

October 18, 2022

The Second Regular October meeting of the Danville City Council was held on October 18, 2022, 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). *Council Member Vogler left the meeting at 7:10 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 Sherman M. Saunders followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Presentation: Partnership for Regional Prosperity
By: Beth Doughty

Mayor Jones recognized Beth Doughty from Partnership for Regional Prosperity who spoke regarding the history of the partnership to help address change for the best outcomes. Ms. Doughty noted the group started in July of 2021 with the mission to cultivate strategic transformation by convening, encouraging, and organizing efforts to build prosperity. Prosperity was a key value, not only the name, but the mission as well, and discussed investments and jobs within the community, as well as opportunities and challenges that have been faced. Ms. Doughty stated Rebecca Ryan, a futurist, will be giving a presentation on November 14th at 5:30 pm at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research. This was a free event with a complimentary dinner pre-registration was required. Ms. Doughty has been speaking to civic groups and asking what they would like people to say about Danville and Pittsylvania County twenty years from now and there were two specific responses. They want it to be a great place to live, work, and raise a family, and they want it to be an example of success and resilience. In the next couple of months, the Partnership will hold several exercises around the region for people to come together, to consider and talk about trends and projections in areas such as education, job growth, poverty, and inclusion. Mrs. Doughty thanked Council for their time.

Council Member Vogler thanked Ms. Doughty for coming and giving the presentation; he was very excited about what the group was going to do and that he loved the name. Two of his favorite words were in the name, "partnership" and "prosperity", and he hoped to see a lot of both in the years ahead. Council Member Campbell noted his agreement with Council Member Vogler and added that his concern was with all the good coming to Danville, what were some of the concerns on engaging all areas of the community that don't leave out certain sections. Ms. Doughty stated that she understood Council Member Campbell's concerns and that those same questions and concerns have been part of the Partnership's conversations.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Ann Moore-Sparks, CEO and President of the Danville-Pittsylvania Chamber of Commerce, and Christy Harper, Director of Member Engagement for the Chamber, who noted their support of DCC's Job and Resource Fair. The Chamber thanked DCC for organizing this event; there were more than 1,383 positions available for hire. The region was going to see rapid growth and must be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities coming

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its way. Ms. Harper shared information regarding the Job Fair on Tuesday, November 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Danville Community Market, 629 Craghead Street, Danville, and stated more information can be found on the Chamber's Facebook page, City website, River City TV, or by reaching out to Council Member Mayo at DCC. Paul Farrar, Director of the TARE Program for DCC, stated TARE was designed to help eligible students eliminate barriers to education, for free. There were certain eligibility requirements in order to attend the program, and information on the program can be found on the DCC website and at the resource fair.

Council Member Mayo stated that flyers with a QR code were circulating, and that code can be used to register early so citizens do not have to fill out the paperwork when they arrive. Council Member Saunders stated looking at the announcement, Halifax, Danville, and Pittsylvania County were being represented at the job fair, but all citizens from all regions were invited to attend. Council Member Miller commented on the unemployment rate fourteen years ago and how he has seen prosperity growing in Danville with the jobs that were coming. Council Member Hood asked when it stated all citizens, does that include felons, and Council Member Mayo stated that it included everyone no matter what their circumstances were. Mayor Jones thanked everyone for working diligently on putting this job fair together.

Mayor Jones recognized Dale McCray, Lead Organizer for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers who spoke on behalf of the Danville Power and Light Department. Mr. McCray stated the IBEW was a leader in utility unions. Recently, several workers in the power and light department reached out to IBEW to form a union. After some research, it was apparent that due to some changes in law in the state of Virginia, that was now a possibility for City workers. They proceeded to see if there was a majority of workers who wanted to form a union and the majority of city workers do want a union. According to the new law, Danville City Council has the authority to pass a resolution or ordinance defining how their employees can organize in a union and be represented. The IBEW was there to partner with Council any way they saw fit, to accomplish this. Mayor Jones asked Mr. McCray to take the City Manager's card and contact him regarding this issue.

Mayor Jones recognized Lynwood Jones of the Eastside Riders Motorcycle Club who introduced themselves to Council. Mr. Jones noted they were trying to give back and shed a positive light on the motorcycle community. In August, they partnered with Walmart to raise money for the Children's Miracle Network and collect school supplies. The Club looked to assist local businesses and events that were taking place in the City. They can be reached via Eastside Riders Motorcycle Club Facebook page. Council Member Saunders thanked Mr. Jones for coming tonight, speaking on behalf of bikers and what they are doing in the community.

Mayor Jones recognized Reverend Percy Pass and Mildred Richardson who spoke to Council about the Youth Summit 2022 being held at Laurel Grove Missionary Baptist Church on October 29th from 11am to 2 pm. The address was 3421 Kerns Church Road and youth can register by sending an email to lgyouthsumit@gmail.com.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Whittle and **second** by Council Member Campbell, Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on September 20, 2022, were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIAL REPORTS THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2022.

Director of Finance Michael Adkins reported the financial results of the General Fund through the first quarter, September 30th of the new fiscal year. Total revenues as compared to budget were on track; as of September 30th, Revenues were at \$21.8M, representing 18% of budget. For comparison, last year at this time, revenues were \$20M, or 17% of budget. Mr. Adkins noted he cannot yet comment on the Real Estate or Personal Property Taxes for the current fiscal year; the first billing and collection cycle of that will begin next month with those bills going out the first week of November. The collection of delinquent taxes continued to perform well; the City has realized about \$565,000 in the first three months of FY23, an increase of about \$42,000 from last year at this time. They were planning another public auction of delinquent parcels which has proven to be effective for getting those abandoned properties back in the hands of active owners. That auction will be held in Chambers on Friday, December 16th, and it will be advertised closer to that time. With regard to local consumer taxes, Sales Tax was on track at \$25.6% of budget, a little above budget, running about \$67,000 ahead at this point. Meals tax exceeded budgeted expectations at 29% of budget, currently surpassing last year at this time by about \$240,000. Lodging taxes as well were outperforming at 33% of budget, an increase of about \$171,000 from last year at this time. Mr. Adkins noted Council Member Whittle had asked last time he was there about the event at VIR; that event took place the first week of September, so those businesses have until of this month to get those collections in and he will be able to comment more the next time he reports. In September, the City received its first installment of the 1% Local Option Sales Tax; this enabled the City to issue bonds for school capital projects. The first installment would represent sales from the month of July, was \$745,000. The City based their borrowing for the schools and the debt service structure with an estimate of receiving between \$680,000 and \$700,00 per month; the City was in a very comfortable spot. Any excess revenue that develops over the next twenty years has to be used on school capital; staff will monitor that month to month and will be in communication with the school system so they know the status. With regard to State revenues, those were on track at 23% of budget; most of the State revenues were correlated to expenditures such as Social Services expenditures and Constitutional Offices. Looking at Departmental expenditures, those were also under budget at 23%. Non Department Expenses were ahead of budget at 33%, but it was important to note that this category contains several items that were not paid out equally throughout the year, the biggest one being debt service. Most of the City's bonds have payments that were due twice a year, in September and March. Usually, at the end of September, the City has made 50% of their debt service payments for the year and why it pushes up above 25% for the first quarter. The FY 2023 Bond issuance was underway; the City Manager and the Economic Development Director and Mr. Adkins will be making their credit presentation to the rating agencies this Friday, and they will assess a credit rating for the new bonds. Also, the FY 22 year end audit was underway, it was progressing well and he was not aware of any issues at this point; it was typically completed at the end of November.

Vice Mayor Miller noted \$563,000 in delinquent taxes was a good job; to get that amount of money the City would have to raise its Real Estate tax 2.5 cents on the hundred; Council does not like to do that and encouraged staff to continue to collect those delinquent taxes. Also, the 1% sales tax, that was not for medicines and foods, and Mr. Adkins noted that was correct.

CONSIDERATION OF RELEASING EXISTING LIENS ON PARCEL #20340

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

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RESOLUTION NO. 2022-10.02

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF CITY-HELD LIENS AGAINST REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS PARCEL #20340 COLQUHOUN STREET TO FACILITATE ITS DONATION TO THE DANVILLE REDEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AUTHORITY.

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

VOTE: 7-0-1-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, and Whittle (7)
NAY: None
ABSTAIN: Jones (1)
ABSENT: Vogler (1)

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE DANVILLE CITY CODE TO ADD SECTION 23-9.1 ENTITLED "UNPERMITTED CAMPING ON CITY PROPERTY"

Council Member Buckner **moved** to **TABLE** an Ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 2022-10.01

AN ORDINANCE TO ADD SECTION 23-9.1 ENTITLED "UNPERMITTED CAMPING ON CITY PROPERTY" TO CHAPTER 23, ENTITLED "OFFENSES – MISCELLANEOUS" OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA.

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

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

Mayor Jones questioned if there was anyone who would like to speak on New Business Item C. Mayor Jones noted that Council Tabled this item because they wanted to look at this issue further.

Mayor Jones recognized the following citizens who spoke against the Ordinance on Camping:

Larissa Deedrich, Executive Director of Danville Redevelopment and Housing Authority.
Jessica Hearn, 228 Broad Street.
Maggie Richardson, 1100 Main Street, Apartment 3.
Jude Swanson, Director of House of Hope.
Ryan Busby, 331 Virginia Avenue.
Petrina Carter, President and CEO for Tri City Community Action.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking reminded Council to mark their calendars for November 12 for a joint meeting with the School Board; the time has not been determined yet.

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City Attorney Clarke Whitfield noted he wanted to take a moment to commend Deputy City Attorney Alan Spencer for his ethics presentation at their annual conference.

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

Council Member Mayo thanked everyone for coming out and speaking tonight. After listening to everything said, he agrees with Council Member Saunders, Danville was a caring City, and all of the citizens matter.

Vice Mayor Miller gave a shout out to John Hurl, Michael Duncan, and Marc Adelman for attracting a major conference this week for Civil Air Patrol. Those people were staying in the City's hotels and eating in their restaurants; this was a major win for Danville. Dr. Miller also noted Walraven opened a precision machinery headquarters in Danville.

Council Member Saunders stated that Danville was a caring city and was blessed to have wonderful people who want to help others. That was the reason Council was taking a deeper dive into this ordinance before voting on it, and appreciates Council doing that. Mr. Saunders thanked everyone for coming tonight, showing that they care and were willing to help.

Council Member Buckner thanked all the Council Members; it was a pleasure to serve with them. Mr. Buckner noted he and other council members spoke with the GW football team before their big game on Friday night; they had a wonderful time and it was encouraging to hear from them. Mr. Buckner reminded citizens that the 12th Annual Food Truck Rodeo will be held this Saturday, and hoped to see everyone there.

Council Member Campbell stated it was heartwarming to see the citizens and Council concerned about the homeless and those going through difficult times; they all have compassion. Reverend Campbell noted he saw that some of the test scores in the schools moving up; education was important in the community.

Council Member Hood stated that with all the events going on in the community, it shows that they were a caring City. It also speaks on its resilience and coming together as a body.

Mayor Jones recognized the students from Tunstall, thanked them for coming out tonight, and noted the Youth Summit, and All Citizens Job Fair happening on November 1st.

Meeting adjourned at 8:44pm.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK