

February 21, 2023

The Second Regular February meeting of the Danville City Council was held on February 21, 2023, 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, Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry Mayo, Dr. Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (8). L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., was absent (1). *Council Member Vogler left the meeting at 7:57 p.m.*

Staff Members present were: City Manager Ken F. Larking, City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield, Jr., and City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi. Deputy City Manager Earl B. Reynolds, Jr., was absent.

Mayor Jones presided.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Sherman M. Saunders gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Presentation: City of Danville Kick-Off of PLAN Danville
2040 Comprehensive Land Use Project

Presented by: Renee Burton, Planning Director

Renee Burton thanked Council for their support of PLAN Danville, and introduced members of the team, Kendra Hyson and Suzanne Schultz; Ms. Hyson noted she was a consultant/landscape architect with Smith Group based out of Washington, DC, and Ms. Schultz noted she was with Progressive AE out of Grand Rapids, MI. Ms. Hyson reviewed a Power Point presentation explaining a comprehensive plan was a twenty year policy document that was required by the Commonwealth of Virginia and directs how and where development and change will happen within the City. The Plan builds on the work the City was already doing, brings those things together to have a comprehensive vision so everyone was moving in the same direction to get the City to where they want it to be. Ms. Hyson noted there were a lot of great things going on in Danville, a lot of new investment, so this was the perfect time to be embarking on a plan like this. Ms. Hyson reviewed the leadership involved, and the six areas of focus for the plan, which can fluctuate as they do community engagement. They had a pre-planning process some time ago; they came to Danville, did research, met with different stakeholders to get an understanding of what was the baseline, what was happening in the City so they could prepare an approach.

The approach they came up with was one they typically use throughout all their planning processes to ensure that they were inclusive, as well as forward thinking and actionable, and included five steps: Share, Dream, Explore, Draft and Go. From the pre-planning process, they uncovered plan drivers, aspirations and will ultimately end with recommendations. The plan drivers were equity, health, and resiliency; those were three guiding values they want to make sure all of their recommendations, strategies and actions were working toward.

Equity would be Danville being inclusive for its diverse residents, workers and neighbors; they want to make sure they were driving an equitable process and they hear all the voices that may not have been heard before, to make sure the plan was representative of everyone. Health: Danville will enhance quality of life for community members through connected networks of services and places that encourage healthy choices and improve physical and mental health. They understand there were challenges with regard to physical and mental health, access to healthcare,

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and spaces to have physical activity. Resiliency: Danville will better withstand, overcome and adapt to physical, social, environmental and economic threats and challenges. They want to make sure the community was not only resilient from an environmental standpoint but also economically resilient. They did receive a \$200,000 grant to pursue a resiliency plan as a part of this comprehensive plan initiative. Plan Aspirations include prosperity for people, lifelong learning, advocacy and access, and neighborhood and networks.

Ms. Schultz discussed the engagement strategy, noting today was the soft launch, and they wanted to increase awareness with the official storefront opening on March 7th. They will have community ambassadors, leveraging existing events and will ask the community for their input. They have partnered with Tegeris doing digital media, but were also going to have the grassroots pieces. They want everyone in Danville to know that they can engage in this process, and want them to feel they all have a seat at the table; the community ambassadors were a key part of that. As they go out into the community they will be having conversations, talking to the community, meet them where they were, ask for their input so when they come together at the big community event, they will see the input they have already provided and it will be a bigger citywide picture.

Dr. Miller noted this was the time to do this and encouraged everyone to come out, listen to the discussion, and think positively about what it was going to do for their community. Council Member Vogler thanked them for the presentation and looked forward to coming by the storefront to see the progress taking place. Mr. Vogler noted the biggest thing he likes about this was that it engages their citizens, gives them a voice and opportunity to help shape the future of Danville. Danville's best days haven't already been written in the history books, they were in front of them, and the people of the City were going to be the ones to help move Danville forward.

Mayor Jones thanked the team for coming and giving the presentation.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized the following firefighters who spoke to Council regarding being a firefighter, wages, staffing, recruitment, overtime, retention, the hazardous materials team, and special training:

David Worsham, 1214 Old Liberty Terrace, Bedford
Robert Walker, 209 Oakdale Street, Martinsville, VA
Kevin Hayes, 3008 Old Mayfield Road, Danville
Joe Simpson, 1401 Broad Street, Altavista

Mayor Jones recognized Eric Finneccum, 401 Bridge Street, who spoke to Council regarding the work being done on Wilson Street next to where he lives, it was affecting his daily life and it looked like they were about to tear up the roads and sidewalks in his area. He only has one access point to his apartment building and if they tear up the road and sidewalks, he will have to no way to get into his building. He also spoke about the disability access in the City, vehicles parking on sidewalks blocking his access, inaccessible sidewalks without curb cutouts, and lack of handicap parking.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Budget Items on the Consent Agenda. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on February 14, 2023. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

Minutes from the Council Inaugural Meeting held on January 3, 2023, Regular Council Meeting held on January, 17, 2023, and Regular Work Session held on January 17, 2023. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Budget Appropriation – Amending the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for a Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Grant Appropriation.

An Ordinance entitled, Ordinance No. 2023-02.04, An Ordinance Amending the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Appropriation Ordinance by Increasing Revenue from a Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Grant in the Amount of \$500,000 and Appropriating the Same.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

Review of General Fund Financials as of January 31, 2023.

Director of Finance Michael Adkins began his report noting that the results were through January 31, 2023, the first seven months of the fiscal year or 58% of the fiscal year completed. Revenues through January 31st were \$64.5M, an increase of \$3.4M over last year. Property taxes had little activity at this time of year, until the next billing and collection cycle which will be May and June. With the first half of the fiscal year billing concluded, the City had received 54% of the budget for real estate, finishing a little ahead of expected, and on target for Personal Property receiving 48%. The reason it does not quite get up to the 50% mark was because of the state funding that comes in unevenly through the year; the City receives more in the spring than in the fall, but were right where they should be. Delinquent real estate collections were active and have collected \$708,000, 79% of the annual budget, and doing very well. The City was preparing for another auction of abandoned property which will occur this spring. Over half of the increases so far in revenues related to local retail sales, meals and lodging taxes. Meals tax increased \$569,000 over last year, slightly ahead of budget at 59%; lodging taxes increased \$315,000 which was slightly below budget at 53.5%, but Mr. Adkins noted he expected that to rebound. Through October, the average monthly receipts of motel and hotel taxes were \$240,000 a month; this dropped to about \$170,000 for November and December and if he speculated, he would say it was probably some of the construction teams that were staying here through the fall for construction projects, probably did not stay here as much over the holidays. Mr. Adkins noted he expected that to go back up with the milder weather and into the spring. Sales tax increased about \$357,000 over last year, right on target with the budget at 58%, and as a preview to next month's report, the City received its monthly sales tax installment last week for December retail sales, and it was \$1.17M which was a record amount for one month, that the City had not seen before. State based revenues continue to perform as expected and has no concerns there.

With regard to Expenditures through January 31st, the City expended \$80.5M, 62% of the budget; the reason they were over the 58% mark for January was primarily timing. This year they

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transferred the General Fund revenues for capital projects in January; last year they made that transfer in March and April. Departmental Spending was at 55% of budget, just 3% under budgeted levels, so departments were still doing a good job keeping their operating expenditures well within the budgeted amounts at this point. Non-Departmental Expenses was primarily Debt Service and Group Health Insurance; Debt Service was a known amount, they know what that will be going into the budget and that was on track. Group Health Insurance, as reported in the past, has had a little bit of an uptick, seeing that exceeding budget at \$400,000 at the end of January, 5% above budget, but also in January, the employee premium increase went into effect and that will help alleviate some of that overage as they end the fiscal year. Mr. Adkins noted he did not have any concerns about Revenues or Expenditures at this time.

Council Member Whittle questioned the City contribution of \$26M into the school system, was that the total amount the City will push in this year. Mr. Adkins noted the budget this year, including carry forwards was \$26M; at the end of January they had transferred almost \$22M, they still have a little bit to go before they have what the local government provides. Mr. Whittle questioned the budget stabilization for \$3M, and Mr. Adkins explained per the City's financial policies, and this resulted through the economic downturn the City experienced in 2008 and 2009, the City's policy was to keep \$3M in reserves for unexpected economic downturns. That can be tapped if state revenues fall under a certain percentage of what was expected. Mr. Whittle noted he never received an answer to his question about the \$27M in COVID money, he couldn't find it in the budget; Mr. Adkins explained it does not appear in the General Fund, it was separated in the Special Revenues and he will be glad to share a detailed listing of how that money was earmarked and spent to date.

Mr. Whittle stated with the Utility Department, they have another line item budget that they do beside the General Fund, and he never sees it. Mr. Adkins explained every month at the Danville Utility Commission meeting, a financial report was given on each of those Utility Funds; that can be shared with Council and he can include some summary information in the future. Mr. Whittle questioned the bonds and why the City was \$6M for the Utilities or whatever they were bonding up every year and Mr. Adkins explained each year, the Utility Funds have a budgeted transfer to the General Fund which represents what they would pay if they were a private industry, business licenses, personal property taxes, real estate taxes and such. For their major projects they do issue bonds to spread that cost out over twenty years, such as replacing transformers, or something that lasts twenty to thirty years, those were usually financed through bonds. Mr. Whittle noted it seemed like the City was kicking the can down the road on buying a bond and spreading the money out, why not have the City not take the \$15M, take \$10.5M or whatever, and stop buying the bonds over time. Mr. Adkins noted the thinking behind it was generational equity; the City was going to buy something that was going to last twenty or thirty years, the question was, in the case of utilities, do they make the current rate payers pay it now for something they may not actually use or spread the cost of that infrastructure over the current and future customers as well. Mayor Jones noted Council Members Whittle and Campbell serve on the Educational Committee, it would be good if staff gave them a report on the education expenditures.

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO AMEND CITY COUNCIL'S RULES AND PROCEDURES

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-02.06

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A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA.

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

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

BUDGET AMENDMENT- CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR THE 2021 ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-02.05

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR A GRANT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY IN AN AMOUNT OF \$97,447 AND A LOCAL SHARE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$9,745 FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$107,192, AND APPROPRIATING SAME.

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

Council Member Whittle stated the money was coming in from Homeland Security, does it come to the City, and where does the money go. Deputy Fire Chief Tim Duffer explained the City gets the \$97,447 and has to put a portion in to make up the \$107,192. The City spends it, sends all the receipts into FEMA and they reimburse the City; the money was used in the City and this item was for washers to clean the turn out gear. It was a cancer reduction program.

BUDGET AMENDMENT – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES ACT APPROPRIATION

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-02.06

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY APPROPRIATING COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES ACT FUNDS AND PROVIDING LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$4,780,388 AND APPROPRIATING SAME.

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

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COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor Jones noted Council this evening passed a Resolution making changes to some of their Rules of Procedure, and confirming they were following changes made in 2019. Beginning with the March 7, 2023 Council meeting, citizens will now use the following guidelines: Citizens who wish to speak under Communications from Visitors will now have three minutes to speak; a citizen representing a group will have five. These changes were actually made in 2019 and were now being implemented. Citizens will be required to sign up to speak no later than noon the Friday before the scheduled Council meeting. Citizens may sign up on the City's website or call the City Clerk at 797-8928. A new sign up page will be on the website by the end of the week. The order of business on the Council agenda has been changed also. Communications from Visitors will now be after the New Business section and before Communications from staff and Council.

City Manager Ken Larking noted Dr. Hairston passed on information about the Read Across America challenge; there was a kick off on March 2, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the Ruby B. Archie Library. Dr. Hairston was asking any Council Member that wanted to sign up to read at a school following the event, to let the City Manager know and he will pass that information along.

There were no communications from the City Attorney or City Clerk.

Council Member Hood thanked the firefighters for their service. Mr. Hood noted PLAN Danville, coming from a citizen first to see that, was exactly what citizens wanted to see, everyone getting together and connectively joining in to make the City better. Mr. Hood gave a shout out to the Wendell Scott Legacy Gala which had great attendance and scholarships given out, and also to the E Boys Scholarship Gala this past week.

Council Member Mayo noted PLAN Danville was a great event and encouraged citizens to go by when they open; their input matters. Mr. Mayo noted he works with the Department of Corrections at Danville Community College, they will be hosting a Family Reunification workshop on March 22nd at DCC. It was to help citizens coming out of incarceration, coming back to families they may have disconnected with; it provides them with information on available resources.

Vice Mayor Miller recognized Barbara Stanfield who was a nurse for forty-seven years at the hospital; she was an excellent nurse, everyone loved her and she did a lot for the community. Members of the Council approved an Ambulance service about a month ago for Fab's. Since then, LifeCare who provided transport services, closed in the region leaving a shortage. The owner of Fab's has ordered two more ambulances and there will be a ribbon cutting soon.

Council Member Whittle thanked the firefighters for coming this evening, and Council will work through the process.

Council Member Buckner thanked the firefighters for coming this evening and looked forward to a resolution as soon as possible.

Mayor Jones thanked everyone for being here this evening and thanked those who spoke this evening; they were going to work diligently for all the staff. Mayor Jones noted he had the opportunity to stop by George Washington High School to view the GLH Johnson black history program, and March 2, 2023 was Read Across America at the Ruby B. Archie Library.

ADJOURNED: 8:06 PM

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APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK