

August 20, 2024

The Second Regular August meeting of the Danville City Council was held on August 20, 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). *Mr. Whittle entered the meeting at 7:03 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.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mayor Jones welcomed everyone in Chambers, those watching from home, and asked everyone to join him in wishing Council Member Saunders a very happy birthday. Mayor Jones congratulated members of the school board for the climbing numbers in math and reading scores.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

Approval of Minutes from Regular Council Meeting held on July 16, 2024. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Amending the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for the Creative Communities Art Grant

An Ordinance entitled Ordinance No. 2024-08.08, Amending the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Appropriation Ordinance to Provide for a Virginia Commission for the Arts grant in the Amount of \$4,500, and to provide for the Local Share in the Amount of \$5,000 for a total grant of \$9,500.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS AS OF JUNE 30, 2024

Chief Financial Officer Michael Adkins noted these were the preliminary results for Fiscal Year 2024. All material adjustments have been made but there were adjustments that will need to be made throughout the end of August; those were usually immaterial. As anticipated, based on previous reports, revenues did very well with many coming in over budget. The anticipated addition to unrestricted fund balance was over \$13M. The most profound savings were related to personnel costs; it was the largest sector of the budget when it comes to expenditures. Staff

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does budget for all positions to be filled, but also budgets for some vacancy and attrition savings. For this past year, they budgeted 98% of a full slate; the actual expenditures came in at 94%. That difference created about \$2.4M in personnel cost and benefit savings related to that; those savings went to fund balance.

Under revenues, casino revenues were budgeted at \$15M and actual revenues came in just under \$21M; this added \$5.7M of excess revenue to the fund balance. When staff developed the Fiscal 24 budget, interest rates were around 2.5%, and the Federal Reserve did several increases to interest rates throughout Fiscal 24. Currently, the City was earning 4% to 5% off investments, as they did during all of Fiscal 2024. This resulted in a budget of \$3.5M and actual interest revenue of \$5.3M for last year, producing \$1.8M over expected results that went to fund balance. Sales tax, as mentioned in the past, was budgeted for FY24 at \$11.9M, actual results were \$13.1M, that variance of \$1.2M also adds to the fund balance. Meals tax was budgeted at \$11.4M, actual results were \$12.4M; adding \$1M to the fund balance. Lodging tax was budgeted at \$2.5M, the City has seen record amounts of stays over the last year; the actual results were \$3.2M, adding \$700K in excess revenues to the fund balance. Business licenses were budgeted at \$7.5M, actual results were \$7.9M, adding \$500K to the fund balance. All together that comes to \$13M being added to fund balance this year.

Mr. Adkins explained the fund balance policy was 20% of budgeted revenues, and the Fiscal Year 2025 budget was about \$164.6M; 20% of that was \$33M. The year started at \$37M, they will add a little more than \$13M to that and will end the year with \$51M in the fund balance; that was 31% of the current budget; this represents a cushion of about \$18M. Mr. Adkins noted this may be the time to seriously discuss increasing the fund balance fiscal policy; he will be following up with the City's financial advisors. The City was currently rated AA-, and he wanted to see policies for AA, AA+ and AAA cities in the Commonwealth to see how Danville's fund balance policy compares to theirs. Mr. Adkins noted these results do not impact the current year's budget. When the current Fiscal 25 budget was prepared, they looked at actual results as they were coming in, and fine-tuned as they developed the budget. As they find their correct balance between maybe increasing the fund balance policy and how much buffer was really needed, it may provide Council with the option of using some fund balance during the year if a special project or special need arose, as a one-time funding option. Mr. Adkins noted the auditors will be showing up in a few weeks to review the City's work.

Mayor Jones recognized Dr. Angela Hairston, Superintendent of Danville Public Schools, who addressed Council about a recent press release from the Governor showing recovery in education across the state, post COVID. Two city schools were past state average in SOLs with Galileo at 90 and 94% passing rates, along with Forest Hills exceeding at math, reading, and science state pass rates. Significant gains were seen at George Washington, Westwood, Bonner, Schoolfield, and technology gains at Park Avenue. Accreditation results come out in September, and they know those will affect the accreditation rates in a positive way. Dr. Hairston thanked Council for their encouragement, support, and investment in education along with their constant reminder that students matter.

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION OF OFFICIAL INTENT TO REIMBURSE EXPENDITURES WITH PROCEEDS OF A BORROWING

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-08.14

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A RESOLUTION OF OFFICIAL INTENT TO REIMBURSE EXPENDITURES WITH PROCEEDS OF A BORROWING.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORT OF THE WILLIAMS COMPANY SOUTHEAST SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT NATURAL GAS PROJECT

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-08.15

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE WILLIAMS COMPANY'S (WILLIAMS) PROPOSED EFFORTS TO CONSTRUCT THE SOUTHEAST SUPPLY ENHANCEMENT (SSE) PROJECT IN THE DANVILLE-PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY REGION.

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 (0)

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE DANVILLE-PITTSYLVANIA COMMUNITY SERVICES PERFORMANCE CONTRACT

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-08.16

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 PERFORMANCE CONTRACT FOR DANVILLE-PITTSYLVANIA COMMUNITY SERVICES.

The Motion was **seconded** by Vice Mayor Miller and carried by the following vote:

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

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE IDA'S APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION'S SOUTHERN VIRGINIA PROGRAM

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

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RESOLUTION NO. 2024-08.17

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA'S APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION'S SOUTHERN VIRGINIA PROGRAM AND MATCHING SAID GRANT REQUEST.

The Motion was **seconded** by Council Member Buckner and carried by 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 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR A DCJS GRANT FOR THE OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-08.09

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUE FROM VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES – FISCAL YEAR 2025 FIREARM VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION GRANT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$142,000 AND APPROPRIATING THE SAME.

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

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR A VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION GRANT FOR WHITE MILL DAM REMOVAL

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-08.10

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUE FROM VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION - DAM SAFETY, FLOOD PREVENTION AND PROTECTION ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$250,000 AND A LOCAL SHARE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$250,000 FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$500,000 AND APPROPRIATING THE SAME.

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

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR A DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE JAG GRANT TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT SHIELDS

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-08.11

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUE FROM VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES – FISCAL YEAR 2024 BYRNE/JAG LAW ENFORCEMENT EQUIPMENT GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,000 AND A LOCAL SHARE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,000 FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$16,000 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 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR A DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER GRANT

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-08.12

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUE FROM VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES – FISCAL YEAR 2025 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER GRANT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$103,415 AND A LOCAL SHARE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$32,855 FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$136,270 AND APPROPRIATING SAME.

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

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Cherie Tamson, 528 S. Woodberry Avenue, who handed out information to Council related to tax money that was being distributed to the Danville Area Humane Society, including a letter of support sent to DAHS from Best Friends. Ms. Tamson pointed out items that were free versus those that were not and questioned if tax dollars paid for those items.

Mayor Jones recognized Katie Fine, 419 Live Oak Street, Kyle, TX, senior campaign strategist for Best Friends Animal Society and Danville Deserves Better campaign, who spoke to Council about programmatic resources available to help assist the shelter. She reviewed the letter of support offering assistance to the shelter; the assistance in that letter still stands. Ms. Fine discussed adoption, spay/neuter, and fostering programs.

Mayor Jones recognized Deborah Dix, 433 Downing Drive, Danville, who addressed Council about the contract with the Danville Humane Society and the 83% failure rate of the shelter. Ms. Dix stated the Dan River has PFAS, which was a forever chemical, and also spoke about radon gas and the importance of monitoring those levels.

Mayor Jones recognized Dr. Laura Luffman, Veterinarian at Animal Medical Center, previous board member at DAHS, and Shelter Veterinarian of the Danville Animal Humane Society, who spoke to Council about the services she provides to DAHS, and the work that was done at the

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shelter. Dr. Luffman noted the biggest problem was people not spaying or neutering their animals. The DAHS has offered free spay and neutering in the past, but citizens do not take advantage of it; the goal should be to stop the overall population of unwanted pets.

Mayor Jones recognized Claudette Robinson, 223 Riverview Drive, attorney for DAHS, who spoke to Council about the credibility of Paulette Dean and how she was being villainized by the Best Friends Animal Society. Ms. Dean was a true public servant who was on call 24/7 to respond to law enforcement, and she was being villainized for a policy that was the smart policy. Ms. Robinson reviewed examples of the shelter caring for pets while the owners were going through issues like mental health, domestic violence, and prison time.

Mayor Jones stated that he has asked the City Manager, City Attorney, and the Public Information Officer to work with him to draw up something regarding bullying. Mayor Jones thanked those who came to speak this evening and stated this was a society where people can agree to disagree; what has taken place in this community was very unfortunate. Everyone has a right to his or her opinion but when it gets to the point of attacking a person's character or threats to individuals, that was something they don't do in Danville. Mayor Jones noted everyone cares about the animals and so does Council, and encouraged citizens to agree to disagree, not to attack the character of staff. Mayor Jones stated if citizens love the animals so much, try loving one another the same way.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking thanked the Mayor for his comments.

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

City Clerk Susan DeMasi wished Council Member Saunders a happy birthday.

Vice Mayor Miller wished happy birthday to Council Member Saunders and congratulated the schools on the new test scores.

Council Member Saunders stated he appreciated people who expressed their ideas. Mr. Saunders thanked Council for what they were doing in the city, they were doing a lot, noted his appreciation of the City Manager for managing the city well, and thanked the citizens for coming and speaking, Council was listening.

Council Member Vogler wished Council Member Saunders a happy birthday, thanked everyone in chambers tonight, and those who came up to the podium to speak. This was a very emotional and passionate issue that has a variance in opinions regarding the best path forward. As leaders, they hear all the feedback and information from everyone and try to do their best to make an informed decision. Mr. Vogler congratulated Galileo and Forest Hills for their achievements, and commented on activities going on in the community.

Council Member Whittle stated that he believed there was a spot in the middle that everyone can work from and the more information that was available, the more informed decisions can be made. Mr. Whittle thanked everyone who came out and spoke tonight. The school system was moving in the right direction and thanked the superintendent and school board for that.

Council Member Buckner thanked the Mayor for his earlier comments on bullying. Mr. Buckner noted there will be an event held at the Danville Museum for Fine Art entitled Double Exposure:

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Photographers Emmet Gowin and Glen Scarboro, starting September 6 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm; the exhibit will be open until November 1.

Council Member Campbell thanked the Mayor for what he said, they have a great city and a great community. Rev Campbell wished Mr. Saunders a happy birthday, and congratulated Dr. Hairston and her team for the increase in accreditation. Rev Campbell wished everyone a safe and enjoyable Labor Day.

Council Member Hood wished Council Member Saunders a happy birthday, and noted it was great to see an uptick in DPS test scores.

Council Member Mayo wished Council Member Saunders a happy birthday, thanked the Mayor for what he said and thanked the citizens for coming out tonight; Council listens and hears their concerns.

Mayor Jones wished Council Member Saunders a happy birthday, and thanked Dr. Hairston on behalf of Council for the established partnership between Council and DPS.

ADJOURNED: 8:06 p.m.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK