

The Second Regular July meeting of the Danville City Council was held on July 21, 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, Samuel A. Kushner, Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (8). L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., was absent (1).

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 J. Lee Vogler, Jr.

City Manager Ken Larking noted he was pleased to announce that he has appointed Corrie Bobe as the Director of Economic Development. She has done a great job in the interim role over the last few months, and has worked for the last eleven years on behalf of the City to promote the downtown, economic development throughout the City, industrial development, and job creation. Mr. Larking stated they were very pleased, after a national search and process, that she has accepted the job.

Ms. Bobe thanked the City Manager and Deputy City Manager for this opportunity. Ms. Bobe noted she was originally from Danville and decided to move back from San Francisco about twelve years ago. She was offered an internship in Economic Development and through that she gained a better understanding about the vision of the region and wanted to be a part of that transformation. Ms. Bobe noted she was thankful to the City of Danville that has provided her with a career that was personally rewarding and also helps to generate positive outcomes that future generations can enjoy. It was an exciting time for the region and she looked forward to working with Council in this new capacity moving forward. Ms. Bobe thanked the entire economic development team. The past few months have provided challenges, and each person in the office has gone over and beyond to provide the best customer service possible for the local businesses. Council Members and staff congratulated Ms. Bobe, noting she was an outstanding choice for the City and wished her for the best.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

City Council received three comments submitted through the City's website. Transcripts of all messages received were distributed to Council Members and attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Mayor Jones recognized Gordon Bartholomew who discussed a speeding issue on Trade Street, and having a police bike patrol or more police presence on the Riverwalk Trail.

Mayor Jones recognized Jackson Folley who read a statement regarding removing money for a new police station from the City budget.

Mayor Jones recognized Tommy Bennett, President of the Danville Chapter of the NAACP, who congratulated Ms. Bobe on her new position, and the NAACP offices were open anytime she needed their services.

Mayor Jones recognized members of the School Board, Ty'Quan Graves and Tyrell Payne, who gave an update on Danville Public Schools. Mr. Graves noted the School Board was working

diligently to make sure the students go back as safely as possible, and that their plan was feasible and safe. This Thursday, they will meet and have more information on the reopening plan. Mr. Payne noted they were working hard, going to retreats, to make sure the decisions they were making were not good just for certain people but good for all. Mayor Jones thanked them for their work. Council Member Saunders asked if they could invite the Interim Superintendent to come to Council and be introduced.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Buckner and **second** by Council Member Saunders, Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on June 16, 2020, Minutes from Special Work Session held on June 9, 2020 and Regular Work Session held on June 16, 2020 were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

APPOINTMENTS

Vice Mayor Miller **moved** for adoption of the following Resolutions:

Resolution No. 2020-07.04 - A Resolution Appointing Samuel A. Kushner as a Member of the Danville Development Council.

Resolution No. 2020-07.05 - A Resolution Appointing Madison J. Whittle as a Member of the Dan River Business Development Center.

Resolution No. 2020-07.06 - A Resolution Appointing J. Lee Vogler, Jr., as a Member of the Danville-Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority to fill an Unexpired Term Ending December 31, 2021.

Resolution No. 2020-07.07 - A Resolution Appointing Gary P. Miller, as an Alternate Member of the Danville-Pittsylvania Regional Industrial Facility Authority to fill an Unexpired Term Ending December 31, 2021.

Resolution No. 2020-07.08 - A Resolution Appointing J. Lee Vogler, Jr., as a Member of the Staunton River Regional Industrial Facility Authority to fill an Unexpired Term Ending December 31, 2022.

Resolution No. 2020-07.09 - A Resolution Appointing L.G. "Larry" Campbell, Jr., as a Member of the Staunton River Regional Industrial Facility Authority to fill an Unexpired Term Ending December 31, 2022.

Resolution No. 2020-07.10 - A Resolution Appointing Gary P. Miller, as a Member of the Danville Utility Commission, to fill an Unexpired Term Ending June 30, 2022.

Resolution No. 2020-07.11 - A Resolution Reappointing Sherman M. Saunders, as a Member of the Employee Retirement System Board of Trustees.

Resolution No. 2020-07.12 - A Resolution Appointing Barry Mayo, as a Member of the Pittsylvania County Community Action Board.

Resolution No. 2020-07.13 - A Resolution Reappointing J. Lee Vogler, Jr., as a Member of the West Piedmont Planning District Commission.

Resolution No. 2020-07.14 - A Resolution Appointing James B. Buckner as a Member of the West Piedmont Planning District Commission.

Resolution No. 2020-07.15 - A Resolution Reappointing J. Lee Vogler, Jr., as a Member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Resolution No. 2020-07.16 - A Resolution Appointing James B. Buckner as a Member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Resolution No. 2020-07.17 - A Resolution Appointing James B. Buckner, as a Member of the Transportation Advisory Committee.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF THE HUD ONE YEAR ACTION PLAN AND FIVE YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding the HUD One Year Action Plan and Five Year Consolidated Plan. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on June 20, 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. 2020-07.18

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) A ONE YEAR ACTION PLAN AND FIVE YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN.

The Motion was **seconded** by Council Member Vogler.

Council Member Whittle requested staff update him on this item. Director of Community Development Ken Gillie noted the Annual Plan was what the City does with the HUD funds; the City has about \$100,000 that goes to local organizations. There was also a five year plan that needs to be submitted to HUD that sets the City's goals for the next five years and how they spend that money.

Mayor Jones asked Mr. Gillie and Norma Brower from Community Development to explain what they have been working on, and Ms. Brower noted they have the COVID bags which have been passed out through the community with the help of the police department. The COVID Readiness Bag includes a face mask, hand sanitizer, a magnet with COVID information and a bottle of water. The COVID Youth Bags, which Laura Ashworth in Economic Development helped design and say, Standing Together Six Feet Apart, include a tee shirt for the child with a matching mask and

a snack. They were handing those out at various locations including the housing authority, and tomorrow they will hand them out at Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club and CIC/Head Start; on Friday they will be at Almagro. They have distributed 600 bags so far. If people want a bag, they can call Community Development at 799-5260, they have about 1200 left and have ordered another 2000. Mayor Jones thanked them for what they were doing.

City Manager Ken Larking noted he was very proud of Ms. Brower and Mr. Gillie and others in the Community Development department who have been working, not only during this time, but throughout their entire careers here, trying to build up the community. The City of Danville received a certain amount of CARES Act funds and staff felt it was important that they invest some of those monies into the community to keep them safe. They set aside a certain amount for the bags that were being handed out in communities that needed a little help getting resources. The City decided to earmark a certain amount to help utility customers who have struggled to make payments due to COVID 19; about \$500,000 of the allocation went to that program. Mr. Larking noted he appreciated the work of Ms. Brower, the police department and others to make this happen. Mr. Larking noted Mr. Gillie reminded him that they have set aside funds to help with rental assistance as well. Mayor Jones stated if there were some way to get this information out through the media sources and what people needed to do to go about applying for these funds, noting he appreciated their work.

The **Motion** was carried by the following vote:

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

APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF PARCEL IDS #02116 AND #02117 FOR MARKET GARDEN PARK

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-07.19

APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS PARCELS 02116 and 02117 FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AT MARKET GARDEN.

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

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

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking noted he wanted to echo comments made by the Mayor about being appreciative of people who like to come before Council and speak regarding issues of importance to the community. Mr. Larking noted staff and himself were always happy to answer questions,

listen to concerns and try to help people understand what was going on, why they decide on the things they decide on and how they decide those things. The City Budget was recommended by the City Manager to the City Council; City Council deliberates over it for many months and at the end of the day, they decide to approve the resources that were limited, in the areas they feel best, after deliberation amongst themselves and the public. It was a long process, it was labor intensive and there was a lot that goes into it. They were always happy to discuss concerns with members of the community about what they see in it and he would be happy to do that. Mr. Larking noted his office number was 799-5100 and his email was klarking@danvilleva.gov.

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

Vice Mayor Miller noted Gerald Smith was the new police chief in Richmond, when asked if they should defund the police, his answer was "fund the change." Dr. Miller noted no one doubts that police have had trouble in some communities but it was better to train the police to handle stress and defuse the crisis. It was easy to sit back and criticize the police, watching TV and say they should have done this, they should have done that. Police and other first responders are under tremendous stress, post-traumatic stress syndrome was going up nationwide, and police suicide was at all-time high, more than the number that were killed in the line of duty. For the police station, the City hopes to find a good part of this with the casino resort. The Police Department downstairs was pathetic. A new station will have areas to promote community policing and even have areas to work with disadvantaged, at risk youth; the City needs the police station. The resort casino will have 900 jobs initially with construction, 1300 jobs long term. These jobs have full benefits, and pay above the median salary for Danville. Caesars has plans to hire minorities and they have done that in their other casinos. Dr. Miller noted he did not see how property taxes will go up with the City getting an additional \$34M each year into the Treasury. The casino resort will promote hiring of minorities, it will improve the life of all the citizens and that was what it was all about.

Council Member Saunders noted to Ms. Bobe and Mr. Bennett, many years ago a study was done and it said 70% of all high school graduates, when they leave home, be it college or military, never come back. That was changing, they both were examples of that and Council appreciates that. Mr. Saunders noted all remember the late Elijah Cummings from Baltimore who has passed, they know about the late John Lewis who has gone home, and CT Vivian, all three were in Danville and they knew the City well. Congressman Lewis spoke about Danville in the march on Washington speech. He knew Danville then and he knew Danville now, because he and Mr. Saunders talked about it. Mr. Saunders noted citizens really need to think about all these people who stood up to make the world better regardless of race, color or creed. So much can be said about Congressman Lewis, Mr. Saunders had seen and talked with him many times; he will be missed. Thanks to him for all he did and thanks to everyone for bringing about progress and change in the country. To the citizens, all the city employees, and most especially the law enforcement, thank you for what they did every single day. Mr. Saunders noted he also appreciated the leadership of the City, the City Manager, Deputy City Manager for what they do, and to the Mayor for his leadership.

Council Member Vogler noted to the police department, his thanks for all they do, they have his complete support; the City's police department has done a fantastic job. Some of the issues seen in other localities in America are not being seen here. Mr. Vogler stated he will not support taking one penny away from the Public Safety budget because they do a tremendous job. The numbers in the last couple of years speak to themselves about the job they were doing. Mr. Vogler noted to citizens when they are not able to be socially distanced, please wear their masks. The Director of the CDC just recently said that if everyone in America would wear a mask when they are not able to be socially distanced from people, the country could have this under control in four to six weeks. The country has had challenges, different challenges over time, each time the country stepped up

to meet that challenge; this was the challenge of their time and hopes citizens will rise up to meet that challenge. When you can't socially distance, please wear a mask.

Council Member Buckner congratulated Ms. Bobe, they look forward to what she will continue to bring to the City; she has been doing a fine job for many years now. Mr. Buckner encouraged people to pick up the phone, check on their neighbors, and make sure they were doing okay. The temperatures were extremely hot; if citizens had older people living around them, make sure they are checked on.

Council Member Kushner commended Mr. Larking for the powerful letter he wrote and sent to the *Register & Bee* that appeared in last Sunday's paper. It was a call to arms to every citizen of Danville to recognize the peril and to do his and her best to help combat the disease locally. He heard today that only 40% of citizens nationwide were wearing masks; that was a sad statistic, the country can do better, it should do better. Mr. Kushner noted he also heard that tens of thousands of lives can be saved if each person accepted their civic responsibility to not only protect themselves but to protect their families and neighbors. Mr. Kushner stated he would like to commend Council for supporting the effort, and thanked Mr. Vogler for his comments.

Mayor Jones noted a friend of his always told him to meet in conversations; this meeting went fast but there were a lot of things discussed. A half a million dollars was there to help people who were struck by the COVID pandemic, to help with utilities; there was rent assistance as well. The School Board Vice Chair spoke about the School Board meeting every Thursday, and retreats on the weekend, for the safety of the children, faculty and staff and the community as a whole. This pandemic has hit home, it was in the community, in the churches and it hurts; people can assume what the outcome was going to be, but they don't know. They ask that everyone that can to adhere to the safety guidelines and wear their masks. Mayor Jones thanked those that attended this evening, if they need to reach out to the City Manager and his staff, he had an amazing team, they have a lot of the answers. Mayor Jones noted he was proud of Ms. Bobe and wished her the best.

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

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK