

REGULAR MEETING ~ CITY COUNCIL
PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
February 8, 2021

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 pandemic, on Monday, February 8, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Mayor David Graham; Vice Mayor James Harvey; Council Member Marshall Lytton, Jacqueline Rucker, James Hill, Dewey Russell and Joseph 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

Councilman Joe Allen offered thanksgiving for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Princeton on City Council and to grant Council Members the wisdom in doing so; prayed for all the essential workers who minister to others and continue provide services to the public during the Covid-19 pandemic; cited Psalm 91 in praying for deliverance from the pandemic and for those families that have lost loved ones; prayed for the Almighty's protection for all City workers who go about their daily duties on our behalf and asked for divine guidance in the conduct of this evening's Council meeting.

Vice Mayor James Harvey 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 ~ RESOLUTIONS ~ PRESENTATIONS

There were no special presentations.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

PUBLIC HEARING: On authorizing the transfer and exchange of parcels of property between WV American Water and the City of Princeton to enable the construction of the Bell Street Booster Station.

Mayor Graham moved City Council into the public hearing at 6:34 p.m. by reading the following information into the record:

On Monday, the 8th day of February, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., the Princeton City Council, meeting by teleconference, will conduct a public hearing on the transfer and exchange of two parcels of real property off Hylton Avenue, between Upper Bell and Lower Bell Avenues, by the WV American Water Company and the City of Princeton, to-wit: The WV American Water Company will convey an existing booster station site to the City of Princeton in exchange for a similar, nearby booster site. The Water Company will quitclaim the existing booster station site to the City of Princeton and

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the City will convey (with special warranty) a new booster site to the Water Company.

Mayor Graham called for comments from the public regarding the Bell Street Booster Station proposal.

There being no comments forthcoming, Mayor Graham closed the public hearing at 6:35 p.m.

MOTION: James Harvey moved City Council approve the exchange of parcels between the West Virginia American Water Company and the City of Princeton and authorize the City Manager to sign any and all documents related thereto.

James Hill duly seconded the motion.

Council Member Hill commented that he had viewed the two parcels of property which he described as very small tracts, one beside the other.

On voting, the motion carried unanimously.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Graham offered the following items on the Consent Agenda for consideration:

A. Minutes of the December 22, 2020, Special City Council Meeting.

There being no corrections or additions, Mayor Graham committed the minutes of the December 22, 2020, Special Council Meeting to the record.

B. Minutes of the January 11, 2021, Regular City Council Meeting.

There being no corrections or additions, Mayor Graham committed the minutes of the January 11, 2021, Regular City Council Meeting to the record.

VI. POLICY AGENDA

A. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PUBLIC WORKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairperson Jacqueline Rucker reported that the Public Works and Recreation Committee met on Friday, February 5, 2021, with the following items and information to report out to City Council:

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Public Works' Monthly Report for January – Assistant Public Works Director Eric
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Gatchell had reported that in the month of January the Public Works 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. Mr. Gatchell also advised that the report issued to Council in December remains in effect, with the hope of starting to address the issues therein as soon as the weather allows.

The Assistant Director next reported that the Public Works Department is back to a full complement of personnel after a period of illness and had responded to 15 service requests in January, but the only storm water work accomplished in January was some ditch work along Rogers Street.

Snow removal and de-icing came into play on the weekend of the 16th with a crew working the streets on Saturday and an all-nighter Sunday night in preparation for the following week. Crews pulled another all-nighter on Thursday the 28th, followed by more snow and ice removal on Sunday the 31st, and continued into the week with overtime work with call-ins early Tuesday morning to treat persistent icy conditions.

Equipment – In a related matter, Mr. Gatchell reported to the Committee the loss of one older salt spreader to a malfunction, but added the Department still has both gravel spreaders and three salt spreaders functional. Public Works also has acquired three new, updated plows and another spreader box to better prepare the fleet for any upcoming snow and ice events. In addition, a used snow blower attachment has been acquired that will work with the existing skid steer. This will help significantly with clearing sidewalks and the center of Mercer Street during large snows.

Public Works also has ordered a new Bobcat skid steer loader with delivery expected in a few months. The machine will serve primarily as a planer vehicle with the new milling machine attachment to attack the potholes as soon as the weather breaks.

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Chairperson Jacqueline Rucker presented the following report on behalf of Recreation Director Amanda McCabe:

Recreation Center – Recreation Director Amanda McCabe had reported that the Recreation Department's status remained the same by being open only on Monday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. for a karate class. Also, she had reported that no rentals had been reserved for the month of February.

Mrs. McCabe had continued by reporting that, with no registration occurring for the Spring Leagues, it has been decided that, beginning in March, the Recreation Department will begin refunding everyone who pre-paid registration fees. Also, to date only \$1,700

of \$13,000 in registration fees had been refunded. An announcement will be posted on the Recreation Center's Facebook page regarding the refunds, Mrs. McCabe advised.

The work on the City Pool's bath house has been completed by the Recreation Department's maintenance crews, which means the facility is now up to ADA standards.

Also, as of the 3rd of this month, Recreation's part-time maintenance worker will not return to work until the spring, while the fulltime employee has been furloughed with benefits secured while on unemployment and awaiting the call to return to work.

Lastly, Mrs. McCabe reported that two heating units at the Recreation Center had been repaired at a cost of \$130.

Lighting on the Recreation Center's Parking Lot – Mrs. McCabe reported to the Committee that AEP had completed the installation of new LED lights on the Recreation Center's parking lot at the end of January, which had enhanced the Recreation Center's surroundings significantly.

RAILROAD MUSEUM

City Manager Mike Webb reported that, although the Railroad Museum has been closed to the public, work has continued on the model railroad to add the final details of the display and to finish the electrical work. Also, Mr. Webb advised he would have more information to report next month.

2. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Committee Chairman James Hill reported the Public Safety Committee of Princeton City Council met immediately after the Public Works and Recreation Committee on Friday, February 5, 2021, with the following to report out to Council and called on Code Enforcement Director Ty Smith to present his report, as follows:

CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

Monthly Report for January 2021 – Director Ty Smith presented the following report for the Code Enforcement Department:

COMPUTATION OF COMPLAINTS

Summary – Property Maintenance

Initial Complaints	290
Cumulative Complaints to Date –	39,606

Demolition/Renovation Programs Status

Condemnations this Month	6
Demolitions in Process (out for bid)	6
Demolitions w/Notice to Proceed	2

Total Demolitions to Date 685

Animal Control & Property Maintenance

Complaints this Month	89
Animal Control Cases	21
Impounded (dogs 3; cats 3)	6
Adopted	0
Euthanized	0
Reclaimed	3
Rescued	0
Property Maintenance Cases	68

- Ms. Meachum currently is studying for the B-1 exam

Building Inspection (Zoning, PM, RC)

Total Cases	64
Building Permits (Res. 7; Com. 2; Demo 1)	10
Total Inspections	11
Total Project Costs	\$93,192.00
Permit Fees	\$ 778.00

Flood Plain Management & Property Maintenance

Flood Plain Determinations	8
Flood Plain Permits Issued	1
(Completed review of all permits back through 2016)	
Property Maintenance	44

- Ben Love currently is preparing for the PM-64 Exam

Zoning Official

Certificate of Occupancy Applications:	2
Certificate of Occupancy Inspections:	1
Zoning Board Cases:	1

Rental Compliance

Revenue in Jan.: \$150; Total to Date: \$13,723.50
Registered Units Jan.: Houses 3; Apts. 0; Total Units 3
Cumulative Total: Houses 303; Apts. 509; Other 67; Total 873

Vacant Buildings

Registered Vacant Buildings Jan. 1; Total 15.

Chairman James Hill cited City Code § 905.06, "Removal of Ice; Snow;
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Obstruction of Drains,” as follows:

- (a) Every person or public institution using or occupying in any manner or for any purpose whatsoever any house, store, shop, garage, tenement or building of any kind, or any vacant lot, and all persons having charge of churches and public buildings of every description, and the owners of unoccupied houses and unimproved or unoccupied lots abutting on a sidewalk in the City, and their agents, shall within three hours after the fall of any snow or the formation of any ice on the sidewalk on which the property abuts, removed and clear, or cause to be removed and cleared, such snow and ice in such manner as to leave the sidewalk free and clear of such deposits, and in such manner as not to obstruct the passage of water in the gutter adjacent to the sidewalk; provided, that, if snow falls or ice forms between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. the following morning, such snow or ice shall be removed before 11:00 a.m.
- (b) It shall be the further duty of the persons hereinbefore mentioned and their agents to keep the gutters, downspouts and drains serving their properties so located and in such a state of repair that water, snow or ice shall not fall, flow or escape therefrom onto the adjacent sidewalk.

Upon reading the City Code, Mr. Hill commented that these requirements are not being performed in some cases and pointed out that snow and ice on sidewalks from recent storms continue to pose problems days after the storms. Mr. Hill followed by recommending that the responsible parties along Mercer Street be contacted to inform them of the aforesaid requirements of the City Code.

City Manager Mike Webb replied that the responsible parties would be notified of the City Code provisions relative to clearing the abutting sidewalks of snow and ice.

Council Member Dewey Russell remarked that people must abide by the Code, but a person he knows on Mercer Street, who owns two buildings, is diligent in clearing the abutting sidewalks. However, he is no more than finished when the Street Department covers his sidewalks again when plowing snow.

James Hill replied that the Public Works moves the snow to the middle of Mercer Street to keep it from collecting on or next to the sidewalks and remove it later at night. Still, he acknowledged that some businesses are good to clear the sidewalks, but days later some still haven't been touched, he explained.

Mr. Russell countered that if the plow operators turn the plow toward the sidewalk there is no reason to clear the sidewalks.

Mr. Hill replied by commenting that the Public Works Department is doing a fine job
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clearing the City streets of snow and do push the snow from the curb to the center of Mercer Street for removal later.

The City Manager reiterated that he would see that the property owners and/or tenants are notified to maintain their sidewalks.

Mayor David Graham remarked that on Sunday he had noticed several of the cars previously parked on Mercer Street at night had been removed.

Council Member James Harvey explained that one truck remains parked and covered with snow in the 800 block of Mercer Street.

The City Manager replied that he would check with Public Works' midnight crew and have the truck towed, if necessary.

Mr. Hill recommended the matter be left to the Police Chief to resolve.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

January Call Report – Fire Chief Chad Bailey reported that during the month of January the Fire Department responded to 78 EMS calls and 19 fire calls; conducted two inspections and issued one certificate of occupancy. Also, there were no notable fire calls in January, the Chief advised.

Training – Chief Bailey further reported the Fire Department conducted 324 training hours in January, most notably on Firefighter I, HAZ-MAT operations, Driver's Training and familiarity of the City's streets.

Grant – Chief Bailey also reported that the Fire Department will be applying for the following grants:

- Assistance to Firefighter grants
- Fire Prevention and Safety Grant
- Safer Grant – to assist in providing staffing for adequate fire and emergency response.

Personnel – Fire Chief Bailey continued by reporting the resignation of Firefighter Nathan Hensley, effective January 28th, after being hired by the Princeton Police Department. However, the Chief added that Mr. Hensley would continue serving the Fire Department as a volunteer firefighter. In response to this resignation, the Chief advised that the Fire Department would be conducting interviews to fill the vacancy.

Ladder Testing – Chief Bailey concluded his report by informing that the Fire Department had conducted tests on the Department's ladders in January, with all
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of them passing without any issues.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Tim Gray presented the following report:

January Call Report – During the month of January 2021, the Police Department responded to 359 calls for assistance, made 30 arrests and issued 63 citations.

Personnel Update – Chief Gray reported the hiring of two officers, Zane Jones on January 20th, and Nathan Hensley on January 28th, which brings the Police Department back to full strength. Also, the Chief informed that during the month of January eight to nine officers were off sick at one time, but officers still were able to cover the streets.

In addition, the Chief advised that the Police Department employee’s who wanted to receive the Covid-19 vaccination now have received their second shots.

Demolition – Chief Gray also reported that the former Police Station had been demolished and expressed appreciation for the good job performed by Lusk Disposal in doing so.

Chairman James Hill thanked the Chief for all the hard work accomplished by the Police Department.

3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATOIN COMMITTEE

Chairman Marshall Lytton reported the Finance and Administration Committee of Princeton City Council met immediately after the Public Safety Committee on Friday, February 5, 2021, with the following to report out to Council and called on the Finance Director to present his report.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

January 2021, Financial Report – Finance Director Danny Dillow reported that as of the end of January, the seventh month of FY2021, the actual revenues collected stood at 72.58% of the budgeted amount, while actual appropriations were expended at a rate of 56.24%, 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 **\$2,469,451**.

Next, Mr. Dillow reviewed the noteworthy expenditures in January, as follow:

City Manager Fund Transfers	\$225,000
Library Quarterly Allocation	\$30,750
PEIA	\$52,349

Chairman Lytton continued by reporting the Finance and Administration Committee
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approved and recommended the January 2021, Financial Statements to City Council, **and he so moved.**

James Harvey duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Council Meeting Dates in March – Mr. Lytton continued by reporting that on the recommendation of the City Administration, the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, moving the dates of the City Council meetings in March to Wednesday, March 10th, for the committee meetings and Monday, March 15th, for the City Council Meeting, at their regular meeting times of 1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m., respectively.

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. & O. Tax Incentive Application – On the recommendation of the City Clerk, the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and Mr. Lytton so moved**, approval of the following individual for the B. & O. Tax Incentive:

Savanna Linkous – Lash Extensions & Esthetics, Allure Salon, 1602 Princeton Ave.

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Ballot Commissioners for City Election – On the recommendation of the City Clerk, the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and Mr. Lytton so moved**, the appointment of the following registered voters in the City to serve as Ballot Commissioners, together with the City Clerk, for the 2021 City Election:

Judy Wellman – 113 Frederick Court – (R)

Debra Clay – 1104 Henry Street (NP)

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Blood Borne Pathogens' Class – Per Mr. Lytton, Human Resources Director Brian Blankenship had reported to the Finance and Administration Committee that a series of Blood Borne Pathogens' classes would be offered to City employees next week by the Princeton Fire Department.

PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Chairman Marshall Lytton presented the following report on behalf of Library Director Sheena Johnson:

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

For February the Library is offering programs such as:

DIY Valentines Newspaper Roses on February 6th – where you can enjoy learning how to make paper rose picture frames in the comfort of your own home.

Homemade Friendship Bracelet Pickup Craft on February 10th – where you can learn how to make special friendship bracelets just in time for Valentine's Day.

Among Us Crafting on February 17th – where you can join in creating your own figurines from Among Us, which also will include all materials as well as a tutorial with which you can follow along.

The Library also has monthly programs that repeat, such as:

Kidz Kraft – which is a new monthly program that has a more detailed craft with materials for pickup. This Kidz Kraft tutorial will teach you how to make a Traveling-N-Pack out of recycled DVD cases.

DND on roll20.net – which allows you to play Dungeons and Dragons online with a library staff member and a group of people in your community. By using our link, you will be connected to the library group and allowed to play with others locally. This program takes place on the 11th and 25th.

Lab Squad Scientists Facebook Live – where they will show you a fun experiment involving a potato battery on the 4th and a glowing volcano on the 18th, all with materials you can find at home.

We also have our new addition, **Banned Book Club**, on February 25th at 2:00 p.m., through Zoom that will focus on books that have been banned in various communities. This month's choice will be "Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck.

Don't forget some of our regular favorites such as **Drop in Tech Time** through Zoom on the 2nd and 16th, **Life Lessons Book Club** (through Zoom) on the 24th at 11:00 a.m. Our book this month is "Where the Crawdads Sing," by Delia Owens, **Virtual Lego Club** through Facebook Live on the 22nd at 6:00 p.m. and our regularly scheduled story times on Facebook Live Thursdays and Fridays, with the inclusion of a Friday craft tutorial and materials proved for pickup.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

Mr. Lytton reported the Community Improvement Commission met on Monday, February 1st, and discussed the following:

- A 5-year plan for purchasing Christmas decorations;
- Replacing the bulbs in the overhanging lights on Mercer Street and at the fountain for Christmas;
- Providing an initial installment of five trash cans downtown at a cost of \$2,000.

B. CITY ATTORNEY

City Attorney Paul Cassell presented the following styled motion for Council's consideration:

"The Common Council of the City of Princeton hereby requests that the Planning Commission consider the appropriate zones for Medical Marijuana Dispensaries, as well as imposing the following restriction on the location of Medical Marijuana Dispensaries: 'That no such dispensary shall be located within 1,000 feet of the property line of a public, private or parochial school, or a day-care center.'"

MOTION: James Hill so moved the above-styled motion as recommended by the City Attorney.

Jacqueline Rucker duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

C. CITY MANAGER

City Manager Mike Webb thanked everyone who had participated in the remote Council meeting. He continued by acknowledging the outstanding work by the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments during the past month, noting in particular the terrible hours the Public Works Department had worked during the recent ice and snow storms.

D. CITY CLERK

The City Clerk had nothing to report to City Council.

E. HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Director Brian Blankenship thanked Mr. Lytton for reporting on the Blood Borne Pathogens' classes and added that the Fire Chief had reached out to the Sanitary Board to encourage its employees to participate in the classes.

VII. COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

In keeping with his practice during the Covid-19 pandemic, Mayor David Graham dispensed with the Council Roundtable.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion, the February 8, 2021, meeting of Princeton City Council adjourned at 7:10 p.m.