

April 1, 2025

A Regular Work Session of the Danville City Council convened on April 1, 2025, at 7:21 p.m. in City Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. The following Council Members were present were: 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 (8). Vice Mayor James B. Buckner was absent. (1)

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.

WORK SESSION ITEMS

DISCUSSION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET

Mayor Jones noted the City Manager presented Council with a budget, has met with Council members and what the City Manager needed to know was if Council had to vote on the budget tonight, where they all were and if they need another meeting with him.

Council Member Campbell noted he was concerned about Utilities. The City users would get a credit, was that for one year or two and Mr. Larking noted the budget amendment covers the upcoming year; Council would have to do it again the next year. It was an annual cost and the fix was a one-time appropriation. Rev Campbell noted if the budget was presented today, he would vote for it.

Council Member Saunders noted he would like to have a third meeting with the City Manager to speak about the budget. One thing he wanted to talk about a little bit more was education, youth, poverty and the elderly; he wanted to make sure they were doing okay and can afford the services the City provides. Council Member Whittle noted he would like to meet with the City Manager, with Mr. Saunders.

Council Member Miller stated the ten-dollar credits were for City residents only and Mr. Larking noted it was. Dr. Miller asked what the tax increase was added together and Mr. Larking noted for the average customer, the rate increase was \$10; the credit would basically neutralize the increase for customers in the City. Dr. Miller noted he was still not on board with that and he did not need another meeting unless something was changed.

Council Member Vogler noted that he appreciated that staff adjusted to have the credit, and the credit for the City residents only kicks in if the Utility increase was approved, the credit does not happen if the increase does not happen. Mr. Vogler noted what still concerned him about voting for it, looking at how strong everything was and moving up, he thinks the City was in a pretty good position and does not know that they need to be raising utility rates on anyone. Mr. Vogler noted he was not going to vote for a utility increase. Council Member Bryant noted if it was put to a vote today, he would vote for it, but he would also like to meet with the City Manager again.

Mayor Jones noted he agreed with Council Member Campbell, and something that happened to him personally was he had a family house and received a \$589 bill in October, \$549 bill in November, and a \$600 bill in December. Danville Utilities sent a team to the house, they identified things he had not done his due diligence on. The thermostat had never been changed, the heat and air hadn't been checked, and they found a water leak under the house. How many senior citizens and low income people have the same problems. Lately, the City has put up information

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for people with the same situation he had. With the budget, they added Neighbors Helping Neighbors and things to help educate the citizens. Mayor Jones noted if he had to vote for this tonight, he would vote yes. He would like to know where the City would get the \$6M for the budget if the utility rate increase does not pass. Council says they can pull it from Caesars, were they going to do that every year.

In response to Rev Campbell, Mr. Larking noted the City helped 64 houses and Rev Campbell questioned if there was a program to help more. Mr. Larking explained it was what they were proposing to do with the budget amendment which will have a first reading at the next meeting.

Dr. Miller noted at the Utility Commission meeting last week, Mr. Grey pointed out that they sent out over 3,000 letters to people who were using over 3,000 kw more than they should; Utilities will come to their house and let them know what the homeowner needed to do to fix that. If the City uses Caesar money to pay for this, what was the incentive to save power. If they City was going to pay their bill, which was what a lot of citizens want, they won't conserve power.

Mr. Larking noted by April 30th there has to be an introductory budget by Council that was then the one that was voted on. There were usually some adjustments that had to be made, some were presented by Council and some that staff identifies. Mr. Larking noted one major change staff identified was that they had the casino property assessed by a special company that does that sort of thing, and found out that the value of the casino, based on their assessment, was much higher than the value the City had used in the budget. It will bring in an additional \$1.6M of revenue for the real estate tax. In the budget recommendation, he had included an appropriation of about \$1.4M to fund balance, to balance the budget. He would like to propose that the introductory budget replace that use of fund balance with this increase of real estate tax revenue. It helps to make sure that the Fund Balance was healthy; when the City doesn't use their fund balance, it looks good to the credit rating agencies.

Mr. Larking noted they were anticipating some increased revenue from the new parking program downtown; that had not been included in the budget, they wanted to make sure that was in there, and there was funding expenditure for that as well. There was some debt service that had not been accounted for in the General Fund, Wastewater Fund, Gas Fund and Electric Fund. Mr. Larking was asking Council if these changes could be included in the introductory budget that was presented to the public on April 30th.

Mayor Jones questioned Council on adding these items to the agenda and six council members noted they agreed to add these items to the budget.

Mayor Jones noted Rev Campbell's daughter worked in the school system, Mr. Mayo's wife worked in the school system as well as Mr. Vogler, can they vote on the school budget, and Assistant City Attorney Alan Spencer noted for Rev Campbell, he thought the conflict would be if it was a spouse. Mr. Mayo's wife would cause a conflict and Mr. Vogler asked if there was a threshold that had to be cleared, he was only receiving a small stipend. Mr. Spencer noted he did not think there was a threshold, but they would look into it.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Saunders questioned if there was a way staff could let Council know about the success Robert David's program was having; what measured success, what made it successful. How many kids did not get back in trouble, how many were working, how many joined the military. Mayor Jones

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noted he would like Robert's graduates to come to a Council meeting; it would be nice to hear from them on how the program changed their lives.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:57 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK