

January 18, 2022

A Regular Work Session of the Danville City Council convened on January 18, 2022 at 8:26 p.m. in Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. Council Members present were: James B. Buckner, L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo 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 Larking, Deputy City Manager Earl B. Reynolds, Jr., City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield Jr., and City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi.

Mayor Jones presided.

## **MINUTES**

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Saunders and **second** by Council Member Mayo, Minutes of the Regular Work Session held on December 21, 2021 were approved as presented. Draft copies were distributed to Council Members prior to the Meeting.

## **WORK SESSION ITEMS**

### **CONSIDERATION OF RELEASING THE EXISTING LIEN AND ASSOCIATED COLLECTION COSTS AFFECTING PARCEL #25163 ON GRAY STREET**

Council had no questions regarding this item and agreed to put it on an upcoming business agenda.

### **DISCUSSION ON A NEW PROCEDURE FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS TO BRING SUGGESTIONS TO COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION**

Council Member Miller noted at the last work session, Council talked about a procedure for Council Members to bring suggestions to Council, either during a work session, or for them to go through the City Manager so he can check the feasibility. Sometimes Council comes up with what seemed like great ideas, but they may not be; that way the City Manager and staff can have a chance to vet it or study it.

Council Member Buckner noted Council Members can call the City Manager; he either answers right away or calls back in a short period of time. Looking forward, if he has an idea, he will call the City Manager for input. Council Member Campbell noted he also calls the City Manager who prepares information for him. Council Member Mayo noted no one likes to be blindsided; the City Manager has an open-door policy, Council Members can always call him, ask those questions and not wait until they get to a Council meeting to get an answer. Council Member Vogler noted he did not have a problem with that at all; he usually tries to run everything by the City Manager before he brings it up before Council.

Vice Mayor Miller suggested bringing it up in a work session so everyone can hear about it before it gets put on a business meeting; that can put Council on the defense because they don't know anything about it, especially if it was a big issue that could cost a lot of money.

Council Member Saunders noted his agreement, to contact the City Manager before a Council Meeting and try not to blindside him and staff. Council Member Hood noted everyone has been accessible to him and he was thankful he was able to reach out to the City Manager to question him on various items. He believed that has worked for him and has worked for everyone else as

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well. Council Member Whittle noted the City Manager keeps Council informed and he always gets back to him when he has questions.

Dr. Miller noted he does not think they need to vote on any procedure, just have an agreement to try to be cooperative, and if they get an idea during the regular meeting, maybe bring it up during the work session so all the Council can hear it.

City Manager Ken Larking noted he appreciated listening to everyone discuss this issue and wanted to make sure they understood that when they ask questions during meetings, if he knows the answer and was confident that he knew the answer, he was happy to answer it then. He doesn't necessarily feel blindsided by questions being asked of him during the regular meeting or work session. If he doesn't know the answer, he will find the answer and get back to Council; he doesn't want the public to be misinformed by anything he says during a meeting. Mr. Larking noted if there was a new idea, he wanted to make sure that staff knew what direction to go in.

Mr. Larking stated he thought it was important for Council Members, listening to their constituents, to bring forward new ideas for consideration among all the Council Members; if Council wanted his feedback before they bring it forward to Council, he will give them his assessment. If he needs to get more information, he will provide more facts in the future. What would be important to have, as part of that process at some point, was a consensus from Council, that if it required a lot of work of staff to get an answer to a question or to fully flesh out an idea, Council provides that consensus to staff.

Mayor Jones thanked everyone for their input.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Council Member Saunders questioned whether the City should have a joint meeting with the new leadership with the County, perhaps after the County hires a new administrator.

Mr. Vogler noted he had spoken to the City Manager previously and had asked about City Council members getting key fobs to get into the building.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:35 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC  
CITY CLERK