

November 7, 2024

The Regular November meeting of the Danville City Council was held on November 7, 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, Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry P. Mayo, Vice Mayor Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (8). L.G. "Larry" Campbell, Jr. was absent (1). *Mr. Whittle entered the meeting at 7:02 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 James B. Buckner gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Proclamation: Shop Small, Shop Local Business Month
Presented to: Diana Schwartz, River District Association

Diana Schwartz thanked Council for the recognition to bring awareness of the importance of supporting the local small business community, particularly as the holiday season begins. Ms. Schwartz issued a challenge for everyone to start their Christmas shopping by shopping small local businesses this holiday season. Amy Pruitt, owner of Happy Little Fox Toy Shop at 321 Lynn Street, noted she specializes in eco-friendly toys sourced from all over the world, including sensory and unique toys not found anywhere else. Susan Moss, co-owner of Moss Mountain Outfitters at 326 Main Street, Suite 102 stated they carry lots of comfort wear, outdoor wear and equipment for everyone's outdoor needs. Catherine Carter, owner of the Dog-Eared Book Store at 525 Main Street, stated they sell a variety of new, used, and children's books, as well as events. Alfreita Bennett noted she provides real estate and property management services for her clients. Council thanked them all for attending tonight.

Presentation: Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services Annual Report
Presented by: Lori Eanes-Brooks, Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services Board

Ms. Eanes-Brooks presented the DPCS Annual Report covering activities of the agency between July 4, 2023, and June 30, 2024, showcasing the remarkable progress and achievements of those connected to DPCS. Ms. Eanes-Brooks noted the yearly report contains stories about bringing wellness to the community, and on page four, outlined the eight dimensions of wellness. Ms. Eanes-Brooks reviewed several of the personal client stories highlighting how those eight dimensions of wellness helped families, and thanked Danville City Council and the Pittsylvania Board of Supervisors for their vision on creating DPCS. Adrian Watlington and Jim Bebeau thanked Council for their support and Council Members thanked them for their amazing work.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Buckner and **second** by Council Member Mayo, the Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on October 1, 2024, were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

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NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF A SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION FILED BY LIGHTSHIFT ENERGY TO ALLOW A PUBLIC UTILITIES FACILITY AT 900 MOUNT CROSS ROAD

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding a Special Use Permit. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on October 24, 2024, and October 31, 2024.

Mayor Jones recognized Ricky Elder, 1201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA, who noted he was the director of development for the company; they were long-term owner/operators of battery energy storage projects. Mr. Elder noted they already have one facility in the City and were there for a second project. Mr. Elder thanked Council for their consideration of this application and was available for any questions Council may have.

No one further desired to be heard and the public hearing was closed.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11.01

AN ORDINANCE GRANTING SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION PZ24-00482, FILED BY LIGHTSHIFT ENERGY, REQUESTING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A PUBLIC UTILITIES FACILITY AT PARCEL 72885 (900 MT CROSS ROAD) IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 3.M, SECTION C., ITEM 13.

The Motion was **seconded** by Vice Mayor Miller.

Council Member Whittle asked how this was going to help the meter payer in Danville and will they sell to PJM. Mr. Elder stated that the facility was designed to be a peak shaver, it will be charged at various points in time throughout the year and discharged in such a way that it will lower the overall peak demand on the Danville Utilities infrastructure grid. The peak demand savings will flow back to the customer; they were working only with Danville Utilities on this project so they will be the beneficiary of the peak shaving. Vice Mayor Miller discussed how peak rates were charged and peak shaving helps to supply power during those peak periods to help lower utility rates. Council Member Vogler asked Jason Grey, Director of Utilities, what this meant for individuals' bills, and Mr. Grey explained these battery projects prevent the City from being committed to the grid for any kind of energy demand. The demand portion cost goes up 10% to 15% every year, that was what the City was trying to curtail by using peak shavers. Council Member Whittle asked if the City leased the batteries on Industrial Boulevard and Mr. Grey stated the City has a capacity rate, a rate to use them during peak shaving times. Lightshift owns the battery facility and keeps up any maintenance the batteries.

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

VOTE:	8-0-1
AYE:	Buckner, Hood, Jones, Mayo, Miller, Saunders, Vogler, and Whittle (8)
NAY:	Campbell (1)

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CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST FOR TAX EXEMPT STATUS BY PRESENT HELP MINISTRIES

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding a Request for Tax Exempt Status. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on October 31, 2024.

Mayor Jones recognized Alfreita Bennett, applicant, who stated that several properties were donated and some were purchased to help members of the community. They were a 501(c)(3) and asked that they be exempt from real estate taxes.

No one further desired to be heard, the public hearing was closed.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11.02

AN ORDINANCE TO DESIGNATE PRESENT HELP MINISTRIES AS BEING EXEMPT FROM LOCAL REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXATION.

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

Council Member Saunders thanked Ms. Bennett for the services she provided for the community. Council Member Vogler invited Ms. Bennett to speak about the work that she does. Ms. Bennett noted it was hard and steady work, all of their members were volunteers, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and no one was paid. They have homes for the homeless, battered women and children, total care residents, and sexual assault and abuse victims. The ministry covers Halifax County, Pittsylvania County, Danville and the overflow from Caswell County. Everyone can stay up to 60 days as long as they abide by the rules. They were looking to build permanent housing including rental housing for people who can afford those accommodations; they also help those children who have been permanently expelled from school. Council Members thanked her for all the work they do.

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

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Hood, Jones, Mayo, Miller,
Saunders, Vogler, and Whittle (8)
NAY: Campbell (1)

CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS TO THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding the Issuance of Bonds. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on October 22, 2024, and October 29, 2024. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11.03

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AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, IN THE MAXIMUM AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF \$16,000,000 TO FINANCE THE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, AND EQUIPPING OF VARIOUS CAPITAL PROJECTS.

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

CONSIDERATION OF A PROPOSED BATTERY STORAGE SYSTEM ON MOUNT CROSS ROAD

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-11.01

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR 12 MEGAWATTS OF BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE CAPACITY TO BE CONSTRUCTED WITHIN THE DANVILLE UTILITIES SERVICE TERRITORY.

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

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Hood, Jones, Mayo, Miller,
Saunders, Vogler, and Whittle (8)
NAY: Campbell (1)

Director of Utilities, Jason Grey, explained that Utilities was able to secure a \$750,000 grant and \$750,000 loan for this project, and recognized the Tobacco Commission for their support of this project.

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LEAD SERVICE LINE INVENTORY GRANTS

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11.04

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR TWO (2) VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GRANTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$250,000 EACH TO ASSIST WITH THE CITY'S LEAD SERVICE LINE INVENTORY EFFORTS AS DIRECTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY FOR TOTAL FUNDING OF \$500,000 AND APPROPRIATING THE SAME.

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

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Tamara Malone, parent and legal guardian of Tate Malone, who asked where individuals with disabilities and special needs can go once they outgrow pediatric services. There were no facilities in Danville that were equipped to handle these individuals. Healthcare

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facilities also needed to be updated with proper equipment. Mayor Jones asked that Ms. Malone take a card for the City Manager's Office and contact them.

Mayor Jones recognized Reverend Brud Perry who addressed Council about putting a stoplight off 58 in the Dan Hills community. Rev Perry spoke about accidents that have happened on both 58E and 58W near Jones Chapel Church, and presented a petition signed by eighty-four residents for a stoplight. Council Member Saunders stated that he appreciated Rev. Perry coming and expressing concern for the neighborhood, and asked the City Manager to look into this to see what can be done about putting a stoplight up. Council Member Buckner asked the City Manager to explain the process, and Mr. Larking stated that typically it had to be studied, and once a study was completed it will be determined how to best make it safe for all types of vehicles.

Mayor Jones recognized Lauren Cressale, who informed Council that the Three Sisters Marathon was being planned in Danville for September 2025. This will include a marathon, a half-marathon, and 5K event. The kickoff will be September 5, 2025 with the 5K Fun Run that will start and finish at Caesar's casino; Saturday, September 6, 2025 at 7:00 a.m. will start that elite runners marathon. Ms. Cressale noted the group recently obtained certification as a Boston Marathon qualifier. They were expecting quite an economic impact as people come in from all across the United States for this event. Steve Scott stated they asked residents for input on the name, and one day while running, he noticed the three smokestacks at the former Dan River Mills location. He went online and read the story about the smokestacks, asked the other members about the name and it stuck. Anyone interested in signing up can do so December 1, 2024 on the website. Mr. Larking thanked City Council for sponsorships that were given to Visit SoSi for events like this one.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

Vice Mayor Miller noted the marathon coming to Danville was awesome and in the news today they reported on Caesars' opening on December 12, 2024, with four restaurants, spas, shows and entertainment. Dr. Miller congratulated all the winners of the election, this was a tough year to run for Council, but Council went out and did their job; it was a great election.

Council Member Saunders also congratulated those who were elected as well as the candidates that also ran for Council, and told those who ran that he hoped they will do it again. Mr. Saunders thanked the voters who voted for him, all the candidates that ran, and the citizens of the City, Council, the City Manager, Deputy City Manager, all city employees, and the Mayor for the excellent job that they were doing in the City.

Council Member Vogler thanked all those in chambers tonight and those watching at home. Mr. Vogler thanked everyone who voted, especially the 8,980 who put their faith in him and his campaign; he was grateful and thankful to each and every one of them. Special thanks to his family and everyone who helped with the campaign; especially his mom who went above and beyond. Mr. Vogler recognized Casey Cunningham and her new appointment to the DPS school board, the other candidates who were elected to the School Board, and thanked all the candidates that participated in the Council race.

Council Member Whittle thanked the 7,311 individuals who he came across during the campaign, thanked everyone who came out and helped, and thanked Public Works for their help.

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Council Member Buckner congratulated the elected Council members, and the school board members. Mr. Buckner recognized the SoSi brand ambassadors in the audience, and reminded citizens of the Brightview Brew Fest Saturday at the Community Market from 11 am to 5:30 pm.

Council Member Hood congratulated all those who ran in the Council race, and for school board. Mr. Hood reminded citizens the Veteran's Day parade will be held this Sunday, November 10 at 2:30 pm., spoke about a program helping to get youth involved with veterans, and thanked all veterans here tonight.

Council Member Mayo congratulated all winners of the elections, and thanked family and friends who have helped along the campaign trail; it was good to be back and handling the business of the city. Mr. Mayo reminded citizens of the upcoming Job and Resource Fair being held November 14 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Community Market; there will be 100 vendors, and 1,506 jobs in the door for anyone who was looking for a job.

Mayor Jones noted Dr. Jerry Wallace was leaving DCC, and they salute him for all the great work he has done. With the holidays coming up, if any organization was looking for someone to donate to, the Danville Police Department was collecting new toys for their annual toy drive. To those from RDA and the marathon team, Mayor Jones thanked them for what they were doing to invest back into the Danville community, and thanked everyone who ran for City Council and School Board positions with visions of improving the City and helping citizens.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 pm.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK