

July 1, 2020s

The Inaugural Meeting of the Danville City Council was held on July 1, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. The following Council Members were present: James B. Buckner, Alonzo L. Jones, Barry P. Mayo, Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler and Madison J.R. Whittle (7). L. G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., was absent (1).

Staff Members present were: City Manager Ken Larking, Deputy City Manager Earl B. Reynolds, Jr., City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield Jr., Assistant City Attorney C. Ryan Dodson, and City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi.

City Clerk Susan DeMasi called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone in attendance and introduced Assistant City Attorney C. Ryan Dodson who gave the Invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag followed.

PRESENTATION OF ELECTION CERTIFICATES

City Attorney Clarke Whitfield presented Certificates of Election to Council Members Barry P. Mayo, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle, certifying their election on May 20, 2020, for four-year terms commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2024.

OATHS OF OFFICE

Ms. DeMasi administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Mayo, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Vogler and Mr. Whittle. (Clerk's Note: A copy of the oaths are attached to, and made a part of these minutes).

ELECTION OF MAYOR

The next order of business was the election of Mayor for a two-year term commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022. Ms. DeMasi turned the floor over to City Attorney Clarke Whitfield to conduct the elections. Mr. Whitfield congratulated the re-elected and the newly elected Council Members, and opened the floor for nominations for Mayor.

Council Member Saunders nominated Alonzo L. Jones for Mayor. Council Member Saunders noted, *the world has changed, there are other unknowns ahead. For such a time as this, we need a proven leader. It is a pleasure to nominate that leader, the Honorable Alonzo Jones, as Mayor of the City of Danville, Virginia for another term, July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022. Mayor Jones continues to serve our City extremely well. He continues to prove that he cares about all of our citizens and will go to any length to help them in any way he can. I also believe he has earned and continues to have the respect and the support of Council Members. He is a Danville native, he attended Danville Public Schools and Colleges. He is a former member of the Danville School Board. He served as Vice Mayor of Danville. He served our country in the United States Army. He is a father of great children. He is dependable and loyal to our City. He has been tested and proven that he is the leader, again, for such a time as this.*

There were no further nominations for Mayor and the nominations were closed.

Council Members voting for Mr. Jones were: Mr. Buckner, Mr. Jones, Mr. Mayo, Dr. Miller, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Vogler and Mr. Whittle.

Alonzo L. Jones was elected to serve as Mayor for a two year term commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022.

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ELECTION OF VICE MAYOR

Mr. Whitfield opened the floor for nominations for Vice Mayor for a two-year term commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022.

Council Member Saunders stated, *it is true that teamwork makes the dream work. Together, our City will make even more progress by being led by people of like minds. People who truly respect each other and are proven leaders. It is an honor to nominate the Honorable Dr. Gary Miller as Vice Mayor, for the City of Danville, Virginia for the term of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022. Dr. Miller has lived in our City for thirty-one years. He has been a member of Danville City Council for twelve. Dr. Miller continues to build upon his contributions to our City. He served previously as Vice Mayor of our City. After graduating from high school, Dr. Miller took a job as an orderly/custodian in his hometown hospital. His co-workers saw leadership ability in him and encouraged him to go to med school to further his education. Dr. Miller listened and today he continues to be a practicing cardiologist in our City. He is a former classroom schoolteacher. He co-chaired City Council's race relations committee. He is very active in City Council's three priority areas: Growing Danville, Reducing Crime and Improving Education. Dr. Miller led the Council to build the new fire department located on Lynn Street, an active member of Danville Public Schools Compact Committee, and was heavily involved in protecting our City during the Coal Ash Spill, and was very active to get Danville citizens the opportunity to decide if they want a casino or not. He is a very strong supporter of the Police Department. He secured and gave away over 2,000 masks during this pandemic. He will be a loyal partner to our Mayor and he will serve our City well.*

Council Member Whittle nominated Barry P. Mayo for Vice Mayor.

There were no further nominations for Vice Mayor and the nominations were closed.

Council Members voting for Dr. Miller were: Mr. Buckner, Mr. Jones, Mr. Mayo, Dr. Miller, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Vogler and Mr. Whittle.

There were no votes for Council Member Mayo for Vice Mayor.

Dr. Gary P. Miller was elected as Vice Mayor for a two-year term commencing July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022.

DRAWING FOR COUNCIL SEATING

The last item of business conducted by Ms. DeMasi and Mr. Whitfield was the drawing for Council Seating. Following the drawing, there was a brief recess while the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Members of Council assumed their respective seats.

Mayor Jones recognized the families of Council Members attending the Inaugural Meeting.

Mayor Jones noted, *The miracle of gratitude is that it shifts your perception to such an extent that it changes the world that you see.* – Dr. Robert Hogan

Mayor Jones thanked Council Member Saunders for the warm words and thoughts, noting Council Member Saunders has served the community for many years and he was one of the wisest of Council Members. Mayor Jones thanked him for the phone calls, and the many times he has reached out to Mr. Saunders. Mayor Jones noted he wanted to take this time to say there was much more to come. To Dr. Gary Miller, congratulations on his position, and

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looked forward to serving with him. To his friend, and community partner, Vice Mayor Lee Vogler, thank you for the two years he was able to serve with him as he served as Vice Mayor, he appreciated that, thank you so much. Mayor Jones welcomed Barry Mayo and thanked all the City staff.

Mayor Jones noted, *over the past two years we have faced many challenges, and with the support of Council, staff, citizens and local partnerships, we weathered those storms. Our goal is to build on those partnerships and establish and possibly recruit new partners. Those partners will help move our City forward, keeping focus on our strategic goals: reducing violent crime, supporting education and growing Danville and partnerships. I will be asking Council, one of our first priorities as Mayor, to possibly rearrange the order of those strategies. Seeing a critical need for education, possibly moving partnerships to number one and education to number two. We have seen great reductions in crime and our city employees have done a superb job in growing Danville. Our challenge is education. I am going to ask Council to maybe move our priorities around because first, we have to have partnerships. We cannot do this education piece by ourselves. Having partners and establishing partnerships to help us get the educational system where it needs to be. Yesterday, we lost a superintendent who served us for five years. We have a brand new school board, many new members of school board start today. As you heard earlier, there are two members I asked to serve on the Education Compact and I'm asking them to stand, Council Member Saunders and Council Member Gary Miller. The wisdom that I have personally gained and obtained from these gentlemen standing here. As you heard mention before, I served on the School Board. This is a serious, serious issue in our committee. The Virginia Department of Education has a Memorandum of Understanding with our School system. Council Member Saunders and Council Member Miller have also been working with our school leaders and members of the Education Compact Committee. This Council, in agreement, is also asking the document that is before the School Board, that it also be titled: A Memorandum of Understanding Between the School Board and the City Council. The reason for that is because for so long, it has been stated, that is an elected body and this is an elected body. We have to put our personalities and our differences aside and work together. And I sincerely thank you both for working on the Committee. Mayor Jones recognized his family in attendance, and thanked them. Those first two years as Mayor, our family went through so much. The attacks that his family had to endure and the things they had to do during the first two years, he wanted to say to them, thank you very much. The people here in the audience, he wanted to say for his family, thank you for coming. Sherman Saunders, I'll never forget a council meeting, a particular individual attacked our family and he stood right there beside me, and the comforting words he gave me. Because we are all human, the Bible says, For all have sinned and have fallen short. That particular day I was being real short, because I love my family like everyone loves their family, and you stood with me and I thank you sir.*

ROLL CALL

Council Member Buckner welcomed Mr. Mayo and noted he looked forward to serving with him. To Mayor Jones and Vice Mayor Miller, congratulations and he looks forward to serving with them as well.

Council Member Mayo noted he was glad this was over and was ready to go to work. It was an honor to be here and was ready to work for the citizens. This was a great group of people, and he has been looking forward to this. It was all about the work and improving the City, and helping the citizens; it was an opportunity he does not take for granted.

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Vice Mayor Miller thanked Sherman Saunders for the nice words. Dr. Miller noted, *I love this City, but more than that, in the thirty years I have lived here, twelve years on Council, I have come to love the people of this City. There were some amazing, quite remarkable people who live and work here. Each of you have your own, all-star list of people you come to admire and respect. Ruby Archie, teacher, a wonderful person, Mayor of this City, she was my patient, just a wonderful person. Ed Polhamus; Ed was gone now, teacher, school board member, beloved little league commissioner. Harry Johnson, great basketball player, also my patient. Laurie Moran, you can't say anything that hasn't been said about Laurie, she was wonderful. Then there is Hampton Wilkins, Mr. Ambassador for Danville; Apostle Campbell and his family, the Wendell Scott family, Tiffany Franks of Averett, Alexis Earhart. Listen to this roll call of people who live here. Robbie Woodall, DLSC, what he's done for the City. Mike Moore, Mike got the residency program started at the hospital. If you are on a blood pressure medicine, Mike Moore helped write the guidelines for blood pressure medicine. He lives in this City. William Sweezer, world class surgeon. Karl Stauber at the Foundation, Kenny Lewis, all his work with the youth. Tony Tunstall and his wife Sheila, maybe all of you don't know them, they're our neighbors. He worked at Goodyear for thirty years; I don't think anybody in this room could work at Goodyear for thirty years and do what Tommy did. Tommy is now retired and we were hoping to get to some ball games together before COVID came; we go to basketball and football games together. He and his wife and Karen and I had a great weekend last December when we went down to the Belk Bowl for a game together. These are some of the great people, and you have your own list and could go on and on about people you respect and admire. Almost forgot the MVP of my list and she is sitting right out there, my wife Karen. She has put up with this for twelve years, all the telephone calls, where's Dr. Miller, I have a complaint about the City. She has put up with a lot, some nice calls, some not so nice calls. The point of this is, this is a great City and it has great people in it and that's what makes it a great city. I and my fellow Council Members are here, we pledge we are going to make it grow and prosper. And whether its coal ash or COVID 19 attacking our City, we are going to defend and support our City.*

Council Member Saunders noted a special thanks to all the voters who placed their trust in him and to those who considered him as well. Special thanks to his bride, Sandy and friends who have come today, Deborah Hairston, Barbara Witcher and Betty Brown, thank you so much for being here. Mr. Saunders stated he looked forward to serving they City for four more years of even more success. To Mayor Jones, he and the Vice Mayor were a wonderful team.

Council Member Vogler congratulated the Mayor and Vice Mayor, and thanked the voters, the people of the City of Danville for putting their trust in him to serve another term on Council. When he first ran eight years ago, he talked about being a voice for the people; he takes that to heart, and believes that every day. Mr. Vogler noted he's enjoyed his time on Council and was very excited about what they will do in the next few years. Mr. Vogler noted he and Mr. Mayo have already talked about how they would love to see the summer youths' job program come back to the City; that was something they would hear from them about soon. It was very successful in years past and thinks it could be successful and transformational to young people in the City and the City as a whole. Mr. Vogler thanked his family that were here today, his wife Blair, his son Kingston, his daughter Ava and his mom Rhonda. His dad was unable to be here, but he was thankful for his family, especially the last two years when he was serving as Vice Mayor. They have put up with a lot, and he was glad they were here today.

Council Member Whittle thanked Dr. Miller for serving, he was very involved in different boards and committees. Mr. Whittle thanked Ann for helping him with the election, and his mother; he was glad to be back on Council. To Mr. Mayo, it was a real quick curve to learn on, he

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was sure he would do well. He has seen Mr. Mayo work through different ministries in the past, has seen evidence of what he has done and he appreciates that.

Mayor Jones recognized Brenda Bowman who served as the former Chair of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors. Mayor Jones noted the Governor has opened up Phase III and encouraged citizens to please wear their masks, stay six feet apart and not take this for granted. The numbers are going up and asked that people be safe and have a wonderful Fourth.

The Meeting adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK