

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
APRIL 11, 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, 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 Liquor Store Manager Dylan Donner. Absent was PUC Manager Keith Butcher

Councilor Jenny Gerold attended online.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Agenda Additions / Deletions

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

4. Consent Agenda

- 4.1. Approval of City Council Minutes from Regular Meeting of March 28th, 2024
- 4.2. Approval of Gambling Permits for Mason's Lodge #92 - Raffles on August 14th, September 11th and October 11th 2024
- 4.3. Certificate of Commendation for Operational Excellence in 2023, Princeton Wastewater Treatment Plant
- 4.4. Orderly Annexation Agreement with Baldwin Township for Richard Schwartz Property
- 4.5. Authorize Signature of MIF Loan Agreement for Northwoods Finishing
- 4.6. Approve Advertising for 2024 Sealcoating
- 4.7. Approve Opening of City Compost Site April 13th - Regular Hours of Saturdays 9am -2pm and Wednesdays 3pm - 7pm
- 4.8. Approve Hiring of Fred Rittenour for Seasonal Public Works Starting April 13th, 2024
- 4.9. Approve CIP Purchase for Trash Receptacles

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED. 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.

Princeton Township Board Member Dan Hiller stated that he feels Councilor Jenny Gerold has acted in a rude manner. She is the reason why the Fire Department lost Blue Hill Township. He said she had claimed he wanted to stop doing all medical calls. He said he did not say stop entirely, but wanted to get them under control a bit as there were a lot where the Fire Department was cancelled before they even got to the site.

6. Old Business

6.1. Fire Billing

McPherson advised that staff presented information at the March 28, 2024 meeting regarding the annual fire billing 2018-2024 (for previous year's expenses) as well as the truck bill amounts. Mr. Ken Murray, Wyanett Township provided a copy of the cancelled check for their truck fund payment in the amount of \$143,230.

Staff determined why the records did not reflect the truck payments properly. The Senior Accountant, on the Finance Director's instruction, coded the receipts to one GL account code. The Finance Director then coded the dollar amounts into a different GL account code. Once the issue was

identified, finding the amounts was easy. Staff also did not previously pull paper receipts from 2018 and 2019. All records have now been accounted for.

Councilor Gerold also provided some historical information that she had from her time on the Fire Advisory Board.

Completed Steps:

Per the March 28, 2024 memo, these were the next steps identified:

1. Request that Wyanett review the numbers provided.
2. Request that Wyanett provide a copy of a receipt or cancelled check for the truck fund payment.
3. Request of the Townships a copy of the truck fund breakdown that was provided.
4. Calculate total refunds for 2022 and 2023 billings and present the final amounts to the City Council. Given the lack of complete record-keeping, staff recommends that the State Net Tax Capacity numbers be used as the base line.

Assistant Chief Vaccari did a review of the numbers with information provided by Wyanett. It does not appear that any data entry errors were made in the new spreadsheet. Wyanett Township resident Mellgren may have additional input; staff will meet with him.

Wyanett provided a copy of their check for the truck fund payment.

Councilor Gerold found the Capital Budget Allocation for the truck fund in her files:

2018 / 2019

Twp	TC %	Eqp Amt	Truck Amt	# pymts	Total Finance	Cash Amt	Dif.
Blue Hill	16.44%	\$2,470	\$21,780	9	\$196,020	\$164,390	\$31,630
Bogus Brook	3.6%	\$540	\$4,775	9	\$42,975	\$36,040	\$6,935
Princeton City	31.75%	\$4,760	\$42,075	9	\$378,675	\$317,490	\$61,185
Greenbush	8.82%	\$1,320	\$11,680	9	\$105,120	\$88,180	\$16,940
Princeton Twp	16.52%	\$2,480	\$21,890	9	\$197,010	\$165,230	\$31,780
Spencer Brk	8.54%	\$1,280	\$11,320	9	\$101,880	\$85,440	\$16,440
Wyanett	14.32%	\$2,150	\$18,980	9	\$170,820	\$143,230	\$27,590

The above spreadsheet aligns with what was charged based on the payments that have been tracked by townships that paid in full, although not all the amounts appear to match:

Truck Fund	% 2018 NTC	Amount	Amoun Paid
\$1,000,000	(state)		
Blue Hill	17.70	\$176,996	\$146,087
Bogus Brook	3.78	\$37,791	\$36,040
City of Princeton	32.43	\$324,254	
Greenbush	9.15	\$91,550	\$88,180
Township			
Princeton	17.16	\$171,614	\$165,230
Township			
Spencer Brook	8.88	\$88,836	\$45,280
Township			
Wyanett	10.90	\$108,958	\$143,230
Township			

Comparing the above charts, it is clear that an error was made in calculating the payment required of Wyanett Township for the Truck Fund (\$34, 272).

Conclusion:

Based on the previously recalculated fire bill information, staff has determined that:

For Wyanett, 2022 billing:

- forgo collection on the outstanding amount of \$10,999.00, and
- provide an additional refund of \$1,781

For Spencer Brook, 2022 billing

- provide a refund of \$9,748

The above amounts are relatively easy to resolve as the 2024 billing for 2023 expenses have not been sent, if the townships are agreeable, their bills can be reduced by the above amounts.

For the Truck Fund overcharge, that amount was not factored into the 2024 budget. Additional discussion with the Township needs to occur for repayment. Staff recommends not mixing the capital expenses with the operating expenses.

Staff does not recommend requesting additional payments from the remaining Townships.

Staff requests that the City Council provide input regarding the above conclusion. No action is requested at this time, other than an opportunity to review the numbers and meet with Wyanett resident Mellgren.

7. New Business

7.1. 2024 Park Plan Presentation - Jeff Feulner WSB

Jeff Feulner from WSB presented the 2024 Park Plan.

7.2. Wine and Spirits Grant Request for Mille Lacs Relay for Life

Jenkins advised that Denice Jansen has submitted a Wine and Spirits Grant request for Mille Lacs Relay for Life. As in the past, they are requesting \$500.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE WINE AND SPIRITS GRANT REQUEST FOR MILLE LACS RELAY FOR LIFE. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.3. Review and Approve Hiring Process for Part-time Fire Chief

The application deadline for the part-time Fire Chief position closed April 5 at 3:00 pm. Seven applications were received. Staff has developed a process for Council consideration to review applications, interview candidates and recommend a candidate to the Council. Staff recommends that all seven applicants be interviewed, unless they have not met the minimum requirements.

For the Council's consideration, staff proposes the following steps and panel compositions:

Step 1:

City Administrator and City Attorney review applications using a yes/no checklist for compliance with minimum standards of the job description.

Step 2:

Staff to develop for review and input by the interview panels, interview questions.
PFRD to select its panel participants.

Staff to reach out to possible community leaders and the suggested Fire Chief in Panel A for their willingness to participate.

Staff to identify possible interview dates – weekends possible?

Step 3:

Interviews by two panels –

Panel A:

- Outside Fire Chief – a suggestion has been made for a candidate
- Greenbush Township Fire Advisory Board Member
- PFRD Member with less than 10 years' experience (non-leadership)
- PFRD Member with more than 10 years' experience (non-leadership)
- PFRD Leadership team member
- Community Member – USDP, Glenn Metalcraft, Plastic Products, or other
- City Administrator

Panel A is responsible for conducting the first interview. At this time, it is recommended that all applicants be interviewed, and Panel A narrows the list to no more than the top three (3). Given that the recommendation is to interview all applicants, making for a very long day, respecting applicant and participant schedules, staff recommends that this first interview occur on a Saturday; May 4 has been identified as a potential date.

Panel B:

- Assistant City Administrator Gerold
- Assistant City Administrator Frederick
- Outside Fire Chief or one (1) of the PFRD members who participated on Panel A
- Mayor or a City Councilor
- City Administrator

Panel B would be responsible for the second interview and final selection/recommendation to the City Council.

Step 4:

- Background check.

Staff requests that the City Council:

1. Discuss the proposed process.
2. Provide input on a Saturday interview schedule for Panel A's work.
3. Provide input as to Panel B's composition specific to fire representation.
4. Approve the process with any necessary changes.

J Gerold said she feels Panel A is a little too heavy on one side and any internal applicants would be favored. She would like to see the Outside Fire Chief only be on Panel B, and for the Fire Advisory Board Member to be moved to Panel B. Being the position is a management position, she feels two business members would be applicable for Panel A. For Panel B, the Fire Board Advisory Board Member, Mayor, Administrator, one of the community members from Panel A and a Councilor. She said she feels that the panels would be balanced better and provides for good experience on both.

Walker asked J Gerold if she felt it was a problem to have three people from the Fire Department on Panel A. He also does not have a problem cutting it down from five interviewees, to three for the 2nd interview.

Edmonds added that he likes the way it was laid out by staff.

J Gerold stated usually employees do not sit in on interviews with people that would be their boss.

Reynolds said he would like to see a Mayor or Councilor added to Panel A and does not have a problem narrowing it down to four candidates.

HALLIN MOVED TO ADD THE MAYOR OR A COUNCILOR TO PANEL A. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. VOTE 4:1 HALLIN, REYNOLDS, J GEROLD AND EDMONDS IN FAVOR, WALKER OPPOSED. THE MOTION CARRIED.

EDMONDS MOVED TO ADVANCE THREE FOR SECOND INTERVIEWS. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. VOTE 3:2 EDMONDS, HALLIN, AND WALKER IN FAVOR, J GEROLD AND REYNOLDS OPPOSED. THE MOTION CARRIED.

REYNOLDS MOVED TO MOVE THE FIRE BOARD ADVISORY MEMBER TO PANEL B. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

WALKER MOVED TO KEEP THE NUMBER OF PFRD MEMBERS ON PANEL A THE SAME AS STAFF RECOMMENDED. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. VOTE 4:1 WALKER, EDMONDS, HALLIN AND REYNOLDS IN FAVOR, J GEROLD OPPOSED. THE MOTION CARRIED.

HALLIN MOVED TO ADD A DIFFERENT COMMUNITY MEMBER ON PANEL B IF AVAILABLE, IF NOT IT SHALL BE THE SAME AS THE COMMUNITY MEMBER ON PANEL A. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Walker asked in regard to the discussion of Panel B. Do we want an outside Fire Chief, or the PFRD member that was on Panel A.

J Gerold recommended an outside Fire Chief. Reynolds and Hallin would like it to be it to be a PFRD member.

REYNOLDS MOVED TO TAKE ONE OF THE PFRD MEMBERS ON PANEL A, TO ALSO BE ON PANEL B. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. VOTE 4:1 REYNOLDS, HALLIN, WALKER AND EDMONDS IN FAVOR, J GEROLD OPPOSED. THE MOTION CARRIED.

7.4. City Administrator Bi-Weekly Report

McPherson had the following observations and information to share from the last update on March 26, 2024:

Airport

A vacancy exists on the Board.

Work continues on the parcel releases and deed restrictions relating to the AWOS relocation.

Baldwin Township

Staff has received the public comments submitted to the Administrative Law Judge. We have no ability to respond, so they have been saved to the server.

Attorney Bourgeois is working on the City's legal argument to support our request. The interesting position the City is in is that there is a gap in the statute; the statute allows the ALJ to determine that properties are better served by another jurisdiction but provides no process by which that can occur. It was likely assumed by the Legislature that there are always cooperating jurisdictions in the case of incorporation requests.

Development

Staff met with the developer interested in the 40-acre parcel in Princeton Township near the airport on March 20. The preliminary TIF runs were presented. The meeting went very well and the outcome appears to be favorable for a project moving forward. They did have some additional follow-up questions that staff will respond to. Staff also provided them information regarding the 50+ acres the School District is interested in selling.

Fire

The transition team continues to meet weekly; discussions are open and the meeting results are productive. Information sharing on policies and procedures between departments is ongoing. Of particular interest are forms and procedures to ensure that equipment and PPE repairs are documented and completion is achieved.

Infrastructure

Staff met with representatives from MNDOT and Sherburne County to discuss potential 2025 construction projects that will impact traffic in and around the City. MNDOT is planning to overlay the multitude of bridges on Highway 169. Sherburne County is planning to reconstruct Sherburne County 29 from Tiger Boulevard to the underpass, including traffic signal upgrades and intersection improvements. A follow-up meeting with all parties has been scheduled for June 24. Staff will keep the Council apprised of the schedule as additional information is obtained.

Legislature

There has been no significant change in the legislation previously reported.

School Resource Officers

Superintendent Barton has indicated that the School Board's Finance Committee had no issues with the draft contract that was submitted by staff. They have sent it to their attorney for review but no comments have been returned.

They have asked that the 2023 contract be "prorated" to the date that the SROs returned to the schools in March but provided no guidance. For 2023, the proration would apply for the months of September to December. Chief Frederick and McPherson will provide some form of a response regarding the 2023 bill. Any proration in 2024 would be determined in 2025 and would apply to the months of January to March 18.

Upcoming Meetings and Reminders:

There are no unusual meetings of note upcoming.

7.5. Bill List

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE APRIL 11, 2024 CHECK REGISTER CONTAINING CHECKS 88095 TO 88153 AND ACH PAYMENT 41120241 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$352,543.72, AND THE PAYROLL ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS AS NOTED ON THE PAY PERIOD 7 TRANSMITTAL REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$80,443.86 AND PAY PERIOD 7 CHECK REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$134,853.16. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. Committee Reports

Edmonds reported that Princeton Public Utilities has won an Energy Star Award as well as the 2023 American Public Power Associations Safety Award of Excellence.

9. Adjournment

HALLIN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:08PM. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted,

ATTEST:

Shawna Jenkins Tadych
City Clerk

Thom Walker,
Mayor