

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
NOVEMBER 10, 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, Jules Zimmer and Jeff Reynolds. Others present: Administrator Michele McPherson, Clerk Shawna Jenkins, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Todd Frederick, Wastewater Plant Manager Chris Klinghagen, Technology Services Manager Ed Yost, Fire Chief Ron Lawrence, Liquor Store Manager Dylan Donner and Public Utilities Commission General Manager Keith Butcher. Absent was Attorney Damien Toven

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Agenda Additions / Deletions

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

4. Consent Agenda

- 4.1. City Council Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2022
- 4.2. Airport Board Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2022
- 4.3. Resolution 22-68 - Certify City Election results
- 4.4. Approval to Hire Public Works GM1 Bob Blackwelder effective 11-21-22

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Public Hearings

- 5.1. Public Hearing to Vacate portion of Alley in the Sharco Estates Plat

HALLIN MOVED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:03 PM. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

HALLIN MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:03 PM. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- a. Ordinance 826 - Vacating Alley in Sharco Estates Plat - FIRST READING

HALLIN MOVED TO INTRODUCE ORDINANCE 826. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

- 5.2. Public Hearing to Vacate Drainage & Utility Easements and 19th Ave South in Princeton Business Park Plat

HALLIN MOVED TO OPEN THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:06 PM. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

HALLIN MOVED TO CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:06 PM. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- a. Ordinance 827 - Vacating Drainage and Utility Easements and 19th Ave South in Princeton Business Park - FIRST READING

McPherson reported that this is in preparation of the replat of the Business Park to accommodate Glenn Metalcraft's proposed site plan. There will be easements put back on the plat at a later date.

HALLIN MOVED TO INTRODUCE ORDINANCE 827. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6. 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.*

7. Old Business

8. New Business

8.1. Resolution 22-66 - Accept Donation from Princeton Chevrolet for the Police Department

Frederick reported that on October 26, 2022 the Princeton Police Department received a donation in the amount of \$500.00 from the Princeton Chevrolet Dealership and the Chevrolet First Responder Test Drive Program. Princeton Auto has generously assisted with helping the Princeton Police Department participate with this program.

The Princeton Police Department is truly grateful for this donation. The donation will be used for police equipment such AED supplies.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 22-66. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8.2. Resolution 22-67-Accept Donation from Phillips Distilling for Police Department K9 Program

Frederick advised that on November 4th, 2022 the Princeton Police Department received a donation in the amount of \$257.31 from Phillips Distilling Company. Phillips Distilling Company asked that the donation be used for the K9 program. Phillips held a "Nacho Fundraiser" where employees could purchase nachos and cheese dip for lunch while at work. Phillips then donated the proceeds to the Princeton K9 program. The Princeton Police Department is truly grateful for this donation.

It should be noted that Philipps Distilling Company has just recently assisted in a similar fundraiser which they donated \$211.00 dollars for Bogey that the council approved in August of this year.

The donation will be used for expenses associated with the purchase of K9 training equipment.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 22-67. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8.3. Resolution 22-69 Authorizing Execution of Purchase and Developer Agreements for Sale of Real Property to Friday Bay, Inc.

McPherson advised the staff has reviewed the Developer Agreement for the purchase of land by Friday Bay, Inc based on the concept plan presented by Steve. Hage to the Council.

J Gerold asked what the square footage will be for Phase 1, as it is not listed. Hage responded that they are planning on up to 5000 square feet of Commercial and 2 apartments at approximately 950 square feet each.

Walker asked if there needs to be a curb cut to access the sewer and water. B Gerold responded that he believes there are utility lines on that side of the street so there a curb cut would not be needed.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 22-69. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8.4. Ordinance 828 - Annexation of parcels from Princeton Township to the City – FIRST READING

McPherson reported that these 4 parcels were in the Annexation discussion and notices this spring. These 4 parcels are ready to proceed as there have been no comments from Princeton Township in the required timeframe of 90 days. In the original discussion, there were a total of seven parcels noticed for annexation. Three of the parcels need some additional work on legal descriptions and will be re-noticed. The issue is some roads that were not included in previous annexations. Those will need to be added to the land descriptions to be eligible for annexation into the city. Staff will likely bring those to the Council at the beginning of 2023, and send new notices to the County and Township.

HALLIN MOVED TO INTRODUCE ORDINANCE 826.J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8.5. Resolution 22-70 Appointing Assistant City Administrator(s)

McPherson reported that the Finance Director's job description included duties to act as the City Administrator in the event that the Administrator was absent. The Finance Director's position is currently vacant, so there is no staff person to fill that role should the City Administrator be absent.

McPherson stated that she has to have a minor surgery that will be scheduled prior to the end of the year; it is same-day surgery, but she may not be available for a day or two. It is good operational procedure to have individuals appointed and given the authority to act in the absence of the City Administrator.

McPherson said she has asked both the Public Works Director and Police Chief to serve as Assistant City Administrator(s) in the event of an absence. They have both agreed to take on the role, either individually or as a team as needed. She recommended them due to the length of their tenure with the city and their availability. Their appointment would continue until such time as a Finance Director was hired or circumstance required a change.

As there are sufficient signatories, their duties would not include the need to sign checks for payroll or bills.

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Resolution 22-70 appointing the Public Works Director and Police Chief as Assistant City Administrator(s).

Hallin commented that she has heard from some who feel that there is a conflict of J Gerold being on the Council and B Gerold being the Public Works Director. She questioned if it would be an issue with B Gerold being the acting Administrator and J Gerold being on the Council. J Gerold responded that before she ran four years ago, she checked into it with the League of MN Cities and Attorney Toven. As long as she does not vote on things that would benefit her financially, there is no conflict. If people are concerned, they are welcome to contact her directly.

Zimmer added that he can see both sides of that. Walker suggested maybe putting a time limit on the Resolution so an Acting Administrator would not serve long term, and would only be utilized for daily activities when needed and on a short term basis.

REYNOLDS MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 22-70. ZIMMER SECONDED THE MOTION.

Hallin would like to see it be Chief Frederick and someone else for the second person due to J Gerold being on the Council.

HALLIN MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO APPROVE CHIEF FREDERICK AS AN ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND CHOOSING ANOTHER EMPLOYEE AS THE SECOND PERSON. NO SECOND, THE MOTION FAILED DUE TO LACK OF A SECOND.

VOTE TO 3:1:1 REYNOLDS, ZIMMER AND WALKER IN FAVOR OF APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 22-70 APPOINTING CHIEF FREDERICK AND PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR BOB GEROLD AS ASSISTANT CITY ADMINISTRATORS TO FILL IN FOR ADMINISTRATOR MCPHERSON IN THE CASE OF HER ABSENCE. HALLIN OPPOSED, J GEROLD ABSTAINED. THE MOTION CARRIED

8.6. Bill List

ZIMMER MOVED TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 31 AND NOVEMBER 8, 2022 CHECK REGISTERS CONTAINING CHECKS 85657 TO 85713 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$303,967.44, AND THE PAYROLL ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS AS NOTED ON THE PAY PERIOD 22 TRANSMITTAL REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$68,130.32 AND PAY PERIOD 22 CHECK REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$106,515.13 (EQUALS THE AMOUNT OF CHECK 85657).

8.7. 2023 Budget Review

a. Request to Increase Fire Chief's Hours to 3/4 Time

McPherson and Lawrence advised that in recent years, fire departments have experienced increased difficulty in finding and filling on-call firefighter positions. Since 1984, across the nation, the number of volunteer firefighters has dropped 17%. (National Volunteer Fire Council) It was recently announced that the Bloomington Fire Department with a roster of 150 volunteer firefighters has 51 vacant positions. They are now having to hire 18 full-time firefighters to provide service to their community. As volunteers decline, responsibilities are relegated to leadership/administration.

Neighboring cities that have transitioned to a full-time Fire Chief are:

- Cambridge
- Elk River
- East Bethel
- Isanti
- St. Francis
- Zimmerman

Some of these include an Emergency Manager's responsibilities, but none include the R.E.P responsibilities.

Demands on the Fire Department

In addition to fire suppression, a fire department is also called upon to complete the following activities:

- Requests for inspections
- New construction review and inspection for State Fire Code requirements
- Respond to Fire Code complaints
- Investigate fire cause and origin

- Human resources duties
- General Administration

Activities in addition to the above that are specific to the Princeton Fire and Rescue Department include:

- Requests from the townships within the fire service district: wedding barns, inquiries from businesses outside the city for guidance regarding occupancy levels (COVID) or evacuation plan requirements, etc.
- More community trainings: Active Shooter/Intruder, Fire Safety for the elderly
- Inter-agency collaboration: DNR, State Fire Marshal's Office, Monthly/Quarterly Chief's meetings
- Grant and Donation solicitation to off-set department costs
- Emergency Management responsibilities
- R.E.P. Program responsibilities
- Responding to daytime requests for service (medical, fire, other)

With a part-time (55%) Chief, there is a need to prioritize and balance the various activities noted above. Some activities like a regular fire inspection program do not get off the ground.

Budgetary Impacts of a ¾ Time Fire Chief

As with many of our neighboring cities, it is likely that the city will require a full-time Fire Chief and possibly additional full-time staff in the future if volunteer firefighters, especially daytime responders become difficult to recruit.

Transitioning to a full-time Fire Chief in phases allows the city to absorb the budget impacts over time.

An increase to ¾ time adds eight (8) hours per week to the current hours worked. The increase amounts to an additional \$17,047.68, calculated thusly:

2023 wage per hour: \$40.98.
8 x \$40.98 = \$327.84, weekly increase
\$327.84 x 52 = \$17,047.68 annual increase
\$17,047.68 / 2 = \$8,523.84.

As the R.E.P. program pays for fifty (50) percent of the Chief's salary, the impact to the General Fund and therefore the levy is \$8,523.84 for 2023. The incumbent Chief does not require the City's health insurance, which is a savings of \$19,818.72 for 2023, assuming family coverage of the HSA Value Plan.

Budgetary Off-sets

There are a number of potential expense off-sets that have been identified which would further reduce Department expenditures to help absorb the requested increase in hours.

1. Implementing Departmental in-house training for EMR/EMT. This would save the Department approximately \$1,300.00 per year. There is also the opportunity for the Police Department to save some money as they would be able to participate in the yearly training to meet their medical training requirements. There is also a possibility of allowing neighboring departments to attend our refresher classes and charging them a fee for their firefighters.
2. Fire Chief responding to calls during the day that do not need a compliment of firefighters. These calls would be medicals, CO calls, or Fire Alarms calls with no fire or

smoke showing. So far this year, the Department has responded to approximately 80 medical calls between the hours of 9am and 3pm. If the Chief was in town and responded to 50 of these calls, it could save approximately \$4,800.00. The rough calculation is:

$$\begin{aligned} 8 \text{ firefighters @ } \$12.00/\text{hour} &= \$96.00 \\ \$96.00 \times 50 \text{ calls} &= \$4,800.00 \end{aligned}$$

This takes some of the response burden off the firefighters. Except for one year, the call volume has increased every year in the last six years.

3. Increase in water sales for pools and ice rinks. In 2022, there has been over \$10,000.00 in water sales and this will likely increase going forward.

Future Considerations and Department Changes

Going forward, there are a number of items to consider:

1. Loss of Daytime Responders. This issue is two-fold; first, there are current firefighters expected to retire in 2023 and as a result the daytime responder pool will likely be reduced from eight (8) to four (4), second there is the potential that local businesses will not be able to afford to have employees leave their shift during the day. As of now, no business has indicated a refusal to allow employees to respond but it could become an issue in the future.
2. Increased Department Professionalism. The incumbent Chief is working with staff to move away from elected to appointed Captains. This process will require the development of job descriptions and job duties beyond what is currently in the Department's Handbook as well as policies and procedures for ranking and interviewing candidates.
3. Cross-training of Administrative Duties. Currently, the Assistant Chief completes much of the incident reporting and payroll calculations. These are responsibilities that the Chief should be able to complete.
4. Creation and Implementation of a Fire Inspection Program for Businesses and Rental Properties. Fire inspections (fire extinguisher checks, evacuation maps, smoke detectors, egress windows, clear zones in storage areas) of business and rental properties on an annual or biennial basis. Completion of these inspections helps prevent fires before they occur or prevent the loss of life in the event one does occur. According to FEMA, 40% of businesses never reopen their doors after a disaster. This is a tax loss to the city and a loss of employment. It is possible that this program could have a small fee attached to it.
5. Evaluation of Daytime Response Options. Options for daytime responses need to be explored as volunteer recruits who can respond during business hours will likely continue to decrease as have been experienced by other departments. One option has been identified above, other options include duty crews or additional full or part-time staff.
6. Establishment of Fire Chief Office Hours. In order to address many of the noted considerations, there will be a need to establish a more consistent set of office hours for the Chief. This may require evaluating who provides some of the services currently covered by the Chief as there may be budgetary impacts to a different division of duties.

In 2022, staff proposed moving to a full-time Fire Chief. That request was rescinded in light of the need for a Technology Services Manager and interns in Finance and Community Development. In 2023, the request has been scaled back to add eight (8) additional hours per week to the position making the position $\frac{3}{4}$ time.

J Gerold stated that she appreciated all the work that went into preparing this information.

The Council discussed the request and asked questions of Chief Lawrence.

ZIMMER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FIRE CHIEF TO MOVE TO $\frac{3}{4}$ FULL TIME. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Request for Additional Full-time Staff, Public Works

B Gerold and McPherson reported that in the last 20 years, the city has increased in population and physical size through annexation. In 2021, the city achieved the population goal of 5,000 residents. Recent area expansion include annexation of the Sherburne Mobile Home Park and the 40 acres for the Princeton Business Park.

Staff inquired of similar-sized cities as to the number of Public Works Staff. As each city has a different composition of services (streets, sewers, parks, etc.), we looked at the aggregate number of staff absent directors or managers:

- Princeton: 8 (excluding the Public Works Director and Wastewater Treatment Plan Manager)
- Zimmerman: 11
- Litchfield: 10, includes an airport
- Cambridge: 10, includes an airport
- New Prague: 14
- Isanti: 8
- Watertown: 8
- Glencoe: 10, includes a cemetery

Public Works staffing levels have not kept up with the increase in population nor the expansion of the city. Increases in calls for service are occurring in the following areas:

- Streets - patching, sweeping, plowing, salting and sanding. During a significant storm event the Director's regular and administrative duties are set aside to assist with cleanup operations. As additional streets come on line with the new development (Princeton Business Park, Fountain Place, un-named residential development north of the middle school), the additional mileage will require increase staff time for maintenance.
- Storm sewers – repair, maintenance, ensuring proper stormwater flow in rain events. With the increase in population to 5,000, the city will be required to obtain an MS4 stormwater permit; the requirements associated with this permit are unknown at this time. There may be additional duties for Public Works to perform.
- Parks – maintenance of nine (9) parks with increased amenities and more calls for service for grass cutting, tree and shrub planting and trimming, sweeping, building and facility maintenance.
- Campground – coordination of the Campground Host's duties, responding to issues of loitering beyond the reservation time and other miscellaneous issues.
- Sanitary sewers - ongoing repair and maintenance of an aged system with jetting, cleaning, and regular maintenance of nine (9) lift stations and four (4) backup generators. Maintenance and repair of the streambank plantings for phosphorus reduction associated with the treatment plan operating permit.
- Non-profit and Civic Organization – provision of personnel and equipment for community events like the Rum River Festival, Light Up Princeton, the plantings on Rum River Drive, and requests for street closures by a number of organizations.

- Seasonal Staff - It is becoming increasingly difficult to hire and retain seasonal staff; the city is competing with private sector businesses that can offer a higher hourly rate. The lack of seasonal staff requires regular staff to cover those duties, i.e. watering of flowers and trees and grass cutting.
- Longevity of staff - As employees' length of service increases so does the available time off to staff, which makes scheduling somewhat difficult at times. Leave for staff includes holidays, vacation, and earned comp time. More often than not, Public Works is running with less than a full crew with the Director filling in the gaps.

The above list does not include responsibilities related to the airport or cemetery.

As the city continues to grow and expand, the Director's duties must return to those more administrative in nature, while not completely eliminating the need to be a working Director:

- Review of the annual road mileage for MN State Aid Street certification
- Implementation of any MS4 stormwater permitting requirements
- Implementation of the infrastructure improvement plan resulting from the 2022 planning work related to pavement management, transportation, sewer and water inventory plans.
- Identifying and implementing alternative funding sources on behalf of the City Administrator.

As a result of understaffing, the Public Works Department is in a reactive mode versus proactive to duties, scheduled maintenance, and upcoming events, the result of which is increased costs and stress to the city and staff. In order to reverse this trend and provide a level of service to City residents that they are accustomed to, expect and deserve, staff requests the addition of one additional full-time staff person in the Public Works Department.

Zimmer noticed that the number of line staff has not increased since 1978 when he first worked for the city.

WALKER MOVED TO APPROVE THE HIRING OF AN ADDITIONAL PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEE. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

c. Fee Schedule

Staff and the Council went through the proposed amendments to the fee schedule. The recommended changes will be made, and staff will continue working on the ones that are in question. It will come before the Council again as an ordinance to introduce and then approve at a second meeting.

8.8. City Administrator Bi-Weekly Report

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

Age-Friendly

The Surrey Bike has been assembled – thank you Public Works staff. It was placed on display for the first time at the Pumpkin Chuckin' event on October 31 and there seemed to be quite a bit of interest from the general public. It is now on display in the window of the Crystal Cabinet Training Center on Rum River Drive. Crystal Cabinets has graciously agreed to store it until next spring. It will make its next appearance at the Mini Dazzle parade on November 26.

Airport

Work is progressing on the Targeted ALP Study at the airport. The cultural inventory was started November 1 and they are working on the wetland delineation this week. If all goes as planned, KLJ will have a preliminary analysis for staff review completed mid-December; the review will include staff from the FAA and MNDOT Aeronautics. Staff is tentatively planning a joint Council-Airport Advisory Board meeting on January 5, 2023 to review the results and determine the next steps.

Boards and Commissions (a continual reminder until January)

We have started to advertise for applicants to the various boards and commissions. In addition to the typical term expirations, we have vacancies on the following boards:

- Economic Development Authority
- Fire Advisory Board (Bogus Brook)
- Park and Recreation Advisory Board
- Housing and Redevelopment Authority

It may be helpful for the Council to personally invite residents to serve on a board or commission. Appointments will be scheduled for after the first of the new year.

Development

Community Development Planner Marquardt and I met with Brad Brzenski of DEED on October 31 to discuss the Glen Metalcraft project. To date, DEED has not received any applications for state assistance. Mr. Brzenski was going to reach out to them to see where things were at.

Finance

Utilization of the new finance software continues to move forward. Next week's timecards will be completed entirely online. We have training on the electronic submittal and approval of invoices on Wednesday November 9 with the Department Heads and Managers.

On a sour note, McPherson stated she has been informed by Bergan KDV that, after a review of their client list and ability to service clients, Princeton did not make the cut and they will not be doing our fiscal year 2022 audit. That will require us to go out for Requests for Proposals or obtain quotes from firms to find a new audit firm. As PUC recently changed audit firms, staff plans to reach out the General Manager Butcher for assistance.

Grants

There may be movement on the Small Cities Grant; McPherson reported that she was contacted for a minor piece of information on November 7. Given that it was our Federal tax number, she is hoping that will be good news for us.

Lodging Tax

City Attorney Toven, Community Development Planner Marquardt, and PACC Executive Director Young and McPherson met on November 3 to discuss implementation of the lodging tax. A cooperative agreement has been drafted and work is progressing on the ordinance. The adoption schedule is proposed as follows:

- November 22 – 1st Reading of the Ordinance
- December 8 – 2nd Reading of the Ordinance
- December 14 – Publication

Staff proposes that the lodging owners receive the ordinance and the forms in time for the November 22 meeting.

Miscellaneous

On November 1, McPherson said she participated in Just Desserts, a collaboration between the Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce and School District. It was somewhat like speed dating where students were able to have casual conversations with local professionals for four (4) minutes and then they would move onto the next table. They were encouraged to practice their handshake skills and their good-bye. It was quite fun and all of the students volunteered to participate.

Upcoming Meeting/Event Reminders

- CGMC Fall Conference – November 17 to 18, Alexandria, registration is now open; Councilor Hallin is attending

9. Committee Reports

Walker commented that with the election results and soon to be changes in the legislature, it is important to decide what the city wants it's lobbyists to push for.

10. Adjournment

ZIMMER MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:42 PM. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Respectfully Submitted,

ATTEST:

Shawna Jenkins Tadych
City Clerk

Thom Walker
Mayor