

November 21, 2023

The Second November meeting of the Danville City Council was held on November 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, L.G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry Mayo, Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (8). Sherman M. Saunders was absent (1). *Rev. Campbell entered the meeting at 7:25 p.m.*

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.

Mayor Jones noted Tyrell Payne, Vice Chair of the Danville School Board had been selected to serve as the Vice Chair of the Southern Region of the VSBA.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member J. Lee Vogler, Jr., gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by School Board Vice Chair Tyrell Payne.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Presentation: Salvation Army

Presented by: Lieutenant Antonio Hodges and Lieutenant Shawnte Hodges

Lieutenant Antonio Hodges gave a brief review of some of the things the local Salvation Army has been doing, including a short video on the playground build they had on Henry Street; they had over fifty-five volunteers including children, who have been enjoying the new playground. Lieutenant Hodges explained they create healthy meals that were distributed to some of the afterschool programs and help to keep kids active in the community. Lieutenant Shawnte Hodges noted, Monday through Friday, they have a community feeding program, serving about 103 people each day, with 256 volunteers on average, giving 955 hours over the year to help them. Over the past fiscal year, they fed over 19,480 families with their community program. Mr. Hodges discussed their Christmas programs including the Angel Tree and Christmas Campaign stating they have 575 children on the Angel Tree this year and sixty seniors. The Hodges noted the red kettle campaign has begun and encouraged citizens and Council Members to sign up to volunteer to ring the bell. Council members thanked the Hodges for what they do in the community. Mrs. Hodges noted they will be having a dinner for community members on Thanksgiving.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Consideration of Approval of Minutes from Regular Council Meeting held on October 17, 2023.
Draft copies of the Minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Consideration of Amending the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Appropriation for a Grant from the Edward Byrne Memorial JAG Program in the Amount of \$17,799

An Ordinance Entitled, Ordinance No. 2023-11.01, An Ordinance Amending the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Appropriation Ordinance by Increasing Revenue from the United States Department of

November 21, 2023

Justice 2023 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program in the Amount of \$17,799.

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

VOTE: 7-0-2
AYE: Buckner, Hood, Jones, Mayo, Miller,
Vogler and Whittle (7)
NAY: Campbell, Saunders (2)

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2023

Chief Financial Officer Michael Adkins gave a brief overview of the General Fund Financials through October 31st, four months into the fiscal year, and 33% of the year complete. Total Revenues for the General Fund were \$34M, tracking very well with budget and an increase of \$6.4M over last year at this time. A good portion of that increase was related to casino revenues, \$4M of the \$6.4M; \$1.4M of that increase was interest earnings. Currently the LGIP, the Local Government Investment Pool rate was about 5.5% on average for this fiscal year; last year at this time it was 2.5%. In addition, sales, meals and lodging were contributing to the increase in revenue from last year, together about \$1M. Under Sales Tax, the City received \$4.2M, nearly 37% of the budget, and every month so far this year has exceeded \$1M; that was unheard of prior to this year. The City just received their payment for November on the 16th and that also was over \$1M. Meals Tax was also around \$4M at this point, 37.5% of budget; also each month for meals tax has been close to or over \$1M. To compare that, last year, the average per month was \$930,000. Lodging was also doing very well, it was a smaller line item, but the increase was significant for that; the City received \$1.2M so far, that was 48% of the budget, so nearly half of the budget has been received at the end of October. The month of October was the highest receipts for lodging taxes that the City has ever had at \$330,000; they were seeing increased stays. Real Estate and Personal Property bills went out the beginning of this month and the City was just getting those revenues in; they were coming in faster this year. Last year, on November 21st they received about \$2.7M of Real Estate, this year on November 21st, they have already received \$4.7M. The budget has not changed that much, people were just getting that bill out of the way earlier this year. Personal Property was comparable; so far through today they have received \$1.6M, last year was about \$1.4M, it was on track or a little ahead of what was expected. Mr. Adkins noted he would have more complete results on property taxes next month. State revenues were performing as expected, with no concerns with Revenues as a whole.

Under Expenditures, Departmental Spending was about 32% of budget after four months, tracking about 1% below expectations. If that multiplies out and that trend continues through the year, they will finish between two and three percent under budget which was fairly typical. The only expenditure they were watching closely and a little concerned about was the group health insurance. Being self-insured, the City pays the claims as they come in; currently they were a little over 1% ahead of budget. There were plan changes that will take effect in January and also the employee contributions share will go up a bit in January. That will help curb that expense but staff will keep Council informed.

The Fiscal 2023 Audit was just about complete and the external auditors will be at Council at the last meeting of December to officially give the audit report.

November 21, 2023

Council Member Vogler noted the City was seeing unprecedented revenue levels in a lot of the categories, and Mr. Adkins noted they were seeing growth they have never seen before. Meals and Sales Tax were about 14-15% higher than last year and Lodging was about 25% higher. They hope that trend continues through the rest of the fiscal year.

Vice Mayor Miller noted casino earnings were down last month, and in the other casinos, and the predictions for the Gross National Product were about half of what they were this year; the projections were not good for the near future. Mr. Adkins noted he recently returned from a continuing education conference for Virginia Local Government Finance Personnel and some localities were seeing some softening of sales tax, Danville had not experienced that, yet. That could change. Mr. Adkins noted some of their growth has to be related to casino visitation, but there were other events such as the Rock Festival that had a big impact on hotel lodging seen this past month. Council Member Whittle questioned how much the City bonded the electric department this year and Mr. Adkins noted the City has not issued any bonds this current fiscal year. Last fiscal year revenue bonds were issued in conjunction with the regular General Obligation bonds for electric infrastructure, that was several million, but he did not have the exact number.

CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE LEASE WITH AMERICAN TOWER, LLC FOR USE BY THE CITY OF A TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-11.04

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE RENEWAL OF A TOWER LEASE WITH AMERICAN TOWERS, LLC AT 337 SWEETGUM LANE IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY.

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

VOTE: 7-0-2
AYE: Buckner, Hood, Jones, Mayo, Miller,
Vogler and Whittle (7)
NAY: Campbell, Saunders (2)

CONSIDERATION OF THE RELEASE OF CITY LIENS AGAINST PARCEL NO. 56704 ON WOOD AVENUE

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-11.05

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE RELEASE OF CITY-HELD LIENS AGAINST REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS PARCEL #56704 WOOD AVENUE TO FACILITATE ITS SALE.

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

VOTE: 7-0-2
AYE: Buckner, Hood, Jones, Mayo, Miller,

November 21, 2023

NAY: Vogler and Whittle (7)
Campbell, Saunders (2)

**BUDGET AMENDMENT - CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024
BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR USDA GRANT FUNDS FOR FOOD SERVICES
AT WW MOORE JR., DETENTION HOME**

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-11.10

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR A FEDERAL GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF APPROXIMATELY \$54,118 TO AID THE FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS AT W. W. MOORE, JR. DETENTION HOME AND APPROPRIATING SAME.

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

**BUDGET AMENDMENT - CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024
BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR VIRGINIA JUVENILE COMMUNITY CRIME
CONTROL ACT FUNDING**

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-11.11

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR A GRANT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$86,999 AND A LOCAL SHARE OF \$39,830, FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$126,829, TO PROVIDE FOR THE ELECTRONIC MONITORING AND OUTREACH DETENTION PROGRAMS, ONLINE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS, AND PRO- SOCIAL SKILLS PROGRAMS FOR THE CITY OF DANVILLE AT THE W. W. MOORE JR. DETENTION HOME AND APPROPRIATING SAME.

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

**BUDGET AMENDMENT - CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024
BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUES TO FUND VARIOUS
EXPENDITURES**

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-11.12

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUES FROM INTEREST INCOME, SALES TAXES, AND MEALS TAXES TO FUND VARIOUS EXPENDITURES AN APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,000,000 AND APPROPRIATING THE SAME.

November 21, 2023

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

Council Member Whittle asked if the City Manager could break this out for Council when they receive it next time, and Mr. Larking noted the Ordinance lists the ways the funds will be used; he can send it to Mr. Whittle.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking noted earlier that evening he sent an email to all City Council Members about an opportunity to meet with consultants for Parks and Recreation. They were working on their recreation programming, have already spoken to people in the community and stakeholders, and would like to offer an opportunity to meet with Council Members.

City Attorney Clarke Whitfield noted he wanted to extend his condolences to the actual family, and the GW family, for the loss of longtime trainer and manager Steve Stamps. He was only 53, and he always had a smile and encouraging word. His funeral was tomorrow at GW at 1:00 p.m.

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

Council Member Mayo noted Steve was a jewel to the entire GW family, had so much passion for what he did, and never complained even when he was feeling bad; they were praying for the GW family and his immediate family. Mr. Mayo commended all the citizens and volunteers regarding a clothing drive for the fire victims at Northpointe. Mr. Mayo commented on the loss of Azalea Hickson who gave so much to the GW family; she had a wonderful funeral and noted his prayers to Tommy Bennett and family. Mr. Mayo wished a Happy Thanksgiving to all Council Members and citizens in the City.

Vice Mayor Miller noted his congratulations to Tyrell Payne on his appointment to the VSBA. Every year up to this year, God's Storehouse had donated turkeys and all the fixings, but unfortunately this year there were not enough funds for the turkeys; they have a drive now to raise enough money for Christmas and were asking for donations. He attended the Airport dedication last week, it was a really nice renovation and jewel in the community; Marc Adelman and the Airport Commission should be thanked for all that. The Utilities Commission had a meeting a few weeks ago and received an update on all the capital projects; the Airside Substation was just about finished, Ballou Park across from Caesars was replaced, and there were major upgrades in the system including replacement of gas and water mains.

Council Member Vogler noted his congratulations to Mr. Payne on the great work he was doing in the community and being recognized. At the last meeting he spoke about the budget and tax cuts for the citizens for real estate, car tax and to finish the job they started in the last couple years in expanding tax relief for senior citizens. In the last couple weeks, he has received a lot of calls and texts from people thanking him for hearing them. Things could take a turn for the worse but believed they can do things to safeguard the City, such as putting in place a policy to mandate a percentage of the casino revenue goes into the rainy day fund every year. The City does not have to spend all the money that comes in right away. Mr. Vogler wished City Council, staff, City employees and citizens a very happy Thanksgiving.

Council Member Whittle noted for the past four or five years he has asked for the four-cent reduction per hundred in the real estate taxes and thinks there was no better time than now to put a motion on the floor to have a four cent reduction in the real estate taxes. Mr. Whitfield noted that would need to be done during the official business session and preferred to have something

November 21, 2023

in writing. Mayor Jones noted his agreement with the Attorney and suggested letting the City Manager and City Staff look at the numbers. Mr. Whittle noted the Historical Society Building was fantastic and encouraged citizens to go in and see it, it was fascinating.

Mayor Jones recognized Mr. Jones and Mr. Hessler, board members of the Historical Museum on Cabell Street, and encouraged citizens to visit.

Council Member Buckner noted a Happy Thanksgiving to his colleagues, friends and citizens, to have a safe and happy holiday.

Council Member Campbell apologized for coming in late, he was tied up in church and work. There was a lot going on in the community; Danville was a great city and agreed that with prosperity being able to assist those in need. Rev. Campbell wished everyone a blessed and happy Thanksgiving; this Thursday, Bibleway will be serving food at 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Council Member Hood congratulated Mr. Payne. Last week he had the opportunity to visit the Governors' Housing Conference; throughout the Commonwealth people were looking at the same situation of affordable housing. To be with so many people, looking to help correct that situation, and to hear Danville spoken about in a positive manner. Mr. Hood noted his appreciation of the work the Hodges were doing in the community, and noted he visited the Danville Historical Society and encouraged people to visit. Mr. Hood noted his appreciation of all the volunteers throughout the City and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mayor Jones noted he was thankful for the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, the Attorney and Clerk, and all the employees, and was thankful for all they do. Mayor Jones noted he was thankful for how Danville has turned around, thankful for the education system, thankful for those citizens that support others, and thanked the Salvation Army for the work they do. Mayor Jones asked citizens to say a kind word to others, thanked the citizens of the community for believing in Council, and was thankful to all.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:51 p.m.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK