

REGULAR MEETING ~ CITY COUNCIL  
PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA  
December 14, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Princeton, Mercer County, West Virginia was held by teleconference due to the Covid-19 virus on Monday, December 14, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Mayor David Graham; Vice Mayor James Harvey; Council Members Marshall Lytton, James Hill, Dewey Russell, Jacqueline Rucker and Joseph Allen; City Manager Michael Webb, City Attorney Paul Cassell and City Clerk Kenneth Clay. A quorum was constituted thereby.

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**I. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Citing I Peter 5:10, Council Member James Hill prayed for the healing of the all citizens and employees of the City of Princeton; for the future protection from the covid-19 virus of the citizens of Princeton, Mercer County and the public health personnel; prayed for divine guidance for City Council in making decisions that will affect the public health and safety of City residents and that all people take the time to reach out to the sick and shut in during the Christmas Season.

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. RESOLUTION**

Mayor Graham read the following Resolution of Council honoring Charleston Police Office Cassie Johnson:

***RESOLUTION***

***WHEREAS***, Officer Cassie Johnson selflessly devoted herself to serving and protecting the residents of the City of Charleston; and

***WHEREAS***, Officer Johnson volunteered her services willingly while understanding the dangers police officers face every day in the line of duty; and

***WHEREAS***, Patrolman Cassie Johnson did not withhold the full measure of devotion in answering her heart's calling to become a law enforcement officer; and

***WHEREAS***, her tragic death in the line of duty is a grievous loss to her family, the law enforcement community, the City of Charleston and the State of West Virginia; and

***WHEREAS***, Officer Cassie Johnson's sacrifice will never be forgotten by those

who salute her dedication and life of service which will stand forever as a guiding beacon for all those who will follow her into law enforcement.

***NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED:***

That the Common Council of the City of Princeton honors Cassie Johnson and her devotion to duty; convey heartfelt condolences to her family, the Charleston Police Department and the City of Charleston; unite our hearts with her brothers and sisters in the law enforcement community in mourning Cassie Johnson’s untimely death; and pledge our unwavering support for the “Long Blue Line.”

***IN WITNESS WHEREOF*** we, the members of the Common Council of the City of Princeton, have hereunto set our hands and caused the great seal of the City of Princeton to be affixed this 14<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2020.

David E. Graham Mayor	James E. Harvey Vice Mayor	Marshall V. Lytton Council Member	Dewey W. Russell Council Member
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Jacqueline Rucker Council Member	James V. Hill Council Member	Joseph G. Allen Council Member
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**IV. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was no public input.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

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

Minutes of the November 9, 2020, Regular City Council Meeting.

**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, December 9, 2020, with the following to report out to City Council:

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

Chairperson Jacqueline Rucker presented the following Public Works report:

**Public Works Monthly Report for November** – Assistant Director Eric Gatchell had reported that in November the Public Works Department started work to install a drain

for the Cat's Meow at Maple and Street and Stafford Drive, but encountered too many utility issues to continue. However, Public Works contracted work to repave the strip along the Stafford Drive portion to keep the water from getting onto the business's lot from Stafford Drive, which hopefully will eliminate the water issues for the business.

Public Works has installed one set of solar powered "Welcome to Princeton" lights at the Ingleside Road location. The remaining two sets will be installed in the near future. The Department continued its regular duties of keeping storm drains and inlets cleaned, picking up and returning shopping carts, miscellaneous trash and debris removal, and upkeep of the City's road signage. Spreader trucks were out two times thus far in the early morning hours to treat for slick road conditions. Public Works now has three additional snowplow trucks that can be fitted with plows very quickly.

Crews performed 25 service requests in November, including one that is ongoing on Straley Avenue.

The Public Works Department also completed the following jobs in November:

**Asphalt Jobs:**

- Public Works has not accomplished much asphalt work while focusing on leaves and storm drain repairs.

**Gravel Work:**

- Continuing to meet needs in the City as citizen requests are received.

**Storm Water Work:**

- Opened a large sinkhole off South Wickham Avenue, but poor soil conditions in the area were determined as the cause of the problem.

**Tree Work:**

- Park Avenue tree in the storm drain: Still need to remove a stump with a large gas line nearby. A stump grinder might be rented, unless Public Works is able to clear the storm line without completely removing the stump. The resident at 507 Park Avenue claims this pipe is clogged and causing their basement to flood. However, it is believed the main issues are related to the sewer line, not the storm drainage line.

**Miscellaneous:**

- Assisted the Library with a lighting upgrade and in cleaning the Gilbert Center Book Sale storage room.
- Continued the cleanup and grading work on the lot next to City hall that also included stump and debris removal by Public Works.
- Christmas decorations and string lighting – Most decorations are up, a few have wiring issues, as well as several decorative street lights around the courthouse. New red and green LED bulbs have been purchased that will be mingled with the white bulbs on the string lights.
- Star ornaments are being damaged regularly by delivery trucks, but crews will attempt to keep them repaired and moved higher.

#### PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

City Manager Michael Webb presented the following report on behalf of Recreation Director Amanda McCabe.

**Recreation Center Program Report** – The Recreation Department’s status remains the same, being open only on Monday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for a karate class. The Rec Center currently does not have any rentals booked for the month of December and only one small baby shower booked for January.

**Park Board Meeting** – The Park Board met on November 24<sup>th</sup> and all members agreed not to hold any registrations for programming until further notice. We are very glad that registration was not conducted for the Department’s winter leagues with Covid-19 cases increasing, especially now that no winter sports are being allowed for middle and high schools until mid-January. Therefore, no decision will be made until January 2021, regarding registration for spring basketball, which typically begins on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, after reassessing the situation.

**Projects** – The Recreation Department continues to operate with a maintenance staff of two men, one fulltime and one part-time. With mowing and weed eating not required, the crew has been working on the following outdoor projects:

- Painted the stage in City Park
- Repaired the wooden trash receptacles in City Park
- Built one new wooden receptacle
- Painted lines on the Rec Center parking lot
- Repaired the privacy fence at the City Pool
- Repaired the siding on the Rec Center Building
- Currently the crew is working on the Pool’s bathhouse where numerous ADA improvements are required in the men’s and women’s restrooms, with some concrete work

**Disc Golf Tournament** – Greg Bishop held another Disc Golf Tournament on Friday

and Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, with the first round on Friday at the City Park as a “glow round” with lights on the baskets and discs.

Saturday was a doubles’ tournament held on the course at Glenwood Park. Eighty players participated, making up 40 teams consisting of 14 pro teams and 26 amateur teams. Players were from four different states: WV, VA, TN and NC.

## 2. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chairman James Hill reported the Public Safety Committee of Princeton City Council met on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, after the Public Works and Recreation Committee, with the following to report out to Council:

### CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

**Monthly Report for November 2020** – Chairman Hill presented the following report on behalf of Code Enforcement Director Ty Smith:

#### **COMPUTATION OF COMPLAINTS**

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

Initial Complaints	290
Cumulative Complaints to Date –	39,316

##### **Demolition/Renovation Programs Status**

Condemnations/Unsafe in Process	11
Demolitions in Process (out for bid)	11
Renovations in Process	0
Demolitions w/Notice to Proceed	5
Total Demolitions to Date	683

##### **Animal Control & Property Maintenance**

Complaints this Month	21
Impounded (dogs 4; cats 4; other 0)	8
Adopted	0
Euthanized	0
Reclaimed	2
Rescued	0
Property Maintenance	66
Bookkeeping & Liens	4 (tracking payments for demo & abatement charges)

##### **Building Inspection**

Building Permits (Res. 14; Com. 7; Signs 2)	23
Total Inspections	18
Total Project Costs	\$423,886.00

Permit Fees \$2,258.00

**Flood Plain Management & Property Maintenance**

Flood Plain Permits Issues 6 (Currently working through 2017-6 permits for flood plain files)  
Property Maintenance 20

**Zoning Official**

Certificate of Occupancy Applications: 1  
Certificate of Occupancy Inspections: 1

Zoning Board Cases: 1

**Rental Compliance**

Revenue in Nov: \$50; Total to Date: \$13,573.50  
Registered Units Nov: Houses 1; Apts. 0; Total 14.  
Cumulative Total: House 298; Apts. 505; Other 67; Total 870

**Vacant Buildings**

Registered Vacant Buildings Nov. 0; Total 14.

**New Businesses**

Bucha Brewhouse reopened

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Chad Bailey presented the following report:

**New Hire Justice Shafer** – Chief Bailey reported the recent hiring of the Fire Department’s newest Firefighter, Justice Shafer, is working out well. The Chief added that Mr. Shafer came highly recommended by his previous employer, had scored the highest ever on the Department’s written exam and is a quick learner as indicated by his performance in the Firefighter I Course.

**Firefighter Alec Gunnoe’s Apprenticeship** – Chief Bailey reported that Firefighter Alec Gunnoe had completed his Apprenticeship Program with the Fire Department that involved a rigorous 3,000 hours of class work and 6,000 hours of on-the-job training.

**EMT Class** – The Fire Chief further informed the Committee the Fire Department would be offering an upcoming, State sanctioned EMT Class in January that will be free of charge to participants. The Chief explained this class represents an excellent opportunity, in that the class otherwise would cost \$300 - \$500 to attend. Also, he advised the initial class meeting will be held at the Princeton Fire Department on January 4<sup>th</sup>.

**November Activity Report** – The Fire Chief reported that during the month of November the Fire Department responded to 59 EMS calls and 30 Fire calls; conducted 11 inspections, issued one certificate of occupancy and issued 29 citations. Also, Lieutenant Croy and he recently received their certifications as Fire Inspectors and some of the numbers cited above include inspections conducted by them.

#### POLICE DEPARTMENT

**Sgt. Faris** – Police Chief Tim Gray reported that Friday of this week would be Sgt. Faris' last day with the Princeton Police Department as he prepares to assume his duties as Sheriff of Summers County on the first of the year.

**November Activity Report** – Chief Gray reported that in November the Police Department responded to 396 calls for assistance, made 23 arrests and issued 77 citations.

**Commendation for Patrolman Leftwich** – Chief Gray reported that Patrolman Earl Leftwich, who has nine years with the Police Department, received a Certificate of Congressional Recognition from Congresswoman Carol Miller “in recognition of outstanding and invaluable service to the community.”

**Funeral Service in Charleston, WV** – Chief Gray reported that seven officers from the Princeton Police Department had attended the funeral service for City of Charleston Patrolman Cassie Johnson, who had lost her life in the line of duty.

**Interviews** – Chief Gray further reported that the Police Department was conducting interviews and psychological examinations for qualified candidates to fill two vacancies.

**Demolition** – The Chief advised that the dumpster was in place at the old Police Station and all is ready to begin the demolition of the station building.

**Honor Guard** – On inquiry by Chairman Hill, Chief Gray informed that he is forming an honor guard at the Princeton Police Department to serve during promotion ceremonies, recognition services and at funerals upon request. The Chief added that five officers currently are on the teams with one more individual wanted.

**Resolution Honoring Charleston Patrolman Cassie Johnson** – Chairman James Hill reported the Public Safety Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, the resolution honoring the life and service of Charleston Patrolman Cassie Johnson who lost her life in the line of duty.

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

### 3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Marshall Lytton reported the Finance and Administration Committee of the Princeton City Council met after the Public Safety Committee with the following to report out to Council and called on Brian Blankenship to present the Finance Department's report.

#### FINANCE DEPARTMENT

**November 2020, Financial Report** – Finance Director Brian Blankenship reported that as of the end of November, the fifth month of FY2021, the actual revenues collected stood at 57.27% of the budgeted amount, while actual appropriations were expended at a rate of 43.07% , as compared to the budget projections of 41.65% forecast for the end of November. Total funds available for City operations at the end of November were **\$2,107,816.**

Mr. Blankenship then reviewed the noteworthy expenditures for November:

Capital Equipment . . . . .	.\$ 41,886
Fire & Police Pensions . . . . .	\$ 30,573
City Manager Fund Transfers . . . . .	.\$303,370

Chairman Lytton continued by reporting the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended the November, 2020 Financial Statements to City Council, **and he so moved.**

Dewey Russell duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Remaining Half-day of Christmas Eve** – Mr. Lytton reported the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, granting the remaining half-day of Christmas Eve as holiday time for City employees. (The other half-day had been granted by the State of West Virginia.)

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

**B. & O. Tax Incentive** – Chairman Lytton continued by reporting that on the recommendation of the City Clerk, the following application for the B. & O. Tax Incentive for new businesses in the City of Princeton is presented for City Council's consideration and approval:

**Mountaineer Market, LLC** – convenience store, 605 Rogers St., Donna Lowe, Owner.



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**MOTION:** Chairman Marshall Lytton moved City Council approve the B. & O. Tax Inventive for Mountaineer Market, LLC.

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Management Services Agreement between PCH and WVU Hospitals, Inc.**

Chairman Lytton **moved** City Council table consideration of the Management Services Agreement between PCH and WVU Hospitals, Inc.

Joseph Allen duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

**PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Library Director Sheena Johnson presented the following report:

The Princeton Public Library still is open Monday through Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and continues offering full curbside service from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. These services include copying, faxing, scanning and checking out of materials.

For December, the Library is having programs like our Candy Cane Factory, which was on December 2<sup>nd</sup> (in person); Mail a Hug, which debuted on December 9<sup>th</sup>; and our Holiday Card Bonanza on December 14<sup>th</sup> (in person). The Library also will have programs like Natures Creation, which shows you how to make critter friendly décor and was featured on December 8<sup>th</sup>; and Celebrating Austen, which celebrates this beloved author with a discussion, crafting, and tea and cookies on December 16<sup>th</sup> (in person).

Don't forget some of our regular favorites such as Drop in Tech Time through Zoom, Life Lessons Book Club (in person and through Zoom), and our regularly scheduled story times on Facebook Live on Thursdays and Fridays, with the inclusion of a Friday craft and tutorial.

As always, please visit the Library's on-line calendar for more details on events and for available Zoom links. Also, please join the Library's You Tube Videos and Facebook Live Feeds online.

**COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION**

Sheen Johnson also reported that the Community Improvement Commission met earlier today, December 14<sup>th</sup>, and reported the following:

- The Christmas decorations throughout the City , including the tree at the fountain, have generated a lot of positive feedback;
- The Bucha Brewhouse and Bistro at 943 Mercer Street is open for business once again after extensive closure for remodeling; and
- This year’s Downtown Countdown on New Year’s Eve will be celebrated via a special Zoom broadcast and invited everyone to enjoy the festivities virtually.

#### B. CITY ATTORNEY

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

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE 1900, “PERSONNEL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES,” OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF PRINCETON, WEST VIRGINIA.**

Mr. Cassell explained that, upon passage, the ordinance would eliminate the attendance bonus program and enact vision insurance for employees and their qualifying family members.

**MOTION:** Dewey Russell moved City Council accept the ordinance on first reading.

Joseph Allen duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

#### C. CITY MANAGER

City Manager Mike Webb thanked those who participated in the virtual Council meeting and followed by thanking the City’s employees for their good work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### D. CITY CLERK

The City Clerk wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

#### E. HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Director Brian Blankenship had nothing to report to City Council.

Mayor David Graham reported that Mr. Danny Dillow now is the City’s Finance Director, while Brian Blankenship has been appointed to the position of Human Resources Director after Wanda Donahue’s retirement.

### VII. COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

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Once again, citing current conditions, Mayor Graham dispensed with the Council's Roundtable.

#### VIII. RECESS

There being no further business, at 7:05 p.m. Mayor Graham recessed the Council meeting until Friday, December 18, 2020, at 1:30 p.m.

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David E. Graham, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Kenneth E. Clay, City Clerk