

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
MARCH 28, 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, Liquor Store Manager Dylan Donner. Absent was PUC Manager Keith Butcher

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Agenda Additions / Deletions

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

4. Consent Agenda

- 4.1. Approval of the City Council Minutes from March 14, 2024
- 4.2. Airport Board Advisory Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2024
- 4.3. Authorize Bidding - CSAH 4/7th Avenue Reconstruction and North Lift Station Improvements Projects
- 4.4. Step Increase for Liquor Clerk Gage Thomas effective March 16, 2024
- 4.5. ~~Approve Hiring of Shawn Aaesby for WWTP Operator Starting April 15, 2024~~
- 4.6. Approve Liquor License for Big O Racing for Princeton Speedway - April - August 2024
- 4.7. Approve Gambling Permit for Chops, Inc Raffle at Princeton Raceway on May 4th and 5th, 2024
- 4.8. Approve Gambling Permit for Princeton Lion's for Bingo, Paddlewheels, Raffle & Tipboards on May 4th, 2024
- 4.9. Approve Gambling Permit for PFRD Relief Association on September 7th, 2024
- 4.10. ~~Authorize Execution of Storage Rental Agreement with Princeton Township for Grass Rig~~
- 4.11. Authorize Execution of Professional Service Contract; PFRD and Big O Racing LLC to Provide Emergency Services at Friday Races, Princeton Speedway
- 4.12. Authorize Execution of Labor Contract with AFSCME Council 65
- 4.13. Approve Request to Close City Hall at 4:00pm April 4, 2024

J Gerold would like to move 4.5 to after the Swearing in of New Firefighters and 4.10 to New Business.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH THE REMOVAL OF 4.5 AND 4.10. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Promote Probationary Firefighters to Regular Firefighter Status, Swearing In

Brandon Jeanotte, Brittany Moser, Sylvia Plante, Michael Powers, and Taylor Snow have completed their training and time as probationary firefighters. They are ready to be promoted to regular firefighter status.

Walker swore in Brandon Jeanotte, Brittany Moser, Sylvia Plante, Michael Powers, and Taylor Snow as regular firefighters.

6. Approve Hiring of Shawn Aaesby for WWTP Operator Starting April 15, 2024

Klinghagen reported that applications were received, reviewed, and five candidates selected to interview for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator position.

Consensus was reached on a candidate. Shawn Aaseby has verbally accepted the position. A background check is pending. He will start at Step 4 which is midpoint on the pay scale. Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the hiring of Shawn Aaseby for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator position.

J GEROLD MOVED TO APPROVE SHAWN AESBY AS THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR STARTING APRIL 15, PENDING THE BACKGROUND CHECK. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Presentation - Mille Lacs County Historical Society - Barry Schrieber

Schrieber showed the sign that was made to be mounted on the clock tower at the corner of Rum River Drive and First Street. The goal is to have a few more signs done to put up around the City showing its history.

8. 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.*

9. Old Business

9.1. Ordinance 850 - Amendment to Chapter 355 - Sale of Cannabinoid Products - Final Reading

McPherson reported that there have been no changes since the first reading. As discussed at the first reading, this is changing the distance from a store and a commercial daycare and amending it to be a door to door distance if a person were to walk it, and not a straight distance from property line to property line.

J GEROLD MOVED TO APPROVE ORDINANCE 850 AMENDING CHAPTER 355. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. VOTE 4:1, WALKER, J GEROLD, EDMONDS, REYNOLDS IN FAVOR, HALLIN OPPOSED. THE MOTION CARRIED.

9.2. Approve Mellow Fellow Tobacco and Cannabinoid Licenses

Jenkins advised that now that Ordinance 850 has been passed, Mellow Fellow's Cannabinoid license meets the distance requirements.

J Gerold stated that she researched Mellow Fellow and he runs a very nice business in Milaca. Frederick added that he spoke with the Milaca Police Chief and they have not had any issues with Mellow Fellow.

J GEROLD MOVED TO APPROVE THE TOBACCO AND CANNABINOID PRODUCT LICENSE FOR MELLOW FELLOW. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

9.3. Wyanett Township Fire Billing

McPherson advised that errors were made in the fire billing to the Townships. As presented previously to the Fire Advisory Board, she said she recalculated the billings from 2018 to the present. The findings and payments were summarized. In addition, paper copies of items such as tax capacity reports from the counties at the time of billing are hit or miss.

As McPherson recalculated the billings, the following hold true:

1. The premise is the billing is for services rendered as the contract is a "look-back" method of calculation. In addition, the contract is not clear as to how the payments are to be applied.
2. The recalculations are based on the operating expenses only. There is a "capital contribution" on each bill (not the truck fund), but how the former Finance Director utilized the formula, or what the base amount is based on is not clear. This again is an area in the contract that needs clarification. As a result, the payment totals and the billing numbers in the first example are not

going to match; further analysis is required to complete the exercise, should the Council decide it is necessary.

The results of the analysis/recalculation is that, while the 2023 bill for 2022 expenses billing issue was corrected, the 2022 bill for 2021 expenses needs to be corrected for Spencer Brook and Wyanett Township. Wyanett underpaid the 2022 bill and we are still showing a balance owed of \$10,999.00 which the City should forgive. There would still be a small amount to refund. A refund is also owed to Spencer Brook

Truck Fund:

The first attachment also shows the truck fund (\$1,000,000) apportioned per the formula in the contract. It also shows the payments received to date. Staff has been unable to obtain a copy of the document showing what each township was to have paid; such document is available from a township member. It is believed that some townships were overbilled based on the net tax capacity used, but it cannot be verified at this time. In addition, some townships first made payments and then opted to pay in full.

Staff reviewed the general ledger and pulled receipts for the various payments including the truck payments. Staff was not able to find a receipt for a truck payment from Wyanett Township.

Next Steps:

This information is being provided for information at this time. McPherson believes that the next steps would be:

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 recommended that the State Net Tax Capacity numbers be used as the base line.

The refund amounts were not budgeted for 2024, so staff will need to prepare a plan and discuss the issue with the affected Townships.

Ken Murray Wyanett Township stated he appreciates the progress on the billing issues. He has an additional issue, which is the tender that the City sold on auction. That tender was kept at the Wyanett substation and they feel they should have been notified it was going to be sold as they use it to water the roads on occasion, and had some extra parts installed on it for that purpose. They also should have been given the opportunity to purchase it.

J Gerold responded that Captain Brian Mellgren would have been aware that the tender was going to be sold. The city cannot just sell something outright, it needs to be put up for auction / bid. They were aware that the tender was going to be in the auction, they could have bid on it.

Dan Hiller, Princeton Township asked if the Council is going to be looking at other Township billings as well. He asked if the City would be re-invoicing all of the Townships.

Hiller mentioned the tender that was sold and said it could have been brought up at the Fire Advisory Board.

J Gerold added that another problem in trying to decipher how that was done in the past was that the very long-time finance Director had a severe health issue shortly after he retired, so staff were not able to talk with him.

Walker stated that the city used a formula for many years that caused the city taxpayers to subsidize the difference in what the townships were billed and what the actual costs were. This is not fair to the city taxpayers, so staff have started using actual costs in determining how much to bill each township.

Staff will continue working with the numbers and will bring the issue back at the next council meeting.

10. New Business

10.0 Authorize Execution of Storage Rental Agreement with Princeton Township for Grass Rig

McPherson reported that with anticipation of a heavy wildfire season, Assistant Chief Vaccari approached Princeton Township to store one of the Princeton Fire and Rescue Department's grass rigs at the Princeton Township Town Hall. The rig may also be used to respond to medicals in Princeton and Greenbush Township.

Storing the grass rig will allow PFRD members who reside near the Town Hall to respond with the rig stored there as opposed to driving to the station which should improve response times.

The Township was agreeable to the arrangement and the attached agreement was drafted by the City Attorney.

The Township approved the agreement at its March 26, 2024, meeting.

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize execution of the Storage Rental Agreement with Princeton Township.

J Gerold stated that now that there has been some snowfall with the ground not being frozen, that should help with the high fire danger. She questioned why we should store a truck there for \$250 a month, and asked how many firefighters are located closer to the Townhall.

Vaccari responded that there are five firefighters that are closer to the Townhall than the Princeton Fire Station. He was thinking it could be month to month on a trial basis.

J Gerold stated that Dan Hiller from Princeton Township had stated they wanted to limit the number of medical calls. Vaccari stated that addressing dispatch issues to reduce medical calls was discussed at a Fire Advisory Board meeting.

Walker said his opinion is to try it and see how it works out. Edmonds agreed and said it may be helpful for grass fires and medicals.

Walker asked what the minimum personnel is when responding to medicals. Vaccari replied that there is no minimum, but two is ideal. Ron Lawrence did respond alone to some medicals.

EDMONDS MOVED TO APPROVE THE STORAGE RENTAL AGREEMENT FOR A GRASS RIG WITH PRINCETON TOWNSHIP. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. VOTE: 4:1 EDMONDS, REYNOLDS, WALKER AND HALLIN IN FAVOR. J GEROLD OPPOSED. THE MOTION CARRIED.

10.1. Resolution 24-15 - Accept Donation from TUCS for Fire Department

Vaccari reported that on March 21st, the Princeton Fire Department received a donation in the amount of \$2,350.00 from Tucs Equipment. The Princeton Fire Department is truly grateful for this donation. The donation will be used to replace 2 4-gas monitors that are old or damaged, and to purchase 2 single gas monitors. These monitors are used to determine the presence of hazardous or toxic atmospheres when the Fire Department responds to calls inside buildings or confined spaces.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 24-15 ACCEPTING THE DONATION FROM TUCS FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.2. Rum River Festival Special Event Permits

McPherson advised that because this is a city-wide event the Council has in the past waived the fees for the items listed on our special event permit. Staff are requesting the fees be waived for this year's events as well.

J GEROLD MOVED TO WAIVE THE SPECIAL EVENT FEES FOR THE RUM RIVER FESTIVAL. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

10.2.1. Rum River Festival Parade - Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST FOR THE RUM RIVER PARADE. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.2.1.1. Resolution 24-14 - Requesting Road Closure from Mille Lacs County for the Rum River Festival Parade

J GEROLD MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 24-14 REQUESTING THE ROAD CLOSURE FROM MILLE LACS COUNTY FOR THE RUM RIVER FESTIVAL PARADE. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.2.2. The World's Largest Rubber Duck - Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL EVENT TO HOST THE WORLDS LARGEST DUCK DURING RUM RIVER FESTIVAL. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.2.3. Rum River Festival 5K - Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT FOR THE RUM RIVER FESTIVAL 5K. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.2.4. Craft and Vendor Fair - Powerful Zen Massage & Blue Ribbon Events MN

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CRAFT AND VENDOR FAIR DURING RUM RIVER FESTIVAL. EDMONDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.3. Request by Pat Briggs to Reduce Park Dedication Fees, Phases 3 & 4 Princeton Residential Suites

McPherson advised that Pat Briggs submitted a request to reduce the park dedication fees for Phase 3 and 4 Princeton Residential Suites. He would like to pay \$101,758, based on a "per door" amount of \$613; he arrived at this amount by taking the amount paid for Phases 1 & 2 (total of \$60,000) and dividing it by the total number of units in these Phases.

At the time Phases 1 & 2 were constructed, the City calculated the fee based on a percentage of land value. In 2021, the ordinance was changed to charge \$1,800 per unit. The total of park dedication based on that calculation would be:

Phase 3 (66 units):	\$118,800
Phase 4 (100 units):	\$180,000
Total:	\$298,800

In August 2023, the Park Board considered this project and determined, based on the number of units at that time (62 and 85), that they would accept \$264,600. Mr. Briggs was informed of this amount after the August meeting; his Engineer provided written comment to Community Development Specialist DeWitt in September 2023 that Mr. Briggs may request a reduction in the fee since they had increased significantly.

The Park Board, at its March 25 meeting, considered Mr. Briggs' request to reduce the park dedication fees to \$101,758. They moved and voted unanimously to recommend to the City Council to accept the amount approved in August 2023 of \$264,600.

Staff recommends that the City Council accept the Park Board's recommendation and reduce the park dedication fees for Phases 3 & 4 Princeton Residential Suites to \$264,600, a reduction of \$34,200.

J Gerold was at the Park Board meeting and their concern was that when Bob Barbian did the proposal for the first two phases, Park Dedication fees were way below what others charged in the area. McPherson added that those fees were calculated by the percentage of land value, which she said is not the standard way Park Dedication fees are calculated. In her experience, it is always calculated as a per unit fee.

Park Dedication fees in surrounding communities were looked at to determine the \$1800 per unit. It is the same whether it is a single family or multi-family building. Commercial is flat rate per acre. Briggs is now requesting to pay \$900 per unit.

J Gerold stated the Park Board also mentioned that this information was given early enough prior to them getting ready to begin work on Phase Three and Four. McPherson asked Briggs if he remembers getting the information from the Park Board in August. Briggs stated that he did not recall, but that he had multiple projects in the works.

J Gerold added that the Park Board was concerned when they did not see any of the playgrounds, or the pond that was originally discussed.

Briggs responded that they did not have the Rainbow Play system on the plan for Phase Two, but it has been installed. They also put in a dog area for residents. They just finalized their landscaping plan. Briggs stated most of the renters in Phases One and Two are single people in studio and one-bedroom apartments.

Walker commented that if you take the amount of park dedication fees that the Park Board is proposing plus the original amount and divide it with the number of units, that is near \$1200 per unit, He said he seems to remember a conversation about how the Park Board felt left out of loop on the previous discussion. The Park Board looks out for the residents when it comes to parks, so he feels we should not move too far from their numbers.

Hallin agrees with the Park Board's recommendation and fees. The Council should not micromanage the Boards and Commissions. She added that they are adding some park space on the property as well.

Reynolds agreed that the Council should follow the Park Board's recommendation.

Walker added that this is not the only ask for these projects, there are TIF Districts as well.

Edmonds said Brigg's did make a valid point, that the standard residents of these apartments are not going to use the city parks as much as a single-family home with children.

WALKER MOVED TO CONCUR WITH THE PARK BOARD RECOMMENDATION OF \$264,000 FOR PHASE TWO AND THREE PRINCETON RESIDENTIAL SUITES. HALLIN SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.4. Warning Siren Purchase and Siren Upgrade - Approve CIP Purchase

Lawrence advised that the Emergency Management team, with assistance from Administrator McPherson, have been working to improve the warning sirens that cover the City of Princeton. Improvements include adding a siren and upgrading two of the older sirens with newer technology. The upgrade will help amplify the sound farther than the current technology.

An additional consideration is the potential growth of the city. There appears to be a deficiency in the industrial park area. An April meeting with the Frontline Plus technician has been scheduled in order to identify where the next siren will be placed. A map of the existing siren coverage and the projected coverage change with upgraded sirens was included in the agenda packet.

There is \$45,000.00 approved in the 2024 Capital Improvement Budget to purchase a new siren and to move a siren. Frontline Plus has special pricing for new sirens purchased in the month of April. After obtaining quotes for the upgrade and new siren, now is the time to purchase a new siren and upgrade the two older ones. As the E.M. Director, completing this project as soon as possible before the severe weather moves arrives is important and timely.

The quotes for the new siren and the upgrades were included in the agenda packet. The total exceeds the approved CIP amount by \$5,000.00, but staff recommends using monies from the Emergency Management operating budget (repair and maintenance) to bridge the gap. Purchasing the new siren now will save the city roughly \$13,000.00. Last year the cost of the sirens rose 8-10%.

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE CIP PURCHASE FOR THE SIREN UPGRADE UP TO \$50,000 WITH \$45,000 FROM THE CIP AND \$5000 FROM THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPERATING BUDGET. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.5. Bill List

HALLIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 28, 2024, CHECK REGISTER CONTAINING CHECKS 88033 TO 88086 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$219,879.81, AND THE PAYROLL ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS AS NOTED ON THE PAY PERIOD 6 TRANSMITTAL REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$83,600.92 AND PAY PERIOD 6 CHECK REGISTER IN THE AMOUNT OF \$199,628.07. J GEROLD SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.6. City Administrator Bi-Weekly Report

McPherson reported the following observations and information to share since the last update on March 13, 2024:

Airport

A vacancy exists on the Board.

Work continues on the ALP and parcel release request.

Andrew Zielike and McPherson met with representatives of the FAA and MNDOT on March 21 to review the airport CIP, status of grants, and project progress to date on the ALP Update. Airport Advisory Board members Edmonds and Sautter were also in attendance.

Baldwin Township

The public comment period ended March 22 at 4:30 pm. The city will receive copies of the comments but has no ability or requirement to respond to them.

An orderly annexation agreement (OAA) has been drafted for the Schwartz property. The notice for the same has been submitted by the city for publication; the Township is required to pay 50% of the publication costs. This item will be placed on the April 11 Council agenda for action. We are still waiting for the “clean up” OAA relating to the legal descriptions of previous annexations from the Township’s attorney.

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 with 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.

Five applications for the Chief’s position have been received to date. As the application deadline was extended to April 5, an email informing the applicants was sent on March 25.

Infrastructure

A neighborhood meeting has been scheduled for April 10 at 5pm at the Civic Center to present the CSAH4/7th Avenue Project to the area property owners. WSB will prepare a postcard for mailing, and it should be distributed soon.

Legislature

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

1. Legislation that would pre-empt local zoning controls in order to promote additional affordable housing. There have been modifications to the legislation, but it continues to be problematic for cities in outstate Minnesota.
2. Legislation requiring cities to report how the Public Safety Aid from 2023 was spent (this is a recent bill introduction).

Changes to Open Meeting Law requirements (Senate only at this time):

- Elimination of the requirement that the remote participant be in a location open and accessible to the public.
- Requirement that an entire meeting, including public comment period be available for remote monitoring.

- Increase monetary penalty for Open Meeting Law violations, require the closed meeting for attorney-client privilege be recorded after identifying the legal issue or case to be discussed.

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.

School Resource Officers

Officers Josephes and Kyper returned to the schools in an official School Resource Officer capacity on March 18 after the legislation revising the 2023 legislation was signed into law the week prior. The new legislation still has a few imperfections, specifically as it relates to training and the calendar, but it will work.

Police Chief Frederick and I will meet again with Superintendent Barton and Director of Business Services Czech to continue discussions regarding a new contract for the School Resource Officers and determine the 2023 billing amount as well as the amount for the first portion of 2024. At this time, a meeting has not been scheduled.

Upcoming Meetings and Reminders:

- April 4 – Study Session; Emergency Management Tabletop Exercise; 4:30 pm at the Public Safety Building
- April 10 – Neighborhood Meeting, CSAH 4/7th Avenue Construction Project; 5 to 6:30pm at the Civic Center

11. Committee Reports

Edmonds provided a short update on the PUC meeting and announced that PUC was the recipient of a 2024 Energy Star Partner Award.

12. 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