

November 16, 2021

The Second Regular November meeting of the Danville City Council was held on November 16, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. The following Council Members were present: James B. Buckner, L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry P. Mayo, Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (9). Mr. Vogler entered the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Staff Members present were: City Manager Ken F. Larking, Deputy City Manager Earl B. Reynolds, Jr., City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield Jr., and City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi.

INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Mary Foley, 145 Sutherlin Avenue who spoke on behalf of Sacred Heart School and Church about the Madonna Icon that hangs above the school. Mrs. Foley noted in 2008, it was moved to Sacred Heart Campus. When it was moved, Power Signs bought all the bulbs for it; it has been almost 20 years and the bulbs are nearly gone. In order to preserve it, it needs to be rewired, and all sockets replaced with new LED bulbs; the estimated cost was between \$15,000 and \$20,000. #Giving Tuesday, the National Day of Giving, was the Tuesday after Thanksgiving; this year it was November 30th. As part of Giving Tuesday, Sacred Heart was asking citizens to help them raise \$20,000 to help preserve the sign. Mrs. Foley noted she would post a link on River City TV's Facebook post for "I Give Catholic" or citizens can go to Sacred Heart School or Church's website or Facebook page, to find the link. Council Members thanked Mrs. Foley for appearing before Council.

Mayor Jones recognized Mark Holland, 204 Virginia Avenue who spoke to Council regarding the lack of paint on the pavement in the Schoolfield area. There were a couple communities that were affected by the lack of paint, people who were walking and riding trying to be healthy. There were also people who had to walk to get to the stores; in that area there were no crosswalks west of Magnolia, and there were no crosswalks at any of the bus stops. Mr. Holland stated he also thought it was a problem that there were no parking spaces painted in that area of the City. Mayor Jones noted he would discuss this with the City Manager.

Mayor Jones recognized Lieutenants Antonio and Shawnte Hodges, 123 Henry Street, from the Salvation Army who appeared before Council to ask for the support of Council and leadership during the Holiday season. Shawnte Hodges explained the funds they raise during the kettle season was for the whole year, in support of all their programs, such as summer camp for children, rent and utility assistance and feeding programs. Mrs. Hodges asked for the support of the community to help serve the City of Danville. They will be serving Thanksgiving Dinner from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 pm; Mayor Jones thanked the Hodges for what they do.

Mayor Jones recognized William Griffith, 935 Green Street, who appeared before Council regarding 937-939 Green Street and asked City Council to exercise their oversight and cancel or hold the sale of that property. The expert opinion that was commissioned stated that property would be prohibitively expensive to rehabilitate. Mr. Griffith noted this house has been on a merry go round of being sold and then returned because buyers quickly realized the house was too expensive to renovate properly. That same expert opinion cited that in rare cases removing a home was actually more of an improvement to the neighborhood than keeping and restoring it. It

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was concerning to him and understood the City Manager was trying to seek solutions for the community and the City, but these actions do not benefit the entire City but only a select few.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Buckner and **second** by Council Member Campbell, Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on October 19, 2021, were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2021

Director of Finance Michael Adkins reviewed the General Fund results through October 31, 2021 which was 33% of the fiscal year complete. Revenues were about \$27M, tracking well with budget, and showed an increase of about \$1.8M over last year. The sources for the increase related to the collection of delinquent real estate taxes of about \$470,000 which was 45% of budget at this point, as well as local consumer taxes which were nearly \$900,000 over the prior year. Local Consumer Taxes were predominantly made up of sales tax which was set to outpace budget, currently 35% of budget with 33% of the year complete, and \$260,000 more than last year. Meals tax was the most significant item in the local tax category, currently at 38% of budget with \$557,000 over last year. Lodging taxes were also performing well at about 48% of budget and \$178,000 over last year. Other revenues such as state and federal revenues were on target with projections at this time.

Expenditures were also tracking well with budget; Departmental Spending was at 30% of budget, about 3% under budget at this time. Non Departmental Expenses, which was primarily the Group Health Insurance, was currently at 31.5%, trailing budget. The only significant change in the expenditures had to do with the timing of funding sent to Danville Public Schools. This year they were back to in school instruction as opposed to virtual learning; that was more costly this year with the related auxiliary services as well. It takes the schools a few months of operation each school year in order to start drawing down state funds, often they use the local funding first.

Mr. Adkins noted the City's bond issuance was scheduled to occur very soon; all three of the credit rating agencies, Moody's, S&P and Fitch, affirmed the City's AA credit rating once again. They emphasized the City's stable financial position, and were very complimentary of Economic Development and Tourism projects on the horizon. Mr. Adkins stated when the City starts to see that impact the finances, they will be in a position for a credit upgrade in the future. The General Obligation Bonds the City traditionally issued each year will be put out to bid tomorrow and he will tell Council the interest rate at his next report. In addition, the City's audit report was scheduled to be presented at the December 21st work session; the audit was just about complete and currently there were no material changes to the numbers he presented for June 30th.

APPROVING A MORAL OBLIGATION WITH VIRGINIA COMMUNITY CAPITAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A SHELL BUILDING

Council Member Buckner **moved** for adoption of a Resolution entitled:

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-11.03

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APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A MORAL OBLIGATION AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA AND VIRGINIA COMMUNITY CAPITAL, A VIRGINIA BANKING CORPORATION

The Motion was **seconded** by Council Member Mayo and carried by the following vote:

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, and Whittle (8)
NAY: None
ABSENT: Vogler (1)

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking noted Parks & Recreation had developed conceptual plans for Doyle Thomas Park and Ballou Park as possible locations for splashpads, and will be coming to a work session to share that information with Council. The Budget included about \$1M for each splashpad. Depending on the topography, location and existing infrastructure at each location, the amount of amenities that can be placed on those sites with that \$1M will be slightly different. Mr. Larking stated Parks & Recreation also plans to engage with the community with regard to Youth Athletics. Youth Athletics throughout the country has declined recently; little league and soccer programs have declined because children were doing other things. They wanted to engage with citizens to make sure they have a program that makes sense for the community.

City Attorney Clarke Whitfield noted he will be bringing forward ordinances to institute the new tax that was passed by the citizens, an ordinance moving the elections from May to November and also a resolution dealing with the opioid settlement.

There were no communications from the Deputy City Manager or City Clerk.

Council Member Mayo noted the Kettle Drive going on with the Salvation Army takes place every year, and thanked the Lieutenants for coming to Council tonight; it benefits so many in the community. With regard to the Madonna being shown every year, he was glad to see that was going to carry on, and what needs to happen to make that happen. Mr. Mayo congratulated Kelly Cunningham for the fashion show she had.

Vice Mayor Miller noted he attended the dedication at DCC with other Council Members for the new welding center, an \$18M investment; it was a great event, it was workforce training for the community. They train men and women for not only machinists, but automotive technicians, and welders for local industries; it was first rate facility. Dr. Miller gave a shout out to Reverend Cecil Bridgeforth, he was admitted to the hospital today and wanted everyone to pray for him for a speedy recovery; he has brought many issues to Council, and was champion for people all over the City. Dr. Miller encouraged citizens to get their vaccines.

Council Member Saunders noted he sends his prayers to Reverend Bridgeforth and his family and noted his congratulations to DCC on the dedication of the welding center, providing training for industry jobs.

Council Member Vogler apologized for entering the meeting late, he was at his son's football playoff game, they had a great group of young men on the team.

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Council Member Buckner thanked everyone that came out to the Bright Leaf Brew Fest this past weekend, it was a great event.

Council Member Campbell noted he spoke with Reverend Bridgeforth's son this afternoon and they would be praying for Reverend Bridgeforth. Reverend Campbell commended the City Manager for the initiative for youth sports for the children of Danville, wished everyone a blessed, safe and Happy Thanksgiving, and encouraged everyone to get their vaccine.

Mayor Jones noted there were a number of ribbon cuttings going on in the community, the one at DCC yesterday; this past Friday, Kelly Cunningham's beautiful facility Fashion Haus, they did a great job. Tomorrow there will be another ribbon cutting at Soul of the Sea, a new seafood restaurant and next Monday will be the Lazy Bee Bar and Grill having their ribbon cutting. Mayor Jones noted his appreciation of City Staff, all city employees and encouraged citizens to find someone to be kind to this week.

ADJOURNED: 7:45P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK