

REGULAR MEETING ~ CITY COUNCIL
PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
April 13, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Princeton, Mercer County, West Virginia was held **by teleconference**, due to the corona virus, on Monday, April 13, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Mayor David Graham; Vice Mayor James Harvey; Council Members Marshall Lytton, Jacqueline Rucker, James Hill and Dewey Russell; City Manager Michael Webb, City Attorney Paul Cassell and City Clerk Kenneth Clay. A quorum was constituted thereby.

I. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Marshall Lytton invoked divine guidance for the conduct of the meeting, as well as healing for the country from the Corona Virus. Mr. Lytton also gave thanks for the Easter Season with the hope it brings to all believers; and expressed gratitude for our first responders in light of their dedicated service to our community during the current crisis.

Council Member Dewey Russell led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

II. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor David Graham called the meeting to order.

III. PROCLAMATIONS ~ PRESENTATIONS

There were no proclamations or presentations scheduled.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input offered.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

With two corrections on page 14 of the March 16, 2020, Regular City Council Meeting noted by the Clerk, Mayor Graham committed the Consent Agenda to the record, as follows:

- A. Minutes of the March 4, 2020, Special City Council Meeting;
- B. Minutes of the March 16, 2020, Regular City Council Meeting; and
- C. Minutes of the March 27, 2020, Special City Council Meeting.

VI. POLICY AGENDA

A. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PUBLIC WORKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairwoman Jacqueline Rucker reported the Public Works and Recreation Committee of Princeton City Council met by teleconference on Wednesday, April 8, 2020, with the CC-04-13-20

following items to report out to Council:

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Monthly Report – Public Works Assistant Director Eric Gatchell had reported that the Public Works Department continued work on its New City Complex facility by installing sewer lines and beginning the installation of new water lines.

Worker and Crew Safety – Mr. Gatchell continued by reporting that the Public Works Department is practicing safety and distancing plans for workdays by the best possible means. Also, leadership is reviewing the current Garbage Codes with the intent of proposing the adoption of additional employee and crew safety measures.

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Recreation Director Amanda McCabe had reported the following to the Committee:

The Recreation Center has been closed since March 13th until further notice due to the Corona Virus. Likewise, the main gate to City Park has been closed to traffic to discourage large gatherings while continuing to allow walkers to enjoy the Park. Also, signs have been posted at the Recreation Center to inform the public of these actions.

Ms. McCabe continued by reporting that six new picnic tables had been constructed and placed in City Park by Boy Scout Logan Greene as one of his community service projects to earn his Eagle Scout rating.

Lastly, Mrs. McCabe reported that the renovation of the City Pool had been put on hold for the time being.

RAILROAD MUSEUM

Mrs. Rucker reported that the Railroad Museum is closed until further notice.

Chairwoman Rucker inquired as to when the Public Works Department would be moving into its new facility and added that it has taken too long already for that to occur. She added that another winter had passed and asked when the move will happen.

City Manager Mike Webb responded that no timelines had been determined on Public Works' permanent move into its new facility.

Fire Chief Chad Bailey explained that the sprinkler system is up and running in the new Public Works area. Also, Public Works' crews meet there to begin their workday, have lunch in the facility and have moved much of their equipment into the building.

The City Manager advised that Public Works employees have access to the restrooms in City Hall until the installation of the sewer lines to their restrooms has been completed.

James Hill asked if the City Manager could have a timeline by the next Council meeting.

Mr. Webb responded that he would check on the timeline by the next Council meeting.

2. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chairman James Hill reported the Public Safety Committee of Princeton City Council met by teleconference on Wednesday, April 8, 2020, with the following items to report out to Council:

CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

Monthly Report for March – Code Enforcement Deputy Director Ty Smith presented the following report for March 2020:

COMPUTATION OF COMPLAINTS

Summary – Property Maintenance

Initial Complaints	97
Cumulative Complaints to Date	37,900

Area Patrol Summary (ZONES PATROLLED DURING THIS MONTH)

Director – Zone 6	Rental Compliance Officer – Zone 8
Animal Control Officer – Zone 9	Property Inspector – Zone 9

Demolition/Renovation Program Status

Condemnations/Unsafe in process	20
*Demolitions in Process	20
Renovations in Process	0
Demolitions (Notice to Proceed)	0
Total Demolitions to Date	679

* Ty Smith added that two demolitions are set to go soon.

Animal Control Complaints

Complaints this Month	18
Impounded (dogs 4; cats 0; other 0)	4
Adopted	0
Euthanized	0
Reclaimed	0
Rescued	0

Building Inspection

Building Permits (Res. 12; Com. 15)	27
Total Inspections	5
Total Project Costs	\$362,050.00

Permit Fees \$2,332.00

* In a related matter, Mr. Smith reported he had issued nine permits for the installation of 5G cells downtown.

Mr. Hill asked Mr. Smith to explain this project in more detail.

Ty Smith explained that Princeton had been approved for the installation of twelve, high speed, 5G mini-cell transmitters that will provide access to high speed broadband. He added that half of them have already been installed and are operational, emitting signals for a radius of 1,000 feet, which will greatly increase the speed and reliability of internet services in the City.

Flood Plain Management

Flood Plain Determinations	28
Flood Plain	0

Zoning Official

Certificate of Occupancy Applications	1
Zoning Board Cases	0

Rental Compliance

Revenue in Mar.: \$180; Total to Date: \$12,843.50
Registered Units Mar.: Houses 3; Apts. 1; Other; 0; Units 4
Cumulative Total 20 Months: Houses 296; Apts. 506; Other 39; Total 841

Vacant Buildings

Registered Vacant Buildings March 0; Total 13

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Monthly Report for March – Fire Chief Chad Bailey presented the Fire Department’s statistical report for the month of March that reflected responses to 65 EMS calls and 30 fire calls; 5 inspections; 3 certificates of occupancy and 92 fire lane citations issued.

Continuing, the Fire Chief reported that both Lieutenant Croy and he had passed their Fire Certification II Class exams and now are authorized to conduct fire inspections in the City instead of relying on the State Fire Marshal.

Grant Award – The Fire Chief further reported the receipt of a \$10,000 grant from the Community Foundation of the Virginias to reimburse the Department for the purchase of emergency protective equipment (PPE’s) to respond to calls during the Corona Virus Pandemic.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Monthly Report for March – Police Chief Tim Gray presented the Police Department’s statistical report for the month of March that reflected responses to 453 offenses; 43 arrests made and 95 citations issued.

Chief Gray further reported that the Police Department had received a grant from the Shott Foundation in the amount of \$21,694 to purchase safety equipment for responding during the Corona Virus pandemic.

James Hill asked if the Police Department had been involved in the enforcement of more large gatherings.

Chief Gray replied that Police Officers had not enforced the prohibition against large gatherings since the initial arrest for violating the Governor’s “Stay at Home” order, but continue to patrol vigilantly. However, he added that officers are not making arrests on any City misdemeanor warrants during the pandemic.

3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Marshall Lytton reported the Finance and Administration Committee of the Princeton City Council met by teleconference on Wednesday, April 8, 2020, with the following items to report out to Council:

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

March 2020, Financial Report – Finance Director Brian Blankenship reported that as of the end of March, the ninth month of FY2020, the actual revenues collected stood at 85% of the budgeted amount, while actual appropriations were expended at a rate of 85%, as compared to the budget projections of 74.97% forecast for the end of March. Total funds available for City operations at the end of March were **\$867,611**.

Mr. Blankenship next reviewed the noteworthy expenditures for the month of March:

PEIA	\$58,323
Appraisal Fee	\$10,500
Legal Fees re: PCH	\$ 3,426

Mr. Lytton continued by reporting the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended the March 2020, Financial Report to City Council, **and he so moved.**

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

James Hill asked if this now takes care of Princeton Community Hospital.

Mr. Blankenship replied that it satisfies the legal fees.

Date and Time to Lay the Levy for FY2021 – The Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and Mr. Lytton so moved**, setting the meeting time at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21, 2020, for Council to Lay the Levy for the FY 2021 General Fund Budget.

James Harvey duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. & O. Tax Incentive Application – The Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and Mr. Lytton so moved**, the following business for receipt of the B. & O. Tax Incentive for new businesses in the City:

Hangry Burger – 700 Rogers Street – Sonye Vincentino, Owner.

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library Director Sheena Johnston presented the following report:

- The Library will not be enforcing fines for overdue books until May 1st, and will reassess at that time;
- The Library will be opening a WIFI hot spot to local businesses and Library patrons made available through Library Commission;
- Will continue to engage with the community through the Library’s Facebook page and website by providing alternative reading programs to patrons;
- The Library participated in a Rainbow Hunt on Easter Sunday by drawing rainbows on the front steps of the Library; and
- Selected virtual programs for will be available patrons, as follows:
 - Japanese Word of the Day
 - Virtual Share What Your Are Reading
 - Virtual Library Card Sign-up
 - Purchase of a Zoom account and encouraging patrons to join

Community Improvement Commission member Sheena Johnson presented the following report for the CIC:

The Community Improvement Commission held an informal meeting by Zoom on Monday, April 6th and touched on the following:

- Discussed an artistic Rainbow Hunt promotion for Easter, in cooperation with Hammer and Stain and the Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau, as a way to encourage people to go outdoors, walk and find photos or artwork featuring rainbows posted in the windows of businesses and homes.
- The CIC revived the Historic Banner Project that will display reproduced and enlarged historic photos of Princeton provided by the Mercer County Historical Society.
- Received a progress report on the Green Spaces Tree Project for Stafford Drive that is scheduled to begin by next year.

James Hill asked Mrs. Johnson if the Library would be using other methods in addition to Facebook to engage the community, such as the Library's web page.

Mrs. Johnson agreed that the Library's webpage is a good option.

B. CITY ATTORNEY
Declaration of Local State of Emergency for the City of Princeton

Mayor David Graham presented and read the following

P R O C L A M A T I O N

WHEREAS, there is an ongoing pandemic with regard to the Covid-19 virus; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared a national emergency; and

WHEREAS, there are confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the State of West Virginia and Mercer County.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, David Graham, Mayor of the City of Princeton, West Virginia, upon the authority granted to me and upon approval of the City Council, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM and DECLARE, pursuant to the Authority granted by W. Va. Code §15-5-1. *et seq.*, a LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY for the City of Princeton, West Virginia for the period starting today, April 13th at 8:00 p.m., until further notice.
CC-04/13/20

I will be exercising the authority granted to me by W. Va. Code §15-5-1. *et seq.* as needed, through the issuance of executive orders, emergency policies, and through the use and direction of City personnel, services, and equipment to perform acts necessary to the management of this existing and continued state of emergency.

I further delegate to the City Manager the same authority granted to me pursuant to W. Va. Code §15-5-1. *et seq.*, to issue executive orders, emergency policies, and to use and direct City personnel, services, and equipment to perform acts necessary to the management of this existing and continued state of emergency.

DATED this 13th day of April, 2020 at 8:00 p.m.

David Graham, Mayor

MOTION: James Hill moved City Council adopt the “Declaration of Local State of Emergency for the City of Princeton.”

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

C. CITY MANAGER

City Manager Mike Webb thanked City Council and department heads for working through the conditions related to the corona virus, especially the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments.

D. CITY CLERK

The City Clerk had nothing to report to Council.

E. HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

Hometown Hero Banners – Human Resources Director Wanda Donahue reported that the Hometown Hero Banners have been inspected and some were retired due to their deteriorated condition. However, those banners pulled will be posted on Facebook and family members who sponsored the banners will be contacted and provided the option of purchasing a replacement banner at a lower cost.

VII. MEETING IN RECESS

Mayor David Graham declared the meeting in recess at 7:04 p.m. until April 21, 2020, at 12:00 p.m. at which time Council will reconvene to Lay the Levy for FY 2021.

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David E. Graham, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kenneth E. Clay, City Clerk