

May 16, 2023

The Second May meeting of the Danville City Council was held on May 16, 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, L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry 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.

Mayor Jones presided.

### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Council Member L.G. "Larry" Campbell, Jr., gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Consent Agenda items. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on May 9, 2023. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on March 21, 2023, were approved as presented.  
Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Amending the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Appropriation Ordinance to Fund Pay Plan Implementation and Support City Operations

An Ordinance entitled, Ordinance No. 2023-05.09, Amending the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Appropriation Ordinance by Increasing Revenues from Business and Occupancy Licenses to Fund Pay Plan Implementation and Support City Operations for an Appropriation in the Amount of \$600,000 and Appropriating the Same.

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

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

### **OLD BUSINESS**

### **CONSIDERATION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 DANVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET**

Vice Mayor Member Miller **moved** for adoption of a Resolution entitled:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-05.01**

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A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE BUDGET OF THE SCHOOL BOARD OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2024.

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

Council Member Whittle noted when he first got on Council, he asked the School Board for the \$1M back and was told by the Board that it was Council's pleasure to leave them the \$1M over their budget. Mr. Whittle stated he thinks it went to \$2M and asked where was it now. City Manager Ken Larking noted he believed the Schools were able to keep any unspent money for certain, specific purposes, but does not have that information at the moment. Mr. Whittle noted it says, City support of public schools had an unexpected balance of \$7.566M at June 30, 2021 which was \$5.45M spent in fiscal year 2023 and the local funds as needed and it allows to carry unspent funds forward for the future. Mr. Whittle questioned that and Mr. Larking noted if he recalled, those unspent funds were typically used for capital type expenditures; it has been that way in the past and was what his understanding was. If that was the case, they would have to use it for some type of capital. Mr. Whittle questioned was that on top of the \$144M, and Mr. Larking noted it was and it has been many years since a lot of those schools have been renovated and the \$144M only covers renovation of four schools. Mr. Larking stated he believed DPS received a nearly \$50M grant last week that was going toward the renovation of Forest Hills and Woodbury; they were constantly looking for funds to help renovate various schools. Mr. Whittle stated they would use that \$7.5M towards those capital expenditures and Mr. Larking noted he would verify that for him.

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

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

**NEW BUSINESS**

**REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS AS OF APRIL 30, 2023.**

Chief Financial Officer Michael Adkins gave a review of the General Fund financial results through the end of April; that was ten months into the fiscal year completed, or 83%. Revenues continue to perform strong and meet budget expectations. Revenues received were \$91.4M at the end of April, and that was an increase of about \$6.5M over last year. Mr. Adkins noted nearly half of this increase related to local consumer driven taxes, specifically, sales tax. The City received \$9.5M, up about \$616,000 from last year and at 84% of budget. The City received meals tax of \$9.2M, up \$914,000 over last year, or almost 85% of budget. In Business Licenses, the City received \$6.3M, up \$760,000 from last year, and already exceeded budget for this year at the end of April. Mr. Adkins stated that he was projecting that this line item will exceed budget by about \$1M by the end of the fiscal year. Some of that can be related to inflation; business licenses were based on a percent of gross sales, as the cost of goods has increased, so has the business license fees. Lodging taxes were also performing well, the City has received \$2.1M at the end of April, that was up \$470,000 over last year. Lodging taxes did dip down during the winter and were currently at 74% of budget. Now that they were into the spring, each month was doing very well, but still trailing budget at this point. Mr. Adkins noted the City has set some records in this group: Meals tax receipts during the month of April were over \$1M, and that has never occurred before. Lodging

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tax receipts in April were over \$250,000, that has only happened three times in his knowledge and sales tax receipts this week, which will be in next month's report representing March retail sales, was over \$1.2M; that was a new record. The City has never had sales tax in one month exceed that \$1.2M. Another category of revenues that was doing very well were interest earnings; he had mentioned in previous months that with the rising interest rates, they do have some benefit from that with the money that was invested. At the end of April they had \$2.4M of interest earnings, an increase of \$1.2M over last year. They have already exceeded their current budget for interest income this year by \$1.7M and still have two months to go; they get about \$260,000 in interest, so they still have another half million dollars in interest income coming this fiscal year. State revenues were on track as well.

Property Tax bills for real estate and personal property went out the first week of May; they were due June 5<sup>th</sup>. Next month he will be able to comment on the performance of those two items. The casino opened this week, and they will be open for about six weeks of this fiscal year which was not budgeted. Mr. Adkins stated he anticipated there will be some gaming tax revenues from that; his guess would be about half a million dollars related to those six weeks of operations.

On the Expenditure side, departmental spending was well controlled, currently at 75% of budget at the end of April. Some of that savings was through vacancy savings but also the departments were managing their budgets very well. The only concern he had this year was group health insurance which was based on claims, as the City was self-insured. At the end of April, claims were at 90% of budget; this has been addressed in the coming budget for Fiscal Year 2024; that line item has been increased in the proposed budget. For this year, all the revenues that were coming in over budget will take care of any overages in group health insurance for this year.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING – CONSIDERATION OF EXTENDING A PERMANENT AMBULANCE OPERATOR'S PERMIT TO FAB'S FAMILY MEDICAL TRANSPORT**

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding a Permanent Ambulance Operator's Permit. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on May 9, 2023. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

Vice Mayor Miller **moved** for adoption of an Ordinance entitled:

#### **ORDINANCE NO. 2023-05.10**

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING AN AMBULANCE OPERATOR'S PERMIT TO FAB'S FAMILY MEDICAL TRANSPORT

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

Vice Mayor Miller questioned the applicant, she had three ambulances and Ms. Bethel noted that was correct, and Dr. Miller stated she had contracts with Carillion, South Boston and Ms. Bethel noted she did not have contracts with them and none with the Danville hospital. She has asked, but does not have one, and in response to Dr. Miller noted she did feel it was impeding her growth.

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

VOTE: 9-0  
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones, Mayo,  
Miller, Saunders, Vogler and Whittle (9)

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NAY: None

**CONSIDERATION OF THE RELEASE OF AN UNUSED ELECTRIC EASEMENT ON BERRY HILL ROAD**

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-05.04**

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ABANDONMENT OF AN UNUSED CITY EASEMENT ACROSS PROPERTY IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR ENERGY INSTALLATIONS UPON THE SAME PROPERTY.

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

Council Member Vogler questioned this was a solar farm in Pittsylvania County, how does the City benefit from this. Director of Utilities Jason Grey noted Dominion Energy was building a solar farm and in order to use the property, they have to have a clean lien. There was a current easement that was no longer usable for the City's electric service that was still there. Mr. Vogler noted this was not a RIFA project, it was a County only project, and they will collect the tax revenue; this project doesn't work without the City doing the easement and Mr. Grey noted that was correct, it holds up their project and doesn't give them a clear title to the property.

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 FUNDING REQUESTS FROM DANVILLE-PITTSYLVANIA COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-05.05**

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF DANVILLE TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH DANVILLE PITTSYLVANIA COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY FOR THE DANVILLE-PITTSYLVANIA TREATMENT COURT

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

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

**PUBLIC HEARING - CONSIDERATION OF FEE CHANGES EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2023**

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Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Fee Changes. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on May 8, 2023 and May 15, 2023. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

### **ORDINANCE NO. 2023-05.11**

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND ESTABLISHING AND INCREASING CERTAIN FEES OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2023.

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, or City Clerk.

City Attorney Clarke Whitfield noted he attended the funeral of Miss Virginia Collins; she worked for the City and the City Attorney's office for 39 years, and was there for about a year after he first started twenty-five years ago. He wanted to recognize her service. She dedicated her life to the City and to the City Attorney's office, and wanted to let her family know she was appreciated for her contribution.

Vice Mayor Miller noted the buzz around town this week was the Casino, it opened and it was magnificent; crowds were lined up around the building and up the sidewalk; and it went on all day. Even today, they have large crowds; it was off to a great start. Many employees were from the region, and from North Carolina and two from California. There will be a lot more people moving here. Dr. Miller noted the Weldon Cooper Center has said that Danville would continue to lose population; he believes they were wrong, and it will be increasing. Dr. Miller noted the GWHS track had their first track meet in twenty-three years on Wednesday night; it was 2015 when Council set aside \$1.3M for that track. It was put in reserve and somehow held in reserve for all those years, and they finally got enough funds to help pay for the track. Dr. Miller noted the Bristol Welcome Center now has brochures from Danville available.

Council Member Saunders noted the City was growing and experiencing a wonderful evolution. He also had concerns with the Weldon Cooper Center numbers regarding Danville's population. The population was not dropping, it was increasing and will increase even more. Mr. Saunders congratulated the school system on the track and field events and the ribbon cutting held for it was very good. Mr. Saunders recognized Neal Morris, and stated on behalf of the City and everyone, thanked him for what he did every day for this City; he has been doing it for a very long time, was an excellent police chief, and donates his time for the City of Danville boards. Council appreciated that.

Council Member Vogler noted his agreement with Mr. Saunders' assessment of Chief Morris, Council cannot thank him enough. About the Weldon Cooper Center, past was prologue, the Weldon Cooper Center has been wrong about Danville before; they already projected Danville to be down to 38,000 this decade. Before the end of the last decade, they were off by about 4,000, and thinks they will be way off by the end of this decade. There was an article today that talked about that in the last few years, more people were moving into Danville, people were choosing to

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move to Danville, and Council needed to find places for these people to live, to find housing for them. Mr. Vogler noted he was in Richmond serving on work groups with the Virginia Housing Commission, one of which was the Real Property Community Development and Best Land Use Practice Work Group, the other was the Short Term Rental Work Group. They had a couple different meetings today talking about legislation that was in front of the General Assembly that will help address the housing shortage across Virginia. One of the main points that was stressed by a number of people was, they have to start looking at housing development the way they look at economic development, get aggressive with it; he would love Danville to lead the way on how a locality can really tackle housing development.

Council Member Buckner welcomed all the people traveling in and out of the City.

Council Member Hood gave a shout out about the regional tourism brand for Danville and Pittsylvania County, and congratulated all DCC graduates this past Saturday.

Council Member Mayo noted his congratulations to all graduates, and to Dr. Hairston and the School Board, congratulations on the new track. The opening of Caesars was exciting, seeing all the people there from all over, the atmosphere inside was great, with people enjoying themselves. Mr. Mayo reminded citizens that Festival in the Park was this weekend.

Council Member Campbell noted many were aware of what was happening in his life; they all deal with grief and stress in many different ways. Reverend Campbell noted he wanted to thank the community for the support he has received which has been absolutely unbelievable, and asked citizens to keep him and his family in prayer.

Mayor Jones thanked City Council and the School Board working together on the School Board budget; it has been one of the smoothest ones they have had. Mayor Jones recognized Kaley and Kacey Cunningham, Shakeva Frasier, Tommy Bennett, Tyquan Graves and Tyrell Bennett, Rebecca Campbell, Cindy Poteat, Reverend Ferrell, Shelby Irving and Sylvia Brooks all of who were involved in Danville, working on boards and engaged in the community. All were ambassadors to the community.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC  
CITY CLERK