

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2025**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on February 24, 2025, in the Yusunas Meeting Room of the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Noting the absence of Mayor Barnes, Recording Secretary Ruth Scott asked the Council for a motion to appoint Alderman Mike Verbic as Temporary Chair for this meeting.

MOTION: Alderman Tracy Smith moved to appoint Alderman Verbic as Temporary Chair; seconded by Alderman Greg Perkins.

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

Recording Secretary Scott then called the roll. 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 Alderman John Walker. Alderman Andre Powell and Mayor Cohen Barnes were absent.

Following roll call, Recording Secretary Scott turned the meeting over to Temporary Chair Verbic.

Temporary Chair Verbic noted that Alderman Powell had notified him of his absence due to illness.

Others in attendance included City Manager Bill Nicklas, Assistant City Manager Bob Redel, City Attorney Matt Rose, Transit Manager Mike Neunkirchen, and Assistant Transit Manager Brian Van Hine.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Alderman Walker 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, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Powell, Barnes. Temporary Chair Verbic declared the motion passed.

D. PRESENTATIONS

1. Introduction of Deputy Fire Chief of Operations, Luke Howieson, Who Replaced Deputy Fire Chief Don Faulhaber Upon His Retirement on February 21, 2025.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the title above for the record.

City Manager Nicklas introduced Fire Chief of Operations Howieson and provided a brief overview of his employment history with the City of DeKalb.

2. Introduction of John Petragallo, Who Was Appointed Chief Building Inspector on February 18, 2025.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the above title for the record.

City Manager Nicklas introduced Chief Building Inspector Petragallo and provided a brief history of his former employment with the City of DeKalb and his most recent experience as a Building Inspector for another municipality.

3. DeKalb Public Library 2024 Annual Report Presented by Executive Director Emily Faulkner.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the above title for the record.

Ms. Faulkner provided an overview of the library's accomplishments in 2024. Her report included information regarding the library's vast collection of reading materials and partnership with a consortium of libraries in Illinois, the addition of sensory kits for children, a larger inventory of popular book titles, and an increase in attendance at various scheduled events. Ms. Faulkner also provided information on other amenities provided by the library, such as the registration of new voters and notary services.

Continuing, Ms. Faulker provided information regarding capital projects the library is working on, including the Haish building and its courtyard and patio, as well as window replacement, security cameras, terrazzo maintenance, as well as refreshing some interior finishes and furnishings that have become worn over nine years of daily use. She also reported that Hillman Pediatric Therapy has provided funding for the library to create a sensory space in the children's library and the Lehan Family Foundation has donated funds to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to DeKalb County.

Closing out the report, Ms. Faulkner thanked the library staff, the library board, and City Council for their hard work and support.

Alderman Larson asked if the library's 2024 surplus will cover some of the costs of projects planned for 2025. Ms. Faulker explained that several of the capital projects were already budgeted for, but the surplus will help. She also explained that some of the surplus will be put towards the library's goal of building its 25% operating budget reserves.

Temporary Chair Verbic stated it's interesting to hear of all the essential services the library is providing and how the library has diversified over the years thanks to Ms. Faulkner's leadership.

Alderman Zasada shared that she recently met a retired couple who were interested in purchasing a home in DeKalb and how excited they were when they learned about the extensive number of events and services the library provides.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Norden Gilbert spoke about the Human Relations Commission (HRC), noting his concern that it hasn't met in several months due to its lack of members. He noted that the HRC still plays an important role within the community and urged the Mayor and Council to fulfill their commitment and appoint members so that it can fulfill its duties under the municipal code.

Linh Nguyen expressed concern that the City is proposing to eliminate five bus stops along Route 19. She stated that the bus stops are crucial for those within the community who rely on public transit to access their daily needs, such as employment, childcare, school, healthcare, and groceries. Ms. Nguyen further stated that the elimination of the stops will add additional waiting times, making it harder for those utilizing the system to arrive to work and appointments on time.

Concluding her comments, Ms. Nguyen stated the proposal also underscores the HRC's crucial role as the City's equity lens and providing oversight by asking who bears the burden of these changes and whose voices might be overlooked.

F. APPOINTMENTS

1. Appointing Shaina Martin of the DeKalb County Health Department as an Ex-Officio Member of the Citizens' Environmental Commission as per Chapter 50 "Citizens' Environmental Commission", of the City of DeKalb Municipal Code.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the title above for the record.

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

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

G. CONSENT AGENDA

Temporary Chair Verbic read the Consent Agenda by title only.

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of February 10, 2025.
2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through February 24, 2025, in the Amount of \$4,127,833.12.
3. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report – January 2025.
4. FY2024 Human Services Funding Report.

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

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

At this point in the meeting, Temporary Chair Verbic noted that Mayor Barnes is away on business, which is why he isn't in attendance.

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

I. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Consideration of Updates to Public Transit Routes in 2025.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the title above for the record.

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

Transit Manager Neunkirchen spoke briefly, stating Route 18, not Route 19, serves the health department, adding that those services are not being cut. He further stated that ridership is always a consideration when making changes to the transit system.

Assistant Transit Manager Van Hine gave an overview of the proposed changes and provided a brief history of how Route 19 has evolved over the years, including the addition of running it seven days a week. He noted the route is so well-used that the bus struggles to stay on time due to the number of passengers. The proposed change will eliminate a portion of the route to ensure that the bus stays on time.

Continuing, Mr. Van Hine stated the transit division understands the importance of getting passengers and the employees to and from work, adding that discussions have been had with Ferrara and Meta regarding their work schedules.

Alderman Perkins asked how many riders will be affected by the proposed changes. Mr. Van Hine stated two of the stops will be picked up by other routes, and only one stop will be eliminated. Drivers have indicated that over a period of six months, only four riders utilize the stop.

At the request of Alderman Smith, Mr. Van Hine provided a history of his experience with transit system operations, which started in 1992.

Mr. Van Hine also stated that a lot of research goes into making these types of proposals, whether through bus drivers' tallies of ridership or through the National Transit Database. He noted that as DeKalb grows, so does ridership, which puts stress on the transit system.

It was also noted that the transit system is mostly funded by federal, not local, dollars.

Alderman Smith noted the vast amount of work that goes on behind the scenes before decisions are made and thanked the Transit Division for their hard work.

Alderman Walker encouraged those with criticism regarding changes to the transit system to do more research before pointing fingers. He also thanked the Transit Division for their hard work.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed changes and their effect on those utilizing the transit system and how funding can most effectively be used.

City Manager Nicklas stated that if Council is agreeable, work will begin to put the proposed changes in place. He also noted that bus routes can be accessed through a rider's phone or via a printed route map.

Alderman Zasada asked how much of an increase would be needed to add another bus to Route 19. Mr. Neuenkirchen stated he'd be hesitant to give a specific number because it's variable. However, if issues begin to arise, such as an overload of passengers during a specific time, additional services will be considered.

There was consensus among the Council to move forward with the proposed changes.

J. RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 2025-020 Authorizing a Development Agreement with 206 E. Lincoln, LLC for the Redevelopment of 206 E. Lincoln Highway (PIN 08-23-163-001).

Temporary Chair Verbic read the resolution by title only.

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

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

Alderman Smith asked if the building could open without adding the fire suppression system, to which City Manager Nicklas replied it could not.

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

2. Resolution 2025-021 Authorizing a Development Agreement with Long Family Management, LLC for the Redevelopment of 323 E. Lincoln Highway and 333 E. Lincoln Highway (PIN 08-23-160-021 and PIN 08-23-160-022).

Temporary Chair Verbic read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Walker 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.

Alderman Walker noted that McCabes has been a part of DeKalb's history for many years and expressed excitement that it will be opening again.

Alderman Perkins asked what the plan is for the property.

Owner David Long stated the plan is to bring the building back to life, adding that a fire suppression system will be added to the first and third floors, with additional rental units possibly on the third floor. He also noted that renovation of the existing rental units has already begun.

Alderman Perkins asked why a fire suppression isn't required for the second floor. City Manager Nicklas explained it has a lot to do with building codes. He also noted that there will be two stairwells equipped with illuminated emergency exit signs along with the fire suppression system from the third floor.

Alderman Perkins stated it sounds illogical that the City wouldn't require a fire suppression system for the second floor.

Brief discussion ensued.

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

3. Resolution 2025-022 Authorizing Updates to the City of DeKalb Federal Transit Administration Title VI Program.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the resolution by title only.

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

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 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Powell, Barnes. Temporary Chair Verbic declared the motion passed.

4. Resolution 2025-023 Authorizing a Recapture Agreement Regarding the SunVest Solar Planned Unit Development.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the resolution by title only.

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

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 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Powell, Barnes. Temporary Chair Verbic declared the motion passed.

5. Resolution 2025-024 Awarding a Bid to Performance Construction Engineering in the Amount of \$585,564 for 1,400 Feet of Watermain Replacement on N. First Street Between the Bridge and Tilton Park Drive and within Market Square Shopping Center with Staff Authority to Approve Change Orders Up to \$644,000.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Zasada 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 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Powell, Barnes. Temporary Chair Verbic declared the motion passed.

K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING

There were none.

L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING

1. Ordinance 2025-009 Amending the Fiscal Year-End December 31, 2025, Budget.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the ordinance by title only.

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

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 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Powell, Barnes. Temporary Chair Verbic declared the motion passed.

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

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

2. Ordinance 2025-010 Amending Chapter 51 "Traffic", Schedule C "Parking Prohibited", to Establish a No Parking Zone Along Manning Drive Near its Intersection with Illinois Route 23.

Temporary Chair Verbic read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; 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 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Powell, Barnes. Temporary Chair Verbic declared the motion passed.

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

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

M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Council Member Reports.

Alderman Smith reported on his attendance at the retirement of former Deputy Chief Don Faulhaber and congratulated new Deputy Fire Chief Luke Howieson on his promotion. He also congratulated the Finance Department for being awarded the Government Financial Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for the 30th consecutive year. Concluding his report, Alderman Smith noted the passing of retired DeKalb County Sheriff Roger Scott.

Alderman Zasada reported she will be holding a First Ward meeting on February 27, 2025, at the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church.

Alderman Larson reported she was honored to attend the retirement of former Deputy Fire Chief Donny Faulhaber.

Alderman Verbic also congratulated the Finance Department for being awarded the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. He also reported that the Airport Advisory Board will be meeting on February 25, 2025, to discuss updates about perimeter fencing and a deicer trunk.

2. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas recognized staff who have recently moved to new roles within the City – Andy Raih, who was promoted to Public Works Director, and Tony Kwasniewski, who was promoted to Police Commander.

N. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was none.

O. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Alderman Zasada moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Alderman Larson.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 voice vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Powell, Barnes. Temporary Chair Verbic declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on March 10, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the February 24, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the February 24, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.