staff, along with KLJ, met with FAA staff to discuss the documents necessary to complete the ALP update for the relocation. There will be a number of release documents relating to the "old airport" parcel east of 21st Avenue, removal of road rights of way from the airport, removal of the Flight Service Station, and a general cleanup of the entire east boundary of the airport. KLJ will be developing a simple graphic to accompany a letter to the FAA requesting the changes. The FAA then needs to analyze the request and provide direction to the City and KLJ as to next steps.

Baldwin Township

Staff (Attorneys Bourgeois and Toven, City Clerk Tadych, City Engineer Edison, Community Development Planner Marquardt and I) continue to meet weekly to prepare the City's testimony at the upcoming hearing regarding Baldwin Township's incorporation. A draft document is in process. As it becomes more robust in content later this week/early next, the Council will be provided with an opportunity to review and provide input. We are required to submit our documentation to the Administrative Law Judge by the end of the day February 29, 2024.

Building Inspections

Staff continues to work with MNSPECT on implementing the new permit forms, handouts, and general process for building inspections. There are a lot of changes, but it has been a team effort and I believe that things are going well.

The final payment to Metro West was included in this week's bill list. They were able to final the Glenn Metalcraft Building, hence the larger than anticipated amount. Community Development Planner Marquardt and Senior Accountant/HR Specialist Hodge are to be commended for their diligence in reviewing the final bill to ensure that we paid only what was due Metro West.

Development

Staff met again with the developer interested in the 40-acre parcel south of New Life Church. They have developed a mixed-use concept plan (industrial, for-sale townhomes, and an apartment building) for the site working around the airport safety zones A & B. They will need financial assistance to make the numbers work given that the site needs to be annexed and utilities extended. We will be running some preliminary TIF proformas to see what is possible.

Attorney Toven will be drafting a purchase agreement for the 40 acres west of the airport. We will schedule a closed session for March 14 to further discuss the matter.

Finance

McPherson reported that almost all the staff have converted from vacation/sick to PTO, and we are currently under the budgeted amount for payouts. If the remaining few employees decide to convert plus the Fire Chief's payout, we will end up slightly over budget. There are a few employees that will receive the remainder of their payouts in 2025 and 2026 due to very large sick leave banks, but those numbers are known for budgeting purposes.

Legislature

LMC and CGMC are tracking issues of local interest that are moving through the legislature. Two specific items to note:

1. Changes to the School Resource Officer legislation adopted in 2023. Instead of repealing the language, the legislature is amending the language and requiring training for those that are SROs. The bill is currently laid over in one of the House committees. As an aside, Chief Frederick and I are meeting with Superintendent Barton next week to discuss the SRO contract between the City and School District.
2. Legislation that would pre-empt local zoning controls in order to promote additional affordable housing. The bill is quite lengthy and would require cities, by right to allow "middle" housing (duplex to sixplex structures) on any residential lot within a certain distance of a transit stop, require a city that does not have a transit stop (which is the tie to increased densities in the bill) to designate a commercial area as a transit stop, and limiting the type of limitations a city may impose from a zoning standpoint. The bill is a one-size fits all attempt at a solution to affordable housing.

McPherson continues to participate in the monthly call with Congressman Emmer's office. Staff will submit the funding request to his office for the simulcast equipment; a request has been submitted to Congressman Stauber's office.

Upcoming Meetings and Reminders:

- February 29 – Special Primary for House District 27B
- March 5 – Presidential Primary
- March 6 – Fire Advisory Board meets at 7:00 pm, City Council Chambers
- March 7 & 8 – Hearing for Baldwin Township Incorporation to be held at Baldwin Town Hall starting at 9:30 am; March 8 is a secondary day in the event that there is significant testimony. The general public may testify starting at 5:30 pm on March 7.
- March 12 – Annual Township Elections and Meetings
- March 12 – Distinguished Service Awards Dinner at 6:00pm (Social Hour) and 7:00pm (Dinner). Please let me know if you plan to attend so that we can RSVP on the Council's behalf. RSVPs are due March 1st.
- March 19 – Special Election for House District 27B

8. Committee Reports

9. Adjournment

J GEROLD MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:04PM. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted,

ATTEST:

Shawna Jenkins Tadych
City Clerk

Thom Walker,
Mayor