

REGULAR MEETING ~ CITY COUNCIL
PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
August 10, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Common Council for the City of Princeton, Mercer County, West Virginia was held by teleconference due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, on Monday, August 10, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Mayor David Graham; Vice Mayor James Harvey; Council Members Marshall Lytton, James Hill, Jacqueline Rucker, Dewey Russell and Joe Allen; City Manager Michael Webb, City Attorney Paul Cassell and City Clerk Kenneth Clay. A quorum was constituted thereby.

I. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member James Hill invoked divine guidance for the conduct of the meeting, prayed for all first responders and health care workers as they serve the during the Covid-19 Pandemic and petitioned for the healing of our nation from the scourge of the pandemic.

Council Member Marshall Lytton 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

Resolution in Support of Health Care Workers – Mayor Graham read the following resolution of City Council into the record:

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the Covid-19 pandemic has placed tremendous strain on our country's healthcare workers; and

WHEREAS, the Common Council of the City of Princeton wishes to recognize and applaud their efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Common Council of the City of Princeton wholeheartedly and forthrightly expresses its support and appreciation for the healthcare workers throughout this nation that have been on the frontlines of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I, David E. Graham, with the power vested in me as Mayor of the City of Princeton, have hereunto set my hand and caused the great seal of the City of Princeton to be affixed this 10th day of August, 2020.

David E. Graham, Mayor

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

Stacey Hicks, CEO, Princeton Rescue Squad – Mr. Stacey Hicks first thanked City Council for the resolution recognizing First Responders and Healthcare Workers during this critical time.

Secondly, addressing City Council in his capacity as a member of the Board of Directors for the Mercer County Health Department, Mr. Hicks informed the Council that officials from the City of Bluefield had approached the Board of Health requesting its members rescind a prior order of the Board not to support the establishment of Marijuana Dispensaries in Mercer County and, in turn, take action to approve the same. Mr. Hicks explained that the City of Bluefield had been approached by individuals desiring to establish a marijuana dispensary in Bluefield.

Mr. Hicks further explained that the Board of Health was scheduled to meet again the coming Wednesday and, although not scheduled to vote of the issue, the Board members desired approach other municipalities in Mercer County to obtain a letter detailing their respective positions on the dispensaries. Therefore, Mr. Hicks requested such a letter from City Council explaining Princeton's position on the issue.

Mayor Graham replied that it is the consensus of Princeton City Council not to support the establishment of marijuana dispensaries in the City of Princeton and asked City Manager Mike Webb to pen a letter to that effect for Mr. Hicks.

Council Member James Hill went on record as opposed to marijuana dispensaries.

Council Member Joe Allen asked if said letter could also be conveyed to Council Members.

Mayor Graham replied that it would be so conveyed to Council Members and clarified that the consensus of Council against the dispensaries would stand until information is received from health professionals establishing evidence to the contrary.

Stacey Hicks informed City Council that the Board of Health would not be making a decision that week, but would continue its efforts to gather information regarding the issue before taking action.

Council Member Hill asked if the resolution supporting health care workers could be disseminated to health care agencies in the area.

Mayor Graham responded in the affirmative.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Without correction, Mayor Graham committed the Consent Agenda to the record, as
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follows:

Minutes of the July 13, 2020, Regular Meeting of City Council.

VI. POLICY AGENDA

A. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PUBLIC WORKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairperson Jacqueline Rucker reported the Public Works and Recreation Committee of Princeton City Council met on Wednesday, August 5, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. with the following items to report out to City Council:

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Public Works' Monthly Report for July – Assistant Public Works Director Eric Gatchell had presented the following report for the Public Works Department:

- In July, crews completed 29 service requests for special pickup orders;
- Crews continued storm water work at Bee Street behind the Frontier building to complete restoration work after the last tree and several root balls were removed;
- Capped a disintegrating storm pipe at the Presbyterian Church that had caused the formation of a sink hole, with asphalt patching remaining to complete;
- Collapsing storm water infrastructure at 7th and Harrison Streets is in the process of being repaired;
- a crew recently installed a new drainage pipe and repaired the access road to the Police Firing Range that had been washed out; and
- Public Works currently is prioritizing a number of other areas within the City's storm water infrastructure for remediation, including Hale Avenue, the corner of Hale Avenue and Center Street, the 700 Block of Straley and other areas of concern.

Equipment – The Street Sweeper had been repaired and put back in service for about a week before it had another hydraulic failure. All other equipment has been returned to operational status, with the exception of a two-ton dump truck and the leaf vacuum that requires some minor exhaust repairs.

Sidewalk at Auto Zone – The Assistant Director reported that the new sidewalk at Auto Zone is almost ready for the final phase of pouring and finishing the concrete, which will be accomplished by Public Works and Ty Smith.

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Mrs. Rucker presented the following report on behalf of Recreation Director Amanda McCabe:

Sanitizing of Playgrounds – The Recreation Department’s maintenance personnel have begun sanitizing all of the department’s playground equipment throughout the City on a weekly basis using a concentrated disinfectant which can be mixed in a sprayer.

Race in City Park – Members of the Princeton Church of God held a 3K Race on the trail in City Park on July 18th, with 30 racers competing. The participants also spent numerous evenings cleaning up the trail, weed eating, trimming limbs and filling holes.

Washington Avenue Playground – In an effort to correct the drainage issue on the Washington Avenue Playground, Public Works cleaned out a drain and installed pipe in the area of the property where water had been standing frequently.

Also, the replacement parts for the slide portion of the playground equipment have been ordered and should be delivered within the week. All labor will be completed by Recreation Center maintenance personnel.

Recreation Center – The Recreation Center continues to be open on Monday and Thursday evenings, 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for Karate classes and to process potential rentals. The department had booked several shelter rentals since the last meeting, but had not received any requests for meeting room rentals.

Refunds – With regard to refunds being issued for the spring basketball leagues that were cancelled, to date \$765 in refunds have been issued. Also, many more refunds must be issued in the future and the refunds that have been issued thus far were from requests that had filtered in to the Recreation Center.

RAILROAD MUSEUM

The Railroad Museum remains closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Chairman James Hill reported the Public Safety Committee of Princeton City Council met on Wednesday, August 5, 2020, after the Public Works and Recreation Committee with the following items to report out to Council and called on Code Enforcement Director Ty Smith to present his report.

CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

Monthly Report for July 2020 – Code Enforcement Director Ty Smith presented the following report for the month July:

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COMPUTATION OF COMPLAINTS

Summary – Property Maintenance

Initial Complaints in July	187
Cumulative Complaints to Date	38,407

Ty Smith noted that Code Enforcement Officers now are covering all zones in the City.

Demolition/Renovation Programs Status

Condemnations/Unsafe in Process	22
Demolitions in Process (out for bid)	1
Renovations in Process	0
Demolitions w/Notice to Proceed	0
Total Demolitions to Date	681

Animal Control

Complaints this Month	24
Impounded (dogs 0; cats 14; other 0)	14
Adopted	0
Euthanized	0
Reclaimed	0
Rescued	0

Building Inspection

Building Permits (Res.21; Com. 15)	36
Total Inspections	10
Total Project Costs	\$916,398.45
Permit Fees	\$ 2,548.00

Flood Plain Management

Flood Plain Determinations	36
Flood Plain Permits Issues	1

Zoning Official

Zoning Board Cases	1
(Rebecca Simpson – House of Prayer, 221 S. Walker St.)	

Rental Compliance

Revenue in July 0; Total to Date \$13,223.50
Registered Units July: Houses 0; Apts. 0; Other 0; Units 0
Cumulative Total 23 months: Houses 297; Apts. 506; Other 61; Total 864

Vacant Buildings

Registered Vacant Buildings July 0; Total 13.

Ty Smith thanked City Council for authorizing the advancement of Melissa Meachum’s position to fulltime status.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Monthly Report for July – Fire Chief Chad Bailey reported that during the month of July, Fire Department personnel responded to 85 EMS calls and 38 fire calls; conducted 17 inspections and issued three Certificates of Occupancy.

Retirement – Chief Bailey continued by reporting that Firefighter Anthony Dishner had retired as of July 31st, after 22 years of service with the Fire Department.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Monthly Report for July – Police Chief Tim Gray reported that during the month of July Princeton Police Officers responded to 556 incidents, made 33 arrests and issued 338 citations.

Ealy Drive Named – Chief Gray also reported receiving a notice from Mr. Bobby Hoge, Director of the E-911 Center, renaming the northern portion Young Street, between Thorn and Butler Streets, as “Ealy Drive.” The southern portion of Young Street, from Thorn Street to Kirk Street, will remain as Young Street.

3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Committee Member James Harvey reported the Finance and Administration Committee of Princeton City Council also met on Wednesday, August 5, 2020, after the Public Safety Committee with the following items to report out to Council and called on Finance Director Brian Blankenship to present his report.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

July 2020, Financial Report – Finance Director Brian Blankenship reported that as of the end of July, the first month of FY2021, the actual revenues collected stood at 12.29% of the budgeted amount, while actual appropriations were expended at a rate of 10%, as compared to the budget projections of 8.33% forecast for the end of July. Total funds available for City operations at the end of July were **\$927,183**.

Mr. Blankenship reviewed the noteworthy expenditures for July, as follow:

Phase II Contractor Costs	\$45,680
Fire & Police Pensions	\$30,573
Park & Recreation Appropriations	\$25,417
Library Appropriations	\$61,500

Mr. Harvey followed by reporting the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended the July 2020 Financial Report to City Council, **and he so moved.**

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Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Property Lien on 205 N. 7th Street – Vice Mayor James Harvey reported that, on the information and recommendation of the City Manager, the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, the forgiveness of the City’s lien on the property at 205 North 7th Street, in the amount of \$4895, to allow for the development of a parking lot adjacent to the Harvey Outreach Center on Straley Avenue. Further, that a time limit of two years be imposed for the completion of the aforesaid project.

Dewey Russell duly seconded the motion.

Jacqueline Rucker requested clarification on the location of the property in relation to the Harvest Outreach Center Church.

Mayor Graham explained that the property, consisting of two lots, is above the Church on N. 7th Street.

On voting, the motion carried unanimously.

B. & O. Tax Incentive – On the information and recommendation of the City Clerk, the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and Mr. Harvey so moved**, granting of the B. & O. Tax Incentive for the following new business in the City:

Missy’s Fabulous Finds – 1338 Stafford Drive – Melissa Barker, Owner.

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library Director Sheena Johnson presented the following report for August:

The Princeton Public Library still is offering a full curbside service from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

Little Free Library – The Library has been contacted by local resident Tim Swingle and his friends, the Hulls, who work with the organization of littlefreelibrary.org. We have, with the help of Eric Gatchell, incorporated a new Little Free Library on Lower Pine Street at the Earl E. Muse Memorial Park. We thought this would be a great location and is far enough away from the Library for people who may not have access to our

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institution. This Little Free Library was erected at 11:00 a.m. this morning.

Four Laptops – The Library staff is working on new items for checkout and will start with checking out four laptops within the next few weeks that also will come with laptop bags and chargers. These items will be available for a seven-day checkout with no renewals. These laptops have been provided by the West Virginia Library Commission at no cost to the Library.

Programs – For the month of August, the Library will be offering programs like Lab Squad Scientists, which includes fun, at home science experiments; Virtual Lego, Bullet Journal Tutorial; Fancy Fencing, which introduces children to the art of fencing; our Writer’s Workshop and our regularly scheduled Story Times on Thursdays and Fridays, which are available through Facebook Live.

Everyone is encouraged to check out our Facebook and Instagram accounts to keep up with what the Library is doing. Also, for a full list of events and the virtual details, please visit the Library’s website.

B. CITY ATTORNEY

The City Attorney had nothing to report to City Council.

C. CITY MANAGER

City Manager Mike Webb thanked all who had attended the virtual meeting of City Council and for their indulgence in the venue of the meeting while we all deal with the ongoing pandemic.

D. CITY CLERK

The City Clerk had nothing to report to City Council.

E. HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Director Wanda Donahue reported that it was time for the annual process to update the City’s Personnel Policy. She explained that each department director will review the Personnel Policy and recommend any changes which will be submitted to the City Attorney for review and approval. Thereafter, the City Attorney will draft an ordinance incorporating the amendments into the Personnel Policy for consideration and adoption by City Council.

VII. COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

Mayor David Graham declared City Council would forego its Roundtable remarks for this meeting.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business, the August 10, 2020, Regular Meeting of City Council adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

David E. Graham, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kenneth E. Clay, City Clerk