REGULAR MEETING ~ CITY COUNCIL
PRINCETON, MERCER COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA
July 20th, 2026

A Regular Meeting of the Common Council for the City of Princeton, Mercer County, West Virginia was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 800 Bee Street, on Monday, July 20th, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were Mayor David Graham, Vice Mayor James Hawkins, Council Members Joseph Allen, Jacqueline Rucker, James Hill, and Dewey Russell. City Attorney Paul Cassell, City Manager Mike Webb, and City Clerk Kaitlyn Ellison. Absent was Councilwoman Abigail McCune. A quorum was constituted thereby.

I. Call to Order
Mayor David Graham called the meeting to order.

II. Resolutions-Proclamations-Presentations-Public Hearings
There were no resolutions, proclamations, presentations, or public hearings.

III. Public Input
There was no Public Input.

IV. Consent Agenda
Without any corrections noted, Mayor Graham asked the City Clerk to commit the minutes from the following meetings to record:

a. June 15th 2026 Regular Council Meeting
b. June 24th 2026 Special Council Meeting
c. July 1st 2026 Special Council Meeting
d. July 15th, 2026 Special Council Meeting

V. Policy Agenda
A. Committee Reports
1. Public Works and Recreation
Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker reported that the Public Works and Recreation Committee of Princeton City Council met on July 15th, 2026, with the following to report to City Council:

Public Works Department
Public Works Co-Director Terry Blankenship presented the following progress report for the month:

Old Business:

- Public Works continued litter pick-up and kept storm drains open during the recent rain. They also continued mowing and keeping trash up in the parks as the weather allowed and continued to assist other departments as needed.
- They finished up the stormwater operation at the 1200 block of Stafford Drive, which resulted in removing 80 feet of old metal pipe and replacing it with new pipe, rebuilding a drop inlet, and some asphalt repair work. While they were there, they flushed out a storm drain line from Trent Street to New Street to ensure everything was cleaned out and open.

New Business:

- Public Works completed 19 service requests during June and worked with Code Enforcement to address excessive trash issues throughout the City.
- Crews completed asphalt patching in several locations and repaired asphalt berms to improve stormwater drainage.
- Brush hogging began in several areas and is expected to be completed by mid-July.
- A large sinkhole at Ritchie Street and South 8th Street near Knob Park was repaired after crews discovered a failed terracotta stormwater pipe. The damaged pipe was replaced.
- During gas line work on Douglas Street, the gas company uncovered an abandoned stormwater pipe near the funeral home. Public Works plans to investigate the area further and install a drainage inlet once the gas line project is complete. The area will remain barricaded until work can be finished.
- Crews removed a large Box Elder Maple tree on Kephart Street after a section of the tree fell into the roadway, creating a safety hazard.
- Additional work included repairing fencing at the Washington Avenue Park, replacing a stop sign damaged in a recent accident, and replacing several traffic signal lenses at the Stafford Drive and Ingleside intersection.
- June was a busy month with preparations and support for Celebrate Princeton, West Virginia Day, and 4th of July events. Mr. Blankenship extended his appreciation to the Public Works team for their hard work, as well as the other City departments that assisted.

Parks and Recreation Department

Director Amanda McCabe presented the following report for the month:

- The Recreation Department's 4 summer leagues have been practicing for the last few weeks. League play began this past Monday, July 13. Games are being played 7 days each week; Mini and Minor 3 days a week, and JV and Varsity Volleyball the other 4 days. The seasons will run through mid-August.

- There are a total of 283 summer league participants, who were divided into 33 teams. For Volleyball, there are 47 JV kids making up 5 teams and 98 Varsity kids making up another 11 teams.

- In mid-August, the department will begin registration for the 4 fall leagues: Itty and Bitty Basketball for boys and girls, ages 3-6, and also Coed Youth Indoor Soccer for ages 6-11.

- There will be a 2-round, 36-hole disc golf tournament held in the City Park next Saturday, July 25. It is the Paws and Claws tournament. They will be collecting dog and cat food to donate to the animal shelter. Individuals can donate food that day until 3:30 p.m., even if they are not participating in the tournament.

- Music in the Park continues every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. The Boys of Summer will be performing on July 23rd, and the Princeton Community Choir will be performing on July 30th.

- They just submitted a grant request to the Community Foundation of the Virginias for $9,567. If the funding is awarded, it will be used for the purpose of adding 2 new interactive playground components at the City Park and also at all 5 community playgrounds. These components will include commercial tetherball systems and standalone tic-tac-toe play panels. These 2 playground elements will provide additional sources for play and socialization.

Princeton Railroad Museum

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

Attendance: 1,082
Sales: $311
Donations: $278

Events:

- July 4- They handed out 1,200 copies of the History of Princeton booklet at the Chuck Mathena Center.
- July 14- Beckley YMCA kids will visit the museum
- July 26- Hammer and Stain Tour: A Collaboration with Hammer and Stain to present history, and then participants will paint a railroad ticket souvenir
- August 8- Robin Dalton Book Presentation
- August 15- Retired Railroad Workers Reunion
- September 6- Farley Reunion
- September 12- Author Phylenia French presents her book "My Endearing Appalachia: Memoirs of Southern WV Coalfield Life"
- October 10- PHS Class of 1960 Reunion
- October 20 at 12:00 p.m., East River Garden Club

Princeton Public Library

Library Director Laura Buchanan presented the report for the month:

- The Library made 70 new Library Cards and circulated 5,263 digital and physical items.
- They hosted or participated in 39 programs and events with 1,700 community interactions. This includes several outreach events such as speaking at the Vietnam Veterans meeting regarding the Library's programs and resources.
- For Fiscal Year 25-26, they hosted or participated in 327 programs/events with a community interaction of 8,430.
- As they wrap up their Summer Reading Program, there are still plenty of fun activities to participate in.
- On July 31st, they will be hosting the Summer Reading Bash to celebrate the hard work the youth of the community have done to keep up their reading during the summer.
- August 1st is the fourth annual chess tournament held at City Hall. This is open to all ages and skill levels.

2. Public Safety

Councilman James Hill reported that the Public Safety Committee of Princeton City Council met on July 15th, 2026, with the following to report to the City Council:

Code Enforcement Department

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

Area Patrol Summary:

Initial Complaints:	265
Cumulative Total	52,441

Demolition Program Status:

Condemnations/Unsafe:	8
Demo in Appeals Process:	0
Demo Notice to Proceed:	1
Total Demos to Date:	792 (Grant and Non-Grant)

Animal Control:

Cases for the Month:	5
Dogs Impounded:	1
Cats Impounded:	0
Cumulative Impounds:	3,797
Cumulative Complaints:	11,234
Property Maintenance:	60

Building Inspections/Permits:

Total Permits:	34 (10 Residential, 23 Commercial, 1 Government)
Total Inspections:	37
Total Project Costs:	$37,681,930.00
Total Permit Fees:	$39,830.00

Flood Plain Management:

Determinations:	34
Permits Issued:	3

Zoning:

Occupancy Applications	2
Occupancy Inspections:	1
Appeals Cases:	1

Rental Compliance:

Monthly Fees Collected:	$0
New Units Registered:	0
Cumulative Total:	1,076
Renewals:	0
Units Inspected:	0
Total to Date:	$39,704.95

Vacant Buildings:

New Units Registered:	0
Total:	36
Fees Collected:	$0
Property Maintenance:	56

Fire Department

Councilman James Hill reported the following for the month:

I. **Emergency Calls for the Month: 95**

- Fire Calls: 6
- Vehicle Accidents/Rescues: 1
- Emergency Medical Calls: 63
- Total emergency calls for FY' 25- '26 = 1,194

II. Inspections:

- Fire Inspections: 3

- Certificate of Occupancy Inspections: 3
- Pre- Plans: 2

III. Training:

- Training Hours: 286

IV. Vehicle Accident Billings:

- For the month:
  - Total for FY '25- '26 = $1838.44

V. Other Updates/ Information:

- With Council's approval, the department is ready to proceed with the purchase of the propane fire training props with the 100% reimbursement grant from the West Virginia Emergency Management Division. This training equipment will replace the equipment that was installed when the training center was built in 1999.

Councilman James Hill reported that the Public Safety Committee approved and recommended to City Council to authorize a transfer of $129,892.90 from the Stabilization Fund for the purchase of fire training props for the Fire Training Center.

Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

- Chief Croy requested signs to be placed at the end of the driveway and at the back entrance of the parking lot at the Main Station. This would help keep the general public from driving through the parking lot to avoid the traffic light at Courthouse Road and Morrison Drive. Any individuals with business at the Police or Fire Departments can enter the parking lot from the Morrison Drive side.
- Dalton Bowman completed his Firefighter 1 training and started regular shifts. He will begin EMT training on July 23rd.
- Firefighter Jonathon Franklin passed his promotional exam and has been promoted to Lieutenant.
- Chief Croy thanked the firefighters for their excellent job of serving the city and the citizens of Princeton, whatever the need may be. He thanked Code Enforcement, the Police Department, and Public Works for their continued support.

Police Department

Deputy Chief Seth Gibson reported the following for the month:

1. **June Activity Summary**
   - Incidents: 1,009
   - Arrests: 48
   - Citations Issued: 136

2. **Community Engagement**
   - Sergeant Angle and Patrolman Jones, the department's K-9 officers, conducted several K-9 demonstrations at schools throughout Mercer County. Students had the opportunity to meet K-9 Trax and K-9 Kilo while learning about the role of police service dogs and how they assist law enforcement.

3. **Enforcement Highlights**
   - Following a lengthy drug investigation, members of the Princeton Police Department executed

a search warrant at a residence on Roundhouse Road in Princeton. Officers seized fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, illegal doses of Gabapentin and Suboxone, approximately $300 in cash, and three firearms, including one stolen firearm.
- Two individuals were arrested and charged with multiple counts of Possession with Intent to Deliver, along with additional criminal offenses.

4. **Personnel Update**
   - Jamie Lane retired on June 30, 2026, after 15 years of dedicated service to the Princeton Police Department.
   - The department welcomes Barbara Blankenship as the new Administrative Assistant. Barbara served 22 years with the Lombard (Illinois) Police Department, where she worked alongside more than 60 sworn officers and 20 civilian employees.

3. Finance and Administration Committee

Councilman Dewey Russell reported that the Finance and Administration Committee of Princeton City Council met on June 10th, 2026, with the following to report to City Council:

Finance Department

May 2026 Financial Report – Finance Director Brian Conner reported that as of the end of May, the eleventh month of FY2026, the actual revenues collected stood at 88.19% compared to the budgeted amount of 91.67%, while actual appropriations spent were 83.76%. Total funds available for City operations at the end of the month were $3,802,911.

Noteworthy Expenditures for the month:

PEIA:	$78,205.40
Morgan Stanley:	$45,855.55 (Fire and Police Pension)
First Community Bank:	$27,814.33 (Bond Payment)

Councilman Dewey Russell reported that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council the June 2026 Financial Statements, and he moved to approve them.

Councilman Joseph Allen seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

General Fund Budget Revision #1- Finance Director Brian Conner reported that in March 2026, the FY2027 unassigned fund balance was estimated to be $2,000,000. The actual balance on June 30, 2026, after accruals (receivables and payables), is $2,647,171, thereby creating an increase of $647,171 from estimates. The increase in fund equity brings the total budgeted revenue for FY2027 to $10,027,556.

The General Fund revenue and expenditure estimates have been adjusted for the increase in the fund balance below:

- Increase in the City Manager's contribution line to support community development.
- Allocate to Contingencies for possible project overruns.
- Increase in Code Enforcement for a demolition expense.
- Increase to the Fire Department for equipment invoiced after year-end.
- Increase to the Street Department for equipment invoiced after year-end.
- Allocate to Swimming Pools for employee benefits.

The above revenue and expenditure adjustments create a balanced budget of $10,027.556.

Councilman Dewey Russell reported that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council General Fund Budget Revision #1, and he so moved.

Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

B&O Incentives- City Manager Mike Webb stated that the following B&O tax Incentives have been submitted:

1. Beauty by Belle, Isabella King, Cosmetologist
2. Noble Nails by Laken, Laken Spangler, Nail Technician
3. Integrative Massage, Dana Hambrick, Massage Therapist
4. Nails at Tiffany's, Tiffany Hyder, Nail Technician

Councilman Dewey Russell stated that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended the above-mentioned B&O Tax Incentives, and he made a motion to approve them.

Councilman James Hill seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Economic Development Report

City Manager Mike Webb presented the following report:

New Business Licenses in '26: 43

Social Media: Sites for Music in the Park, Police Dept., Fire Dept., Princeton EDA, Railroad Museum, and City of Princeton:

Metric	***June to Date***
New Page Followers (Net):	**951**
Followers:	**14,814**
Views:	**465,474**
Interactions:	**24,392**

Community Center Update: The USDA has informed staff that they have provided all the information they need at this time. They are waiting for their National Office review to finalize, and they can proceed with closing the 7-million-dollar loan and the 2.2-million-dollar grant.

City Pool: Since opening, 3,888 people have attended. The best sellers of the concession stand have been Dippin' Dots at 810 units, Pepsi Products at 687 units, and Boba flavored drinks at 242 units. In total, 3,611 food items have been sold, and they have recently added candies and Princeton Specialty Splash Drinks to the menu.

Putt-Putt: The golf simulator, Dippin'Dots, and certain Pepsi products have been installed at the putt-putt. The dinos are also improved, and it will be ready for opening soon.

Wave Pool Drawdown #17, Bank Requisition #6- Mr. Webb stated that additional invoices have been received for this drawdown. He stated this recommendation is for a project drawdown of $629,070.42, to be funded through bond issuance at First Community Bank. This amount is represented through four invoices: 1) Swope Construction for $298,385.50, 2) Swope Construction for 142,234.52, 3) Aquatic Builders for

$187,550.40, and 4) Westwood Professional Services for $900.00 for July drawdown inspections. Thereby constituting a drawdown of $629,070.42.

Councilman Dewey Russell made a motion to approve Wave Pool Drawdown #17, Bank Requisition #6, contingent on concurrent approval by the Princeton Building Commission, with the City Manager to sign all necessary documents.

Vice Mayor James Hawkins seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Councilman James Hill "Yes"
Councilman Joseph Allen "Yes"
Vice Mayor James Hawkins "Yes"
Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker "Yes"
Councilman Dewey Russell "Yes"
Mayor David Graham "Yes"

Transfer from Stabilization Fund to Wave Pool Project Account- Mr. Webb stated that this recommendation is to appropriate $149,720.56 from the Stabilization Fund for costs outside the original scope of the Wave Pool Project. Some notable costs include those related to fill, trenching, and undercut at the project site.

Councilman Dewey Russell made a motion to approve and recommend the transfer of funds from the Stabilization Fund to the Wave Pool Project account for $149,720.56 for Wave Pool Change Order #2.

Councilman Joseph Allen seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Councilman Dewey Russell "Yes"
Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker "Yes"
Vice Mayor James Hawkins "Yes"
Councilman Joseph Allen "Yes"
Councilman James Hill "Yes"
Mayor David Graham "Yes"

Wave Pool Change Order #2- Councilman Dewey Russell reported that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council Wave Pool Change Order #2 in the amount of $149,720.56, and he so moved.

Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Councilman Dewey Russell "Yes"
Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker "Yes"
Vice Mayor James Hawkins "Yes"
Councilman Joseph Allen "Yes"
Councilman James Hill "Yes"
Mayor David Graham "Yes"

Transfer from Stabilization Fund to Wave Pool Project Account- Mr. Webb stated that this recommendation is to appropriate $10,819.99 from the Stabilization Fund for costs outside the original scope of

the Wave Pool Project. Some notable submitted costs include a retaining wall, an adjusted kitchen layout, and costs related to the placement of an emergency 911 phone.

Councilman Dewey Russell made a motion to transfer $10,819.99 from the Stabilization Fund to the Wave Pool Project Account for Change Order #3.

Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Councilman James Hill "Yes"
Councilman Joseph Allen "Yes"
Vice Mayor James Hawkins "Yes"
Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker "Yes"
Councilman Dewey Russell "Yes"
Mayor David Graham "Yes"

Wave Pool Change Order #3- Councilman Russell reported that the Finance and Administration Committee approved and recommended to City Council Wave Pool Change Order #3 in the amount of $10,819.99, and he so moved.

Councilman James Hill seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Councilman James Hill "Yes"
Councilman Joseph Allen "Yes"
Vice Mayor James Hawkins "Yes"
Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker "Yes"
Councilman Dewey Russell "Yes"
Mayor David Graham "Yes"

Wave Pool Fencing Bid- City Manager Mike Webb stated that Jim Glass Fencing submitted the lowest bid for the Fence Project for $54,000. He recommended that City Council approve the bid.

Councilman Dewey Russell made a motion to approve the bid submitted by Jim Glass Fencing for $54,000 for the Wave Pool Fencing Project.

Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously with a roll call vote as follows:

Councilman Dewey Russell "Yes"
Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker "Yes"
Vice Mayor James Hawkins "Yes"
Councilman Joseph Allen "Yes"
Councilman James Hill "Yes"
Mayor David Graham "Yes"

Appointment- City Manager Mike Webb stated that he recommends appointing Marshall Long to the Economic Development Authority for a three-year term.

Councilman Dewey Russell made a motion to approve Marshall Long for a three-year term with the Princeton Economic Development Authority.

Councilwoman Jacqueline Rucker seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

VI. City Attorney
The City Attorney did not have anything to report.

VII. City Manager
City Manager Mike Webb presented a slideshow highlighting ongoing and completed projects throughout the City. He also provided an overview of the City's Fourth of July activities.

VIII. City Clerk
The City Clerk did not have anything to report.

IX. Human Resources
Human Resources thanked Council for the 1% COLA raise for all City employees.

X. Council Roundtable
No roundtable discussion was conducted.

XI. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

These minutes were prepared by City Clerk Kaitlyn Ellison and approved by City Council on the _____ day of _____, _____

_____
Kaitlyn Ellison, City Clerk