

April 16, 2024

The Second April meeting of the Danville City Council was held on April 16, 2024, 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

Vice Mayor Miller gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Certificate of Recognition: John Wilt
Presented to: John Wilt

Mr. Wilt thanked Council for the recognition of his running career, and stated how blessed and lucky he was to be able to achieve his accomplishments.

Presentation: Update on Averett University
Presented by: Dr. Tiffany Franks

Dr. Franks thanked Council for all they have done to elevate and advance the city, and noted that Averett was celebrating their 165th birthday this year. Dr. Franks discussed a program called "Workforce Rx", it was an employer tuition benefit initiative that was designed to help employers with talent recruitment and retention, and employees have no out of pocket tuition. SOVAH and Caesars were the first to sign on. Averett continues to elevate hospitality in the region, with the first cohort of area managers and staff completing the hospitality leadership training program. Averett worked with SOVAH to provide needed programs in medical technology and were re-launching the RN to BSN program. Thanks to a \$670,000 Congressional earmark Averett was awarded, they will also be able to support regional workforce needs through the delivery of affordable new training and upscaling opportunities. Dr. Franks discussed education and training for teachers, and the Aeronautics program, working with DCC and the City to expand education and training opportunities, including an Aviation Maintenance technology program which will help support expanded flight instruction opportunities. Their relationship with the Danville Police continues to expand and they welcomed Chief Wiles and his command staff a few weeks ago, many of whom were Averett graduates; they value that partnership. Dr. Franks discussed student volunteerism and service to the region, and the athletic programs at Averett, noting they were competing in the NCAA Region 3 ODAC Athletic Conference. Mayor Jones thanked Dr. Franks, Dr. Wallace, Dr. Hairston, and Telly Tucker for all their collaboration efforts and Council Members thanked Dr. Franks for her leadership and the growth at Averett.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Buckner and **second** by Council Member Campbell Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on March 19, 2024, were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS AS OF MARCH 31, 2024

Chief Financial Officer Michael Adkins reviewed the General Fund Financials as of March 31, 2024, which marked 75% of the fiscal year complete. Total Revenues were just over \$101M for this period, an increase of \$18M over last year at this time. Most of this was from casino derived revenue, or \$9.4M. Additionally, interest earnings have provided about \$3M more than last year. Consumer driven taxes also contributed about \$3.5M more this year than last year. Sales tax was \$9.7M, nearly 82% of budget and an increase of about \$1.1M over last year. In March, the City received retail activity from January; historically that was the lowest month of the year. This year, it was still probably going to be the lowest at \$961,000; last year, it was \$867,000, that was a \$100,000 increase in sales tax for that one month. In order to generate \$100,000 in sales tax, that required \$10,000,000 of retail activity; there was an additional \$10,000,000 of retail activity during the month of January this year compared to last year. Business licenses were at \$7.2M, that was \$400,000 over budget or 105% of budget and an increase of \$1.2M over last year. As far as the number of business licenses, they were seeing an increase of 130 over last year at this time. Meals tax was also performing well at \$9M collected for the first nine months, 79% of budget, and an increase of \$840,000 over last year. Lodging tax was at \$2.3M, 94% of budget, almost 100% of budget and several months to go before the end of the fiscal year; that was an increase of \$438,000. Looking at the average monthly stays for the first nine months compared to last year, that increase went from 17,703 per month to 20,735 per month; an increase of about 3,000 nightly stays per month compared to last year. On the expenditure side, Departmental Spending was currently at 72% of budget, trailing by about 3%, where they typically see it through the year. Non-departmental expenses were primarily debt service and group health insurance. Debt services were right on target and group health insurance was running ahead of budget; Mr. Adkins anticipated it finishing about 10% over budget, but the extra earnings in interest earnings will take care of that and he does not have a concern. They ended March with a deficit of \$3.3M, which sounds bad but it was much better than where they normally were; the next influx of revenue will happen at the end of May, first of June as they go through the tax collection cycle. That will be when they see that rebound and hopefully show a surplus for this year.

Council Member Vogler asked unless something drastically changes, the City was looking at a surplus at the end of this year, and asked if he knew how much; Mr. Adkins stated there were a lot of things that happen in the last month, they will have to wait and see. If they stay on this path, he believed he will have some surplus to add to the fund balance. Council Member Campbell asked when Mr. Adkins summarized the statements, he was saying that Danville right now was in a state of prosperity, and Mr. Adkins stated they were seeing growth especially in consumer driven taxes, some of that was the product of inflation; a lot of these were based on a percentage of the cost of goods. They were seeing an increase in tourism through the hotel stays, so there was some prosperity, and they were experiencing some growth in the economy. Council Member Saunders noted according to this report the City was doing great, the city had a list of priorities to spend the funds on; in that list there may be items that have not been done yet. As they get these surplus funds, can they go back to that list and allocate some funds to those. Council Member Whittle asked if the sales tax for January included internet sales, and Mr. Adkins stated that would include all sales, in person and online.

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING A RESOLUTION TO ISSUE GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

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

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RESOLUTION NO. 2024-04.02

RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE ISSUANCE, SALE AND AWARD BY THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, OF ONE OR MORE SERIES OF GENERAL OBLIGATION PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT BONDS, HERETOFORE AUTHORIZED, AND PROVIDING FOR THE FORM, DETAILS, AND PAYMENT OF SUCH BONDS.

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

Council Member Whittle asked about the \$5,265,000 from 2022 of unused bonds, and Mr. Adkins stated that every year Council opens the possibility of issuing bonds; that maximum amount was \$6M for general government projects. If the City does not use all of that capacity, it can be carried over for one year. The City had some carryover from last year that they can add to their bonding ability this year in order to fund the projects that were in the Fiscal Year 2024 adopted budget.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF AN UPDATE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE'S PROCUREMENT CODE

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-04.11

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REORDAINING IN ITS ENTIRETY CHAPTER 30, ENTITLED "PROCUREMENT" OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, 1986, AS AMENDED.

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

Council Member Campbell asked the City Manager to explain this item, and Mr. Larking stated that staff was requesting a total update of the procurement code; the highlights include adhering to state law and additional updates to help make procurement easier for businesses trying to do business with the City, and for minority owned businesses to do business with the city as well. Assistant City Attorney Ryan Dodson explained the last time Chapter 30 of the Code was updated in its entirety was in 2009; during their review process, they updated it so everything was in compliance with state law; all the bills that just passed in Richmond this past week were incorporated in this. Rev. Campbell asked if the City was hitting the quota for SWaM that they were required to hit. Division Director of Purchasing Carol Henley stated that their continued efforts in updating the procurement code will allow them to continue those efforts to create more opportunities for small and SWaM certified businesses. This will also increase performance bonds from 100,000 to 500,000 because small businesses have a very hard time getting those payment performance bonds and being able to bid on City projects of that size. Ms. Henley noted they have added some language on the Purchasing website, and a link to the Department of Small Business Suppliers and Diversity so they can learn more about how to become SWaM certified. In response to Rev. Campbell, Mr. Larking explained Amanda Paez, the Assistant to the City Manager, was the City's Chief Equity Officer; she was in charge of making sure the City was doing everything

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they can to make sure they were inclusive. The City of Danville was one of a handful of participants in the National League of Cities, Southern Cities Economic Inclusion program. One of their big projects was to look at the City's procurement policies and see how the City can help engage minority owned businesses to do more business with the community.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING DANVILLE CITY CODE CHAPTER 24 REGARDING PARADES AND OTHER ASSEMBLIES

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-04.12

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING, REPLACING, AND REORDAINING CHAPTER 24, ENTITLED "PARADES AND OTHER ASSEMBLIES" OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, 1986, AS AMENDED

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY ANTICIPATING THE PROCEEDS FROM THE ISSUANCE OF UTILITY REVENUE BONDS

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-04.13

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF UTILITY REVENUE BONDS AND APPROPRIATING SAME.

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

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY ANTICIPATING THE PROCEEDS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

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

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ORDINANCE NO. 2024-04.14

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY ANTICIPATING THE PROCEEDS FROM THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND APPROPRIATING SAME FOR ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURES.

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

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR A RECREATION ENRICHMENT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$326,615

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-04.06

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$64,447 FOR A RECREATION ENRICHMENT PROGRAM AND THE LOCAL IN-KIND SHARE OF \$262,168 FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$326,6115 AND APPROPRIATION OF SAME.

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

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Lonnie Jones who spoke on behalf of the Danville Historical Society. The DHS was recognized on April 1st as one of the region's best businesses for interns; the recognition comes from Virginia Talent and Opportunity Partnership (VTOP). Mr. Jones noted there was a lot of interest from local students, and internships begin in June. Mr. Jones spoke to Council about additional donations to DHS, and upcoming programs and events.

Mayor Jones recognized Lisa Jones from Virginia Organizing who addressed Council about housing and the need for more diverse housing opportunities in the City that will include affordable subsidized housing. Ms. Jones noted they needed land donated by the City to private developers to build affordable subsidized housing on the land and asked that the city consider working with organizations that can help bring this to the city.

Council Member Campbell noted he appreciated what she said, and asked the City Manager to explain what the City was trying to do. Mr. Larking stated the City has had multiple housing studies, the most recent was by Ken Danter and it identified some gaps in the City's housing market. Housing in Danville was actually 18% lower than the national average; that doesn't mean there aren't people that still have needs to be met. Part of what they were doing as a community was to try to make sure that there was continuum of housing at all income levels so that people who want to live and participate in Danville's success, have a place that they can afford to live. The City was aware of the housing issues, they were doing what they can to address them, trying to find developers to help build new multi-family, and rehab existing building into multifamily as well as single family.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

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Mr. Larking noted, the fact that the City can show such growth year over year in revenues, especially consumer driven revenues, was unique for a City like Danville that was isolated from large metro areas. What had to be done over many years, taking risks, investing in Council's goals of education, economic development and public safety, has made Danville a place that people want to invest in; they were seeing that happen. It was a team effort by Council, leaders in the community that advocate and support that, and the City staff implementing the policies.

Council Member Mayo noted he had the opportunity to tour the museum, they have done extraordinary work there, and encouraged them to continue. Mr. Mayo thanked Ms. Jones for coming and speaking for Virginia Organizing. The Family Reunification workshop will be held tomorrow at DCC in the Foundation Building from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm., and Mr. Mayo noted Reflections held a ribbon cutting ceremony this past Saturday on North Main Hill.

Vice Mayor Miller stated Katie Fines with Best Friends Animal Society, an organization for animal welfare, do a lot of projects around the country for animals; they will be spaying cats this Friday in Chatham. Dr. Miller noted improving the City has been a long time coming, there were some mistakes along the way, but the overall trajectory has been up, and the City continues to grow. Greenville warned Council years ago, with their city, it was a twenty-year period to improve. They told Danville that they would make mistakes, but overall the upward trajectory has been positive.

Council Member Saunders sent a special thank you to Police Chief Wiles for everything he was doing for the city; his men and women were great. Last Saturday, there was a fundraiser, Men Cooking with Delta, raising money for charity. Council Members Mayo and Hood and School Board Member Tyrell Payne were there. Mr. Saunders thanked the Mayor, Council, City Manager, and staff for all that was done for the City and how proud he was to be among this successful group.

Council Member Vogler thanked Lonnie Jones and Lisa Jones for coming out and speaking tonight, and noted there has been a lot of positive buzz about the new bus shelter on Riverside Drive. People want to know if the City was going to have more. Mr. Vogler asked the City Manager, out of all the bus stops in the city, how many have benches and how many have covered shelters, and Mr. Larking stated that there were thirty-four covered shelters and eighteen stops with benches. Mr. Vogler asked what were the plans for more of these shelters, where does the funding comes from and the general cost of these shelters and Council Member Buckner stated that any time one of these shelters was ordered it takes anywhere between 6 to 11 months for them to be built due to demand all over the country. Once a site was determined it must be surveyed along with other factors like applying for grants, approvals from VDOT and so forth. Mr. Vogler asked about the traffic on Craghead Street and safety concerns due to the amount of traffic; what precautions can be put into place to help slow down traffic and ease concerns. Mr. Larking stated there were options that can be looked at, and safety was important. Mr. Vogler noted there will be a fundraiser for Donnie Hunt and his wife Pam who have had some very serious health issues, on Saturday, May 4 at Bro Pete's from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm. For more information or to help, call Rhonda Vogler at 434-203-0081. Mr. Vogler stated it was an amazing and exciting time in this city; there was still some work to do to make sure this prosperity was shared throughout.

Council Member Whittle commented on the lunch with the new police cadets. Mr. Whittle stated they have two or three years to play catch up in the city, and they will do well at it. They stopped building houses twenty-five years ago, the old developers have moved on, and new ones were coming in. Their concerns were the high interest rates and high inflation. Maybe the City can suggest to the IDA if they have some tracts, they could work with these new developers as incentives to build here.

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Council Member Buckner noted Danville and Pittsylvania County lost some wonderful friends this past weekend, please keep the families and friends of Kenyan Scott and Karen Cotta in your thoughts and prayers. Mr. Buckner encouraged everyone to take time to tell their friends, family, and those they care about how much they mean to them because they never know when they will have an opportunity to again. Mr. Buckner welcomed the new cohort to the ADTM program at the Institute; it seemed like they were turning folks in and out of that program as fast as they can get them there.

Council Member Campbell noted that he was glad to see the Virginia Organizing in Chambers tonight, and thanked Dr. Franks for all that she does in the city with Averett University. Rev. Campbell noted he was very impressed with the turnout at the procurement fair; people were concerned about prosperity being shared and also about being certified. It was important to look at the quality of life in Danville and to enhance it to make it better.

Council Member Hood gave special thanks to the Deltas for a successful fundraiser, and a shout out to Virginia Organizing, their meetings were always proactive. Mr. Hood noted today he had the pleasure of facilitating the DRHA conversation luncheon for the new police recruits along with Council Member Whittle. They talked about everything from mental health to youth; this was a very promising group of recruits. Mr. Hood recognized Willis Ferrell for hosting the Danville warming center, and noted he went to a Governor's Housing Conference this past weekend and it showed that homelessness and affordable housing was the topic of the nation.

Mayor Jones noted he received a call from the city attorney about a dear friend of his that passed, they were still praying for his family. Mayor Jones also encouraged citizens to love their neighbors and their family, to take time to do so. Mayor Jones stated he wanted to let the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Council, and Staff know that he appreciated them and noted they were about to celebrate Council Member Hood very soon, he and his fiancé.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK