

July 20, 2021

The Second July meeting of the Danville City Council was held on July 20, 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: 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 (8). James B. Buckner 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., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Mayor Jones recognized Lieutenant Antonio Hodges and Lieutenant Shawnte Hodges, the new leaders of the Salvation Army. Mr. Hodges noted they were from Chesapeake, Virginia and it was their first time in Danville. They were very excited about being here, their goal was to be a strong advocate to the community, continue to help those in need, to really go out to the youth and be a strong presence for those who need a place to go. Mrs. Hodges noted their goal was to hit the ground running, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and be an asset to the community. They were here to help in any way. Council Members welcomed the Hodges to Danville.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Joyce Culley, Director of Career and Technical Education for Danville Public Schools, who noted the students have been working in the Internship Program, and they were thankful to Council for their collaboration. Ms. Culley introduced Jaden Harris, an intern in the Sheriff's office who was there to speak about his experience. Mr. Harris explained it has been very educational and great learning experience for him, working in general, seeing new things, people, and outlooks about Danville. He has been able to sit in court to see what they do, watched the front door with security and in the control room for the jail. With the internship program he has been able to get money for college and would recommend more people do this in the future. Ms. Culley thanked Council for the efforts they have put in for the youth and they were hopeful this program will continue next year, expand and place more students.

Mayor Jones recognized Harvey White who noted he wanted to speak to Council about the casino being built near the area he lives in and how it will affect property values and taxes. City Manager Ken Larking noted he would be glad to speak with him any time. The City's IDA has engaged a consulting firm to work specifically in the Schoolfield Neighborhood. They were hoping it would be a very public process, that people participated and that Mr. White and his neighbors could provide feedback to the group. They will be looking at the Schoolfield neighborhood with very specific recommendations for people that live there and what can be done to make sure there was good quality of life for them. They will also be looking at the corridor that leads from North Carolina to the Schoolfield area, and from the Schoolfield area down Main Street to the River District. It will be an opportunity for citizens to provide input.

Mayor Jones recognized Gary Richardson, Westover Drive, who was asked by Mr. W.T. Gatewood, who wanted to be there this evening to speak to Council himself, but was not able to. He wrote a letter and asked Mr. Richardson to read it to council regarding the closing of the Westover Branch of the Danville Library. Mr. Richardson read the letter to Council, which stated

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the branch library had closed during the pandemic and not reopened, was a violation of the annexation agreement, and hopes Council will reverse the decision to close the Westover branch. Council Member Vogler thanked Mr. Richardson for speaking tonight, noting he was opposed to closing that library. His understanding was the City was working toward a solution to keep library services in Westover, which he was in favor of. Mayor Jones noted the City Manager spoke with Mr. Richardson earlier, and would also speak to Council about this matter. Council Member Campbell noted his agreement with Mr. Vogler.

CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Vogler **moved** for adoption of the following Consent Agenda items:

Approval of Minutes from Regular Council Meeting held on June 15, 2021. Draft copies of the Minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Amending the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for Virginia Department of Aviation Airport Maintenance Funds, and Local Share for a Total Appropriation of \$120,000

An Ordinance entitled: Ordinance No. 2021-07.09, Amending the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Appropriation Ordinance to Provide for State Department of Aviation Maintenance Grant Funds Related to the Maintenance of Certain Airport Properties in the Amount of \$100,000 and for the Local Share in the Amount of \$20,000 for a Total Appropriation of \$120,000 and Appropriating the Same.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

PURCHASE OF PROPERTY FOR THE EXPANSION OF THE WEST FORK SUBSTATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-07.03

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, TO ENTER INTO A PURCHASE AGREEMENT, AS WELL AS THE ACTUAL PURCHASE OF 42.85 ACRES OF LAND AT 581 LONG CIRCLE WITHIN THE DANVILLE UTILITIES SERVICE TERRITORY.

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

Vice Mayor Miller noted this was discussed in work session; the City was trying to purchase land for a fourth substation. It will serve up to half of the City and County customers, provide backup for the whole system and was something desperately needed. Council Member Vogler noted his agreement with Dr. Miller; Director of Utilities, Jason Grey had explained to him how important it was for the City to have more energy produced on this side of the grid.

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

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

CANCELING THE AUGUST 3, 2021 REGULAR MEETING OF DANVILLE CITY COUNCIL

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-07.04

CANCELING THE REGULAR MEETING OF DANVILLE CITY COUNCIL SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021 AND SCHEDULING A SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021.

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

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

GRANTING A SHORT-TERM EXTENSION OF DEADLINES TO RIVER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT, LLC

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-07.05

APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING GRANTING RIVER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT, LLC A SHORT TERM EXTENSION OF THE UTILIZATION DEADLINES FOR THE FIRE STATION AND THE UTILITY BUILDING PROPERTIES IN THOSE CERTAIN REAL ESTATE PURCHASE OPTIONS BY AND AMONG THE CITY OF DANVILLE, RIVER DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT, LLC, AND THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA.

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING – CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING UTILIZATION OF THE CITY'S FISCAL YEAR 2022 BORROWING CAPACITY TO ISSUE GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

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Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Fiscal Year 2022 Borrowing Capacity for GO Bonds. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on July 6, 2021 and July 13, 2021. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-07.10

AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, IN THE MAXIMUM AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$16,000,000 TO FINANCE THE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, AND EQUIPPING OF VARIOUS CAPITAL PROJECTS.

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

CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTING THE CIRCUIT COURT TO ORDER A SPECIAL ELECTION ON THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION SCHOOL BONDS

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-07.11

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, REQUESTING THE CIRCUIT COURT TO ORDER A SPECIAL ELECTION ON THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION SCHOOL BONDS IN THE MAXIMUM PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$141,000,000 AND AUTHORIZING SUCH BONDS

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

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking explained the last item presented for First Reading on the agenda was in relation to the one percent local option sales tax for school construction which was recently put on the ballot by City Council. Having this item on the referendum was necessary in order to be able to borrow funds for school construction using the proceeds from the one-percent local option sales tax. It was good time to borrow; the interest rates were low, and there were a great number of needs in the schools. The School Board identified a significant amount of buildings that need upgrades, and the ability to do those upgrades as quickly as possible would have a greater impact rather than paying as they go, doing small construction projects as the funds come in. This will enable the school system to do a large number of projects and impact the schools in a quicker way.

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

Vice Mayor Miller noted the City recently ordered fifteen new police cars, and these cars will be allowed to be taken home by the police officers; the presence of a police car parked on the street can make citizens feel safe. Dr. Miller noted COVID was on the increase, and the variant was very contagious; the COVID vaccine was 94% effective, not 100%. If citizens go into a crowded area, they can't tell who was vaccinated, and they should take precautions.

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Council Member Saunders asked the Vice Mayor to speak more on the variant of COVID, if they received the vaccine should they start wearing a mask, and Dr. Miller stated if they go into a high risk area with large crowds, they should take precautions; the vaccine was not 100%. Mr. Saunders questioned the City Manager, the school bond which people will be voting on, if all the funds were not used, will the rest will go to pay down the debt and Mr. Larking explained the City did not know exactly what can be borrowed until they go out for the bonds, but staff will be conservative with their estimate and if the City gets more in any given year, they can either pay down more principal or do additional capital projects for the school system.

Council Member Vogler thanked Dr. Miller for his comments and hoped people will listen, but he didn't want people to hear that and ask what was the point of getting the vaccine if they have to continue to take further precautions. If citizens have not taken the vaccine yet, it was their choice, but he would strongly recommend them getting it if they have not already. Council Member Buckner was not here tonight but asked Mr. Vogler to pass along he was with an economic development prospect and that was why he was not at Council this evening.

Dr. Miller stated he did not want to imply not to get the vaccine, the problem was so many people did not get the vaccine; they would be done with the virus if 90% got the vaccine, right now only 50% have received the vaccine. People still need to take precautions.

Council Member Whittle thanked all the police, fire and rescue in the City, he appreciates all the work they do. Mr. Whittle questioned if they could put the words "In God We Trust" on the new police cars.

Council Member Campbell noted he was glad to see Superintendent Hairston at the meeting this evening, and stated he did support the bonds for capital improvements in the schools.

Council Member Hood noted over the last few weeks he has been visiting several community events, last Saturday he visited ten. People really were working on collaboration; Danville was getting stronger and stronger by collaborating more.

Mayor Jones noted one of the events on Saturday was one Mr. Hood hosted, the comedy show, it was a great event. Mayor Jones thanked Jaden Harris for attending tonight's meeting, and for his comments to Council. Mayor Jones thanked all the partners in the summer intern program; he has visited several of the internship sites, and had conversations with some of the students. All of the students noted they enjoyed the program and would participate again. Mayor Jones stated they need people to vote on the sales tax referendum to support the schools; the schools need this bond for their capital improvements.

ADJOURNED: 7:38 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK