

**REGULAR MEETING ~ CITY COUNCIL**  
**PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA**  
**February 14, 2022**

A meeting of the Common Council for the City of Princeton, Mercer County West Virginia was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on Monday, February 14, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Mayor David Graham; Vice Mayor Marshall Lytton; Council Members Dewey Russell, Jacqueline Rucker (by telephone), James Hill, Joseph Allen and James Hawkins; City Manager Michael Webb, City Attorney Paul Cassell and City Clerk Kenneth Clay. A quorum was constituted thereby.

**I. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice Mayor Marshall Lytton invoked divine guidance for the conduct of the Council meeting; offered a prayer for those suffering from Covid-19 and for relief from the virus; prayed for all first responders, hospital workers and City employees who minister to those afflicted by Covid-19; offered a prayer of comfort for the family of Jim Spencer upon the death of his son; and prayed for a healing touch upon Council Member Jacqueline Rucker and former Princeton Mayor Tim Ealy.

Council Member James Hawkins 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 for the meeting.

**IV. PUBLIC INPUT**

- A. **Mr. Arnold Palmer** – Mr. Palmer thanked City Council members for their support and assistance in his project to build a Community Center on High Street.
  
- B. **PUBLIC HEARING** – On the City of Princeton’s application for a USDA/RDA grant for the purchase of an **all-purpose utility truck for the Fire Department** and to provide an opportunity for the public to become acquainted with the proposed project and comment on the economic and environmental impacts, service area or alternatives to the project.

Mayor Graham introduced the first public hearing as cited above, moved City Council into a public hearing at 6:35 p.m. and called for comments from the members of the public present at the meeting.

There were no comments forthcoming. Therefore, Mayor Graham declared the public hearing closed at 6:36 p.m., returned Council to its regular session and called for a  
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motion on the grant application.

**MOTION:** James Hill moved City Council approve the application for a USDA/RDA grant to purchase an all-purpose utility truck for the Princeton Fire Department.

Joseph Allen duly seconded the motion.

City Manager Mike Webb explained the USDA/RDA grant will assist in the purchase of an all purpose utility truck, in the form of a Dodge 2500 4x4 crew cab, for use by the Princeton Fire Department. Mr. Webb added that the grant will cover 55% of the total cost of the utility truck.

**On voting,** the motion carried unanimously.

- C. PUBLIC HEARING** – On the City of Princeton’s application for a USDA/RDA grant for the purchase of **two police cruisers for the Police Department**, to provide an opportunity for the public to become acquainted with the proposed project and to comment on the economic and environmental impacts, service area and alternatives to the project.

Mayor Graham introduced the second public hearing as cited above, moved City Council into a public hearing at 6:37 p.m. and called for comments from the members of the public present at the meeting.

Once again there were no comments forthcoming. Therefore, Mayor Graham declared the public hearing closed at 6:38 p.m., returned Council to its regular session and called for a motion on the grant application.

**MOTION:** James Hawkins moved City Council approve the application for a USDA/RDA grant to purchase two police cruisers for the Princeton Police Department.

Dewey Russell duly seconded the motion.

City Manager Mike Webb explained the USDA/RDA grant will assist in the purchase of two, 2022 model Dodge Durango’s to serve as police cruisers for the Princeton Police Department. Mr. Webb added this grant also will cover over 55% of the total cost of the cruisers.

**On voting,** the motion carried unanimously.

## V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A.** With corrections to paged 3, 4 and 15 duly noted by the Clerk, Mayor Graham declared the first item under the Consent Agenda approved, as corrected, and  
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committed to the record as follows:

Minutes of the January 18, 2022, Regular, Recessed Council Meeting; and

- B. With corrections to page 2 duly noted by the Clerk, Mayor Graham declared the second item under the Consent Agenda approved, as corrected, and committed to the record as follows:

Minutes of the January 24, 2022, Recessed Council Meeting.

## VI. POLICY AGENDA

### A. COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### 1. PUBLIC WORKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Committee Member Dewey Russell reported the Public Works and Recreation Committee met on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, with the following to report out to Council:

#### PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

**Public Works Monthly Report for January** – Public Works Assistant Director Eric Gatchell presented the following report:

**Service Requests** – Public Works completed nine service requests for citizens in January.

#### **Public Works Tasks in December:**

- Christmas decorations removed and stored
- Repaired and cleared several alleyways
- Maintained the main drainage ditch lines and inlets
- Continued work on the Dog Park fencing
- Repaired various street lights as identified
- Ongoing Railroad Museum door repairs
- Ongoing Recreation Center plumbing repairs

**Snow Removal Plan** – Mr. Gatchell reported that Public Works continues the work on mapping out the typical snow and ice removal routes using this year’s experiences to “fine tune” the plan. Public Works will outline its basic strategy (i.e. main roads first, then main feeder roads, then side roads and also identify the typical problem areas and special attention locations).

**Storm Drain Projects** - Public Works will begin work on two areas of storm drainage:  
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(1) the collapsing pipe at the Presbyterian Church to as least get one section of pipe installed so the hole can be closed, and (2) the 600 block of Park Avenue where holes are appearing in the yard of a residence.

**Additional Jobs** – Additional tasks on Pubic Works’ plate are the excavation of roots from the large tree removed from the Library’s side yard and place a pad on the site for a reading table; painting of the caboose and side cars for the Railroad Museum (the side cars have been relocated to Public Works’ new shop at 800 Bee Street to enable repairing and painting the cars in a better environment).

The caboose painting will be a weather dependent task. The Railroad Museum Director also has requested the installation of a mail slot in the front doors for donations from the folks utilizing the parking area for RV’s. Public Works also was tasked with changing the string lights on Mercer Street from colors to white at the request of the Community Improvement Commission. However, City Council decided to keep the multi-color bulbs for the time being.

#### PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Assistant Director Malinda Edwards presented the following report for Parks and Recreation:

**City Pool Project** – The pool contractors from Renosys Corporation had a crew on site at the City Pool working to remove the existing decking and liner, which started on January 11<sup>th</sup>. On January 24<sup>th</sup>, they left for another job site in order to let the weather conditions clear up here. They returned this week to hopefully complete the removal. A second crew arrived on February 9<sup>th</sup> to assist with the job. When the removal is completed the Department will be able to move forward with repairing the water line for the baby pool, followed by the concrete repairs.

Ms. Edwards also reported that Mayor Graham had located a specialty coating contractor out of Beckley, WV that can perform the concrete deck and pool repairs.

**Program Report** – Winter programming continues with Boys Little League Basketball and Girls Cheerleading, competing four days a week. Regular season play will continue through February 17<sup>th</sup>, followed by a double elimination tournament for the boys’ teams. The girls cheer squads also are preparing for their annual cheerleading competition which will be held in March.

The Department also continues registration for its four spring basketball leagues:

- Girls Little League for ages 8-9 and 10-12
- Boys Middle School for ages 11-14
- Boys High School for ages 15-18

**Snowflake Fundraiser** – The Department also is amidst its Snowflake Fundraiser for the winter programs. Each basketball team and cheerleading squad elects two team members to compete for Snowflake King and Queen. The top two boys and girls who collect the most “penny votes” are then crowned at the Snowflake Dance which will be held in the Princeton Recreation Center gymnasium on Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 9 p.m. All proceeds go to the Recreation Department. The fundraiser typically yields \$2,000 to \$3,000.

#### RAILROAD MUSEUM

Director Pat Smith presented the following report for the Railroad Museum:

- The Railroad Museum had 82 visitors in January
- Two projects are almost completed: (1) 400 copies of the Princetonopoly Game, at a cost of \$9,500, with each place on the game board sold at \$250, and (2) seven Historic Markers which were purchased with proceeds from the 2019 Princetonopoly Game;
- Applying for a \$5,000 grant from the National Coal Heritage Association to fund a historic walking tour featuring the markers, together with the publishing of a brochure to accompany the tour and booklets to promote the Railroad Museum and the War Museum;
- Applying for a grant of \$50,000 to purchase a trolley for use during special events, including the WV Day Celebration;
- This year’s WV Day Celebration, sponsored by the Railroad Museum, will occur on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup>;
- Numbers for the last six months: 2,103 visitors; \$3,448 in Gift Shop sales; and \$3,004 in donations; and
- She will be conducting classes at the Railroad Museum for employees on the holdings to assist visitors touring the artifacts.

#### 2. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chairman James Hill reported the Public Safety Committee met on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, immediately after the Public Works and Recreation Committee, with the following to report out to Council:

#### CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

Code Enforcement Director Ty Smith presented the following report for January:

#### **COMPUTATION OF COMPLAINTS**

##### **Summary – Property Maintenance**

Initial Complaints	280
Cumulative Complaints to Date	43,019

#### **AREA PARTOL SUMMARY**

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**Demolition/Renovation Programs Status**

Condemnations/Unsafe in Process	45
Demolitions in Appeals Process	1
Demolitions w/Novice to Proceed	1
Total Demolitions to Date	663

**Animal Control & Property Maintenance**

Complaints this Month	94
Animal Control Cases	40
Impounded (dogs 3; cats 1)	4
Adopted	2
Euthanized	0
Reclaimed	0
Rescued	7
Property Maintenance Cases	54

Currently studying for the B-1 Exam

**Building Inspection (Zoning, PM, RC)**

Building Permits (Res. 11; Com. 7)	18
Total Inspections	18
Total Project Costs	\$10,911,873.58
Permit Fees	\$9,428.00

**Flood Plain Management & Property Maintenance**

Flood Plain Determinations	18
Flood Plain Permits Issues	2
Property Maintenance Case Total	111

- New Flood Plain Mapping scheduled for completion by FEMA in 2023
- Currently preparing for the PM-64 Exam

**Zoning Official**

Certificate of Occupancy Applications: 2  
Certificate of Occupancy Inspections: 2

Zoning Board Cases: 1

**Rental Compliance**

Revenue in Jan. \$325.00; Total to Date: \$17,472.95  
Registered Units Jan.: Houses 4; Apts. 5; Total Units 9  
Cumulative Total: Houses 353; Apts. 555; Others 73; Total 981

**Vacant Buildings**

Register Vacant Buildings Jan: Registered 12; Total 27.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Fire Chief Matt Mould presented the following report for January:

**Call Report** – During the month of January the Fire Department responded to the following emergency calls:

- 4 fire calls (2 structure fires, 1 vehicle fire) both structure fires were outside the City
- 12 motor vehicle accidents/rescues
- 78 emergency medical calls
- Between July 1 and December 31, there were 641 emergency calls

The Fire Department also performed 7 fire inspections and 1 Certificate of Occupancy.

**Training** - 412 man hours were devoted to training during January, 2022.

**Vehicle Accident Billing** – The Fire Department received \$1,614 in January, bring the total for insurance billing to \$9,574 since July 1, 2021.

**Personnel Update** – Interviews were conducted on Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup> for the Fire Department's first vacancy. Ty Mitchell was recommended to the City Manager for approval to hire.

Interviews for the second vacancy were conducted on January 28<sup>th</sup>, but at this time a decision has not been made regarding this position.

**Training Center Project** – The three existing, shipping containers and the SCBA trailer were removed from the site by Recycle WV.

A donation of \$25,000 also was received from the City of Bluefield toward completion of the Project and four new shipping containers have been delivered and waiting to be moved into place and modified if needed.

**Departmental Certifications:**

- Firefighters Safer, Peyton and Franklin attended a Firefighter Level 2 Class and received their certifications;
- Captain Thomason and Firefighter Peyton completed their EMT-Basic recertification;
- Lieutenant Shagoury completed his Paramedic recertification; and
- Chief Mould completed his Fire Inspector recertification.

- The Fire Department currently has three personnel certified as Fire Inspector I and one certified as Fire Inspector II.

Council Member Hill inquired as to the type of containers ordered for the Training Center.

Chief Mould replied that the containers are identical to the previous ones and are water and weather tight.

#### POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Tim Gray presented the following report:

**Call Numbers** – During the month of January the Princeton Police Officers responded to 294 calls for assistance; made 29 arrests and issued 63 citations.

**Surveillance Cameras** – Chief Gray reported he participated in a ride around that was conducted today with the company representative supplying the City’s first surveillance cameras to decide on the placement of the cameras and are pending the City Manager’s approval. The Chief added that none of the locations read vehicle license plates.

**Elder Abuse** – Chief Gray reported he had noticed an increase in elder abuse recently and added that the Princeton PD would be working with local human services’ organizations to reduce the frequency of elder abuse in the City.

**Training** – The Chief further advised that it had not been confirmed that the organization “Street Cops” would be providing a class on drug interdiction for local law enforcement agencies.

**New K-9 Unit** – Thanks to a gift from Cole Auto Group, the Police Department has purchased and will be deploying a third K-9 Unit that will be on the street by March.

**Grant Application** – Chief Gray continued by reporting he would be applying for a grant to fund a new security system for the Police Department to replace the old system that has begun emitting background noise. The new system will cost \$4,000 to \$5,000.

**ROCIC** – Chief Gray informed that Captain Woodard and he would be attending the national conference of the Regional Organized Crime Information Center (ROCIC) in Dallas, Texas the dates of March 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>. The Chief explained that the expenses for the conference are paid by the organization. It is an honor to represent the State’s law enforcement officers in this capacity, the Chief stated in closing his report.

### 3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Marshall Lytton reported the Finance and Administration Committee met on CC-02/14/22



Wednesday, February 9, 2022, immediately following the Public Safety Committee, with the following items to report out to Council:

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

**January 2022, Financial Report** – Finance Director Brian Conner reported that as of the end of January, the seventh month of FY2022, the actual revenues collected stood at 65.20% of the budgeted amount, while actual appropriations were expended at a rate of 60.20%, as compared to the budget projections of 58.33% forecast for the end of January. Total funds available for City operations at the end of January were **\$3,256,294**.

Mr. Conner followed by reporting the following noteworthy expenditures for January:

Library Quarterly Allocation . . . . .	\$31,375.00
Traveler’s Insurance . . . . .	\$14,802.00
Holiday Outdoor Décor . . . . .	\$12,521.57

Mr. Lytton continued by reporting the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended the January 2022, Financial Report to City Council, **and he so moved**.

James Hill duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Ratification of Judy Akers’ Appointment to PHCC Board** – Mr. Lytton next reported that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, ratification of the appointment of Judy Akers, 87 Burgess Street, Princeton, to the Board of Directors for the Princeton Health Care Center.

Dewey Russell duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Business & Occupation Tax Incentive** – Mr. Lytton further reported that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, the following business for the one-year, 100%, Business and Occupation Tax Incentive for new businesses in the City of Princeton:

Trusted in Nature, LLC – 851 Mercer Street – Holley Odle, Owner.

Joseph Allen duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Council Member Marshall Lytton presented the following Library report on behalf of Interim Library Director Laura Buchanan:

The **Friends of the Library Use Book Sale** will take place on February 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> and on March 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Upcoming programs are as follow:**

For a craft that looks good enough to eat, the Library's **Adult Crafternoon** on February 12<sup>th</sup> will show you how to make a sweet little box of chocolates that will melt the heart. Call the Library to sign up.

**Banned Books' Club** – On February 17<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. We will be discussing Benjamin Alire Saez's book, "The Inexplicable Logic of My Life." Come join the discussion where you can be judge and jury in deciding if this book about faith, loss and grief should be banned.

**Welcome to the Hundred Acre Wood** – We originally had this scheduled for January, but due to the weather had to reschedule for February 18<sup>th</sup> at 11 am. This is a fun craft and snack program to celebrate A. A. Milne's beloved bear, Winnie the Pooh.

For those interested in chess, we have **Chess Club** on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6 pm. This program is run by Noah Stafford, the 2021 West Virginia Chess Association's Junior Chess Champion. From novice to experienced, all are welcome.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11 am, you can join **Life Lessons Book Club** for coffee and a discussion about one of New York Times best sellers, "Everything I Never Told You."

March 4<sup>th</sup> the Library will host a **Dr. Seuss Birthday Celebration** with food, stories, crafts and games at 11 am.

**WVU Extension Services: Create Better Health** – Will feature a tasty class on how to make health smoothies and sandwich wraps. This yummy event was supposed to take place in January, but circumstances beyond our control forced us to reschedule to March 8<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. Sign up is requested in order to ensure there are enough tasty samples for everyone participating.

***The Library continues to provide weekly story times in person on Fridays at 11:00 a.m. which are followed by a craft.***

Don't forget our other monthly Library programs including Cinema Society, D. & D. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, PPL Art Club and Lego Club. All information may be found under events on the Library web page or through our FaceBook page.

Lastly, Mr. Lytton reported that a notary public will be available at the Princeton Library in the near future.

#### PRINCETON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (PEDA)

Economic Development Authority Director, Samuel Lusk, presented the following report:

PEDA reports that organizational meetings have been moved to quarterly; Committee and Council Reports will follow each quarterly meeting.

PEDA reports that a Creative Service Agreement has been signed with Starry Eyes Media for Custom Website Development, Brand Development, Graphic Design, Photography and a Marketing Strategy.

- The website will feature elements such as business row, an available property listing within City limits and business incentives;
- The available property listing will be tied in with commercial properties on our vacant building registry by way of individual property owner approval;
- Preliminary concepts for the logo, marketing slogan, and public branding have been identified and should be finalized by our next report;
- Mr. Lusk reported that he has applied for a West Virginia Local Economic Development Assistance Grant that will help cover a portion of this project. Notification of award will be announced in the coming weeks by the WV Legislature.

Mr. Lusk further reported that he had applied for grant funding through AEP's Community Discretionary Fund to upgrade the size of our two TV's and to purchase equipment for our classrooms.

- PEDA plans on using these spaces for business development trainings; we are actively looking at a number of options to provide this resource, but none have been finalized as yet.

PEDA reports that their agreement with WVU Extension Service is ongoing for the completion of a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) Analysis.

- We have provided the Extension Service with substantial GIS mapping of our local businesses.
- They will evaluate this data and combine it with other publicly available information to produce a report.
- As part of this process, a representative from the Extension Service, Michael Dougherty, will tour Princeton and collect public input. The tentative date set of this is April 6<sup>th</sup>. He will be invited as a speaker during Committee that day as

well as PEDDA's next meeting that evening.

- The SWOT Analysis will serve as a baseline economic gauge for our next Comprehensive Plan.

#### COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

Economic Development Specialist and CIC Chairman, Sam Lusk, presented the following report for the Community Improvement Commission:

- CIC reports that the group is actively looking at how to use commercially unappealing city-owned tracts of land. This discussion has gravitated around green spaces and edible landscapes that could serve our community. CIC is working with Code Enforcement to get a full picture of what is possible and the best use of a project like this.
- CIC reports that the body is searching for two board members to fill vacancies. It is expected that the members will have names to present to Council for consideration in April.

#### B. CITY ATTORNEY

City Attorney Paul Cassell presented the following ordinance for first reading by title:

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE 1900, "PERSONNEL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES," OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA: MILITARY LEAVE**

Mr. Cassell explained that this ordinance will increase the amount of military leave accorded city employees from 30 to 45 days per annum.

**MOTION:** James Hill moved City Council accept the ordinance on first reading.

Joseph Allen duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

#### PUBLIC INPUT (continued from p.1)

**Michael Barlow, 106 Douglas Street, Princeton** – Mr. Barlow addressed Council with a parking complaint related to the No Parking Zone in front of his house and the people dropping off and picking up their children at Mercer School. He contended that something must be done to relieve the congestion at this location that results in people blocking and/or parking in his driveway. Mr. Barlow also asserted that he had spoken to the school's Principal who has not done anything in response to the situation. Mr. Barlow concluded by stating that he needed help on this matter.

Council Member Hill thanked Mr. Barlow for coming to the meeting and advised that the CC-02/14/22

issue would be referred to the appropriate people.

Mayor Graham responded by referring Mr. Barlow's request to Police Chief Tim Gray and City Manager Mike Webb.

### C. CITY MANAGER

City Manager Mike Webb presented the following review of projects and activities occurring in the City:

**5G Towers** – 5G towers planned for the City will be installed in late March at 13 locations on poles already in position.

**Bark Park** – Preparations continue on the Dog Park at the Princeton Recreation Center with an opening planned for late February-March after the construction of a fence, the installation of a fire hydrant and signage. The benches have not been delivered, but are expected to arrive any day.

**Disc Golf** – Disc Golf is growing in Princeton and surrounding areas as indicated by the two to three tournaments held every year in City Park and Glenwood Park. A tournament is scheduled for to begin in Princeton on March 26<sup>th</sup> with tier three level players competing.

**Digital Crosswalk Sign** – Mr. Webb reported he had worked with Tim McMillan at the DOH to have the digital crosswalk sign at Center and Mercer Streets replaced, which is now in place and working again.

**Solar Powered Speed Limit Signs** – With the arrival of two, new solar-powered, digital speed limits signs, the City now has three signs up and working.

**Bus Stop Shelters** – Thanks to a \$2,000 grant from the Community Foundation of the Virginias, the City will have two, new bus shelters. One will be placed at Mercer and Bee Streets, while a second will be placed at McKinley Avenue and Roundhouse Road.

**Thorn Street LED's** – With the addition of LED street lights on Thorn Street one can see much better all the way down to the Athens Crossroads and, with the completion of this section, the project to convert street lights to LED's is three-fourths completed. Also, Ingleside Road to Rt. 460 has been approved by AEP for new LED's.

**Thorn Street Sidewalks** – After a rebid of the project by the DOH, the Thorn Street Sidewalks' Project is set to begin and will replace 1,400 linear feet of sidewalk on the south side of Thorn Street. The grant amount was estimated at \$200,000, which required an 80-20 match by the City.

**West Main Street Sidewalks** – The bid has been awarded by the DOH on the West Main Street Sidewalk Project that will cover the construction of 1,000 linear feet of new sidewalk on the north side of West Main Street from the War Museum to the end of the rock wall.

**CDBG for Demolitions** – The City has applied for a \$250,000 community development block grant to demolish 45 dilapidated structures in the City, with a second public hearing on the grant application scheduled for Wednesday, February 15th at 9:00 a.m.

**Rogers Street Stormwater Project** – The engineering work continues on the Rogers Street Stormwater Project by obtaining the easements necessary to install new drainage lines in the vicinity of the Pepsi Plant.

**Fire Training Center** – In a cooperative effort, the City of Bluefield has donated \$25,000 toward upgrading the City's Fire Training Center. Currently, preparations are being made to perform the power work for the facility as the City requests the County Commission to also donate \$25,000 for the project.

**USDA Grants** – Applications have been filed with the USDA-RDA for grant funds in the amount of \$71,000 for the purchase of two, Durango police cruisers and a Dodge 2500 utility truck for the Fire Department.

**East Main Street Development** – Southern Highlands is remodeling the building at 1426-28 East Main Street to house its administrative offices.

**Highway 55 Project** – The restaurant chain Highway 55 has purchased the lot of the City's former police station on Courthouse Road from the Princeton Economic Development Authority and will develop the new site for a new Highway 55 restaurant.

**GIS Capability** – The City is in the process of upgrading its GIS capability which will improve the charting and mapping of all property in the City. The 45 properties identified for demolition will provide a demonstration of the program's enhanced capabilities.

#### D. CITY CLERK

The City Clerk had nothing to report to City Council

#### E. HUMAN RESOURCES

**Personnel Policy Amendment** – Human Resources Director Brian Blankenship reported that the ordinance originating from the Human Resources Department, which had its first reading tonight, amends the City's Personnel Guidelines and Procedures to increase the amount of military leave for City employees from 30 to 45 days and will serve future City employees for years to come as they serve in the National Guard and Reserves.

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## VII. COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

**James Hill** – Councilman Hill commented that Covid-19 continues to pose a problem with no beds currently available in the hospital. He stressed the importance of the vaccine in halting the advance of the pandemic.

Mr. Hill continued by reporting that calls at the Princeton Rescue Squad have increased for shut-ins being found deceased and urged everyone to check on the elderly that he described as frightened by Covid-19 and afraid to go out anywhere.

Mr. Hill concluded by acknowledging that City management has been exemplary of late as reflected in the degree of progress the City is making on all fronts.

**Jacqueline Rucker** – Council Member Rucker commented that she was happy to join the meeting tonight by telephone and expressed appreciation for all the prayers on her behalf. She also emphasized the need to continue taking Covid-19 seriously and getting vaccinated to prevent it from spreading further.

**James Hawkins** – Councilman Hawkins thanked everyone for coming out to the Council meeting and thanked Public Works employees for their work in keeping the City's streets clear this winter.

Mr. Hawkins continued by commenting that he is excited about what the City is doing and the direction in which it is going with new projects and programs to benefit the citizens. He added that he can't wait to see the next level the City attains in its growth and development.

**Marshall Lytton** – Councilman Lytton expressed appreciation for Mike Barlow coming out to the meeting and addressing the Council about his concerns on Douglas Street.

Mr. Lytton thanked everyone for coming out to the Council meeting and urged them to be safe and take all necessary and available precautions regarding Covid-19.

**Joseph Allen** – Councilman Allen wished a happy Valentine's Day to all the ladies present and thanked the City employees for their excellent work on behalf of the citizens of Princeton. Mr. Allen acknowledged the good work of City Manager Mike Webb, Sam Lusk and the Princeton Economic Development Authority and predicted the City will grow bigger, better and achieve even greater results in the immediate future.

Mr. Allen commented that the increase in military leave time for City employees is well deserved and one thing we owe to those employees who also serve in the National Guard and Reserves.

**Mayor David Graham** – Mayor Graham remarked to Mrs. Rucker that the other  
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Council Members have been missing her at meetings and would continue praying for her to get well soon.

The Mayor continued by acknowledging all health care workers and first responders who are working under extreme conditions, especially in light of the pandemic and the ever increasing number of drug overdoses. He also recognized the excellent work of the Police Department, Public Works and Code Enforcement Department and noted that the streets have been in excellent condition this winter.

Lastly, Mayor Graham asked everyone to remember the Spencer family and thanked Mr. Barlow for coming to the meeting and advising Council of parking issues on Douglas Street.

#### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Graham adjourned the February 14, 2022, meeting of Princeton City Council at 7:48 p.m.