

November 19, 2024

The Second Regular November meeting of the Danville City Council was held on November 19, 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 P. 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 J. Lee Vogler, Jr., gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Budget Items on the Consent Agenda. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on October 8, 2024. 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 Regular Council Meeting held on October 15, 2024. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Amending the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for Virginia Department of Health Lead Service Line Inventory Grants.

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.

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

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

APPOINTMENTS

Vice Mayor Miller **moved** for adoption of the following appointment resolutions:

Resolution No. 2024-11.02 - A Resolution Reappointing T. Neal Morris to the Industrial Development Authority.

Resolution No. 2024-11.03 - A Resolution Reappointing Russell Reynolds to the Industrial Development Authority.

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

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

OLD BUSINESS

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

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11.03

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.

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

Council Member Campbell asked the City Manager to explain to citizens why this item was so important, and City Manager Ken Larking explained the City has traditionally as part of its budget process, used a variety of ways to fund things including the issuance of bonds. In this case, the City was using its bond authority to pay for certain projects that would allow the repayment to happen over time.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2024

Chief Financial Officer Michael Adkins gave a brief overview of the General Fund Financials as of October 31, 2024, which was four months into the fiscal year, 1/3 or 33% of the year. Revenues to date were \$36.8M which was an increase of \$2.4M over last year. That increase came from basically three different areas; one was state funding for Constitutional Offices. As those budgets increase, the State awards compensation increases for the support of those operations. Collection of delinquent real estate and personal property taxes were doing very well; in the first four months they were about \$300,000 over last year and already at 40% of budget. Local consumer driven taxes were about \$900,000 of the increase. The City has received \$4.8M in sales tax at this point, 36.5% of budget and about 3% ahead of budget, an increase of \$563,000. Meals tax was at \$4.2M, 35% of budget, running about 2% ahead of budget and an increase of \$165,000 over last year. Business licenses were at \$717,000 or 9% of budget but most of

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business license revenue comes in March; there were some start-up companies or those that were paying quarterly, that was an increase of \$150,000 over last year. For the same four-month period last year, the City had issued 212 business licenses and as of this October, the City had issued 266; this was a growth of 54 business licenses in the first four months. Lodging tax was \$1.2M, that was 34.6% of budget, running slightly ahead, and an increase of \$36,000, however, average stays still increased. Last year at this time, the City had about 22,200 average stays per month; for this past four months, the City was at 22,440 stays per month with an increase there. All other revenue categories in the General Fund were operating as expected. On the expenditure side, Departmental Spending was at 31% of budget, running a couple percentage points behind, which was typical and what the City likes to see. Any increase they see over last year was expected and part of the budget for this year. For Non-Departmental expenses, the main one they look at was Group Health insurance, and for the first four months that was tracking well with budget. Mr. Adkins noted he had no concerns about the City's General Fund Revenues or Expenditures at this point. Next month, he should be able to comment on the collection of real estate and personal property taxes as those bills were due December 5th. The Fiscal Year 2024 Audit was wrapping up and should be finished in the next three to four weeks; he will have those reports from the auditors toward the end of the calendar year or right after the first of the year.

Council Member Vogler asked about the lodging tax revenue; in previous years, the region had the Blue Ridge Rock Festival that filled almost every hotel, but that did not happen this year. Did that have an impact or not. Mr. Adkins noted they do see a little bit of a downturn during the holidays, perhaps less business travel during that time, and would not be surprised to see a little dip from what they were seeing right now, but probably still more than last year.

Vice Mayor Miller asked about the 1500 people working on Caesars, and assumed they were staying in local hotels and eating in local restaurants; a lot of those people will be leaving. On the other hand Caesars told the City once they open, there will be several thousands more people coming in, did Mr. Adkins expect any downturn. Mr. Adkins noted it will be a tradeoff; they will be trading construction individuals for tourism. The City has other construction projects that were ongoing and some that were in various stages so hopefully the City will not see an effect of that.

CONSIDERATION OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-11.04

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA ENDORSING A FISCAL YEAR 2026 VIRGINIA HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION.

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)

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CONSIDERATION OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-11.05

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA ENDORSING A FISCAL YEAR 2026 APPLICATION FOR THE STATE OF GOOD REPAIR PRIMARY EXTENSIONS PROGRAM.

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 VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECT FUNDING APPLICATION

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-11.06

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA ENDORSING A FISCAL YEAR 2026 APPLICATION FOR THE STATE OF GOOD REPAIR LOCALLY OWNED BRIDGES PROGRAM.

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 GRANTING TAX-EXEMPT STATUS TO GOD'S PIT CREW

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding tax exempt status to God's Pit Crew. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on November 12, 2024. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11.05

AN ORDINANCE TO DESIGNATE GOD'S PIT CREW AS BEING EXEMPT FROM LOCAL REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY TAXATION.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-11.07

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 Buckner 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 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY ANTICIPATING THE PROCEEDS FROM THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2024-11.06

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 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.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Sheryl Tucker, 163 Graymont Place, Danville, addressed Council regarding Section 15 of Highland Burial Park being allowed to have high markers instead of the flat markers that the current ordinance from 1983 allows. She stated that at the time the plots were purchased, and her mother was buried, the families were not told that only flat markers could be placed. Mayor Jones instructed her to follow up with the City Manager's Office.

Edward Crews, 127 Kittyhawk Drive, addressed Council about a storage building on his property and being told it was on school board property. He was looking to see what options were available for him to keep his building. He was given 90 days to get a surveyor to perform a survey and map out the property. The surveyor showed that the building was within his property line. He was

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asking to be reimbursed for the \$2,000 that he paid. Mayor Jones stated that the school board would be voting on this issue and will let Council know their decision.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

City Manager Ken Larking asked Director of Utilities, Jason Grey to come up and explain to citizens about the letters that went out regarding lead being in service lines. Mr. Grey explained those letters were required by the EPA to let citizens know their lines could possibly contain lead. These lines were within the property owner's responsibility and not the City's. Over 30 years ago, the City went through and removed City owned lines that could or did contain lead. Mr. Grey stated the water was safe for use and consumption. Part of the water treatment process was anticipating different types of pipes being used in homes; certain tests were done and precautions were taken to help ensure that drinking water standards were surpassed.

City Attorney Clarke Whitfield wished everyone a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving, congratulated the G.W. Eagles for their win and encouraged everyone to go out and support the Eagles.

Council Member Vogler thanked everyone for being in chambers tonight and those watching on TV; it was an incredible time to be in Danville right now. The Harville-Saunders Parkway was an awesome event; there was no other person more deserving of that recognition. Mr. Vogler spoke about the new battery storage facility and the economic impact that will have on the region.

Council Member Whittle stated the past events were fantastic and congratulated Mr. Saunders, it was well deserved, he was glad to celebrate that with him, and the great news that followed. God's Final Call and Warning will be doing a giveaway on Sunday, November 24 from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at 402 Wilson Street; this was a fantastic ministry.

Council Member Buckner congratulated Mr. Saunders and the Harville family for their recognition and thanked them for the many years of hard work and dedication they put into making the Megasite a reality. Mr. Buckner reminded everyone about the Winter Energy Efficient seminar Thursday, November 21 at 5:30 pm at the Pepsi Building; for more information contact Utilities at 857-4381. Mr. Buckner reminded citizens to check on their friends and neighbors to make sure they were okay, and to shop locally every chance they get because every dollar spent locally goes back into the community.

Council Member Campbell wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, to enjoy their family and time spent with them. Rev Campbell noted there have been a string of shootings and murders that have happened in the community and surrounding areas; it was disturbing and being honest, it was all young black men. Rev Campbell noted something was wrong; they have an issue here. He has spoken to the chief of police and the City Attorney's office about some funds that he has and was giving to the Police Department to start a gun buyback program. Danville was better than this; they cannot turn their heads, they need to be more proactive to have a better quality of life.

Council Member Hood stated he stands with Council Member Campbell and that self-knowledge will help significantly. The Governor's Housing Conference was this past weekend in Virginia Beach and they acknowledged Danville and the things happening here; the final night they showcased Danville as being a model small city. Congratulations to Council Member Saunders and the Harville family for their accomplishments and congratulations to Kelly Hood for Danville

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Fashion Week Season 9. Mr. Hood thanked Pastor Ferrell for everything his ministry does to help citizens of Danville, it was beyond appreciated.

Council Member Mayo thanked all the visitors for coming out and speaking tonight and those in attendance, and thanked Council Member Campbell for bringing up the subject of shooting; there needs to be a better way to handle these situations and educate the young people on the consequences of their actions when using a firearm. Mr. Mayo congratulated Mr. Saunders and the Harville family for their contributions to the community. The job resource fair was a great success, everyone had a great time including the businesses that were there, and congratulated Dr. Jerry Wallace on the next chapter of his life, he will be missed at DCC, but he was doing great things.

Vice Mayor Miller commented on how amazing the Job and Resource Fair was for the City and the residents. Last week was exhausting but the highlight was seeing Mr. Saunders and Coy Harville honored at the connector road naming at Berry Hill. Dr. Miller commented on Reverend Cecil Bridgeforth and the great work he has done, and continued to do, advocating for citizens in the community, and stated that Dr. Joyce Glaise passed away on Saturday; she was a well-known civil rights activist and icon in the community.

Council Member Saunders commented on the life of Dr. Glaise and the many contributions she made to the community, and recognized Joyce Kelly for all that she does. Mr. Saunders thanked everyone in Danville, Pittsylvania County, and others for the investment and jobs that were announced at the Berry Hill site and thanked everyone for the honor of having the Harville-Saunders Parkway.

Mayor Jones wished everyone a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving and reminded citizens to spend time with their families and loved ones.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 pm.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK