The Regular August meeting of the Danville City Council was held on August 4, 2020, 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, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry P. Mayo, Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., (6). Samuel A. Kushner and Madison J.R. Whittle were absent; L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., was in attendance, however, as he was not yet sworn in, he did not participate in the Council Meeting (3).

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 Dr. Gary P. Miller followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jones recognized Chairperson of the Danville School Board, Crystal Cobbs, who introduced Dr. Catherine Magouyrk, Interim Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Magouyrk gave a brief presentation to Council regarding Danville Public Schools, noting DPS starts with Pre-K and ends with graduation, and what happens in Pre-K determines graduation. STEAM was learned in Pre-K through 3rd grade; if children cannot read by third grade, their challenges become greater and graduation seems further. One of the challenges they face, looking at test scores, was they leave 50% of the children behind; 50% of the children don't have futures because 50% of the children are failing. The first responsibility comes from the parents, attendance was the responsibility of parents; it was the first stage of teaching youth how to be successful employees. Children who are chronically absent in those first grades, don't learn to read, and after grade three, because they don't have a strong foundation, become students they fear won't graduate. Chronic absenteeism for all students was 19% and for economically disadvantaged it was 24%. Dr. Magouyrk noted with the test scores, she felt absenteeism was a problem. Everyone plays a part, part one was parents, the second part was the community; a strong community with successful schools, the community's economic development soars. Danville's graduation rate was 82%, the dropout rate 10%; those that get GED's, in today's world, high school diplomas are not enough, a GED was certainly not. It behooves the City to graduate their students on time, that becomes a teacher, parent and student responsibility. Seventeen percent of Danville's population did not graduate from high school and have not had additional skills training; they are most likely under employed or unemployed and probably struggle to give their students the help they need. Dr. Magouyrk discussed the need to promote the school system and suggested beginning with the high schools; that was where the City and the businesses can help their students, that begins with CTE (career and technical education). It was important that the City and businesses help DPS get the children at the high school level for graduation. It was parents, it was students, it was the schools and the City.

Mayor Jones noted two members of Council were on the Education Compact Committee, Council Member Saunders and Vice Mayor Miller.

Council Member Saunders welcomed the School Board members, former member Steven Gould, and welcomed Dr. Magouyrk to Danville stating he looked forward to working with her. Mr. Saunders noted he believed all the students could be successful, regardless of their socio-economic status. Consistency in top school leadership remains a concern for him, and Council has set education as a major priority. Parental and family involvement was imperative for successful student learning and achievement. There were many wrap around services available to the schools and he hopes they were all utilized. Mr. Saunders noted he appreciated her leadership philosophy of putting students first, maintaining high expectations for all, building

support through family and community involvement and promoting transparency and collaboration. Mr. Saunders stated he hoped that what Dr. Magouyrk puts in place during her time in Danville will be built upon by the superintendent that comes after her. Vice Mayor Miller noted he has heard many positive comments about Dr. Magouyrk, who came out of retirement from a successful program in Manassas that had very similar problems to Danville. They had very few schools accredited, the education system was not doing well and Dr. Magouyrk turned it around. Dr. Miller stated this was a very positive step; education was the cornerstone of the pyramid of economic development; if the City does not have good schools, it was not going anywhere. He believes the City has taken a giant step to turn that around and thanked Dr. Magouyrk.

Council Member Vogler thanked Dr. Magouyrk, noting she did a great job laying out the information and driving home the point they cannot have a strong City without a strong school system. The first step towards improvement was addressing what Danville's struggles were and figuring out solutions. Mr. Vogler noted he was excited to work with Dr. Magouyrk, noted they were happy to have her in Danville and looks forward to doing anything he can to help. Council Member Mayo noted it was a pleasure to meet Dr. Magouyrk and to all the school board, they were doing a great job. Council Member Buckner welcomed Dr. Magouyrk to Danville, the City needs her, looks forward to her leadership and was glad she was there. Staff members welcomed Dr. Magouyrk and noted they looked forward to working with her. Mayor Jones thanked Dr. Magouyrk, Council was very supportive of education, welcomed her to Danville and thanked the School Board members for the work they were doing.

Mayor Jones noted Council Member Larry Campbell was back tonight and introduced his daughters.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

City Council did not receive any comments through its online portal or phone line prior to the deadline.

Mayor Jones recognized Tasha Chaffins, 250 Arnett Boulevard, who spoke about the lack of resources for autistic children in Danville, and also complained about the Confederate Flags flying in Danville. Mayor Jones encouraged Ms. Chaffins to speak with members of the School Board about programs in the schools for autistic children.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Buckner and **second** by Council Member Saunders, Minutes from the Inaugural Meeting held on July 1, 2020 and the Regular Council Meeting held on July 7, 2020 were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

VACATING AN UNUSED CITY OWNED EASEMENT IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Vacation of an Unused Easement. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on Monday, July 27, 2020. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-08.01

AUTHORIZING THE ABANDONMENT OF AN UNUSED CITY EASEMENT ACROSS PROPERTY IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY IN ORDER TO SECURE A NEW EASEMENT IN A BETTER LOCATION UPON THE SAME PROPERTY.

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

VOTE:	6-0-3
AYE:	Buckner, Jones, Mayo, Miller, Saunders, and Vogler (6)
NAY:	None
ABSENT:	Campbell, Kushner and Whittle (3)

REQUESTING AND PETITIONING THAT A REFERENDUM BE HELD ON CASINO GAMBLING IN THE CITY OF DANVILLE

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-08.02

REQUESTING AND PETITIONING THAT A REFERENDUM BE HELD ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER CASINO GAMING SHALL BE PERMITTED WITHIN THE CITY OF DANVILLE AT 1100 WEST MAIN STREET, DANVILLE, VIRGINIA 24541 (FORMER DAN RIVER MILLS SCHOOLFIELD DIVISION SITE).

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

VOTE:	6-0-3
AYE:	Buckner, Jones, Mayo, Miller, Saunders, and Vogler (6)
NAY:	None
ABSENT:	Campbell, Kushner and Whittle (3)

BUDGET AMENDMENT – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR A VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF $4,500

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Vogler and **second** by Council Member Mayo, an Ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-08.01

AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR A VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF $4,500, AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE LOCAL SHARE IN THE AMOUNT OF $5,000 FOR A TOTAL GRANT OF $9,500.

was presented by its **First Reading**, as required by City Charter, to lie over before final adoption.

BUDGET AMENDMENT – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR FUNDS FROM THE DANVILLE REGIONAL FOUNDATION IN THE AMOUNT OF $37,187.50

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Buckner and **second** by Council Member Mayo, an Ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-08.02

AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUES FROM DANVILLE REGIONAL FOUNDATION IN THE AMOUNT OF $37,187.50 FOR THE STUDY ON THE USE OF POTENTIAL CASINO REVENUE AND APPROPRIATING THE SAME.

was presented by its **First Reading**, as required by City Charter, to lie over before final adoption.

Mayor Jones questioned if someone had raised their hand to speak and a citizen noted he had not heard the Mayor ask for discussion on the casino item. Mayor Jones invited him to the podium to speak.

Mayor Jones recognized Carlos Magana, 317 Guilford Street, who read a statement regarding a casino in Danville, noting many of Danville's vulnerable citizens were being left behind. Mr. Magana stated the City needed to consider the potential effects of the casino on the Schoolfield and Stokesland communities, the quality of jobs provided by the casino, the increase in policing needed and the potential for gambling addictions. Mayor Jones recognized attorney Steven Gould and suggested Mr. Magana could speak with him about his concerns with the casino.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking noted he wanted to address the last item that was under consideration by Council for First Reading and Final Adoption at the next meeting. At the announcement when Caesars was introduced as the preferred gaming operation, he had mentioned that the City and Council were interested in hearing the input of the citizens regarding how to invest the dollars generated from the potential of a casino, should it pass. These funds from the Danville Regional Foundation, in combination with some reprogrammed economic development funds, will be used to start that effort. The City was planning on having multiple opportunities for the public to have input on this and to provide ideas on how best to invest the dollars for the betterment of the entire community. Mr. Larking explained the City has been very deliberate in its examination on whether or not to have casino gaming allowed in the community. They hired expertise to guide the City through the process, to explain what to expect and to help them make sure the City was able to use this opportunity in the best way possible. Favorable legislation was adopted in the General Assembly to allow the City to get as much revenue from the state as possible through the casino gaming tax. All the questions referenced by the speaker with concerns on what casino gaming can bring to the community were a part of the City's deliberations. Mr. Larking noted if citizens have any questions they can email Mr. Larking at klarking@danvilleva.gov or by phone at 799-5100.

Ms. Cobbs noted if citizens want to contact school board members, they have a new APP called "Let's Talk", it can be downloaded onto a citizen's phone or they can go to the School Board website.

Vice Mayor Miller thanked the School Board Members for attending and supporting the Interim Superintendent. Dr. Miller noted with regard to the Casino in Danville, addiction problems were a

concern and each company that applied has an active addiction program, it was required by the State Gaming Commission. The jobs were high paying, coming out to $15 an hour, Averett and DCC will be providing training in hospitality, there will be minority hiring and the jobs will have full benefits. The citizens will decide this in November; this was not just a casino, it was a major resort with major entertainment and restaurants, a 2500 seat concert venue and he would encourage the citizens to vote for this referendum. Council Members went to Morgan Olsen last week, the Governor was there; they have the factory running with 300 people working. Dr. Miller noted he also visited the Health Department and met with Dr. Spillman, and encouraged Council Members to visit as well.

Council Member Saunders thanked the School Board members for attending tonight, and noted he believes they can lay a foundation, build upon that and thinks that was what was happening in the City. He believes Education as the Council's first priority was good, and they were all committed to doing that. The City has some wonderful students, wonderful families and children who can succeed and they want to succeed; the School Board wants that as well. Mr. Saunders noted the Governor comes to Danville often and talks of Danville being a model for other jurisdictions in Virginia. With regard to the City Schools, he has heard some very good things happening and anticipates more things happening that will help the schools. Mr. Saunders thanked the police department and their families for what they do every day, and welcomed Council Member Campbell back.

Council Member Vogler noted it was good to have Council Member Campbell back and thanked the Danville School Board members for attending; he was looking forward to this new relationship.

Council Member Buckner noted his agreement with what has been said about the School Board attending, they appreciated them attending, and welcomed Council Member Campbell back.

Mayor Jones recognized those citizens that spoke before Council this evening and recognized the School Board Members attending as well. Mayor Jones encouraged new school board members to use the knowledge of Mr. Saunders and Dr. Miller. Mayor Jones thanked Dr. Magouyrk for attending and updating Council. Dr. Magouyrk has a lot of dedication to young people; she has said, if you are not here for the children, then why are you here. Mayor Jones recognized Corporal Ferguson of the Police Department whose daughter has also joined the Danville Police Department.

The meeting adjourned at: 8:01 p.m.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK