

**MINUTES OF THE STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL
HELD ON DECEMBER 7, 2023, 4:30 P.M.**

1. Call To Order / Roll Call

Mayor Thom Walker called the meeting to order. Councilors present were, Victoria Hallin, Jenny Gerold, Jack Edmonds, and Jeff Reynolds. Staff present, Administrator Michele McPherson, Clerk Shawna Jenkins, Community Development – Planner Stacy Marquardt, IT Manager Ed Yost, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Todd Frederick, Wastewater Plant Manager Chris Klinghagen, Liquor Store Manager Dylan Donner, and Fire Chief Ron Lawrence. Absent was Attorney Damien Toven and PPU General Manager Keith Butcher.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Several members of the Princeton Fire Department were in attendance and wanted to have a few minutes to bring their concerns to the Council.

Captain Josh Vaccari stated their concerns with the new personnel policy that was adopted with an effective date of January 1st as it includes wording that prevents any firefighter from working on neighboring departments. There are currently four Princeton Firefighters that also volunteer with other departments. They are asking if the current firefighters could be “grandfathered in” and if the policy be in place for new hires.

Shawn Aesby stated he is one of those firefighters and said he is doing it to supplement his retirement. Before he joined Baldwin Fire Department, he asked for Chief Lawrence’s permission, which was given. He said he is fully in support of the Princeton Department but would like to continue the ability to volunteer with other departments as well. He said he has a 50% response to calls from both departments.

McPherson added that there will be some additional minor changes to the personnel policy coming up on the December 28th meeting agenda, so the council can take some time to think about their request.

3. 2024 Fee Schedule Discussion

The staff and Council went over the proposed fee schedule changes. The first reading of the ordinance will be at the December 14th Council meeting.

4. Capital Improvement Program

McPherson advised that the changes to the Wastewater section discussed at the November 21st meeting were made. New additions include carrying forward monies for the phone system and website upgrades from 2023, adding installation of Midco internet lines to the WWTP and removal of the security fence at the Public Safety Building.

5. 2024 Budget

5.1. Officer Retention Program

Frederick stated that there was a question regarding the retention program that was listed on the public safety breakdown at the last Council meeting. He apologized for not being able to explain it better to the Council. Below is the breakdown of the program.

Year 1, the total money paid out is \$18,000.00.

- \$500.00 for every 5 years of service. Staff who have under 5 years of service would receive \$500.00.

- 4 total employees (3 officers including 1 support staff) - \$500.00 to each employee totaling \$2000.00.
- 2 total employees (2 officers) - \$1000.00 to each employee totaling \$2000.00.
- 4 total employees (4 officers) - \$1500.00 to each employee totaling \$6000.00.
- 4 total employees (3 officers including 1 support staff) - \$2,000.00 to each employee totaling \$8000.00.

Year 2, the total money paid out is \$18,500.00.

- 1 Staff change in year two. Noted change on budget breakdown of \$500.00.
 - Reduction could occur as potential officer retirement.
 - Waiting for clarity on retention payment to Chief as a program was created by administration. Would potentially need Council approval on this piece.
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- 3 total employees (3 officers) - \$500.00 to each employee totaling \$1500.00.
 - 3 total employees (2 officers including 1 support staff) - \$1000.00 to each employee totaling \$3000.00.
 - 4 total employees (4 officers) - \$1500.00 to each employee totaling \$6000.00.
 - 4 total employees (3 officers including 1 support staff) - \$2,000.00 to each employee totaling \$8000.00.

J Gerold believes there should be some stipulations in the program that will require them to pay those funds back if they leave within a certain time frame.

5.2. Budget and Levy

McPherson reported that with the Union negotiations being completed and now that we know the insurance rates for next year, she was able to lower the levy considerably from the Preliminary approval in September. If the Police Department Retention program is authorized, that will increase the final numbers a bit. Also, if Officer Kuyper does not retire and stays the entire year, that will be small increase a bit as well.

J Gerold stated she would like to add a little extra, so the city does not go over budget. McPherson stated she would add in the cost as if Kuyper stays for the full year.

The Liquor Store would also like to move lead Clerk Patty Warren to full time.

McPherson asked for Council consensus on the Police Officer Retention program, moving Liquor Clerk Patty Warren to full time, and increasing the Wine and Spirits Grant request total from \$20,000 to \$25,000 for 2024. The Council was in agreement with all three.

6. Adjournment

HALLIN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:06 PM. REYNOLDS SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully Submitted,

ATTEST:

Shawna Jenkins Tadych
City Clerk

Thom Walker,
Mayor