

April 20, 2021

The Regular April meeting of the Danville City Council was held on April 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: 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).

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 Sherman M. Saunders, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by John Kent from SOVAH.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Proclamation: National Service Recognition Day
Presented to: Jessica Beebe, from the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research

Proclamation: National Volunteer Week
Presented to: John Kent, COO, SOVAH Danville

City Manager Ken Larking noted Mr. Kent has been instrumental in getting the community vaccinated. Doctor Spillman was in charge of public health but without the guidance, organizational skills and support of John Kent, Danville would not have been recognized by the State as one of the best community volunteer vaccination efforts. Vice Mayor Miller stated when COVID hit, Mr. Kent was procuring scarce PPE items. He set up the COVID calls for practitioners with the latest information on where to get tested, he informed the public about where to get tested, and played an integral role in the vaccination clinics.

City Manager Ken Larking gave an update on the modifications to the utility rates, noting it was his understanding there were some members of the community who, based on the advertisement placed in the newspaper, might be confused as to the utility rates. Every two years the City does a study to make sure they were charging customers appropriately, based on the class they were in, for all the utilities the City provides. Every two years the City makes some adjustments which ultimately have some impact on the bills. This year, because of some good things that happened, with the market improved, some of the City's purchase contracts have fallen off and the results of the utility changes made here, will result in bills that were lower for people. That was not clear in the ad because there were some charges that were higher, and also charges that were lower. Mr. Larking explained that the utility bills were made up of several components, one being the customer charge which customarily covers the cost of the operation. There was a charge in the cost of electricity for the energy that was used, and that was based on consumption. Citizens will have a base amount they will pay that covers the billing and some operational expenses that was going to be slightly higher, about \$2.00 for residents; that was a fixed amount, it won't go up based on usage. Mr. Larking stated the energy charge was actually lower and when both those aspects of the bill were combined, the average Danville Utility customer, one that has water, sewer, electric, and gas, will see a \$10 per month decrease in their overall bill. Mr. Larking stated they wanted to make sure the public understood these were rate adjustments, this will not raise citizens' bills in any way, it will lower them.

Council Member Whittle questioned the three different rates and Director of Utilities, Jason Grey explained there was a customer charge, a base rate energy charge and a power cost adjustment.

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Mr. Grey noted the City was seeing a decrease in the power cost which will be spread across all customers. The City has built solar into future rates and that would be a tremendous savings for the customers, as it was one of the lowest costs of power generation. Battery has not been built into the rate yet, because it was only recently approved. As the City continues to work on their demand cost, energy efficiency and lowering peak demand, they can work to lower the energy costs and that will help across the board. Mr. Vogler noted as the City moves forward, they will continue to look for ways to reduce costs and pass that along to the customers.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Tommy Bennett, President of the Danville NAACP, who thanked Mr. Kent who has done a great service in the community helping with the vaccine. Mr. Bennett introduced Rebecca Campbell who discussed an event at Bibleway this weekend, their first vaccination clinic, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with a food truck from Taste of Soul, as well a local band, Rock Steady. Council Member Campbell and Ms. Campbell shared their experiences having COVID and the loss of Reverend Campbell's wife.

Mayor Jones recognized Norma Brower, City of Danville, who noted Make Danville Shine will be on May 1st from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Community Market; they will practice COVID social distancing and have events throughout the day. This year, the City will not be doing roll offs, but citizens can still clean out their yards and homes, and put the trash out at the curb; there will be no charge for the extra trash pickup.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding the Budget Appropriation Items on the Consent Agenda. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on April 13, 2021. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

Council Member Campbell **moved** to approve the following Consent Agenda items:

Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on March 16, 2021. Draft copies of the Minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Amending the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for Additional State Aviation Funding in the Amount of \$1,178,023 and the Local Share in the Amount of \$310,639

An Ordinance entitled Ordinance No. 2021-04.02 Amending the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance to Provide for Additional State Aviation Funding for the Purpose of Completing Design Services to Renovate the Airport Terminal Building, for Construction Activities to Widen Taxiway H and Complete Facility Improvements to Support Future Corporate, and T-Hangar Building Development in the Amount of \$1,178,023 Plus Local Share in the Amount of \$310,639.

Amending the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for Funds Related to Project Imagine Work Force Readiness Program

An Ordinance Entitled, Ordinance No. 2021-04.03 Amending the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance by Increasing Revenue for a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Grant in the Amount of \$488,595 and Local Share in the Amount of \$79,983 for a Total Appropriation of \$568,578 to be Used to Fund Support Staff, and Other Expenditures Relating to the Project Imagine Work Force Readiness Program.

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Amending the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for Contributions to Provide a Summer Youth Jobs Program

An Ordinance Entitled Ordinance No. 2021-04.04 Amending the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance to Provide for Contributions from Community Non-Profit Partners in the Amount of \$72,341 and a Transfer from Unreserved Fund Balance in the Amount of \$131,193 for a Total Appropriation of \$203,534 to Provide a Summer Youth Jobs Program and Appropriating the same.

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

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING - CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING RATE MODIFICATIONS TO UTILITY SERVICES

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Utility Rate Modifications. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on April 12, 2021 and April 19, 2021. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

Council Member Buckner **moved** for adoption of an Ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-04.05

ADJUSTING UTILITY RATES FOR UTILITY SERVICES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2021.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF THE TRANSFER OF REAL PROPERTY FROM THE IDA TO THE CITY OF DANVILLE

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-04.05

APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS PARCEL 24134 FROM THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA TO BE USED BY THE CITY AS A POCKET PARK LOCATED ON THE SITE OF THE FORMER PYTHIAS BUILDING

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

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Council Member Whittle questioned if it would be open to the public, and City Manager Ken Larking stated when it was finished, it would be. Mr. Larking noted it was accessible as well, it was below the street level, and there was an elevator for those who cannot take steps. Director of Economic Development Corrie Bobe noted there were a few final pieces to put in place, but they anticipate an opening the beginning of May. It will be available to the public, and will operate under the same hours as the City's public parks, from dawn to dusk.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF RELEASING CITY HELD LIENS ON PARCEL #22118 ON PARK STREET

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-04.06

APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF CITY-HELD LIENS AGAINST REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS PARCEL 22118 PARK STREET TO FACILITATE ITS SALE

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

Council Member Whittle questioned this item and Mr. Larking explained this property was located on Park Street and faces the Doyle Thomas Park. The City has had to mow the property on numerous occasions due to noncompliance with the City's weed ordinance. There were several thousand dollars in liens on the property; what they were attempting to do was released the liens, but not the debt owed so the adjacent property owner can purchase the property. Assistant City Attorney Ryan Dodson explained the lien was a debt collection tool not the debt itself, so if they release the liens the City was giving up a tool but not the debt. What would typically happen, the City would send the owner a bill with thirty days to pay or set up a payment plan; if that doesn't happen, he would file a warrant in debt, sue, get a judgement they can attach to other properties he owns in the City. With a Nuisance Abatement Lien, the City can only attach to that specific lot. The owner has eight other properties in the City that were worth more, this will allow the City to recover the full amount, which was three times the assessed value of the lot.

The **Motion** was 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 2021 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR THE PROCEEDS OF THE SALE OF PINNACLES HYDRO PLANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$8,200,000

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Vogler and **second** by Vice Mayor Miller, an Ordinance entitled:

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ORDINANCE NO. 2021-04.06

AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THE HYDRO PLANT FOR SUBSTATION UPGRADES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$8,200,000.

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

Vice Mayor Miller noted this was in the budget for next year, but the money for the transfer was needed to start procuring the equipment. Mr. Vogler asked Director of Utilities Jason Grey to give an overview of where the substations will be located. Mr. Grey stated this will go towards the Southside substation which is by DCC, fully upgrade that and add a redundant transformer. Also, at the Westover substation they will add a redundant transformer as well; they were looking to have those done in the first quarter of 2022. It takes a lot to get these materials in, prices were going up on steel and the City wanted to get started instead of waiting until the next budget year. Mr. Vogler questioned if all the substations in the City will have been upgraded at some point, and Mr. Grey explained they have one substation they will have to do in next year's budget, but after that, every one of them will be at least 1991 or younger.

BUDGET AMENDMENT – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR A GRANT FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-04.07

AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR A GRANT FROM THE US DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY IN AN AMOUNT OF \$49,804 AND LOCAL SHARE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$49,804 FOR A TOTAL OF \$99,608 AND APPROPRIATING SAME

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

COMMUNICATIONS

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

Council Member Mayo thanked Council Member Campbell; citizens needed to hear him, the severity of what he and his family have been through, it touched him. Mr. Mayo encouraged citizens to get the vaccine.

Vice Mayor Miller noted Mr. Campbell's wife was a beautiful person, for him to describe what they went through and to encourage other people to get the vaccine was indescribable. Dr. Miller noted people were saying they didn't need to take the vaccine because they had COVID was not true. There was a syndrome called Long Haulers Syndrome; people get COVID and it just keeps on making them sick, months later after they have left the hospital, they still can't breathe, taste or smell. There was evidence coming forth that if they get the vaccine, that can help abate those symptoms. Dr. Miller encouraged people to get the vaccine.

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Council Member Saunders congratulated Lieutenant Jeff McLaughlin and his daughter Officer Briana McLaughlin for being the first father and daughter police officers in Danville, and congratulations to all the other new officers as well. Mr. Saunders thanked Council Member Campbell for sharing his experience with COVID, and thanked the Mayor for representing the City.

Council Member Whittle thanked Council Member Campbell for sharing his experience as well.

Council Member Buckner thanked Mr. Campbell and his family for what they do in this community, and encouraged citizens to go to Bibleway on Saturday for the vaccination clinic. Mr. Buckner thanked the Danville Police Department for the amazing job they do; congratulations to the new graduates, and to the recent Fire Department graduates as well. The Danville Police Department was currently accepting applications for the Youth Police Academy from June 7th through June 24th, ages 10-17; it was free to attend. Make Danville Shine was May 1st, and the Blue Ridge Rock Festival will be one of the largest events to come to Danville-Pittsylvania County, September 9th through the 12th; they were expecting over 40,000 people to attend.

Council Member Campbell thanked everyone on Council for their words of comfort. Reverend Campbell thanked the City Manager for choosing the Chief of the Police, he was someone who was able to establish good community relationships, and thanked the Mayor for his service.

Council Member Hood noted to everybody watching on River City TV or on Facebook, Council appreciated them because they take the time to show concern for their City, and what goes on in the City. Mr. Hood asked people to encourage citizens who don't feel involved but want to get involved, to get them more tuned in to local government, the City will continue to excel as one.

Mayor Jones noted he and Reverend Campbell go back a long way; he, Reverend Campbell and Mrs. Campbell did a lot of things together. He appreciates Reverend Campbell, and noted he was going to yield his time to Mr. Saunders and asked him to repeat part of his Invocation.

Council Member Saunders stated "God, Sometimes it seems to me at least, that some of us have forgotten your lessons of love and forgiveness, and are allowing people to control the behavior which we know is wrong. You have always allowed us to agree to disagree. Please help us to rekindle this spirit by listening more and talking less. Father, we thank you for your love and fortitude."

ADJOURNED: 8:11 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK