

August 2, 2022

The Regular August meeting of the Danville City Council was held on August 2, 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). *Mr. Whittle entered the meeting at 7:09 p.m.*

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

INVOCATION

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

Mayor Jones noted on August 5, 2022 the Danville Public Schools will have open houses from 12:00 p.m. to 6 p.m., and on Monday was the Back to Back Initiative at Westwood. Mayor Jones asked Council Member Campbell to lead everyone in pray for the staff, superintendent, school board members, and students and parents of Danville Public Schools.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Sean Barker, 312 Marshall Terrace, who spoke on behalf of the Save the Vaxxed movement, and discussed COVID 19 vaccine injuries.

CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Whittle **moved** for approval of the Consent Agenda items:

Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on July 5, 2022. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Amending the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for a Grant from the Department of Criminal Justice Services in the Amount of \$150,000

An Ordinance entitled, Ordinance No. 2022-07.05, Amending the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Appropriation Ordinance by Increasing Revenue for a Department of Criminal Justice Services Grant to Support the Project Imagine Sports Based Youth Development Program in the Amount of \$150,000.

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

VOTE: 9-0
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, Vogler and Whittle (9)
NAY: None

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF ACCEPTING THE DANVILLE WELCOME CENTER FROM THE VIRGINIA TOURISM CORPORATION

August 2, 2022

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-08.01

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE DANVILLE WELCOME CENTER LOCATED AT 645 RIVER PARK DRIVE FROM THE VIRGINIA TOURISM CORPORATION.

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

VOTE: 9-0
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, Vogler and Whittle (9)
NAY: None

BUDGET AMENDMENT – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR FUNDS FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$990,667

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2022-08.01

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR PROJECTS TO BE OR BEING UNDERTAKEN TO IMPROVE THE DANVILLE COMMUNITY FINANCED WITH HOME-ARP FUNDS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$990,667.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking reminded Council that the Superintendent has invited Council Members to attend open houses throughout the City for the Danville Public School system on Friday from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This was an opportunity for parents and students to attend the open house for their student, and learn from the teachers what to expect during the school year. Mr. Larking noted he wanted to thank the community, City Council and Department heads, and all the City employees that enabled him to have the opportunity to attend the Kennedy School course for Senior Executives in State and Local Government, for the previous three weeks,.

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

Council Member Hood welcomed the City Manager back, and encouraged citizens to continue to support the school system going into the new year, administration, teachers, staff and students.

Council Member Mayo noted his agreement with Mr. Hood; this was going to be a great school year, was looking forward to working with the school board and hopes they can turn things around. Mr. Mayo noted the city shootings, happening back to back in various neighborhoods, have been heavy on his mind lately. He grew up in Danville and was proud of the City. Back in his time, they

August 2, 2022

had fun out in the communities, and never had any arguments to where someone's life was taken in the blink of the eye. The City has done well with the police department, social services and other resources helping the citizens and children. Mr. Mayo noted the Police Department has done a great job, along with all the resources, but citizens shouldn't have to worry or wonder about these things. When they see senseless things happening in the community like a shooting, a death, and the citizens in that community were not speaking out, that was the problem; the problem starts in the community. If citizens knew something was going on in their community, they need to speak up. He has been hearing a lot about how some in the community have adopted "they don't snitch," it was like an oath, they don't do that because that was not the thing to do. Mr. Mayo stated, guess what, it was the thing to do. Citizens can call the police, they don't have to mention their name, and they will come; for some in the communities, they have got to look at themselves when things happen, they have to warn somebody. All it takes was the community in that neighborhood or in those various neighborhoods to wake up and say something. If it was happening in their neighborhood, citizens have to speak out, it was time to speak out; it was not going to go away unless they put these individuals away. Mr. Mayo encouraged parents to get to know their child; if they see their child troubled, tell someone. Mr. Mayo noted that was all he was going to say on that, this has been happening but citizens have to reach out, the community has to reach out to the right people to get this stopped. And until they start doing that, it will keep happening, until they stop these thugs, and he has to say it like it was, stop these thugs from doing this senseless stuff. They have to take it back by starting to speak out.

Vice Mayor Miller noted he had a discussion with Council Member Mayo about this earlier. He was no stranger to death, but they were older people. When a nineteen year old dies, that's different; he never got a chance to be a success in life, to get married, to do anything; he was gone. The City needs help from the community; if they know something, they need to tell someone. If not, they were just giving a blank check to the thugs to do it the next time. Dr. Miller noted he didn't say anything about the COVID presentation; the usual journal he goes to was the New England Journal of Medicine or American College of Cardiology, reputable journals, not journals of virology from another country who have very little standing in the journal world. Dr. Miller stated what he knows in his practice for the last two years, sixty or seventy patients have died of COVID, not a single one of them had the vaccine. Some of the patients who got vaccinated got sick and several got hospitalized, but none of them died. The vaccine was said to protect people from dying and it does its job. There were a few side effects in 1%, but if someone got COVID, they have a twenty to thirty times greater chance of dying if they weren't vaccinated. Dr. Miller noted from the Utility Commission meeting last week, Jason Grey, Director of Utilities reported on a new initiative from AMP who wants to increase their solar footprint and will let Danville participate in that. The batteries for the battery storage were on their way and the ribbon cutting was scheduled for September 14th.

Council Member Saunders thanked Dr. Miller for the Invocation, it was well stated and very much appreciated. To Mr. Mayo, Council and the City were very fortunate to have him; there were many things he could be doing, but he choose to stay in Danville, serve on City Council and help the youth. Mr. Saunders noted his speech to the parents was very good and thanked him for his candor and honesty regarding the community and safety. To the family of the late Ms. Gwen Edwards, they were praying for her, most of Council knew her, the former Director of Human Services for the City of Danville; she was a wonderful lady. Mr. Saunders recognized Grace Mamom from Cardinal News, and noted his pride in Danville's law enforcement, all the men and women who serve. He was proud to be a member of Council, proud to be from Danville and prays that everyone would be as proud as he was.

Council Member Vogler reminded citizens about the Youth Football and Cheerleading sign-ups; the final day to sign up was this Friday, August 5th; he was an advocate for youth sports and what they

August 2, 2022

can do. Mr. Vogler noted he received a phone call a few hours ago from the Governor's office and was notified that Governor Youngkin was appointing him to serve on the Small Business Commission of Virginia; it was a sixteen person board, ten members from the General Assembly and Virginia Senate and six citizens from across Virginia. Mr. Vogler noted it near and dear to his heart to fight for and advocate for small businesses. He helps run a small business, works with small businesses every day, was very excited about this opportunity and maybe more importantly to have the opportunity to represent the city and region at the state level.

Council Member Whittle noted the Harvest Jubilee had at least 3,000 people at their event last weekend; that makes a big impact on the city's restaurants and hotels and wanted to thank them for that. There was a motorcycle rally and Council Member Saunders was there with him, and that was also a great event; there was always a lot to do on the weekends in Danville. Mr. Whittle stated he received a letter from Chandler Concrete; they wanted to make sure they were included with the bids for working with Caesars and wanted to know who to send that to. He also received a call from the Elks Club, they would like the trashcan cleaned up in front of the Elks Club building and there was a handicapped parking space on the side that may need to be marked.

Council Member Campbell commended Mr. Mayo on his comments, was behind him 100%, and congratulated Mr. Vogler on his appointment. Council does want to have successful schools, and were concerned, but with the teachers, students and administration, it can be done. They also need the community; it was going to take a village, a community, all of them coming together. It was important because it affects the City's economics; when people look at coming to Danville, the businesses and industries that were moving here, and they look at the education system, it was not the best. Rev. Campbell stated he cannot believe the schools were where they were, but noted it was an opportunity, they can turn this around, it was going to take their efforts and energy to bring it all together.

Mayor Jones congratulated Mr. Vogler on his appointment. Mayor Jones noted the school system started off on Monday and he heard it was a great day; the faculty and staff's morale was going in a good direction. He will be at Westwood and Bonner with the Police Department on Monday, the first day of school, at 6:30 a.m. Council Member Mayo had told the Mayor those things had been weighing heavily on his heart; he has spoken with the Mayor every day. Yesterday a group of citizens approached him and asked him what he was going to do, what was Council going to do with regard to the violence taking place in the City. To Mr. Mayo's point, the Council needs the citizens. Another citizen told him that the City needs to get recreation going again, and Mayor Jones asked the City Manager to discuss recreation in Danville.

Mr. Larking explained the City has a new athletics director in Parks & Recreation and the charge that was given to him was that they want to make sure athletics programs for all age levels were robust and serving the public so they can give the youth and citizens of any age, opportunities to recreate and to do positive things for themselves and each other. The City has the Heart the Park initiative that was directed through Parks & Recreation with the help of Stephanie Lovely; she was going to every neighborhood park throughout the City, talking to the people who live around that park about how they love their park, what they want to see in their park, what their vision was for their neighborhood. The Council, for multiple years, has put forward funding for an internship program; they will be closing that up on Friday with an event celebrating many of the City's young people having an opportunity to take on an internship through the City's partner organizations, to spend the summer learning about the value of work and getting paid to do it. It does take a village to raise up a community, to raise up young people, and this community has rallied behind that with partnerships. Their partnership with Danville Public Schools was going to be strengthened through the Parks & Recreation department and the school system; they have facilities and the City has

August 2, 2022

programing and the ability to implement programming, and those things will be strengthened as well.

Mr. Larking stated one thing he learned during the courses he took, was young people need to start learning as soon as they were born. It was up to parents, their neighbors and everyone around them to make sure they raise their child to understand how to learn. Mr. Larking encouraged parents to read to their child and discuss what they were reading even if the child doesn't know how to read themselves, that was how they learned, and learned to discern what was right and wrong. Mr. Larking encouraged parents to learn the basics and teach their children so they would be well prepared when they enter pre-school and the school system. It was extremely important, it changes outcomes and there was hope for the child to have a better life. When citizens ask Council Members or the city government, what were they doing, the question should be, don't ask the government what they were doing, ask yourself what you should be doing to make a difference in their community.

Mayor Jones noted he and Council Member Hood attended many events over the weekend that partner organizations were putting on, such as basketball tournaments, and roller skating events. As Mr. Mayo stated, he does not know what else the citizens want Council to do; they put money into the Police Department which has many programs, they have increased funding for Project Imagine, the City's social services department does an amazing job; there were many organizations that can assist parents. School was opening on Monday, and one of the toughest things he has heard over again, was the discipline in the schools was terrible. The people the parents were blaming for the discipline in the schools were the superintendent, the principals, the teachers, when they were not the ones fighting and arguing. With all the efforts that Council has put into changing this community, bringing in jobs, they were not going to tolerate all the violence happening. This Council will not tolerate bullying and one of the ways parents can guide their children was watch their social media. Every time he hears about a killing he hears that someone posted something on social media and the person went to retaliate. The church says, when they close, govern yourself accordingly, and to parents, govern your kids accordingly. Mayor Jones encouraged parents to attend the open houses and meet the teachers.

ADJOURNED: 7:51 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK