

February 18, 2025

The Second February meeting of the Danville City Council was held on February 18, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. The following Council Members were present: Vice Mayor James B. Buckner, L.G. "Larry" Campbell, Jr., Bryant Hood, Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry P. Mayo, Dr. 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.

City Manager Ken Larking stated that one of the City's police officers was shot yesterday, but was pleased to report that the officer was released from the hospital in Roanoke this afternoon. She was escorted back home to Danville by Virginia State Police and the Danville Police Department. The officer was well on her way to recovering from the physical injuries related to this incident. The City will continue to provide support for all their officers as they deal with the psychological trauma of what occurred. The City was incredibly proud of the courage the officer displayed while under fire; she displayed true heroism and they were thankful to the other officers that responded to secure the scene and to provide care. The City of Danville and the Danville Police Department were grateful to Carilion Health System, and the Roanoke Police Department for the support of the officer even before her arrival. They also thank all the regional law enforcement departments who supported the City officers. They were thankful for the support and well wishes received from the community and Mr. Larking expressed his appreciation to City Council for making sure their employees have the tools and training necessary to protect themselves and the public they serve.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Gary P. Miller gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Vice Mayor Buckner and **second** by Council Member Mayo, the Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on January 21, 2025, were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS AS OF JANUARY 31, 2025

Chief Financial Officer, Michael Adkins, gave a brief overview of the General Fund Financials as of January 31, 2025, which marks 58% of the current fiscal year complete. Total revenues received through January were \$84.5M, about 52% of the budget and very comparable to prior years. Property taxes were at 50% of budget and the next billing cycle will occur in May and June. They will be watching Personal Property tax this spring with the combination of depreciation of car values and the rate reduction, which became effective January 1st. Local taxes were at 95%, as a whole, of the budget, and the only thing keeping the City below 58% were business licenses that were typically collected in March of every year; there were some businesses that do qualify, and prefer to pay quarterly. Sales tax received was 64% of the budget, which was about \$685,000, ahead of where they would be if the City were meeting budget. If the trend continues over the remaining five months of this fiscal year, that will project to about \$1M over budget for Sales tax this year. Last week, the City received their sales tax in February for December retail

February 18, 2025

which was \$1.3M; not quite the highest, but the second highest they have received in one month, just \$45,000 less than last year at this time. Meals tax was outperforming budget, currently at 62% and about \$408,000 ahead of where they would be if the City were meeting budget. If they forecast that for the remaining months of the year, they should see a \$700,000 surplus on that revenue line item. For Lodging tax, the dollar amounts were not quite as large as sales and meals, but was also operating at about 60% of the budget. That was only 39% ahead of where the City would be if they were meeting budget, and forecasting out to the end of the year, about \$67,000 extra. The City budgeted \$25M for the current fiscal year for Casino revenues. In order to meet that budget for this year, they would need in the last five months of the fiscal year for the Casino to generate about \$22.5M of net gaming revenue each month. Based on their December and January performances, that goal should be attained, and the City should have some surplus revenues from the Casino that they did not budget for. On the Expenditure side, Departmental spending was well within budgeted levels at about 55% of the budget. Group health was about 52% of the budget; if that trend continues, it looks like a good year for low utilization. The only item that was running ahead of budget, and it was timing, was Transfers to the Public Schools; a lot of those funds were provided that will be reimbursed by federal and state grants in the months to come. Fund balance ended last year at \$51M, this current year's budget planned on using about \$800,000 of that for capital items. Also, Council approved a couple of appropriations from Fund Balance amounting to \$7.6M. If the City met budget completely, the unassigned fund balance would be between \$42M and \$43M at the end of this year; the City's minimum is \$41M. With revenues running ahead of budget, that will help add some cushion to that minimum. As the City goes into next year's budget, they budget the additional revenue from sales tax, meals tax and the casino, and as they budget more revenues, that minimum fund balance will increase as well. Mr. Adkins noted he anticipated next year's minimum fund balance to be anywhere between \$43M and \$45M. Council Member Campbell asked if there has been a difference in income from Caesars casino revenues from before the casino opened until now, and Mr. Adkins noted there was. Prior to the full casino opening, the City saw about \$19M in net gaming revenues at that location, per month. December and January were both higher at \$28M. The City receives 6% of that from state tax and 2.5% as a direct payment. The City's payment from the state and Caesars combined averages about \$1.5M to \$1.7M per month right now.

CONSIDERATION OF AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REORDAINING CHAPTER 35, ENTITLED "STREETS AND SIDEWALKS" OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, 1986, AS AMENDED

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Repealing and Reordaining Chapter 35 of the Danville City Code. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on February 11, 2025. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

Vice Mayor Buckner **moved** for adoption of an Ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02.03

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REORDAINING IN ITS ENTIRETY CHAPTER 35, ENTITLED "STREETS AND SIDEWALKS", OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, 1986, AS AMENDED, AND REPEALING IN THEIR ENTIRETY CHAPTER 7, ENTITLED "BICYCLES", CHAPTER 21, ENTITLED "MOTOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC", AND CHAPTER 31, ENTITLED "RAILROADS", OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, 1986, AS AMENDED.

February 18, 2025

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

Council Member Vogler asked if there would be police enforcement used for people parking illegally in handicapped parking spaces, and Assistant City Attorney Ryan Dodson stated currently under state law, there was a minimum the City has to charge for illegally parking in a handicapped spot, but it can go higher; this would increase that to the maximum. It would also adopt certain practices allowed under state law that allow, under certain circumstances, private security or private property owners to enforce on commercial lots. They could issue a citation without having to get the police involved; the goal would be better enforcement. Mr. Vogler stated one of the other things included was to establish some speed limits for motor scooters, does this just give the City the ability to do these things or were they moving forward with this. Mr. Dodson noted in the case of motor scooters, the City was allowed to set a speed limit of 15 mph which was what the state said. The City had not adopted that yet; this item was passing an enabling ordinance so it can be enforced. Mr. Vogler questioned if the City would put up signs and Mr. Dodson noted there were speed limits in state statute for some of these and the City doesn't need to have signs for everything. If they notice areas where there were concentrations of scooters, they could put up signage if it was requested.

Council Member Whittle asked if someone has a commercial lot and put up a sign that says no parking, someone parks, they can tow people off; can they put a ticket on it and Mr. Dodson explained there was a process established that was described in the state law, and it would go through the local police to register as a volunteer enforcer on your own property. There were some requirements to do that. This was largely just consolidating all the enforcement language to the beginning of the chapter; nothing was being added, the language was just being updated to adopt the state law language. Mr. Vogler voiced his concern for the City Manager to be able to designate certain areas as one-way streets or parking lots, since that seems to be something that elected officials, and the citizens should have a voice in. If everything was being voted on as a blanket item, then he will be voting no. Council Member Saunders asked if the City was currently in compliance with these items, and Mr. Dodson noted that state law always trumps local laws and therefore the City was always in compliance. This ordinance will just clean up the language and bring the code up to what the state requires.

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

VOTE: 6-3
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones,
Mayo, and Saunders (6)
NAY: Miller, Vogler, and Whittle (3)

CONSIDERATION OF ACCEPTING PARCEL #60451 ON PARK AVENUE FROM THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FOR STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Vice Mayor Buckner **moved** for adoption of a Resolution entitled:

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-02.14

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE ACCEPTANCE OF REAL PROPERTY IDENTIFIED AS PARCEL #60451 LOCATED ON PARK AVENUE FROM THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO FACILITATE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS.

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

February 18, 2025

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

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING CHAPTER 37 OF THE DANVILLE CITY CODE

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02.04

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND REORDAINING CHAPTER 37, ENTITLED "TAXATION" ARTICLE XI, ENTITLED "PARTIAL EXEMPTION OF REAL ESTATE TAXES FOR CERTAIN REAL ESTATE," TO ADD A NEW SECTION 37-169.1 ENTITLED, "MULTIFAMILY/COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES", TO THE CODE OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA, 1986, AS AMENDED.

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

Council Member Vogler noted this item furthers the tax-exempt program that was implemented over the last few years, it would allow current or former commercial properties to be transitioned into residential and Mr. Larking noted historic properties. Mr. Vogler noted he liked that, but the conditions state the existing structure must be more than fifty years old and located in the Department of Historic Resources approved district or on a state or national register for historic places. Mr. Larking explained that was a current condition that hasn't been changed. Mr. Vogler stated with the substantial housing need, why was the City limiting this to only buildings that were fifty years old; some of the commercial shopping centers that have been sitting empty could be converted. Mr. Larking stated that it has been applied to try to give extra encouragement to very old buildings that have not been utilized in a long time, and in bad shape, to get them converted into residential uses. Starting at this point was a good way to get things going, being more impactful and encourage development in the most necessary areas first; it can be expanded from there. The big change was, instead of just mixed use, the City was adding the option of it being 100% residential. Mr. Vogler stated he would like to have a discussion to look at doing these things city wide or at least instead of fifty years old, just twenty years old.

The **Motion** was 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 REQUEST TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO ADJUST DANVILLE'S LANE MILE INVENTORY

Vice Mayor Buckner **moved** for adoption of a Resolution entitled:

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-02.15

February 18, 2025

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING A REQUEST BY THE CITY OF DANVILLE TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO ADJUST DANVILLE'S LANE MILEAGE INVENTORY.

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 AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR THE RECREATION ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02.05

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$67,738 FOR A RECREATION ENRICHMENT PROGRAM AND THE LOCAL IN-KIND SHARE OF \$260,240 FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$327,978 AND APPROPRIATION OF 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 THE DANVILLE SHERIFF'S OFFICE JAIL-BASED SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT PROGRAM

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02.06

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUE FROM VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES – JAIL BASED SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT GRANT PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$150,000.00 FOR A TOTAL APPROPRIATION OF \$150,000 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 VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PROJECT APPROPRIATIONS

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-02.07

February 18, 2025

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE CITY OF DANVILLE AND TO BE FINANCED ANTICIPATING REVENUES FROM VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,483,772.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

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

Council Member Miller expressed condolences to the Saunders family for the loss of Council Member Saunders' cousin, Thomas Saunders. Dr. Miller wished a happy early birthday to Council Member Hood, and noted the Edmonds Gala last week was a great event. It was amazing to see how many professional athletes have come from the Danville-Pittsylvania County area.

Council Member Saunders noted his cousin Tom Saunders was the president of Virginia American Legions, and Mr. Saunders appreciated all the calls and the condolences. With inclement weather coming this way, Mr. Saunders encouraged citizens to be careful whether walking or driving, and stated he was thankful for everything that was being done and will be done in the City.

Council Member Vogler noted casino revenue was a common question he gets asked about, where was that money being invested, and will there be an area on the City website where citizens can access that information. Mr. Larking noted staff will get it placed on the website as quickly as possible; it was being reviewed to make sure all the information was accurate. Mr. Vogler noted he attended the VLGMA conference and everyone was talking about Danville and the good things that were happening here.

Council Member Whittle noted on the partial tax exemption, it could be inverted that to help keep individuals in their ventures longer. Mr. Whittle expressed his condolences to Mr. Saunders and his family for the loss of his cousin.

Vice Mayor Buckner recognized the Galileo track team, they took first in boys and second in girls in the state Virginia Regional track meet, and spoke about several individuals who took home records. Mr. Buckner thanked everyone that has reached out with kind words and prayers for the Danville Police officer that was shot. Council was thankful for all their first responders and for the work they do to keep everyone safe.

Council Member Campbell commended all the City employees for what they do to keep the city moving forward, and asked everyone to be careful with the weather coming through. Rev Campbell mentioned that he has received several calls from citizens inquiring about placing streetlights on Bonner Avenue, noted his condolences to Council Member Saunders, and thanked everyone for the love that has been shown to his family for the loss of his mother.

Council Member Hood sent out wishes for the speedy recovery of the officer that was shot in the line of duty and thanked all the police officers for keeping the City safe. Mr. Hood noted his condolences to the Saunders family for the loss of Tom Saunders. The Edmonds Gala was excellent and thanked Keisha Cardwell and staff at Brookdale Senior Center for inviting him to come in and answer questions for the residents. Mr. Hood spoke about the 1985 Lady Eagles basketball team and gave a shout out to the team members for the incredible game they played.

February 18, 2025

Council Member Mayo expressed condolences to Council Member Saunders and extended condolences to Council Member Campbell. Mr. Mayo congratulated the boys and girls G.W. basketball teams, and expressed wishes, thoughts, and prayers to everyone at the Danville Police Department.

Mayor Jones thanked everyone for their prayers concerning the police shooting and encouraged everyone to continue to pray for the officers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK