

REGULAR MEETING ~ CITY COUNCIL
PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
November 9, 2020

A Regular Meeting of the Common Council for the City of Princeton, Mercer County, West Virginia was held by teleconference on Monday, November 9, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Mayor David Graham; Vice Mayor James Harvey; Council Members Marshall Lytton, James Hill, Dewey Russell and Joseph Allen; City Manager Michael Webb, City Attorney Paul Cassell and City Clerk Kenneth Clay. Absent was Council Member Jacqueline Rucker. A quorum was constituted thereby.

I. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor David Graham invoked divine guidance for the conduct of the meeting and offered a prayer of thanksgiving for our Four Seasons Country, the City Council Members and Department Heads. The Mayor also offered thanksgiving for the Heavenly Father's protection of the City's employees, those with Covid-19, their families and the experts who are working to develop a vaccine. Lastly, the Mayor prayed for the President-Elect and for a smooth transition of the new administration in Washington.

Council Member James Hill 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

Presentation to Wanda Donahue – Mayor David Graham announced that, during the Finance and Administration Committee meeting of November 6, 2020, and in the expectation of Human Resources Director Wanda Donahue's impending retirement from the City of Princeton, he had presented her with a plaque from Governor Jim Justice "in recognition of 47 years of dedicated and outstanding service to the citizens of Princeton and the State of West Virginia."

Wanda Donahue acknowledged the Mayor's comments and remarked that she had a lot of memories working for the City and expressed her appreciation for the honor.

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 October 13, 2020, Regular City Council Meeting.
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VI. POLICY AGENDA

A. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. PUBLIC WORKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Mayor Graham reported the Public Works and Recreation Committee of Princeton City Council met in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on Friday, November 6, 2020, with the following to report out to City Council:

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Public Works' Monthly Report – Assistant Public Works Director Eric Gatchell reported to the Committee that in October the Public Works Department had continued its regular duties of keeping storm drains and inlets cleared, picking up and returning shopping carts, removing trash and debris, mowing City properties and maintenance of road signage.

Public Works also performed 18 Service Requests in October, including one brush/limb request that required a crew of five workers and 1½ days to complete. The new street sweeper now is on duty fulltime and the leaf crew is back on duty once again after dealing with breakdowns of both the leaf truck and leaf machine. Numerous calls have come in to Public Works from citizens requesting leaf removal. The leaf crew is working fulltime and overtime to catch up. Also, one set of solar lights was installed at the Ingleside Road Welcome Sign, with work on the others pending.

The Public Works Department also accomplished the following jobs in October:

Asphalt Jobs:

- Patched locations where storm drainage work was accomplished, and
- The new miller will need a skid steer rental and coordination – in light of the Public Works' skid is not working well.

Gravel Work:

- Needs in the City are being filled on citizens' requests.

Storm Water Work:

- Drain inlet installed at 203½ East Drive to alleviate constant flooding;
- Bridge repair at Maple Street and Princeton Rescue Squad;
- At Henry St. and Hale Ave. the problem turned out to be a Sanitary Board piping issue;
- Completed Kee Street repairs;
- Completed the Sump tie-in at Mr. Rice's residence on Park Avenue; and
- Installation of a drain for the Cat's Meow parking lot continues.

Tree Work:

- On Park Avenue a tree in the storm drain was removed. However, crews still need to remove the 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.

Miscellaneous:

- Assisted the Library in a lighting upgrade and in cleaning the Gilbert Center Book Sale storage room; and
- Continued the cleanup and grading work on the lot next to City Hall that also included stump and debris removal by Public Works.

PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

City Manager Mike Webb had presented the following report to the Committee on behalf of Recreation Director Amanda McCabe:

Recreation Center Schedule – The Recreation Center remains closed except for Monday and Thursday evenings from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. for a karate class and to process the many shelter rentals. There will be no registration for fall programs, with an eye to what happens in the school system, including the biggest programs of the year, the Boys’ Little League Basketball and the Girls’ Cheerleading. Also, no programming for the spring is being planned at this time.

RAILROAD MUSEUM

Remains closed to the public at this time.

2. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chairman James Hill reported the Public Safety Committee of Princeton City Council met after the Public Works and Recreation Committee on Friday, November 6, 2020, with the following to report out to Council and called on Code Enforcement Director Ty Smith to present his report:

CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT

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

COMPUTATION OF COMPLAINTS

Summary – Property Maintenance

Initial Complaints	234
Cumulative Complaints to Date	39,026

Ty Smith explained the Code Enforcement Department now is patrolling the City by Wards instead of the previously designated patrol zones.

Demolition/Renovation Programs' Status

Condemnations/Unsafe in Process	20
Demolitions in Process (out for bid)	0
Renovations in Process	0
Demolitions w/Notice to Proceed	0
Total Demolitions to Date	682

Animal Control & Property Maintenance

Complaints this Month	87
Impounded (dogs 8; cats 8; other 0)	16
Adopted	0
Euthanized	0
Reclaimed	4
Rescued	0

Building Inspection

Building Permits (Res. 29; Com. 10)	39
Total Inspections	17
Total Project Costs	\$1,400,661.25
Permit Fees	\$ 4,160.00

Flood Plain Management

Flood Plain Determinations	39
Flood Plain Permits Issued	5

Currently working through 2017-16 permits for floodplain files.

Zoning Official

Certificate of Occupancy Applications:	6
Certificate of Occupancy Inspections:	4

Zoning Cases: 2

Rental Compliance

Revenue in Oct: \$300; Total to Date: \$13,523.50
Registered Units Oct: Houses 0; Apts. 6; Total Units: 6
Cumulative Total: Houses 297; Apts. 511; Other 61; Total 869

Vacant Buildings

Register Vacant Buildings Oct. 1; Total 14.

New Businesses

- Glitz-N-Glamour, 217 Mercer Street – Latisha Gabe
- Tolliver Land & Acquisition, 275 Mercer Street – Brett Tolliver
- Lawson Dentists, Inc., 1308 Stafford Drive – Chad Lawson
- Mountaineer Market, 604 Rogers Street – Donna and Brian Lowe (No CO inspection yet. Opening later in November)
- Princeton Insurance Group, 1273 Stafford Drive – Travis Pace (Moved to this new locations)
- LINX Community Services, 1295 Stafford Drive – Jason Lynch and Tina Rager, Behavioral Health Counselors.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Call Report for October – Fire Chief Chad Bailey reported that during the month of October the Fire Department responded to 77 EMS calls and 42 fire calls; conducted 26 inspections; issued 3 certificates of occupancy and 38 fire lane citations.

Hiring Test – Chief Bailey continued by reporting the Fire Civil Service Commission and Fire Department jointly conducted hiring tests on October 17th, with ten applicants passing. Interviews of the top three candidates have been completed after which the position was offered to the most qualified candidate selected by the Fire Department Review Board.

Pump Testing – Chief Bailey next reported that the Fire Department had completed testing of all the engine pumps as part of the Department’s maintenance program and as required by the ISO, with all pumps passing.

Public Safety Chairman James Hill offered his compliments to Chief Bailey for the applicant who received the highest score ever on the Fire Civil Service Test.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Call Report for October – Police Chief T. A. Gray reported that during the month of October Princeton officers responded to 468 calls for assistance, made 68 arrests and issued 78 citations. The Chief followed by thanking Fire Chief Chad Bailey for standing in for him at the Public Safety Committee meeting on Friday.

BP Robbery – Chief Gray further reported that the Police Department is following up on leads regarding the armed robbery of the BP Station, including forwarding a photograph from a Turnpike toll booth to the NRCIC for enhancement. He added the leads point to suspects from the Beckley area and that other states are assisting in the investigation.

Election of Summers County Sheriff- Chief Gray advised that with the election of Sergeant Justin Faris as the Sheriff of Summers County, he had started background checks and polygraph exams on two potential candidates to replace Sgt. Faris. A need

also exists to fill a vacant patrolman position that occurred earlier this year.

Cooperative Training Agreements – Chief Gray reported that the Princeton PD had entered into cooperative training agreements with the White Sulphur Springs and Lewisburg Police Departments in Greenbrier County to share in training throughout the coming year. The training opportunities will occur in both Mercer and Greenbrier Counties, Chief Gray explained.

Donation for K-9's – Lastly, Chief Gray reported that he was informed this morning via a phone call from an anonymous donor that the Princeton Police Department's would be receiving a donation of \$4,000 for the Department's K-9 Program.

3. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Chairman Marshall Lytton reported that the Finance and Administration Committee of Princeton City Council met after the Public Safety Committee on November 5, 2020, with the following to report out to Council and called on Finance Director Brian Blankenship to present his report.

October 2020, Financial Report – The Finance Director reported that as of the end of October, the fourth month of FY2021, the actual revenues collected stood at 51.56% of the budget amount, while actual appropriations were expended at a rate of 36%, as compared to the budget projections of 33.32% forecast for the end of October. Total funds available for City operations at the end of October were **\$1,974,198.**

Mr. Blankenship continued by reviewing the noteworthy expenditures for the month of October, as follow:

Atlantic Machinery	\$130,933
Fire & Police Pensions\$ 30,573
Quarterly Appropriations	\$ 40,775

Mr. Lytton continued by reporting the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended the October 2020, Financial Report to City Council **and he so moved.**

James Harvey duly seconded the motion.

Councilman James Hill inquired as to the recipients of the quarterly appropriations.

Mr. Blankenship explained the quarterly appropriations were to Bluefield Area Transit, the Salvation Army and the Princeton Public Library.

On voting, the motion carried unanimously.

FY2021 General Fund Budget Revision #3 – Finance Director Brian Blankenship next
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presented and recommended Budget Revision #3 for the FY2021 General Fund to appropriate additional, expected revenue to the General account and to appropriate for expenses that were expected for Covid supplies, etc., for continuing capital equipment purchases and miscellaneous expenses. This revision will increase estimated revenues by \$492,400 and bring the FY2021 General Fund Budget to **\$8,950,666**.

Expenditure adjustments include the following:

- Appropriate for local grants for Covid supply purchases and equipment.
- Appropriate for increasing funds to the Rainy Day and Capital Equipment Funds.
- Appropriate for expenses across several departments.

Total revisions increase the General Fund Expenditures Budget by \$492,000, bringing the total General Fund appropriations for FY2021 to **\$8,950,666**, thereby creating a balanced budget.

Chairman Lytton continued by reporting the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council the FY2021 General Fund Budget Revision #3, **and he so moved**.

Joseph Allen duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Employee Retention Incentive – Mr. Lytton next reported that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, a retention incentive for City employees in the amounts of \$200 for fulltime employees and \$100 for part-time employees.

James Hill duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

B. & O. Tax Incentive – The Finance and Administration approved and recommended to City Council, **and Mr. Lytton so moved**, granting the B. & O. Tax Incentive for new businesses in the City to the following applicant:

Revive Salon (hair salon), 802 Stafford Drive, Hayley Suiter, Owner,

Dewey Russell duly seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Attendance Bonus and Vision Insurance – Mr. Lytton reported that on the CC-11/09/20

recommendation of the City Manager and Finance Director, the Finance and Administration Committee, in turn, approved and recommended to City Council, **and he so moved**, the elimination of the City's Employee Attendance Bonus as a budget line item and the implementation of Vision Insurance for employees, at the same cost as the Attendance Bonus.

Dewey Russell duly seconded the motion.

Councilman James Hill asked Finance Director Brian Blankenship to explain the rationale this motion.

Mr. Blankenship explained that the City had identified the Employee Attendance Bonus as an event which is no longer needed and is also something the State Auditor's Office does not endorse. Therefore, the intent of this action is to offset the loss of the Attendance Bonus and enhance the City's strong benefits' package at the same cost by adding Vision Insurance, as a neutral event, thereby permitting more employees to take advantage of the new benefit.

On voting, the motion carried unanimously.

PRINCETON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library Director Sheena Johnson presented the following report:

A plaque recognizing the Library's historical status by the U. S. Department of the Interior has been erected at the front entrance to the Library.

The Library will offer Forget Me Not kits to pick up for Veterans Day which will be available of November 10th.

The Princeton Public Library still is open on a limited basis 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 materials.

The Library's statistics for material checkout have increased significantly during the months since reopening and now some of the stats are equal to what were prevalent before the closure due to the virus.

Wipe away your fines with canned goods! The Library is participating in a canned food drive from November 16th through the 30th. All canned food donations will be given to Amy's House of Hope. One dollar in fines equals one can of food, but this cannot be used to pay for lost or damaged materials. Everyone is encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

For the month of November, the Library will continue offering a lot of creative, mostly virtual, programs. Programs for the month include creating your own book ends on the 7th, learning how to do a fall hat craft to display on your front door on the 16th, tie dying masks for World Peace Day on the 17th, spreading some happiness with friendship soup, and learning how to make charms for good luck on Friday, the 13th.

The Library also offers a tutorial on how to make stress balls out of balloons and dried beans which was on the 4th.

Don't forget the Library has Drop in Tech Time through Zoom, which was on the 3rd and also will be on the 17th; Writers Workshop on Zoom with Diana Putorek from New River Community and Technical College on the 12th and Life Lesson Book Club in-person meeting of November 18th at 11:00 a.m. (this event will be spaced adequately in the large meeting room and the Library will take precautions for this event). Also, the Library still will present its regularly scheduled Story Times on Thursdays and Fridays, which are available through Facebook Live.

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

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

Sheena Johnson advised that the Community Improvement Commission would not meet until November 16th.

B. CITY ATTORNEY

The City Attorney had nothing to report to City Council.

C. CITY MANAGER

The City Manager thanked everyone for participating in the virtual Council meeting and urged them to guard their health and safety under the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.

D. CITY CLERK

The City Clerk had nothing to report to City Council.

E. HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Director Wanda Donahue explained that the actions taken by Council this evening regarding the Attendance Bonus and Vision Insurance for employees would be incorporated into a draft ordinance for First and Second Reading during upcoming Council meetings.

Marshall Lytton congratulated Mrs. Donahue on her retirement and expressed appreciation for all she had done for the City.

Dewey Russell, on behalf of the Convention and Visitors' Bureau, inquired as to the status of this year's Christmas Parade.

City Manager Mike Webb replied that this year's Christmas Parade had been cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic in light of the large crowds the Parade usually attracts.

James Harvey thanked Wanda Donahue for her service to the City and especially acknowledged her work in making arrangements for the Council Members on their trips. He added that Mrs. Donahue would be missed.

James Hill acknowledged Wanda Donahue's many years of service to the City and in his memory she always had been a constant presence at City Hall.

Dewey Russell commented that Wanda Donahue had been working at City Hall when he first joined Council and here we are 24 years later. Mr. Russell also remarked that Mrs. Donahue would be missed by all.

Likewise, Joe Allen congratulated Mrs. Donahue on her retirement and wished her well in the future.

VII. COUNCIL ROUNDTABLE

Mayor David Graham dispensed with the Council Roundtable.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion, the November 9, 2020, Regular Meeting of City Council adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

David E. Graham, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kenneth E. Clay, City Clerk