

January 19, 2021

The Second Regular January meeting of the Danville City Council was held on January 19, 2021, 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.

INVOCATION

Council Member J. Lee Vogler, Jr., asked for a moment of silence to remember Tommy Pruett who passed away this week; this was followed by the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized Yvette Mayo, who spoke on behalf of her mother who lived on Rocky Lane, and questioned the traffic situation on Ash Street entering onto Piney Forest Road; was there was a plan in place for that area. Mayor Jones referred Ms. Mayo to the City Manager.

Mayor Jones recognized Tommy Bennett, President of the Danville Branch of the NAACP, who, on behalf of the NAACP and citizens of Danville, thanked the Danville Police Department, especially Corporal Sylvia Brooks, and Norma Brower from Community Development who provided toys for children at Christmas.

ADD ITEM TO AGENDA

Council Member Vogler **moved** to Amend the Agenda to add New Business Item E. 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

CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Buckner **moved** for adoption of the following Consent Agenda Items:

Approval of Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on December 15, 2020. Draft copies of the Minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

Budget Amendment – Amending the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance for Litter Control and Recycling Grant Funds

An Ordinance Entitled Ordinance No. 2021-01.04, Amending the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Appropriation Ordinance to Anticipate Grant Funds from the Commonwealth of Virginia for Litter Control and Recycling Efforts in the Amount of \$8,611 and Appropriating Same.

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

APPOINTMENTS

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-01.02

APPOINTING BRYANT HOOD TO THE DANVILLE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND FINANCIALS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2021

Director of Finance Michael Adkins noted the results through the end of December marks halfway into the Fiscal Year. Total Revenues for the first six months were at \$51M which was down about \$595,000 from last year; most of that decrease had to do with interest rates. Interest rates have plummeted quite a bit since a year ago, and the returns on the CDs and other investments were not quite as much as last year. A lot of times when the City issues bonds, they were issued at a premium; that was part of the City's interest income and was a timing difference; the City's bonds were issued a little later this year.

The City has gone through the first collection period for taxes for this fiscal year; they were due December 7th and at the end of December the City did meet the 50% mark in Real Estate, and actually collected a little over 51% of budgeted real estate. That was almost a percent better than last year. Delinquent Real Estate collections were still going strong at 57% of budget and current Personal Property was where it was expected to be. All the categories looked good with the exception of Machinery and Tools, that was a little low. Mr. Adkins noted he does know of one significant payment that was on its way, and that will help make up some of the ground there. There was also a new business, Morgan Olsen, that was not in operation in January of last year, and this will be the first year the City will have the opportunity to collect Machinery and Tools taxes from them. Delinquent Personal Property collections were strong, the City has collected about \$75,000 more in delinquent personal property this year, at this point, than last year.

Under Local Taxes, Sales Tax was performing very well for this fiscal year; at the end of December the City had collected about \$465,000 more than last year, nearly half a million dollars, and at 53% of budget at the end of December. This will help offset some sluggish collections in Meals Tax and Lodging which were depressed a little bit this year. Meals Tax at the end of December was 47% of budget, just three percentage points behind. However, Mr. Adkins stated, because of the holidays, about \$95,000 of collections that normally would have made it into the month of December were processed on the very first business day of January. That was a timing

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difference of about \$95,000, and about half of the decrease from last year that has been made up already. With Lodging, the City was much closer to budget at 49%; the decrease from last year was only \$69,000 which was good considering the environment the motels were working in right now.

The State and Other Revenues were on track, any decreases there were timing, with no concerns. On the Expenditure side, Departmental spending was down around 46% of budget which was good at 50% of the year. Non-Departmental, which was primarily the Group Health Insurance, has crept up a little above budget at 53%; Group Health Insurance was based on the claims processed, which varies each year and was unpredictable. Mr. Adkins noted they would keep a close watch on that. In all, the General Fund was performing well. The Unassigned Fund Balance, which he doesn't like to look at until the end of the fiscal year, but can be used to benchmark, the City last year was \$22,500,000 at the end of December. This December it was \$23.5M; comparing the two, the City was \$1M better off compared to last year in December.

AUTHORIZING AN APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR MASS TRANSIT FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding Mass Transit Funding. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on January 6, 2021 and January 13, 2021. 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. 2021-01.03

AUTHORIZING AN APPLICATION BY THE CITY TO THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR GRANTS FOR OPERATING AND CAPITAL COSTS FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021.

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

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

APPROVAL OF A MORAL OBLIGATION WITH MOVEMENT BANK

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-01.04

AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING EXECUTION OF A MORAL OBLIGATION AGREEMENT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA AND MOVEMENT BANK, A VIRGINIA BANKING CORPORATION.

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

VOTE: 9-0
AYE: Buckner, Campbell, Hood, Jones, Mayo,

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Miller, Saunders, Vogler and Whittle (9)
NAY: None

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CAPACITY AGREEMENT FOR BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-01.05

APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA TO ENTER INTO A CAPACITY AGREEMENT FOR 10.6 MEGAWATTS OF BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE CAPACITY TO BE CONSTRUCTED WITHIN THE DANVILLE UTILITIES SERVICE TERRITORY.

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

Vice Mayor Miller noted this was brought to the Utility Commission and was a win-win situation; Delorean Company would do all the upfront costs, put the facility in a warehouse owned by the City and they will provide peak energy; this was a very important project. Council Member Buckner noted his agreement with Dr. Miller; this project will help the City during peak time periods.

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

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE, VIRGINIA OPPOSING SB1157

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-01.06

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE VIRGINIA OPPOSING SB1157 WHICH PROPOSES TO MANDATE THAT ALL LOCALITIES HOLD THEIR ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Ken Larking explained in the coming days, there will be the first of hopefully several

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vaccination events held jointly with the Health Department, SOVAH Health, Averett University and others. The information was not quite ready to go out to the public, hopefully it would be going out via the Health Department soon, within the next day at the latest. Mr. Larking noted he wanted the public to be aware that these vaccination events were occurring. The City would push out the information to let the public know about them and will include links where citizens can sign up and register for specific times to get a vaccine at these events. The first was targeting citizens 65 years and up; they have to follow the guidelines that were set by the Federal Government targeting the groups that were high priority. Mr. Larking noted he believed the first event would be Saturday, the sign up information will be coming out imminently and encouraged citizens to look for that.

Mr. Larking noted regarding the Piney Forest Road item mentioned during Communications; traffic engineering projects can be very slow, and the reason was they want to make sure when improvements were made to roads, that they were being done carefully. Modifications have to be engineered to make sure it was safe because thousands of cars every day travel on those roads. The City Engineer, working with the MPO, was putting in an application for a study of Piney Forest Road from Holt Garrison to Franklin Turnpike; that will include the area of Ash Street. If any improvements need to be done for safety purposes they can be planned for and budgeted appropriately, and then implemented appropriately. That was status at this point.

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

Council Member Vogler thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting this evening; there many good things happening in the City and he was excited about the year ahead. Mr. Vogler thanked the City Manager for sharing information about the vaccine and its availability in the near future, noting it was important for citizens to get the vaccine to help move past what has happened in the past year. Mr. Vogler noted his frustration at the report that Virginia was ranked 48th in percentage of COVID vaccine doses distributed. The doses distributed to Virginia were 852,725 as of several days ago; so far the number of doses administered was 217,836, 25.5% done, putting Virginia at 48th in the nation. Mr. Vogler noted that was inexcusable.

Council Member Buckner strongly encouraged citizens to take the vaccine; he was able to get his first round last week and it was a very simple, painless procedure. Mr. Buckner reminded citizens of the three WWWs, wait six feet apart, wash your hands often and always wear your mask.

Council Member Hood noted he wanted to keep everyone affected by this pandemic uplifted in prayer, keep everyone encouraged throughout the pandemic and stay resilient.

Council Member Mayo thanked citizens for coming out and sharing their thoughts; the City will get through this pandemic, and encouraged them to follow the guidelines. Mr. Mayo recognized the Averett group, and others that participated last weekend for their virtual Sunday Supper they do every year for Martin Luther King; this year they had a great speaker with Stacy Abrams. Mr. Mayo recognized Ashtyn Foddrell and the IDDU program under the Danville Police Department with a graduation tomorrow of people turning their lives around.

Vice Mayor Miller noted there was a great event for Martin Luther King Day at Averett, but what they didn't have was the banquet, the Peace March, and the MLK breakfast, all were canceled this year. Citizens missed a lot this year because of the pandemic, but hopefully can get back to where they were. Dr. Miller noted his agreement with Mr. Vogler, stating he had called the Health Department last week asking about their plan to get the vaccine out and was told they didn't have one. This has exposed the weakness of the health departments in the State; they have been underfunded and don't have the personnel or capacity. Kudos to the organizations that have stepped up to help out.

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Dr. Miller also noted the City lost an icon with the passing of Tommy Pruett.

Council Member Saunders noted a special thanks to those who participated in Dr. King's holiday, a day on, not a day off; he did so much for this country and his dream was still going on today. A lot of attention was focused on COVID, with citizens having a lot questions and concerns, and hopefully the state and federal governments can make more people available to help answer the calls from citizens. Also, thanks to PATHS, the Health Department and those helping serve the citizens. Mr. Saunders questioned the City Manager if the site for the vaccination center was the Averett campus, would City buses serve that area. Director of Transportation Marc Adelman indicated that the buses do go out to the Averett North Campus; citizens can either use the fixed route service or sign up for Reserve a Ride.

Mayor Jones noted the City has been partnering with Pittsylvania County, PATHS and Averett, and questioned the City Manager if the vaccine was free or did citizens need insurance and Mr. Larking stated it would be free. Mayor Jones asked the City Manager to review the information on transportation and Mr. Larking explained Reserve a Ride was available if citizens signed up in advance. There was a limited amount of availability, but the fixed route bus route was available as well. Mr. Larking noted he wanted to acknowledge the people on the conference call with him yesterday planning this event, County Administrator David Smitherman, Tiffany Franks and others from Averett, SOVAH Health including Mr. Kent, and Dr. Spillman from the Health Department. Everyone on the call was willing to do their part to have this event within a few days. They will learn from this first event and will get better over time. Mr. Larking noted he was proud of the fact that so many different organizations were willing to step up and say what they could do to help.

Mayor Jones stated more information was forthcoming about this coming Saturday at Averett's North Campus on Mount Cross Road, for citizens 65 years and older, transportation was available on Reserve a Ride or fixed route service. Mr. Larking stated people do have to sign up in advance for the vaccine, get a time and show up at their appointed time, and Dr. Miller noted there was a limited number of vaccines. Mr. Larking noted as soon as they have confirmation, they will send the information out as quickly as possible, and asked citizens to pay attention to the information that was being sent out by the Health Department, the City's various social media pages and press releases.

Mayor Jones noted to the family of Tommy Pruett and the Life Saving Crew family and friends, Council's thoughts and prayers were with them.

ADJOURNED: 7:50 P.M.

APPROVED:

s/Alonzo L. Jones
MAYOR

ATTEST:

s/Susan M. DeMasi, CMC
CITY CLERK