

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
JULY 27, 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. Council members present were Vicki Hallin, Jenny Gerold, and Jack Edmonds. Others present: City Administrator Michele McPherson, Clerk Shawna Jenkins, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Wastewater Plant Manager Chris Klinghagen, Fire Chief Ron Lawrence, Technology Services Manager Ed Yost, Liquor Store Manager Dylan Donner, Attorney Damien Toven and Public Utility Manager Keith Butcher. Absent was Councilor Jeff Reynolds, Police Chief Todd Frederick and Community Developer Planner Stacy Marquardt.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Agenda Additions / Deletions

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

4. Consent Agenda

- 4.1. Approval of July 13th, 2023 City Council Minutes
- 4.2. Resolution 23-524 - Approve Documents for the Small Cities Development Program Grant
- 4.3. Approve Firefighter Jason Baumunk retirement
- 4.4. Elemenet Award Letter
- 4.5. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of July 17, 2023
- 4.6. Airport Advisory Board Minutes of May 1, 2023
- 4.7. Park Board Minutes of June 26, 2023
- 4.8. Conditional Use Permit for Oaks Apartment Accessory Building

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED. J GEROLD 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

- 6.1. Wine and Spirits Grant Request from Princeton Breakfast Club

Doug Patnode advised that The Breakfast Club is a group that was formed last year to hold two free breakfasts per month for High School Students. They have breakfast and talk with them about values and life decisions. They survive on donations and are asking for \$400 to cover the costs of the Civic Center rental.

Hallin asked how an individual can donate. Patnode said they have sent letters out to individuals and businesses looking for donations and contacted Churches as well. They are a registered Non-profit. There is no social media presence at this time, but that may come. They had about twenty-five kids at their first meeting. Towards the end of the year, they were getting up to 40 students. They would appreciate a grant help to keep their costs down.

J Gerold stated that she feels this is a great program. At the last meeting, she recommended they bring it to the Council as a Wine and Spirits Grant. Hallin and Edmonds agreed that it is an excellent program. Gerold said it is a nice positive thing for the kids with all the negative things that are occurring in society.

Walker asked Toven if this opened them up to any possible issues. Toven responded that he doesn't see an issue due to it being a faith-based group.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE BREAKFAST CLUB'S WINE AND SPIRITS GRANT REQUEST FOR \$400. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. New Business

7.1. Request to Hire Sylvia Plante and Zach Devalk to Princeton Fire and Rescue Department

Lawrence reported that due to an error on his part, he forgot to present a memo to the Council for hiring Sylvia Plante and Zach Devalk. Both have been working on completing their requirements for the hiring process and have been very energetic and excited to be part of the team. He is looking for Council approval to keep both of these firefighters on the department.

This will leave the department at 40 firefighters, which is the maximum to have on the department.

J Gerold said she remembers saying to the Council and to Lawrence that since there were some issues with the townships, we needed to hold off on hiring anyone else. She is not opposed to Plante and Devalk as they are already going through training, however she is confused at how this happened. Lawrence responded that he does not recall a discussion to put off any hiring. The Department is at forty firefighters, which is the limit. Jason Baumunk retiring now, and he expects two more retirements this year so they will be under forty. He apologized and said he does not recall any discussions about not hiring anyone.

J Gerold said she is frustrated as she made it clear that she wanted to hold off on any hiring right now, especially with the news that Blue Hill Township is moving their fire services to Baldwin Township. Just because we are allowed to be at forty, does not mean we need to be. She was not aware more firefighters were hired until she saw them posted on the Fire Department's Facebook page.

EDMONDS MOVED TO AFFIRM THE HIRING OF SYLVA PLANTE AND ZACH DEVALK. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. VOTE 3:1, EDMONDS, HALLIN AND WALKER IN FAVOR, J GEROLD OPPOSED. THE MOTION CARRIED.

7.2. Planning Commission and Economic Development Authority Applicants

McPherson reported that the City Council had directed staff to have the applicants who have applied to serve on a Board attend the City Council meeting in July. Staff has received three applications for the City Council to review.

Erica Mattice who applied to serve on the Planning Commission and/or the EDA. Jim Oliver applied to serve on the Planning Commission and Joseph Vita applied to serve on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission has one vacancy for a Board Member to complete a term expiring December 31, 2024.

The Economic Development Authority has two vacancies for Board Members. The position that is open on the Planning Commission is restricted to an applicant who lives within the City Limits of Princeton.

Erica Mattice lives outside the City Limits, at this time she could only serve on the EDA Board and not the Planning Commission.

Based on the applications Staff recommends that the Council appoint Jim Oliver to serve on the Planning Commission and Erica Mattice to serve on the EDA. Staff also recommend to offer a seat on the EDA Board to Joseph Vita if he would be interested in that position.

The Council interviewed the three applicants and asked them to expand their comments in their applications.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPOINT ERICA MATTICE TO THE EDA. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

J GEROLD MOVED TO APPOINT JIM OLIVER TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

HALLIN MOVED TO APPOINT JOE VITA TO THE EDA. WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7.3. Hearing for Nuisance Abatement at 509 6th Avenue North

McPherson reported that the property owner has again allowed a collection of junk to accumulate on the subject property. As in 2021, the city is pursuing civil abatement to allow the City to complete the cleanup. The process requires the City to provide the owner an opportunity to address the City Council regarding the abatement.

Toven advised on the process for nuisance abatements. A complaint was received regarding the property in May. The property owner was noticed and was given time to clean it up. Since the site has not yet been cleaned up, this hearing needs to be held. If the property is not cleaned up and the city has to have that done, all costs will be assessed to the property owner.

A few years ago, with another property staff had them sign a “consent to abate”, which is an ongoing authority to abate the issue without going through this entire process, which also saves the property owner money in legal fees.

WALKER MOVED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:37PM. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Rory Clayson, owner of 509 6th Ave North stated he is in the process of evicting a tenant from his property. He said a lot of the stuff is the other person’s property. He is waiting for the eviction paperwork. He complained that a neighbor also has an unlicensed car sitting on city property, and said he finds many times he is blamed for items that are not his. He is providing a service to residents that want to get rid of old appliances and other items. He said he is thinking of selling the house and moving into the country.

J Gerold said he is running a scrap business in the city, which is not allowed. Hallin and J Gerold said this needs to stop. Edmonds stated he is violating city ordinances.

Clayson questioned why a licensed trailer is not allowed to be parking on the street. J Gerold said he is violating city ordinances, it isn’t just a trailer, it is all the junk in his yard and on the multiple trailers. Hallin said he needs to tell people no to dropping off their items and to stop doing this now.

Toven said simply, stop doing what he is doing.

HALLIN MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:49PM, J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Toven advised that there a couple avenues that are available. It depends on how cooperative the property owner is going to be. The Council can pass a motion to order the abatement, and a resolution will be passed at the next meeting.

Toven advised that staff will be in contact with Clayson. If he is willing to sign the consent to abate, the City can begin helping him clean up the property. This option will save Clayson a lot of money.

HALLIN MOVED TO ORDER THE ABATEMENT AND FOR A RESOLUTION TO BE DRAFTED FOR APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Clayson asked if someone can walk through the property with him as it is being cleaned up, so he is aware of what is an acceptable condition for the property. B Gerold said staff did that 2 years ago when the site was cleaned up, he was shown what was acceptable. The City's ordinance has not changed, so nothing has changed since that time and the property should stay in the same condition it was after the cleanup.

7.4. Resolution 23-55 - Approve Donation to Police K9

EDMONDS MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 23-55. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7.5. Resolution 23-56 - Approve Donations for Free Splash Park Days

EDMONDS MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 23-56. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7.6. Discuss Adult-Use Cannabis Moratorium

McPherson advised that the 2023 Legislature legalized cannabis for use by adults. The bill was in excess of 300 pages and there are a lot of parts to implement at both the local and state levels.

The law allows cities to implement a moratorium in order to determine what local controls need to be changed to accommodate or limit components such as public use or the number of establishments.

The City Attorney has drafted an interim ordinance. The process to adopt the ordinance is proposed as follows:

- August 10 – Resolution calling for a public hearing
- August 24 – Conduct the public hearing and hold the first reading of the ordinance
- September 14 – Final reading of the ordinance

The Council was provided information from the League of Minnesota Cities on the topic.

If there are certain concerns that staff should address in future ordinance changes, the Council is asked to express them. The Council directed staff to add this to the August 3 Study Session.

7.7. Bill List

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE JULY 19, 25 AND 27 CHECK REGISTERS CONTAINING CHECKS 86881 TO 86952 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$532,384.49, AND THE PAYROLL ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS AS NOTED ON THE PAY PERIOD 15 TRANSMITTAL REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$79,780.00 AND PAY PERIOD 15 CHECK REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$195,274.78. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.8. City Administrator Bi-Weekly Report

McPherson had the following observations and information to share from the last update:

Airport

We are still seeking applicants to fill the vacancy on the Airport Advisory Board.

Development

Staff is working with the property owner adjacent to the river lot we have for sale on a purchase agreement. Due to an issue with the legal description; title insurance is not available and it will not be combined with the purchaser's property. Staff intends to finalize the purchase agreement by the August 10, 2023 meeting and have a closing scheduled shortly thereafter.

Second meetings regarding the sale of the City-owned parking lots are scheduled for August 3 and 14, with the issue coming back to the City Council on August 24.

Finance

Annual TIF reporting is being completed by Northland Securities. Staff is still working through audit issues with Smith-Schafer. Abdo was assisting this week with Capital Asset depreciation.

PUC

General Manager Butcher and McPherson have been discussing sharing IT staff on a limited basis. Their IT manager is retiring this year and they are looking for limited assistance during the month. An MOU has been drafted which will be brought to the City Council in the next couple of weeks. It is desirable to start this arrangement yet this year.

Legislative Monitoring

Staff continues to attend the various webinars offered by LMC and CGMC on the various 2023 law changes.

Upcoming Meetings and Reminders

- July 26 – Culpepper & Merriweather Circus sponsored by the Princeton Lions at the Mille Lacs County Fairgrounds.
- August 1 – Nite to Unite at Mark Park. The Splash Park will be open in addition to the bouncy houses. Food will be served.
- August 5 – Knights of Columbus Car Show at the Mille Lacs County Fairgrounds.
- August 9-13 – Mille Lacs County Fair. McPherson will be out of the office August 7 to 11 and can be found at the Fairgrounds those days. She will attend the August City Council meeting; the agenda will be fairly light. Everyone is all invited to visit the new Entertainment Pavilion.
- August 26 – Relay for Life at the Mille Lacs County Fairgrounds.

8. Committee Reports

Hallin reported on the Chamber events that are coming up.

Butcher advised on the PUC meeting. They just started construction on Phase 1, and the planning is beginning on Phase 2. They are proposing to do a rate study check-in since they have completed many of the recommended actions.

Edmonds added that they went into Closed Session and did Manager Butcher's review.

9. Adjournment

HALLIN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:16PM. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully Submitted,

ATTEST:

Shawna Jenkins Tadych
City Clerk

Thom Walker,
Mayor