

July 15, 2025

The Second Regular July meeting of the Danville City Council was held on July 15, 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., Mayor Alonzo L. Jones, Barry Mayo, Dr. Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (8). Bryant Hood was absent. (1). *Mr. Whittle entered the meeting at 7:03 p.m. and Mr. Vogler entered the meeting at 7:05 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 Sherman M. Saunders gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENT AND SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Mayor Jones recognized Christy Harper, Director of Member Engagement with the Danville Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce who noted she oversees the Rev Up program at the Chamber. For the past five years this program has supported both start up and expanding businesses located in the City of Danville, specifically outside of the River District. They have been able to award \$155,000 to twenty businesses with the help of their sponsors. Ms. Harper noted some of the winners were present with them tonight including Royal Sweets & Treats, Redeemed Strength LLC, River City Arcade, Uncle Al's Dining, Sundae School Selfie Studio, Mélange Productions, Hammerhill Computers, Body by K, Historic North Theatre, and Manifest Your Vision Studios. Ms. Harper thanked the Council and their funders for their support of the Chamber. Council Members thanked the Chamber for their work. Mayor Jones recognized the Chair of the Chamber, Anne Moore-Sparks, Director of Economic Development and Tourism, Corrie Bobe, and Economic Development Project Manager Samantha Bagbey.

Mayor Jones asked City Attorney Clarke Whitfield to approach the podium to discuss potentially appointing a council member in the event either Dr. Miller or Mr. Whittle are elected to the General Assembly.

Mr. Whitfield noted as the Mayor explained, City Council was going to have a vacancy and that vacancy will occur in January. Staff has looked ahead at the process that Council has to follow. There were three things that had to be kept in mind: the City Charter, which has just changed, State Law and the City Code. They used those and put together a chart laying out the process; there was also a memo with the law that backs up the chart. Everything that occurs on the chart has to occur within 45 days of the date of the vacancy; the vacancy occurs when a council member resigns. First, the office becomes vacant, and the City Clerk will advertise, and will receive applications and resumes from interested parties that want to be appointed to the position. Council will go through those and decide how many and which people they want to have as finalists for the position. The person who was the latest runner up in the last Council election will automatically be considered a finalist. Council will announce the finalists and will conduct interviews of the finalists in open, public meetings, and will make their final decision by a majority vote of the Council members in an open public meeting. The appointed council member will serve until someone was duly elected and qualified, whether that be through a special election or general election; right now that was scheduled for November of 2026. In response to Mayor Jones, Mr. Whitfield stated this will occur probably around the 2nd or 3rd of January next year. City

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Manager Ken Larking encouraged any interested candidates to take a look at the work the City has been doing over the past few years with regard to PLAN Danville, all the public engagement that has occurred, and know that the community has spoken about what they want to see in Danville for the upcoming ten or twenty years. One of the important things during budget season was to determine what the priorities were for spending and a driving force behind a good portion of the general fund budget was how to spend the casino revenue. The City has been very transparent about how those funds have been used, and has used a publicly driven process with surveys and committee members helping to design the *Investing in Danville* report. All this was on-line, available for anybody to look it.

Rev Campbell stated there won't be nominations, just applications and Mr. Whitfield noted that was correct, they will apply and Council will decide the finalists. Mayor Jones noted Shakeva Frazier was a finalist, as the election runner up. Council Member Vogler noted no decision has been made on anybody; he has heard names, as other Council Members have, who were interested, and some of the names he heard he thinks will be great council members, but that does not mean a final decision has been made. This process was different than Council used five years ago when they appointed Sam Kushner to fill Mr. Tomer's spot. Mr. Whitfield explained there was a state law change as well as a Charter change that took effect on July 1st, as well as changes to the City Code. Mr. Vogler stated if Council cannot reach a consensus, a Judge will appoint someone. Mr. Whitfield explained, once the Council vacancy occurs, he will file a Writ of Special Election with the Circuit Court; Council will then have 45 days to complete this process. If Council does not, then the Judge will either step in or they will request the Judge to step in.

Rev Campbell asked if it would take a majority vote to win and Mr. Whitfield noted that was correct it would take five members of Council to win. Rev Campbell asked what would happen if it was 3-3-2 and Mr. Whitfield stated if they decided they couldn't break the tie, then it gets submitted to the Court. Mr. Vogler noted the interviews will be in public, would that be during a Council meeting, a special meeting and would Council have any closed session discussions and Mr. Whitfield noted Council was eligible to do that, because appointments were something that could be discussed in closed meeting. Vice Mayor Buckner questioned if there was a start time to receive applications and Mr. Whitfield stated they should not advertise to submit applications until Council has the vacancy and the vacancy will occur when someone resigns because they have been elected.

Mayor Jones thanked the City Attorney and his team for a great job.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding the Consent Agenda Items. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on July 8, 2025. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

Vice Mayor Buckner **moved** for adoption of the following Consent Agenda items:

Consideration of Approval of Minutes from Regular Council Meeting held on June 17, 2025.

Consideration of Amending the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Appropriation Ordinance by Transferring Funds from the Gas Fund to the Economic Development Fund to Provide Funding for the Coleman Site Project.

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An Ordinance entitled Ordinance No. 2025-07.04, An Ordinance Amending the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Appropriation Ordinance by Transferring \$3,000,000 from the Gas Fund to the Economic Development Fund to Provide Funding for the Coleman Site Project and Appropriating the Same.

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

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, Vogler, and Whittle (8)
NAY: None (0)
ABSENT: Hood (1)

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS, ONE-YEAR ACTION PLAN AND FIVE-YEAR CONSOLIDATED PLAN

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding the Community Development Programs. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on July 1, 2025. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-07.03

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT TO THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) A ONE YEAR ACTION PLAN.

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

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, Vogler, and Whittle (8)
NAY: None (0)
ABSENT: Hood (1)

CONSIDERATION OF A REQUEST TO VACATE AN UNIMPROVED RIGHT OF WAY NAMED LEE COURT

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding the Vacation of a Right of Way. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on July 1, 2025 and July 8, 2025. No one present desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-07.05

AN ORDINANCE VACATING APPROXIMATELY 0.43 ACRES OF UNIMPROVED PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY, ALSO KNOWN AS LEE COURT, ADJACENT TO PARCEL IDENTIFICATION

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NUMBERS 74662 AND 74664.

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

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, Vogler, and Whittle (8)
NAY: None (0)
ABSENT: Hood (1)

CONSIDERATION OF DESIGNATING A PORTION OF 18 FLOYD STREET AS A REVITALIZATION AREA

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-07.04

A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING A PORTION OF 18 FLOYD STREET AS A REVITALIZATION AREA WITH NON-HOUSING BUILDINGS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, APPROPRIATE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Jones, Mayo,
Miller, Saunders, Vogler, and Whittle (8)
NAY: None (0)
ABSENT: Hood (1)

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT FOR FACILITIES AT CAESARS VIRGINIA TO THE CITY OF DANVILLE

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-07.05

A RESOLUTION APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING A LEASE AGREEMENT FOR FACILITIES AT CAESARS VIRGINIA TO THE CITY OF DANVILLE TO PROVIDE A LOCATION FOR A SATELLITE VISITOR CENTER.

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

Council Member Vogler noted he was glad the City was doing this considering the number of visitors going through that facility, to have information on other things that were in the region readily available. Instead of making people go out and seek things, the City was meeting them right there where they were.

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

VOTE: 8-0-1
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Jones, Mayo,

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Miller, Saunders, Vogler, and Whittle (8)
NAY: None (0)
ABSENT: Hood (1)

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Patrick Anderson who stated he was representing a group at the Danville House. Recently things have been happening where the handicapped parking placards were not being honored and a lot of parking tickets were being issued. They don't understand why the placards were not being honored. Mayor Jones asked Mr. Anderson to take the City Manager's card and contact him.

COMMUNICATIONS

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

Mayor Jones asked Anne Moore-Sparks to speak about the Chamber's Ambassador Program, and Ms. Moore-Sparks noted a news release went out this week and they have had an overwhelming response to the program; Christy Harper was going to lead this effort. It was an opportunity for ambassadors to come forward, represent and increase engagement with their members. The Chamber was growing significantly and the growth was directly aligned with the growth of the region. They were taking applications to be an ambassador for the Chamber with an interest meeting coming up Thursday. Some of the qualities they were looking for were someone that was structured, organized and relationship driven, and liked to get out to the public. This person would be an extension of their office, and these were volunteers; they were looking for about ten ambassadors.

Council Member Saunders noted his thoughts were with Mr. Hood and thanked the City Attorney for his presentation regarding the vacancy.

Council Member Vogler noted he missed Mr. Hood and looked forward to having him back soon; their prayers were with him. Mr. Vogler asked the City Manager to speak about the recycling in the City and the correct way to do things; the doors to the containers can no longer be opened all the way as people have been abusing them.

City Manager Ken Larking noted the City offers a variety of recycling opportunities including getting a cart at their house for \$90 a year and the City will pick it up. There were also convenience centers throughout the City for people to recycle; citizens should not abuse them. If there was a bin full of cardboard and someone dumps trash on top of it, the entire container was spoiled. Unfortunately, there have been more instances of people putting things in the recycling bins at the recycling centers that have spoiled the entire bin and forced the City to throw it away. The City looked at what they can do to restrict that kind of thing from happening; staff at the time felt that making it harder to put things in those bins that shouldn't be in there. The City can look at other solutions to help the situation. Mr. Vogler questioned if it would be worth exploring a task force dedicated to solutions for recycling in the City.

Mr. Vogler questioned the status of the traffic light on 58 near Jones Missionary Baptist Church. Mr. Larking noted the process to get a traffic signal installed was a lengthy process including study by engineers to make sure a traffic light was warranted; that has been done and the light was warranted. Funds have been budgeted and approved for that purpose, but he will have to

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research more information. The traffic signal has to be designed specifically for the intersection; that can take months to arrive and to install.

Council Member Whittle noted Fred Leggett, Jr., passed away and asked that everyone keep the family in their prayers, and hoped Council Member Hood was back on his feet soon.

Vice Mayor Buckner noted their prayers were with the Leggett family and hoped Council Member Hood gets well soon. Mr. Buckner noted the Third Annual PLAN Danville Block Party was this Thursday, July 17th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Doyle Thomas Park.

Council Member Campbell questioned the City Manager about the HUD housing projection for next year and would that be low-cost, low-income housing; Mr. Larking noted he would have to get back to Rev Campbell on that. Rev Campbell noted their prayers were with Mr. Hood.

Council Member Mayo noted they were praying for Mr. Hood and his family. Mr. Mayo congratulated the Chamber of Commerce and all the small businesses.

Mayor Jones noted the City Attorney and his staff did a great job and recognized the Rev Up businesses in attendance. Mayor Jones noted his prayers were with Council Member Hood and his family.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK