

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL  
HELD ON MARCH 25 2021 7:00 P.M.**

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Mayor Thom Walker called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Council members present were Jenny Gerold, Jules Zimmer, and Jeff Reynolds. Others present: Administrator Michele McPherson, Finance Director Tracy Peters, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Todd Frederick, Community Development Manager Stephanie Hillesheim, Clerk Shawna Jenkins, Liquor Store Manager Nancy Campbell, Fire Chief Ron Lawrence, Wastewater Plant Manager Chris Klinghagen and Attorney Damien Toven. Absent was Vicki Hallin.

**AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS**

J GEROLD MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. City Council Minutes of March 11, 2021
- B. Bill List
- C. Approve Intoxicating Liquor License for Princeton Speedway, pending approval of back ground check
- D. Personnel – Accept Public Works GM1 Bob Blackwelder’s Resignation effective 4-1-21
- E. Personnel – approve hiring of Part Time Public Works Fred Rittenour effective 4-3-21
- F. Approving opening of Yard Waste Site 4-3-21
- G. Communication: Thank You from Princeton Lion’s Club
- H. Information Item: City Cell Phones and Communication with Staff
- I. Information Item: Public Utility Commission Agenda Packet for 3-24-21
- J. Information Item: Draft Airport Board Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2021
- K. Information Item: Fire Advisory Board Meeting Minutes of January 5, 2021
- L. Personnel: Approval to hire Liquor Clerk Wendy Shipman

J GEROLD MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

**OPEN FORUM**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Resolution 21-16 – accept donation from Coborn’s to the Fire Department

Lawrence reported that Coborn’s has the Fire Department deliver flowers for Valentine’s day each year. The delivery fees are donated to the Fire Department. This year Coborn’s matched the \$350 delivery fees, for a total donation of \$700 to the Fire Department

REYNOLDS MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 21-16 ACCEPTING THE DONATION FROM COBORNS TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- B. Wine and Spirits Grant Request from Princeton All Night Senior Party

Young advised that they hope to hold the event this year and are requesting a Wine and Spirits

Grant for \$500 to help purchase prizes for the event. Walker added that this is a great event for the Seniors. Reynolds questioned why the change from pop which was done in the past. Young replied that the kids are not drinking pop as much anymore, and it didn't get used. Therefore, she talked to Campbell about doing a cash grant instead that will go towards prizes.

Zimmer asked if staff can provide a report to the Council on the Liquor Fund. Peters responded that she will provide a quarterly report.

WALKER MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FROM PRINCETON SENIOR ALL NIGHT PARTY FOR A \$500 WINE AND SPIRITS GRANT. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

C. Approve CIP Purchase of Police Department Duty Weapon replacements

Frederick advised that the Princeton Police Department has currently budgeted within the 2021 CIP \$7,800.00 for the replacement of officer duty pistols. Staff will be replacing our 2008 Smith & Wesson M&P 45 caliber pistols with Smith & Wesson M&P 45 caliber M2.0 pistols with night sights. The current price for 14 pistols through Sioux Sales Company out of Iowa is \$6,650.00. Sioux Sales Company Police Store is Minnesota's Smith and Wesson dealer under state contract.

If the City Council approves the CIP purchase, he intends to proceed with purchasing the pistols around April 1st to allow for adequate delivery/receipt, training, officer certification and conversation to the new pistols by October 2021.

After we have completed the conversation, with council approval, I would like to give the Princeton Officers the opportunity to purchase their pistols that they have carried on duty for the last 12 years. Sioux Sales Company gave us a trade-in value of \$225.00 per pistol, not including fees for each gun they receive. If the City Council approves the purchase of duty pistols by current Princeton Officers, I recommend the sale price to be \$200.00. Hiller Auction would oversee the sale and transfer of the pistols to the current Princeton Officers for no fee. The remaining pistols would be sold by Hiller Auction for normal sale and transfer, with Hiller Auction receiving their normal percentage from the sale of the remaining pistols.

All monies received from the sale of the pistols would then be used to purchase the necessary ammo for officer certification as originally planned. The purchase of pistols and ammo will be under the budgeted amount of \$7,800.

The City Council allowed officers to purchase their duty pistols in 2008 when pistols were last replaced.

The City Council is asked to do the following:

1. Approve the purchase of 14 duty pistols as outlined above, and
2. Approve the sale of duty pistols to current Princeton Police Officers with any remaining pistols to be sold by Hiller Auction as outlined above.

ZIMMER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE DEPARTMENT DUTY WEAPON REPLACEMENTS, TO ALLOW THE OFFICERS TO PURCHASE THEIR OLD WEAPONS FOR \$200 TO AND USE THE SALE PROCEEDS TO PURCHASE AMMUNITION. J GEROLD SECONDED

THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Approve CIP Purchase of Public Works Road Grader

B Gerold stated that the Public Works Department has budgeted for replacing the current motor grader, Caterpillar model 135H that was purchased in 1996 and currently has 5400 hours on it. In 2021 with a Caterpillar model 140 AWD Motor Grader. We have \$350,000 in the CIP and the MN dot contract with all attachments is for \$348,853.

Staff would like to trade in our old unit to Ziegler, the unit will be appraised and the salesman has stated they will give us \$10,000 over the appraised value. This is because we had to go to a larger machine, the one we originally were looking at (Caterpillar model 120 AWD) no longer has the ability to have a wing blade mounted on it from changes to the frame. Preliminary estimates for trade in are \$40,000.

If the Council agrees, a motion to purchase would be in order

ZIMMER MOVED TO APPROVE THE CIP PURCHASE OF THE CATERPILLAR MODEL 140 AWD. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

E. EDA Recommendation: Industrial Park Land Sale Price

The City of Princeton recently purchased 42 acres adjacent to the Aero Business Park land. The plan is to combine the properties and re-plot to create room for new and expanding industrial businesses. The property has been officially purchased by the City, and the final Public Hearing for the Annexation of the 42 acres was held March 11, 2021.

To keep the process moving forward, city staff researched pricing scenarios for the property; comparing local industrial site listings with the City of Princeton's current investment and interest costs. The estimated cost per acre must include all of the costs for the Aero Business Park property including infrastructure and interest costs, along with all fees associated with the newly purchased 42 acres.

The newly acquired property is still in need of infrastructure improvements including road, sewer, water and storm water at an overall estimated cost of \$1.4 million to service all sites. We are looking for ways, outside of property fees to pay for these costs including economic development tools and possibly future grants.

This information was presented at the EDA meeting in February and their recommendation to the City Council is to set the price of the property at \$50,000 per acre.

City Staff endorse the recommendation made by the EDA Board and requests the City Council's approval to set the price for the property at \$50,000 an acre to remain competitive in our local market, as well as to ensure recouping costs associated with the overall investment in the land.

J GEROLD MOVED TO APPROVE THE PRICE FOR THE NEW INDUSTRIAL PARK LAND BE PRICED AT \$50,000 AS SUGGESTED BY THE EDA. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

F. City Administrator Bi-Weekly Report

McPherson advised that it has been a busy two weeks (or so). Everyone has been very helpful and she has learned quite a bit. Other than Nancy Campbell, Liquor Store Manager, and Ron Lawrence, Fire Chief, she has visited with all of the Department Heads and with all of the staff at City Hall. She has been given tours of the City by both the Public Works Director and Police Chief, toured the Police side of the Public Safety Building and the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

She has the following observations and information to share from the last two weeks:

**Airport**

Behind the scenes work is occurring regarding the 19th/21st Avenue connection. A meeting was held with the FAA to determine their needs with the project schedule. A follow up meeting will be held to further discuss the schedules; the FAA will need time to review the requested release of Parcels 10, 11, 18 and Easement 12.

President Biden's American Rescue Plan Act will provide adequate funding for airports such that the City will no longer have to provide a local match for the taxiway project. However, KLJ will be presenting a proposal for the re-bid of the project. It is estimated that the scope of work will cost approximately \$15,000. KLJ believes that we can obtain money from MNDOT to off-set a portion of these costs.

The AWOS needs to be relocated in order for the development of the Industrial Park to proceed. KLJ will be providing a scope of work for this project for the Council's consideration. It is anticipated that this will be a two-part project: Year 1 will be the siting and environmental work; Year 2 will be the actual design and reconstruction.

She has started to research the necessary steps to eliminate the cross-wind runway from the ordinance now that it has been removed from the ALP. Information will be provided to the Airport Advisory Board at their May 5 meeting with the same information provided to the City Council in my next bi-weekly report, which will fall on the weeks of the regular Council agenda.

**City Council**

Goals

During the clean-out and re-organization of the Administrators' files, she found the 2020 Goals established by the City Council. Given the significant projects on the schedule for 2021, she would like to propose a goal-setting session as we develop the 2022 budget. This ensures that funding aligns with the Council's goals.

Agenda Format

In order to improve citizen understanding and transparency of the Council's meetings, she re-arranged the agenda slightly. I hope that with clear titles on items, citizens will be able to participate more easily in the meetings should they desire.

Given the upcoming joint meetings scheduled for our regular study sessions, she plans to use time on the regular meetings in order to discuss and gather Council input on policies staff is developing. Once the study sessions are again available, policy discussions will occur there.

## **Development Projects**

### AT & T Tower

Staff is working to identify the remaining items left to be completed prior to the City taking ownership of the tower. The City should receive a certificate of completion (or some other documentation) that the tower is complete. Landscaping is yet to be completed, there is ongoing staff discussion regarding slats in the fence and whether a light at the top of the tower is required.

### Shipwreck Building

Staff met with Jeff and Jon Smith regarding the re-use of the Shipwreck site. They have a number of ideas and their primary re-use will require annexation into the City in order to access city sewer and water.

### 7th Avenue/County Road 4

The County is reconstructing County Road 4 in 2022. There is both a water and sewer main in the corridor in need of improvement/repair. In addition, there are lands previously identified for possible annexation that should be considered in any improvement or repair. I have reached out to the County Engineer, Neal Knopik, to express our interest in piggy-backing on their project to accomplish our water and sewer maintenance goals. A meeting will be scheduled in the future once their construction season is up and running.

## **Finance/Personnel**

Through the American Rescue Plan Act, the City will receive approximately \$540,000. We are still waiting for the spending guidelines before proposing where to spend the money. Expenditures can be made through 2024.

The City is in dire need of new financial/payroll software. There is significant hand work in order to pay bills, generate receipts, reconcile statements and do payroll. There should not be a two-month delay in getting financial reports to Department Heads in order to track their expenditures. In addition, there is limited access to the single computer that is connected to the financial software which limits our expansion of checks and balances and the ability to telework. Once the audit is complete, focus will turn to identifying and implementing a new software.

Department Heads will begin working on the Personnel Manual in April. The plan is to work through the document one or two chapters at a time. In addition to the Manual itself, the following additional items need to be developed:

1. Standard operating procedures for hiring.
2. Policy for background checks (type and depth) and establishing an account with an outside agency for conducting the checks. The City's Police Chief should not be conducting background checks for City hires. Chief Frederick is looking into a relationship with the BCA to complete background checks for finalists.
3. Standard operating procedures for on-boarding employees.

A Technology Services person is needed. Currently, the Police Department has a part-time Tech Services person, but the Community Development Manager is filling this role for City Hall. A Tech Services person would be responsible for (this list is not exhaustive, just the most pressing):

1. Maintaining the Electronic Devices Inventory across departments for insurance purposes.
2. Analyzing existing hardware and software needs, develop a capital improvement / replacement plan for timely upgrades of hardware and software.

3. Developing a server system for housing software programs (it currently looks like we have a number of standard CPUs serving this capacity).
4. Ensuring that backups are completed and malware/virus software is up to date.
5. Providing customer service to staff and the School District on shared technology hardware and software.

The City should consider an optical imaging/document storage system. Currently, there is no back up to the historical minutes, resolutions or other documents that are required to be kept permanently. An optical imaging/document storage system that is searchable will help staff more efficiently respond to Councilor and resident requests. This may be an eligible expense under the American Relief Act monies.

### **Upcoming Meeting Reminders**

April 1 – Joint Meeting with the School Board  
May 6 – Joint Meeting with the Princeton PUC

J Gerold asked about the personnel manual that had been in the works. She added that Barbian had written a lot of notes. McPherson responded that she had went through all of his files and did not find any notes regarding the personnel policy. J Gerold added that her and Zimmer also went through the proposed changes as well. She has a lot of notes that she can provide to staff.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Zimmer reported that at the Park Board Meeting, Bernick's presented the city a check for \$15,000 for paving the trails. Hillesheim added that the trail will be called the Bernick Family Trail.

Zimmer reported on the PUC meeting. SMMPA reported disaster in Texas had very little or no impact to their customers. Butcher stated that they are working with ECE on transferring service rights to PUC on the newly annexed industrial property adjacent to Aero Business Park.

There was lengthy discussion on charging a convenience fee for credit card payments. The motion was made to begin charging one on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. They will be working on a policy and fee for those that wish to pay with a credit or debit card. Being they collect the sewer fees; they would like to work this to be included on the May 6<sup>th</sup> joint agenda. Last year, PUC spent \$26,000 on credit card fees, and they would like to pass that cost to the customers that use their credit and debit cards.

J Gerold advised that the Chamber is doing a Virtual Expo this year. As of Tuesday, they have 20 businesses signed up, and a few more others interested. The Chamber is also beginning to work on the Rum River Festival. They hope they can have the parade. They have a lot of things to figure out. Usually, a Chili Fest is held in the fall, but instead are thinking of a Food Truck fair.

Hillesheim reported that there is a ribbon Cutting for the She Shed on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Zimmer stated that PUC is also working with customers that are behind on their payments. It has

been a hard time for a number of people.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business:

J GEROLD MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:49PM. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully Submitted,

ATTEST:

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Shawna Jenkins Tadych  
City Clerk

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Thom Walker,  
Mayor