

**MINUTES OF A STUDY SESSION OF THE PRINCETON CITY COUNCIL HELD ON  
MARCH 7, 2013, 4:30 P.M. IN THE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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Mayor Paul Whitcomb called the meeting to order. Council members present were, Dick Dobson, Thom Walker, Jules Zimmer and Victoria Hallin. Staff present was Administrator Mark Karnowski, Finance Director Steve Jackson, Community Development Director Carie Fuhrman, Public Works Director Bob Gerold, Police Chief Brian Payne, Fire Chief Jim Roxbury, Liquor Store Manager Nancy Campbell and City Clerk Shawna Jenkins.

**Rick Olseen from Congressman Rick Noland's Office**

Olseen stated that he was recently hired by Congressman Rick Noland as a field representative for this area. His office is located in the Chisago County Government Center.

Noland's Representatives are familiar with each of their areas and the residents. Job Growth is important and Noland is going to be just north of Princeton tomorrow at E-Ride. Olseen said he has been out to the airport and to the industrial area and Noland would like to tour some of those facilities. He said they are also interested in road projects and would try to get help at a Federal level.

Hallin mentioned the extension of 21<sup>st</sup> avenue and the new safety building that will be breaking ground in May. Karnowski suggested that the City could also use help with the FAA, as we will need to get the cross wind runway removed from the ALP. When it was originally added to the ALP it took approximately 2 1/2 years.

Olseen stated that Congressman Noland had said there have been so many changes in congress compared to his past experienced. The increase in the amount of money spent during elections is quite large, so he is pushing for some election reform. He is also pushing for congress to work a full week when in session, instead of just 2-3 days.

**North Ambulance – Kevin Novotny**

Novotny said he is new manager as of last fall and Gary Pearson is the Director of Operations. He just wanted to inform the Council about what they have been doing lately, how they do things, what their service area is, etc.

North Ambulance is based in Princeton and spread throughout Minnesota. Their services include ground ambulance, air ambulance, education, and research operations. North Memorial Ambulance Services is the only Minnesota-based ambulance service accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services.

They have a new dispatch center in Brooklyn Center, where all calls are routed through. They also have the new 911 Genesis system that only a few secondary Public Safety Answering points have. North has a total of 120 ambulances, 80 of which are staffed at all times. They also have 8 helicopters with 5 staffed at all times and 2 Medical Directors that are Board Certified ER doctors.

They have a lot of shared knowledge and expertise from those who specialize in many different medical fields.

North Ambulance also does their own fleet maintenance, and have their own education department in Brooklyn Center and Brainerd to keep knowledge and training current.

Here in Princeton, there are 2 levels of crews:

One Advanced Life Support (ALS) crew is comprised of one paramedic and one EMT. The ALS crew operates as a mobile emergency room. They have New Life Pack 15 units, which are the newest and greatest Defibrillator units. The survival rate with this equipment is very good.

The Basic Life Support (BLS) Crew includes an emergency medical technician. This crew is able to administer several medications and assistance.

Quality assurance is very important, so they have yearly driver training, preventative maintenance on equipment, extensive new employee orientation, patient care goals, Medical Director participation and are in joint operations with Fairview.

The Princeton site serves Zimmerman, Princeton, Milaca, Pease, Bock, Foreston, Oak Park, and the surrounding townships. Their service area is about 40 x 55 mile area.

The average response time for the City of Princeton is 7.2 minutes. For 2012, Princeton had included 833 calls, with a total of 3500 responses total in this region.

North Ambulance also donates supplies; standby's, demos and provides discounted rates in the amount of \$16,000 to the local communities.

Dobson questioned if the policy is still the same with the Air Ambulance, in that if it lands and it's determined if the patient doesn't need to go by air, it is not charged. Novotny responded that it is still the same policy. If the dispatchers here something is bad, or the first responders feel it may be necessary, they would rather get the air ambulance ordered in right away, and it can always be cancelled.

Zimmer said he has had to use their services in the past personally and felt like he was in great hands.

Hallin said she experienced it once as well, and it was a good experience.

Hallin if they still have their disaster trailers. Novotny replied that they are housed Brooklyn Center and Brainerd. The trailers are equipped with back boards and a lot of additional equipment. Pearson added that in the case of a disaster, many ambulances will come from all over the area to assist.

### **Business District Parking**

Karnowski reported that Kelly Gupitek Ossell is the owner of Louise's Basement and manager of Ossell's and has requested the opportunity to talk to the City Council about whether there should be time limited parking in the downtown area.

Karnowski said he checked with the Chamber of Commerce to see if this issue has been brought up or discussed in the past and if they see it has an issue. Mary Chapman had stated that the Chamber has talked about trying to improve the parking in the downtown area but hasn't talked about time limited parking regulations.

Ossell stated her and Chamber President Scott Berry have gone around and spoken to numerous business owners to see appears to be an issue for almost everyone. She said they

would like some parking regulations to limit long term parking downtown. Tenants, employees, business owners, and even residents are guilty of parking downtown for long periods of time and taking up valuable spaces for customers.

Berry suggested a 2 hour parking limit, from Hytech to Bremer on Rum River Drive, and from the library to east of Elim Home on 1st. He has heard a lot of complaints from business owners saying that people want to park right up front to shop and many people will move on if they can't find a place to park

Berry stated that the Chamber is not currently talking about it, but have in the past. Ossell added with new businesses coming in thru the Experience Princeton Program, they expect even more parking issues. She feels it's an easy fix and that public will respond to notices and a few signs and it won't require much enforcement.

Walker asked if Ossell has an idea how much of the problem is apartment tenants. Ossell said while there are some tenants, she said it's mostly employees and business owners. Fuhrman added that many of the apartments do have their own parking.

Fuhrman said she has spoke to Ossell and was told she has tried to alleviate the problem on her own by talking to the various problem parkers. She has not gotten anywhere, so she is here to ask for help

Whitcomb asked why the business owners don't ask their employees to park elsewhere if it's an issue. Berry said it's some of the business owners as well.

Hallin said she's thinking these people are parking not in front of their own businesses, but other businesses.

Berry said the businesses that seem to be the biggest offenders are those that are not depending on foot traffic. It is a courtesy and if we want to motivate businesses to come in, we should make downtown attractive and assessable.

Zimmer asked approximately how many businesses are causing the parking issues. Berry responded that on Rum River Drive there are 2 and there are some issues on First Street as well. Ossell said some of the businesses have quite a few employees, so they should be directed on where to park and where not to.

Zimmer asked if these people have been talked to. Ossell said she has talked to several people and has not gotten anywhere with them. She said she has even had responses saying it is public parking and they will park there if they want to.

Berry said he talked to quite a few people, and even residents are aware that it is some of the business owners that are causing the parking problems.

Hallin said she agrees with informing the business owners and their employees where they should park.

Karnowski stated he has worked in a few cities that had parking regulations and saw mixed results. Enforcement can be a real issue, and he has seen some people get very upset when they get a ticket, having not seen the regulation signs. While he understands her frustration, it is an issue that has several aspects that make it very difficult to deal with. It is not an easy issue to solve, but it doesn't mean we shouldn't try.

Whitcomb said at one time the City did have had parking restrictions. If the City did again, it likely wouldn't be a priority for the Police Department as we do not have the manpower to enforce it.

Zimmer added that if parking regulations were adopted, it would not just be business owners and employees that it would affect. It would also affect those with campaign signs, garage sales, etc.

Berry said if the council wants a vibrant business community, then something needs to be done about parking. The Chamber is willing to work with the council to come up with a solution.

Chief Payne said if there were parking citations issued, those are all state citations. He added that Cambridge has a particular parking lot that all the downtown workers park and it seems to work well. He stated the Police Department can issue citations, but instead he suggested all the business owners sit down together to talk and agree on the best solution.

Hallin commented that she likes the idea of a public parking area.

Dobson stated he feels it would take something from the City for things to change. Walker said he would be worried about 2 hour limits, and enforcing that.

Walker asked for an estimate on what a simple no parking sign would cost. Gerold responded that the sign along would be about \$35, and more if it required additional hardware to be installed.

Hallin suggested a sign that says customer parking only. Berry said that may be something to try.

Berry stated if there were parking restrictions in place, then the police could do something. Ossell asked if there was an option to give a couple warnings before a ticket was given.

Whitcomb commented that if a customer spent an hour at Ossell's, then decided to go over to K Bob for lunch, that could very well put them over the allotted 2 hour parking limit.

Hallin said she agrees with the customer parking only, and a letter to the businesses outlining several public parking lots available to use.

Zimmer said if you make an ordinance or a law, you have to have a method of enforcing it.

Fuhrman suggested sending a letter to the business owners asking them and their employees to park in the marked parking areas before creating an ordinance.

Ossell said she's asking for the customer only parking signs, and if the sign should be a deterrence and it may not need enforcement.

Karnowski said he will check with the League of Minnesota Cities as he has heard this conversation several times. He will also find out if other cities have had the issue and how they have addressed it.

Karnowski said it would be easy to draft a letter to the Business owners that be signed by all the Council Members and Chamber Board.

Payne asked Ossell where her and her employees park. Ossell responded that they park behind the store in their lot, and she usually has the night employee's park in the shopping center lot so they do not have to go in the alley at night when it is dark.

Berry asked Gerold how much it would cost to put up some customer only parking signs, as he can see if the Chamber can assist in the costs. Gerold responded that if the existing poles are used and 3 signs per block were put up, it would be approximately \$1000.

Walker suggested that the EDA also look at this as well. Karnowski agreed and said it should be a joint letter that comes from the City, Chamber and the EDA.

Payne added that it needs to start at the top on down. It seems like a simple solution, but everyone needs to be involved. Dobson said change is hard and it won't happen overnight.

Berry said he'll bring the sign suggestions back to the chamber, and to the EDA.

### **Princeton airport radio controller**

The Princeton Airport has a pilot controlled light system, which means that pilots can operate various lighting and navigational aids from the air by clicking the microphone on the airport frequency. The Radio controlling this feature has been the subject of some scrutiny due to periods of poor operation. This is a safety consideration.

Some pilots and members of the Airport Radio have been working directly with MnDOT Aeronautics technical staff (John Schroeder) to resolve this and other issues. Though they have been able to adjust or fix other parts of the system at little to no cost, Schroeder has concluded that the radio needs to be replaced due to its age and difficulty of getting replacement parts.

Schroeder solicited three bids for a new radio controller, and received two.

Rural Electric, Inc Mesa AZ	\$1790.00
Control Industries, Inc Urbana OH	\$1990.00

Though a bit costlier, Schroder is recommending the Control Industries unit for \$1990.00 due to better reliability.

Karnowski stated that he and Airport Engineer Dresel have been working on securing a State Grant for this project. Though not guaranteed, it appears that 70% of this project will be funded through MnDOT.

DOBSON MOVED SUBJECT TO THE RECEIPT OF A STATE GRANT, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PRINCETON HEREBY AUTHORIZES THE PURCHASE OF A CONTROL INDUSTRIES, INC RADIO CONTROLLER FOR PNM. FURTHER, THE CITY COUNCIL AUTHORIZES STAFF TO APPLY FOR AND ACCEPT SAID STATE GRANT, PROVIDED THAT SAID GRANT IS MADE FOR AT LEAST 70% OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT COST. WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION.

Karnowski praised the work that Schroeder has done in helping out the city with the radio.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

### **Public safety building update**

Karnowski gave a quick report on the Public Safety Building. It will be on the agenda for next Thursday so no action tonight.

This afternoon the city opened the first set of bids for the proposed Public Safety Building. The bids opened this afternoon included bids for:

- A. the precast concrete wall panels (tip-ups) and
- B. The structural steel for the roof.

The total of the two bids came in about \$10,000 under the engineer's estimate for the work. The construction management firm will be going over the bids to make sure that there were no errors in the computations, so the bid award by the Council will be on next Thursday's agenda. At that time the Council should also consider whether to add the extra bay to the fire station side of the building. The Council will also need to approve the final contracts with Greystone and the architect.

The unaudited bid results were as follows:

**STRUCTURAL STEEL/MISCELLANEOUS METALS:** (3 bidders)

	<u>Base Bid</u>	<u>Alternate #1</u>
Ben's Structural Fabrication	\$108,000	\$ 7,500
Mid County Fabrication	\$109,250	\$ 6,400
Thurnbeck Steel Fabrication	\$114,600	\$ 6,500

(Alternate #1: adding the extra bay to the fire station side)

**PRECAST CONCRETE WALL PANELS:** (2 bidders)

	<u>Base Bid</u>	<u>Alt. #3</u>	<u>Alt. #7</u>	<u>Unit Price #1</u>
Fabcon	\$253,090	\$10,143	\$ 542	\$ 176
Wells Concrete	\$320,440	\$18,900	\$ 300	\$ 50

(Alt. #3: extra bay on the fire station; Alt. #7: police windows; Unit Price #1: No. Side Windows)

The second set of bids for everything else is set for 4-25. The Council needs to decide to add the extra bay, etc.

**ADJOURN**

WALKER MOTIONED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:58PM. DOBSON SECONDED THE MOTION. (THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY)

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawna Jenkins

ATTEST: