

January 17, 2023

The Second Regular January meeting of the Danville City Council was held on January 17, 2023, 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 Mayo, Dr. Gary P. Miller, Sherman M. Saunders, J. Lee Vogler, Jr., and Madison J.R. Whittle (9). *Council Member Campbell left the meeting at @8:30 p.m.*

Staff Members present were: City Manager Ken F. Larking, Deputy City Manager Earl B. Reynolds, City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield, Jr., and City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi.

Mayor Jones presided.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Vogler gave the Invocation, followed by Zachariah Starlings leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Proclamation: National Mentoring Month
Presented to: Pat Daniel, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Danville Area

Ms. Daniel thanked City Council for the honor presented to them, and thanked everyone for their continued support. She asked that everyone remember what the organization does in both Danville and Pittsylvania County, which was to ignite the power and progress of children in this community. Thank you and God Bless you.

Presentation: Danville Police Department and Danville Youth and Gang Prevention
Presented by: Chief Scott Booth, Major David Whitley, and Robert David

Chief Booth reviewed his power point presentation on the state of crime within the community, and reviewed the crime stats comparing before the implementation (four-year average between 2015-2018) of the Danville Model and the four years (2019-2022) following implementation. He noted that violent crime was down an average of 52%, homicides 82%, robberies 10%, aggravated assault 23.4%, property crimes 22.9%, and burglaries were down 53.2%, when compared to the averages from 2015-2019. Since the implementation of the Danville Model in 2019, Danville Police Department Case Clearances, compared to the FBI National Clearance Averages, showed averages well above the FBI rate. DPD case clearance averages show 17% more homicide cases cleared, 15.5% more rape cases cleared, 34.2% more robbery cases cleared, 15.8% more aggravated assault cases cleared, and 47.5% more burglary cases cleared. In 2022 the DPD seized 270 firearms, 2,395 grams of heroin/fentanyl, 2,244 grams of cocaine, 11,590 grams of methamphetamine, 39,186 grams of marijuana, and 21,562 grams of synthetic marijuana.

Major David Whitley spoke about the priority of community impact groups. These groups were focused on efforts in engagement, enforcement, and building community ownership. They were focused on middle and high school age youth, low income and homeless population, individuals suffering from mental health and addiction, and Hispanic population outreach.

Mayor Jones thanked Chief Booth and his team for the presentation, stated it has been amazing to see the turnaround in the school system and asked Chief Booth to elaborate on the things taking place in the school system. Chief Booth stated they have been taking a lot of time building trust

January 17, 2023

within the school community. Corporal Brooks and her team have been doing a phenomenal job working with the middle and high schools connecting with the youth.

Robert David, Youth and Gang Violence Prevention Coordinator, spoke to Council about Project Imagine and its growth since being implemented in 2018. Project Imagine was 1 of 18 in a nationally recognized model. Mr. David spoke about the structure of the program, stating it was a collaborative model that was youth centered. Youth go through a 15-hour orientation that includes a Clifton Strengths-Based Assessment, Casey Life Skills, basic financial literacy, workforce readiness, adverse childhood experiences, credible messenger forum, and were assigned an outreach worker. Outreach services were provided with collaboration from other services and businesses within the community. Referrals were received from schools, detention centers, and the community. Pop-up services were started at the office on Third Avenue for individuals in the community to sign up for services they may not be able to access any other way. Sports based youth development and e-sports were two new programs that have been started. Project Imagine has enrolled 63 youth since August of 2021. There were fifty youth currently enrolled, with 100% active participation, 92% of currently enrolled eligible youth were receiving educational services, 88% have not obtained new criminal charges, and fifteen were currently employed.

Council Member Vogler thanked everyone for the phenomenal presentation, breaking down in detail the numbers and the impact it was having. For a long time he had advocated for community-oriented and sector policing; unfortunately back then it was met with a lot of resistance from previous leadership, but then Chief Booth came to Danville. They met at Crema & Vine, talked about a lot of different things and Mr. Vogler stated he knew after that meeting, this was the man who was going to do great things for the City. Community policing works, sector policing or neighborhood oriented policing works, and the statistics shown here tonight proved that it worked.

Council Member Campbell thanked Chief Booth and Robert David for the work they have been doing. He noted the violent act of the drive-by that happened at Council Member Hood's home, and how it was so extreme and not typical of Danville. Chief Booth stated that although rare, those types of crimes do still happen in Danville. There was nothing to do to diminish that but they have to stay focused on violent offenders and continue to do HEART walks to help heal the community. Council Member Whittle thanked Chief Booth for his presentation and noted that he believed they would solve the case regarding the drive-by. Council Member Buckner thanked Chief Booth and Robert David for their presentations. They have not seen these kinds of numbers in years, and it was a testament to what Chief Booth and his team were doing; he looked forward to many more years of continued success. Chief Booth stated they cannot do their jobs without the trust and support of the community and elected officials.

Council Member Saunders asked Chief Booth if there was any way to determine how many people not from Danville, commit crimes in Danville. Chief Booth stated he did not have those numbers, but from time to time, working with their federal partners, they have someone from out of state like from Greensboro. Some crime was transient, but most of the violent crime was not; most of Danville's violent offenders were homegrown. Council Member Saunders asked if there was any idea in regard to repeat offenders, and Chief Booth stated he did not have repeat offender numbers. When it comes to serious crime they work tirelessly with their partners to make sure they were charged in the federal system. They have a great relationship with their federal prosecutors and Mr. Newman in the Commonwealth Attorney's office.

Mr. Saunders thanked Mr. David for all that he and his staff do with the youth in the City. He asked if the youth in the program were just from the City of Danville or if there were any from the outside, and Mr. David stated that they were all from Danville. Mr. Saunders asked once youth graduate

January 17, 2023

from the program have there ever been any to rejoin, and Mr. David stated no, that at this point youth were involved in the program for several years with the outreach workers so there has never been anyone to repeat the program. Mr. Saunders asked if youth had to be involved in a gang to receive services and how do they deal with gang prevention, and Mr. David explained that due to grant funding they have to be gang involved but he was hoping once the grant ends, with funding from Council, they will be able to extend those services in the future. Gang prevention, in many ways, doesn't start in middle school, it starts much earlier than that in elementary. Prevention can be done in many ways if they can alleviate those triggers.

Mr. Saunders asked Chief Booth was there was any idea on how many additional school resource officers were needed, and Chief Booth stated that a grant was received for two more resource officers, and they were currently recruiting for those positions. One will be sworn in at the end of the week; hopefully, they will have both SRO's in the schools by the summer. Statistically, that puts the number of SRO's in schools higher than those in Lynchburg; they will have six SRO's in the schools. Mr. Saunders thanked Chief Booth for all he and his men and women do for the City to keep it safe, and Mr. David, he has a tough job and thanked him and his staff for all they do.

Council Member Hood stated that he trusted that justice will be served. They see the diligent work that the Police Department and Project Imagine has done; there was no question about it being top notch. Mr. Hood noted he thinks of three words when it comes to them and they were dedication, community, and results; they all bring results and Council thanked them for that. Council Member Mayo commented that with all that has been said, what he sees was the collaboration between everyone; changes were being made and that was a team effort. Teamwork works when there were gaps that needed to be filled. The results Council was seeing in the work being done was astronomical, and wanted to commend both Chief Booth and Mr. David.

Vice Mayor Miller stated from the statistics to the all the awards received nationwide, it was an awesome program. He lived in Richmond for seven years and was aware of community policing. Going back a few years, Council was told that community policing did not work and it had not worked in other cities. Council was told there were no gangs in Danville and they did not have a gang problem. Dr. Miller questioned, did Danville have a gang problem, were there gangs in Danville now, and Chief Booth stated that gangs do not go away overnight. It was not a definite number, it was a cultural component that kind of embeds itself here, and Danville has struggled with poverty. There was a very strong attraction for youth to be affiliated with gangs. It was not solved by arresting that problem away overnight; nor was it solved overnight with intervention and prevention. When you see the decline in crime numbers it was because those things were working. Danville will never get to a zero-crime community but when you see crime declines lower than in 1985, before Danville was even thinking about gangs, he felt pretty good about that.

Vice Mayor Miller noted that at one time Danville was considered a way station for drugs and guns going to New York, was that still a problem, and Chief Booth stated absolutely; again it was the same mix that makes the community somewhat attractive for gangs, was also attractive for drugs. When there were people living below the poverty level and an increase of homeless people in the community, poverty and drugs were intertwined. Chief Booth noted he has been doing this job for 28 years in high poverty and challenged neighborhoods and that was what he has always seen.

Council Member Vogler thanked them for incorporating athletics into their strategy for giving young people a positive outlook in their lives. Mr. Whittle asked if sports were tied into the Parks and Recreation Department, and Mr. David stated they do collaborate with Parks and Recreation for use of facilities, but the Sports program has its own funding through a grant.

January 17, 2023

Mayor Jones thanked Chief Booth and his team, and Robert David for a great presentation.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM VISITORS

Mayor Jones recognized the following members of the Danville Fire Department who appeared before Council to discuss fire fighter pay, the urgency of this matter, having resources to keep serving the community, staffing, training, and hours.

Kevin Hayes – Old Mayfield Road, Danville
Joe Simpson – 1401 Broad Street, Altavista
Tom Collins – 909 Poplar Trace, Danville
Conner Wood – 234 Virginia Avenue, Danville

Mayor Jones recognized Angelia Fountain, 31 Baltimore Ave, 103B who came before Council to discuss a sewer leak in her apartment building. The structures have been deemed unfit and residents were moved to the Super 8 motel. No one can get in touch with the property manager or the maintenance supervisor. There was also mold and other issues in the apartments for the past three years, which has affected her health. Mayor Jones asked what she was asking of City Council and of the City, and Ms. Fountain responded that she wanted someone to come out and look at the problems that they have. Mayor Jones asked if this was something that the City inspectors could take a look at, and Deputy City Manager Earl Reynolds stated that arrangements could be made to work with the residents and the owners. City Manager Ken Larking stated that staff was working on the issue and an inspection was scheduled for the following day.

Mayor Jones recognized Dale McCray, of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers who spoke about collective bargaining now allowed under Virginia law. It was a process and it takes time to accomplish. People need to be educated and aware of what they are voting on. Their legal team has drafted an ordinance that has been sent to Council. Hopefully this was something Council was willing to vote on.

MEETING MINUTES

Upon **Motion** by Council Member Vogler, and **second** by Council Member Mayo, Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting held on December 20, 2022, were approved as presented. Draft copies of the minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of the General Fund Financial Results through December 31, 2022.

Director of Finance Michael Adkins, gave a summary of the preliminary general fund financials as of December 31, which was the first half of the Fiscal Year or 50% of the Fiscal Year completed. Total Revenues at this point received were around \$57M, this represents 47% of the budget, which was typically seen in December. They do not quite reach the 50% mark overall because a lot of state revenues were based on reimbursements, so some of the local taxes do not come in evenly throughout the year; they get a greater portion of those in the second half of the fiscal year. They have completed the first collection cycle of real estate and personal property taxes for this fiscal year. Current real estate collections did pass the 50% mark, at 53% of budget which was nearly \$10M; meeting at least 50% of budget somewhat ensures they will meet the budget for the year in that category. Collections of delinquent real estate taxes were still performing strong; they received \$660,000 at the end of December or 73% of budget; they do typically collect more of Delinquent

January 17, 2023

Real Estate in the first half of the year. Personal Property tax collections at the end of December was at 48% of budget, which was a very good place to be; they do receive a little less than 50% of the state funding for Personal Property during the first half of the year and was made up in the spring. Local taxes collected through December 31, for Sales tax they received \$5.6M, 51% of budget, just over budget by 1%, that was up \$340,000 over last year. Meals tax was at \$5.4M, or 57% of budget, an increase of \$480,000 from last year, and Lodging taxes were just under \$1.4M and 67% of budget, an increase of \$264,000 from the prior year. Business Licenses were showing a pretty good increase over last year at this point of \$147,000, but most of those were not paid until March, and he will be able to report more on those in the Spring. All of the state funding was on track with expenditures, meeting expectations at this point. Under Expenditures, Departmental Spending was trailing budget as usually seen, somewhere between 45% and 46% of budget at this time. The Non-Department Expenses that mostly include debt service and group health insurance was at 53% of budget; as mentioned in previous months, the health insurance has been tracking a little ahead of budget at this point, but there was an increase to employee premiums that went into effect in January, so that will help offset that through the rest of this year. The General Fund was performing well according to budget.

CONSIDERATION OF VACATING A CITY ALLEY ON NEWTON STREET

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding an alley vacation. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on January 10, 2023 and January 17, 2023. 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. 2023-01.04

AN ORDINANCE VACATING APPROXIMATELY 0.03 ACRE OF PUBLIC ALLEY ON NEWTON STREET.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF EXTENDING A TEMPORARY, SIXTY-DAY AMBULANCE OPERATOR'S PERMIT

Mayor Jones opened the floor for a Public Hearing regarding an Ambulance Operator's Permit. Notice of the Public Hearing was published in the *Danville Register & Bee* on January 9, 2023.

Mayor Jones recognized applicant Jamie Bethel of 496 Homestead Trail Ringgold, VA who spoke to Council about the need for transportation. Mrs. Bethel stated she had an ambulance on order, insurance in place, staff lined up, and needed approval from Council to get the proper inspections and to launch her business. No one further desired to be heard and the Public Hearing was closed.

Vice Mayor Member Miller **moved** for adoption of an Ordinance entitled:

January 17, 2023

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-01.05

AN ORDINANCE EXTENDING A TEMPORARY AMBULANCE OPERATOR'S PERMIT TO FAB'S FAMILY MEDICAL TRANSPORT

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

Vice Mayor Miller stated that this was a case of someone in the community seeing a problem and doing something about it. This was not meant to be emergency transportation but nonemergency transportation, and there was a growing need for this. Council Member Buckner stated that when they met with Mrs. Bethel she had an excellent business plan and it seemed they were addressing the Committee's concerns. This was going to be a great service to the community.

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

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

CONSIDERATION OF APPROVING THE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DANVILLE SCHOOL BOARD AND ENGLISH CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-01.01

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE VIRGINIA APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL BOARD OF THE CITY OF DANVILLE AND ENGLISH CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC. TO PERFORM FINAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SERVICES FOR RENOVATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, IN ACCORDANCE WITH VIRGINIA CODE §56-575.16(5).

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

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

BUDGET AMENDMENT – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$741,024 FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-01.06

January 17, 2023

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE BY INCREASING REVENUE FROM VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES ARPA LAW ENFORCEMENT TECHNOLOGY GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$741,024 AND APPROPRIATING SAME.

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

CONSIDERATION OF AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR LITTER CONTROL AND RECYCLING EFFORTS

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

ORDINANCE NO. 2023-01.07

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE TO ANTICIPATE GRANT FUNDS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA FOR LITTER CONTROL AND RECYCLING EFFORTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$14,536 AND APPROPRIATING SAME.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

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

Council Member Mayo thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Mr. Mayo stated that the MLK breakfast at Cherrystone was very well received, and he thanked everyone for coming out. To Dr. Hairston, they were definitely there with her and her staff to support them.

Vice Mayor Miller commended Council Member Mayo for the work he did with the MLK breakfast event; it was so exciting that one lady decided to have her baby. Dr. Miller thanked the school board members there tonight, and noted they appreciated what they were doing to turn Danville around.

Council Member Saunders commended Council Member Mayo, the Omega men, and all the other sorority and fraternity members at the event yesterday. Anytime they have to put down additional tables and chairs, that says a lot about what they were doing and the support that they have. There were over 350 people there, and he thought it was a great event. Mr. Saunders encouraged Mr. Mayo and his brothers to keep doing good work.

Council Member Vogler also thanked Council Member Mayo, noting it was a wonderful event and there were so many people there. It was really standing room only but as always he enjoyed having fellowship with his fellow Council Members and others, and getting to remember Dr. King. Mr. Vogler stated he wanted to remind people, since it was that time of the year, that the business license fee has been eliminated for all small businesses in Danville that make \$100,000 or less. They went from fee to free thanks to the actions taken by City Council months ago; business owners do still have to get their business license. Mr. Vogler stated he has been very fortunate in his life to get to know many of Virginia's governors over the years and blessed to call a few of them friends. He actually spoke to one of them today and said, he would say it here tonight, he wanted

January 17, 2023

to wish a happy 92nd birthday to Governor Doug Wilder who he had the great privilege of knowing since college. He was proud to call him a mentor and friend; he had a significant impact on his life as well as others across the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Country, and the world. At 92 he was still a great wealth of knowledge and was amazing to be around. Mr. Vogler noted he cannot thank him enough for the impact he has had on his life and without him he would not be here tonight.

Council Member Whittle stated that the presentation from the Police Department was excellent. The firefighter's passion for the job they do was heard in their voices, hoped others saw it the same way he did, and hoped Council can work on a solution soon.

Council Member Hood commended the citizens of Danville for their support and the direction that the City was headed in.

Mayor Jones noted to Council Member Mayo, he was very proud of him. He went to the job fair and it was very successful, from there he went to the food drive and it was very successful, from there to the holiday shoot out that was successful, and then to the MLK breakfast that was just as successful. Looking around that room and seeing all the different people there to celebrate Dr. King, and to be able to receive those awards yesterday was very unexpected and he would like to thank them.

ADJOURNED: 9:07pm

APPROVED:

MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK