

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 13, 2025**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on January 13, 2025, in the Yusunas Meeting Room of the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Mayor Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Recording Secretary Ruth Scott called the roll, and the following members of the City Council were present: Alderman Carolyn Zasada, Alderman Barb Larson, Alderman Tracy Smith, Alderman Greg Perkins, Alderman Mike Verbic, and Mayor Cohen Barnes. Alderman Andre Powell arrived at 6:02 p.m. Alderman John Walker was absent.

Others in attendance included City Manager Bill Nicklas, Assistant City Manager Bob Redel, City Attorney Matt Rose, and City Engineer Zac Gill.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Alderman Zasada.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Powell, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

1. Members of the Public Who Unselfishly Donated Their Time in Recent Weeks to Help the Victims of the December 22, 2024, Fire at 1024 Hillcrest Drive Have Been Invited to Take a Bow.

Mayor Barnes provided a brief overview of the devastating fire that took place on December 22, 2024, at 1024 Hillcrest Drive and connected apartments at 930 and 934 Greenbrier Road. He thanked the DeKalb Fire Department, several other local fire departments, the DeKalb Police Department, and local agency representatives for their assistance in coordinating resources, which included DeKalb Township Supervisor Mary Hess, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Vicky Torres of Red Roof Inn & Suites, Family Service Agency Executive Director Tynisha Clegg and Director of Community Programming & Outreach Rylie Loucks-Kues, the American Red Cross, City of DeKalb Community Services Coordinator Jennifer Yochem, and many others that gave monetary donations.

Rylie Loucks-Kues thanked Ms. Yochem and noted the resiliency of the residents affected by the fire.

Ms. Hess stated how proud she is of the community for coming together to assist the residents to ensure they had immediate resources to food, clothing, and shelter.

Mayor Barnes then recounted an event that occurred at Brian Bemis Automotive on October 23, 2024, where a perpetrator attacked personnel and wounded one of them in the process. He praised Brian Bemis employees for remaining calm during what was a very horrific and chaotic situation.

**E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Beth Ganion, the Prevention, Education, and Communications Manager for Safe Passage, spoke regarding the importance of prioritizing domestic violence prevention. She noted a

Women's Rights Rally would be held on January 18, 2025, in front of the DeKalb County Courthouse.

Frankie DiCiaccio spoke regarding changes that are expected to take place after the January 20, 2025, presidential inauguration as it pertains to the LGBTQ community and his fears if those changes come to fruition.

Mayor Barnes stated that while challenges faced by the LGBTQ community can't be solved by this Council, he believes the City has an important role to play moving forward.

Angelica Mendoza spoke to on behalf of migrants and changes that are expected to take place after then January 20, 2025, presidential inauguration. She stated that all human beings deserve to live with dignity and human rights.

Dillon Cathro, a social worker/youth therapist for Northwestern Medicine, spoke regarding changes that are expected to take place after the January 20, 2025, presidential election as it pertains to mental health and health care. He noted there's a huge disparity in the number of children he's seeing based on race and ethnicity. Concluding his comments, Mr. Cathro encouraged critical thinking about how incoming policies are going to be impact those we all love and care for.

Denise Salihoglu of Barb City Food Mart spoke to funding cuts that are expected to take place after the January 20, 2025, presidential election, which will cause an increase in food insecurity in DeKalb.

Jeannine Szostak spoke on behalf of those who fear what may come following the January 20, 2025, presidential inauguration, such as the loss of health insurance, food insecurity, deportation, domestic violence, verbal, physical and sexual abuse, and basic human rights. She encouraged working together and finding ways to help residents feel safe in their surroundings.

Rylie Loucks-Kues spoke on behalf of the Family Service Agency's Community Action Program, which represents low-income and unhoused individuals of DeKalb. She stated that the Family Service Agency shares concerns about the potential impact of reduced federal funding for essential programs that many rely on, such as rental assistance programs.

Martina Fleming, one of many affected by the fire that took place on December 22, 2024, spoke on behalf of all the residents affected and requested the Council's support in addressing the current state of the buildings owned by the Terraces. She noted that residents face ongoing neglect, mistreatment, criminal activity, and unsafe living conditions, which are now exacerbated by the fire that renders portions of the property inhabitable. Ms. Fleming further noted that resident lease agreements explicitly requires that the owners maintain the premises in good habitable conditions as outlined within Illinois Code and Chapter 10 "Landlord-Tenant Regulations" of the City of DeKalb Municipal Code.

Continuing, Ms. Fleming thanked City staff for their assistance, including City Manager Nicklas who she stated spoke up for the residents when they were unable to speak up for themselves.

Mayor Barnes noted a meeting he had with City Manager Nicklas and Alderman Powell about what more can the City do regarding the situation stated by Ms. Fleming. He also noted that the City has made a lot of progress with landlords within the community, but it's still not enough.

Kendra Holton stated she's also concerned about the changes that are expected to take place after the January 20, 2025, presidential inauguration, particularly regarding global, national, and local impacts of climate change.

## **F. APPOINTMENTS**

There were none.

## **G. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Barnes read the Consent Agenda items by title only:

1. Minutes of the Special City Council Meeting of December 2, 2024.
2. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of December 9, 2024.
3. Accounts Payable and Payroll through December 23, 2024, in the Amount of \$3,153,504.12.
4. Accounts Payable and Payroll through January 13, 2025, in the Amount of \$2,995,215.29.
5. Investment and Bank Balance Summary through November 2024.
6. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures through November 2024.
7. Freedom of Information Act Report – November 2024.
8. Crime Free Housing Bureau Report – December 2024.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Alderman Smith.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **I. CONSIDERATIONS**

There were none.

## **J. RESOLUTIONS**

1. Resolution 2025-001 Authorizing an FY2025 Funding Agreement with the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau in the Amount of \$50,000 for Tourism Activities from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

Alderman Larson noted the hard work put forward by DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau staff to bring events to DeKalb and thanked them for their efforts. Mayor Barnes and Alderman Powell agreed.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

2. Resolution 2025-002 Authorizing an FY2025 Funding Agreement with the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) in the Amount of \$35,000 for Economic Development Services Beginning January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Zasada.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

Mayor Barnes commented on his previous participation on the DCEDC board, noting he's seen firsthand the impact it's had on the community.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

3. Resolution 2025-003 Authorizing an FY2025 Funding Agreement with the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce in the Amount of \$35,000 for the Purpose of Facilitating Community Events Beginning January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Smith.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

4. Resolution 2025-004 Authorizing a Payment to the DeKalb County Community Foundation on Behalf of the DeKalb Municipal Band for Services Beginning January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, in the Amount of \$41,088.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

5. Resolution 2025-005 Authorizing Agreements for Aviation and Storage Tank Liability Insurance Coverage Effective January 1, 2025, through January 1, 2026, in the Amount of \$39,215.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Zasada.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

6. Resolution 2025-006 Authorizing an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the DeKalb-Sycamore Area Transportation Study (DSATS) for the Purpose of Determining Mutual Responsibilities in the Metropolitan Planning Process.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Zasada moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Smith.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

7. Resolution 2025-007 Accepting the Qualification Based Selection of Wills, Burke, Kelsey Associates (WBK) to Perform Design Engineering Services for the Intersection Reconstruction Project Impacting N. First Street and Sycamore Road and Authorizing the City Engineer to Provide Approvals on All Standard Department of Transportation Selection Documents.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Verbic.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

City Engineer Gill addressed funding, the scope and nature, and the timeline of the project. He noted that 90 percent of the funding will come from state and federal grants, and 10 percent will be drawn from the City's Capital Projects Fund. The nature of the project is based on the number of accidents that have occurred at the subject intersection, and the scope is a deeper corridor review of the intersection.

City Engineer Gill stated the map provided of the proposed changes to the intersection is only at the conceptual level, adding he believes this will be at least a two-year process before there's a final layout of the project.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed changes to the intersection by adding a roundabout.

Alderman Perkins stated he likes the concept and wondered if something similar could be placed at Illinois Route 23 and Perry Road where some catastrophic accidents have occurred over the years.

It was noted that there's overlapping jurisdiction in that area as Perry Road is a county highway and Illinois Route 23 is a state highway. City Engineer stated he could bring the subject up to the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Further discussion ensued.

Alderman Powell asked how the roundabout would affect school buses entering and exiting Clinton Rosette Middle School. City Engineer Gill stated roundabouts have a significantly higher capacity and they're much more efficient, so it should improve the process.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the current state of the subject intersection and the merging lanes that for some can be quite dangerous.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

8. Resolution 2025-008 Authorizing an Agreement for Services with Wills, Burke, Kelsey Associates to Perform Design Engineering Services for the Intersection Reconstruction Project Impacting N. First Street and Sycamore Road for \$420,000 and Appropriating \$42,000 of Local Funds.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING**

There were none.

## **L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING**

1. Ordinance 2025-001 Approving a Special Use Permit for Antennas and Associated Communication Equipment for the Property at 1500 S. Seventh Street (MasTec for AT&T Mobility).

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Perkins.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Perkins.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

2. Ordinance 2025-002 Approving a Plat of Easement Vacation and a Plat of Roadway Dedication for the Property Located at 1240 Normal Road (Dr. Leroy Mitchell Elementary School).

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Zasada moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Powell.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There was brief discussion regarding potential changes to the traffic flow in, out and around the school.

As for the dedication, City Engineer Gill stated a resident has a driveway that lets out onto what appears to be existing street right now, which is owned by the DeKalb School District. The dedication will allow public access rights to the driveway.

Brief discussion ensued.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Powell.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

3. Ordinance 2025-003 Adopting a Second Amendment to the Land Lease and Solar Agreement with DeKalb Taylor Solar, LLC.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Verbic.

City Manager Nicklas gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Zasada.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

1. Council Member Reports.

Alderman Larson stated she was glad to be back after a five week Council meeting hiatus.

Alderman Verbic thanked DeKalb Scout Pack 131 for inviting him to talk about what it's like to serve for local government and providing him with their visions for improving the DeKalb.

Mayor Barnes reported on meetings and events he's recently attended, including an Opportunity DeKalb meeting, a DCEDC board meeting and annual breakfast, and Police Commander Chad McNett's retirement ceremony.

2. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas had no report.

**N. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was none.

**O. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Alderman Powell.

Prior to asking for a voice vote to adjourn the meeting, Mayor Barnes wished everyone a Happy New Year, stating if 2025 is anything like 2024, then it's going to be a very good year, and he looks forward to working with City staff and the public.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 voice vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on January 27, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the January 13, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the January 13, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.