

REGULAR MEETING ~ CITY COUNCIL
PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
January 11, 2021

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, January 11, 2021, 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 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

Council Member Marshall Lytton prayed for protection of all first responders, including all the City's department heads and employees as they work in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic; asked comfort for those families who have lost loved ones, petitioned for the healing of the nation from Covid-19; invoked divine guidance for all national, state and local public officials elected in 2020 and prayed for divine guidance for Council Members in the conduct of the evening's City Council meeting.

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 called the meeting to order.

III. PROCLAMATIONS ~ PRESENTATIONS ~ RESOLUTIONS

Mayor Graham read the following resolution of Council honoring the employees at Princeton Community Hospital and all First Responders:

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, oft times we take for granted those in the health professions and emergency services who attend to us when in need of medical care or protection from physical or emotional harm; and

WHEREAS, these public servants always seem to stand at the ready to respond, day or night, no matter the nature of the emergency we bring urgently to their attention; and

WHEREAS, the needs of the many often involve exceptional situations in which life and death hang in the balance and push our public servants to the apex of human endurance and the depletion of all strength and available resources; and

WHEREAS, now we face the most critical health crisis to afflict our country in a

century and on a scale never before seen in our lifetime; and

WHEREAS, in this time of crisis, as in no other, we have called upon our doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, firefighters, Rescue Squad and law enforcement officers to come to our immediate aid; and

WHEREAS, whether they be doctors, nurses and administrative staff at Princeton Community Hospital; first responders at the Princeton Rescue Squad, the Princeton Police Department and Princeton Fire Department; and others too numerous to mention across Mercer County, all have risen to this challenge in herculean fashion.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED:

That the Common Council of the City of Princeton commends all doctors and nurses at Princeton Community Hospital and all First Responders for their diligent and tireless efforts in combating the Covid-19 pandemic, going above and beyond the call of duty to protect the citizens of Princeton and Mercer County. Their bravery and sacrifices will forever be etched upon our memories.

IN WITNESS WHERE OF, I, David E. Graham, with the authority 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 11th day of January, 2021.

David E. Graham, Mayor

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

Stacey Hicks, CEO of the Princeton Rescue Squad – Mr. Stacey Hicks thanked City Council for acknowledging all first responders and added that the employees of the Princeton Rescue have been “up against the wall” during this difficult time.

Council Member James Hill requested that the administrative staff at Princeton Community Hospital be instructed to email a copy of this resolution to all employees, including the housekeeping, janitorial and laundry departments. Mr. Hill expressed that these hospital employees also have performed yeoman duties in the midst of the pandemic.

Council Member Jacqueline Rucker commented that the nurses especially should receive a copy of the resolution.

PUBLIC HEARING: On authorizing the transfer of Bluefield Regional Medical Center (BRMC), of Princeton Community Hospital Association, Inc., to Bluefield State College.

Mayor Graham moved City Council into public hearing at 6:37 p.m. and introduced the public hearing on the authorization for the transfer of Bluefield Regional Medical Center, which is owned by Princeton Community Hospital Association, to Bluefield State College and explained the terms and conditions of the transaction as follows:

The transaction involves the sale of 67.67 acres of land, plus the main hospital building, medical office buildings A, B, C, D, E, F, I and the Fresenius Building. The purchase price is \$1.00 and the sale is formalized by a mutual, non-competitive agreement that includes a guarantee by the buyer not to sell the property and the seller's right to monitor the terms of the agreement. The facility will be used for the education of the community and other community purposes. Further, the buyer will lease back to the seller the BRMC Emergency Department, associated radiology and laboratory facilities, Bluefield Radiation, the Therapy Department and office space for \$1.00 a year for twenty years.

Mayor Graham called for public comments regarding the authorization for transfer of Bluefield Regional Medical Center to Bluefield State College by the Princeton Community Hospital Association, Inc.

There were no public comments forthcoming. Therefore, Mayor Graham closed the public hearing at 6:42 p.m.

MOTION: Council Member Dewey Russell moved City Council authorize Princeton Community Hospital Association, Inc., as owner, to transfer the Bluefield Regional Medical Center to Bluefield State College.

James Hill duly seconded the motion.

Mr. Hill commented that this action portrays the Council as look ahead to alleviate the shortage of health care workers in the region by providing the educational facilities and thereby boost health care for southern West Virginia.

On voting, the motion carried unanimously.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

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

- A. Minutes of the December 14, 2020, Council Meeting (Recessed)
- B. Minutes of the December 18, 2020, Recessed Council Meeting.

VI. POLICY AGENDA

A. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PUBLIC WORKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Chairperson Jacqueline Rucker reported the Public Works and Recreation Committee met by teleconference on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, with the following to report out to City Council:

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Public Works' Monthly Report for December – Mrs. Rucker presented the following report on behalf of the Public Works Department:

On January 6, 2021, Assistant Director Eric Gatchell had reported that during the month of December the Public Works Department maintained 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 have been out two times thus far in the early morning hours to treat for slick road conditions. Public Works now has three additional plow trucks that can be fitted with plows very quickly.

Mr. Gatchell also added that the crews had completed these tasks and any service requests as available manpower allowed in December and that the schedule of projects presented to the Committee in November still stands going forward.

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

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

Recreation Center Update – On January 6, 2021, Director Amanda McCabe had reported that the Recreation Center's status remains the same, being open on Monday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for a karate class. The Recreation Center currently has just one rental booked for the month of January.

Mrs. McCabe had also reported there would be no registrations for programming until further notice. However, she explained that the month of February would be a transition month, in that it will involve decisions about programs and whether to reopen the Recreation Center. She added that reopening the Center will require much preparation, including posting help wanted notices to replace employees who won't be returning due to the prolonged closure. The Center also must recover from lost concessions' revenue.

The Recreation Department continues to operate with a maintenance staff of two men, one fulltime and one part-time. This crew has been working on improvements at the City Pool:

- Continuing the work on the pool's bath house to bring it up to ADA standards with improvements required in the Men's and Women's rest rooms to enlarge the stalls; and

- The installation of new plumbing for the bath house showers.

Lighting for the Recreation Center’s Parking Lot – City Manager Mike Webb reported that a work order had been filed with AEP for the installation of new LED security lights for six poles on the Recreation Center parking lot. Mr. Webb added that he expects the lighting will be installed in the early spring.

Washington Avenue Playground – Mrs. McCabe had concluded her report by informing that wheeled vehicles continue to damage the grounds at the Washington Avenue neighborhood park, but explained that the erection of a new gate hopefully would correct the ongoing problem.

2. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chairman James Hill reported the Public Safety Committee of Princeton City Council met by teleconference on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, immediately after the Public Works and Recreation Committee, with the following items to report out to City Council and called on Code Enforcement Director Ty Smith to present his report:

CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

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

COMPUTATION OF COMPLAINTS

Summary – Property Maintenance

Initial Complaints	421
Cumulative Complaints to Date –	39,737

Demolition/Renovation Programs Status

Condemnations/Unsafe in Process	11
Demolitions in Process (out for bid)	11
Demolitions w/Notice to Proceed	2
Total Demolitions to Date	683

Animal Control & Property Maintenance

Complaints this Month	16
Impounded (dogs 8; cats 8; other 0)	16
Adopted	0
Euthanized	0
Reclaimed	2
Rescued	0
Property Maintenance Cases	60

Note: Ms. Meachum currently is studying for the B-1 Exam

Building Inspection (Zoning, PM, RC) Cases 64

Building Permits (Res. 7; Com. 3)	10
Total Inspections	22
Total Project Costs	\$92,830.00
Permit Fees	\$ 838.00

Flood Plain Management & Property Maintenance

Flood Plain Determinations	242
Flood Plain Permits Issued	39
(Currently working through 2017-16 permits for floodplain files.)	
Property Maintenance	39

Note: 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 Dec.: \$150; Total to Date: \$13,573.50
Registered Units Dec.: Houses 3; Apts. 0; Total Units: 3
Cumulative Total: Houses 300; Apts. 506; Other 67; Total 873

Vacant Buildings

Registered Vacant Buildings Nov.: 0; Total 14.

New Businesses

- Blossom & Bees, 943 Mercer Street – Sandra Taylor & Carol Wiley – OPEN
- S&S Tobacco and Vape – 106 Oakvale Rd., Salem Almaradeai – OPENING SOON

Chairman James Hill congratulated Ty Smith on the performance of his two Code Enforcement workers.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Chad Bailey presented the following report:

Call Report – Chief Bailey reported that during the month of December, the Fire Department responded to 62 EMS calls and 24 Fire calls; conducted five inspections and two certificates of occupancy; and issued 31 citations.

New Hire Justice Shafer – Chief Bailey reported that new Firefighter, Justice Shafer, was doing well at his new post after completing the Firefighter I Course in record time with a score of 95% and currently is working on HAZMAT training. The Chief added that Firefighter Shafer started shift work yesterday and experienced his first wake up call while on a 24-hour shift.

Fires – The Fire Chief reported that since the departments' software upgrade on December 14th, the Fire Department had responded to two separate fires, on two successive days, at 303 Valley Street and a mutual aid fire call at 1623 Athens Road. However, the second fire call at 303 Valley Street was not for a rekindle, the Chief clarified.

COVID Funds – Chief Bailey also reported that he had submitted the required documents, including the application, to the Governor's Office by the required date of December 31st to receive \$10,000 in Covid Funds in reimbursement to the Fire Department for the purchase of personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Call Report – Police Chief Tim Gray reported that during the month of December Princeton police officers responded to 375 calls, made 19 arrests and issued 114 citations.

New Hires – Chief Gray continued by reporting that two candidates for hiring, Zane Jones and Nathan Hensley, had reported on Wednesday for their final employment interviews. The Chief added that he decided to hire both candidates, Zane Jones on January 20th and Nathan Hensley on the 27th.

Vaccinations – Chief Gray further reported that those officers who wanted a Covid-19 vaccination received one last Thursday and have been scheduled to receive the second one on January 28th.

Police Officers Commended – Chief Gray acknowledged that January had been a rough month for the Princeton Police Department, but commended all officers for working very hard by going “above and beyond” under difficult conditions.

Resolution Commending PCH Staff and All First Responders – Chairman Hill reported that the Public Safety Committee had referred to City Council for consideration, **and he so moved** that Council approve the resolution recognizing the doctors, nurses and administration staff at Princeton Community Hospital, as well as all First Responders, for their diligent and herculean efforts during the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic.

Joseph Allen duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Marshall Lytton reported the Finance and Administration Committee of Princeton Council met by teleconference after the Public Safety Committee on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, with the following to report out to Council and called on Finance Director Danny Dillow to present his report:

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

December 2020, Financial Report – Finance Director Danny Dillow reported that as of the end of December, the sixth month of FY2021, the actual revenues collected stood at 65.51% of the budgeted amount, while actual appropriations were expended at a rate of 50.38%, as compared to the budget projections of 50% forecast for the end of December. Total funds available for City operations at the end of December were **\$2,102,653**.

Mr. Dillow continued by reviewing the noteworthy expenditures for December:

Traveler’s Insurance\$111,576
Fire & Police Pensions\$ 30,573
PEIA\$ 52,349

Chairman Lytton further reported that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended the December, 2020, Financial Statements to City Council, **and he so moved.**

James Hill duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

FY2021 General Fund Budget Revision #4 – Finance Director Danny Dillow next presented and recommended the FY2021 General Fund Budget Revision #4 to City Council to appropriate additional, expected revenue to the General Account and to appropriate for expenses expected for continuing capital equipment purchases and miscellaneous expenses. This revision increases estimated revenues by \$450,000 and brings the FY2021 General Fund Budget to **\$9,400,666**.

Expenditure adjustments include the following:

- Increases to capital equipment expenditure line items for future purchases for Police Department and Public Works.
- Appropriate for increasing funds to the Stabilization (Rainy Day) Fund and Capital Equipment funds.
- Appropriate for abatement expenses in relation to the old bank building and the former Police Station.
- Increase appropriations to Parks and Recreation to cover anticipated funding

shortfall.

Further, total revisions also increase the General Fund Expenditures Budget by \$450,000, bringing the total of General Fund appropriations for FY2021 to **\$9,400,666**, thereby creating a balanced budget.

Chairman Lytton continued by reporting the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended the FY2021 General Fund Budget Revision #4 to City Council, **and he so moved.**

James Harvey duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. & O. Tax Incentive – Mr. Lytton reported that on the recommendation of the City Clerk, the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, the following application for the B. & O. Tax Incentive for new businesses in the City of Princeton:

Brenda Workman Speaks – Professional Speaker, 202 Wallace St., Brenda Workman, Owner.

Dewey Russell duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Blood Borne Pathogens Class – Human Resources Director Brian Blankenship reported that he would be coordinating with the Fire Chief and Lt. Rick Shagoury in scheduling the mandatory Blood Borne Pathogens Class for City employees.

Committee Meetings in February – On the recommendation of the City Manager, to allow more time for the preparation of the financial reports, the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and Mr. Lytton so moved**, moving the February meetings for the Committees of Council from Wednesday, February 3rd, to Friday, February 5th, at 1:00 p.m.

James Hill duly seconded the motion.

Dewey Russell questioned if this would allow enough time for the Clerk to complete his reports for the Council meeting.

The City Clerk assured he would have the reports ready in time and would email them to Council Members over the weekend.

On voting, the motion carried unanimously.

PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Chairman Marshall Lytton presented the Library's report on behalf of Director Sheena Johnson, as follows:

The Princeton Public Library has opened as of January 4, 2021, after being closed for a two-week period for cleaning and due to the holidays, as well as the rise in Covid-19 cases. We are now open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and offering curbside service Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. These services include copying, faxing, scanning and checking out materials.

For January the Library is offering programs such as the following:

DIY Bookmarks – where you can pick up a bookmark kit to complete in the comfort of your own home;

Calm Down Jars Facebook Live – which shows you how to make colorful jars that resemble the galaxy using glue, water, food coloring, and lots and lots of glitter;

Inspirational Art Tutorial – which shows how you can make inspirational art out of old book pages;

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 show you how to make a winter scene by finger painting.

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.

Lab Squad Scientists Facebook Live – where they will show you a fun experiment about density on the 7th and a simple motor on the 21st, all with materials you can find at home.

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

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

City Manager Mike Webb reported that the CIC met earlier today via Zoom and discussed drafting a Five-year Layout Plan for Christmas decorations. As a part of the overall plan, the CIC will be focusing on supplying the different areas of the City with their own unique Christmas decorations.

Councilman James Hill asked the City Manager, at the next CIC meeting, to discuss with its members a moving of the CIC meetings to the Monday prior to Council's committee meetings on Wednesday.

The City Manager replied that he would do so, but advised that the CIC had been meeting on the said Monday prior to the holidays, but thereafter the dates for the meetings had been impacted by holidays and Covid-19.

Mr. Hill expressed his appreciation for the CIC's plan regarding Christmas decorations.

B. CITY ATTORNEY

City Attorney Paul Cassell presented the following ordinance for a second reading and public hearing:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE 1900, "PERSONNEL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES," OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES FOR THE CITY OF PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA.

Mr. Cassell explained that, upon enactment, the ordinance will rescind the Attendance Bonus Program for City employees and enact Vision Insurance at the same cost.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor David Graham moved City Council into public hearing on the ordinance at 7:05 p.m. and called for public comments.

There were no comments forthcoming and, at 7:06 p.m., Mayor Graham declared the public hearing closed and reconvened City Council's regular session.

MOTION: Council Member Jacqueline Rucker moved City Council adopt the ordinance as presented.

James Hill duly seconded the motion.

Mr. Hill expressed appreciation for the City's staff which, while working under fiscal

restraint, identified this revenue neutral action that will help City employees.

On voting, the motion carried unanimously.

C. CITY MANAGER

City Manager Mike Webb thanked everyone for participating in the evening's teleconference meeting and acknowledged all City department heads for their diligent efforts over the last two months and through the holidays, by exhibiting a high level of performance during throughout while under the pandemic's impact.

D. CITY CLERK

The City Clerk had nothing to report to Council.

E. HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Director Brian Blankenship reported he had been working today with Fire Lieutenant Rick Shagoury to schedule the Blood Borne Pathogens' class and would notify City employees when all the details have been worked out. He advised that Lt. Shagoury currently was involved with training a new class of EMT's.

VII. COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

Mayor Graham dispensed with the Council Roundtable, as has been his practice during the ongoing pandemic.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion, the January 11, 2021, meeting of the Princeton City Council adjourned at 7:10 p.m.