

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 10, 2025**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on March 10, 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 Barb Larson, Alderman Tracy Smith, Alderman Greg Perkins, Alderman Andre Powell, Alderman Mike Verbic, Alderman John Walker, and Mayor Cohen Barnes. Alderman Carolyn Zasada was absent.

Others in attendance included City Manager Bill Nicklas, Assistant City Manager Bob Redel, City Attorney Matt Rose, and Police Chief David Byrd.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to approve the agenda; seconded by Alderman Powell.

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

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

1. DeKalb Police Department 2024 Annual Report.

City Manager Nicklas stated the report Police Chief Byrd will provide describes the performance of the largest department in the City of DeKalb and noted a number of those employees are in attendance. He further stated that the report shows progress toward the goal of having a safe, secure, and growing community.

Police Chief Byrd began by thanking Administrative Assistant Melissa Neblock for putting the report together and the entire Police Department for their hard work over the past year. He also thanked the City Council and City Manager Nicklas for their support and providing the resources needed to combat crime in DeKalb. Chief Byrd also thanked the Human Resources Department and the Fire and Police Commission for their assistance with hiring high quality candidates.

Police Chief Byrd then gave an overview of the report based on the information provided in the agenda packet. There were decreased reports of violent crime in 2024 compared to 2023, a rise in reports of domestic violence, and a rise in adult arrests, mostly due to proactive arrests, warrant arrests, and DUI arrests. It was also noted that Police Officer K9 Chase is trained to locate firearms, which has been effective in locating illegal firearms in DeKalb. Police Chief Byrd also noted the benefit of License Plate Readers (LPRs) and other technology that assists with apprehending criminals.

Continuing the overview, Police Chief Byrd noted the commendable work of the School Resource Officers (SROs) in DeKalb schools and Community Service Officers (CSOs) throughout the community. He also recognized DeKalb's telecommunicators for their efforts in assisting citizens during 911 calls, which sometimes includes having to guide the caller in lifesaving measures until help arrives on scene. Police Chief Byrd also recognized the Administrative Services Division, noting they responded to numerous FOIA, subpoena, and

body camera video requests in 2024. Recognition was also given to part-time Police Officers who work with evidence.

Police Chief Byrd continued, recognizing Community Support Services and the social workers who assist Police Officers with addressing mental health concerns of arrestees or residents. He also commended those citizens who assist the Police Department on a regular basis by reporting suspicious activity or assisting in emergency situations.

Police Chief Byrd also provided an overview of events the Police Department participates in each year, such as spending time with DeKalb's youth during Fun Jam in the Park in the summer, giving tours of the police station, Heros and Helpers during the holidays, and many others.

Concluding his report, Police Chief Byrd stated the Police Department wants to provide a safe, secure, and lawful environment for citizens to live in. He noted that the United States has been infected with a lawless culture that has spread and touched numerous cities and towns, including DeKalb.

Alderman Larson thanked the Police Department for keeping DeKalb safe.

Police Chief Byrd provided additional comments on the services provided by the Police Department.

Mayor Barnes also thanked the Police Department for the work they do daily, adding the report shows the efforts being made are making a difference in DeKalb.

Alderman Smith stated the Police Department should be proud of the work they do.

2. Proclamation: National Transit Employee Appreciation Day – March 18, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to Transit Manager Mike Neuenkirchen and transit employees.

## **E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

## **F. APPOINTMENTS**

There were none.

## **G. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Barnes read the items listed on the Consent Agenda by title only:

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of February 24, 2025.
2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through March 10, 2025, in the Amount of \$3,043,786.25.
3. Investment and Bank Balance Summary through January 2025.
4. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures through January 2025.
5. Crime Free Housing Bureau Report – February 2025.

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

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

#### **H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

#### **I. CONSIDERATIONS**

There were none.

#### **J. RESOLUTIONS**

1. Resolution 2025-025 Authorizing the Purchase of Two Ford F250 Pickups Through Morrow Brothers Ford in an Amount Not to Exceed \$137,399 for Use in the Public Works Water Division (Fund 620).

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

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

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: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

2. Resolution 2025-026 Authorizing the Purchase of Genesis eForce Battery Operated Extrication Equipment from Equipment Management Company in an Amount Not to Exceed \$54,320 Using Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) Funding (Fund 1340).

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson 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.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

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

3. Resolution 2025-027 Authorizing Payments to Municipal Emergency Services for Three Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Units in an Amount Not to Exceed \$26,100 Using Ground Emergency Medical Transportation (GEMT) Funding (Fund 130).

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: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

4. Resolution 2025-028 Authorizing the SFY2026 Downstate Operating Assistance Agreement Between the City of DeKalb and the Illinois Department of Transportation.

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 Smith noted that City funds are not involved regarding this subject matter, to which City Manager Nicklas agreed.

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

5. Resolution 2025-029 Authorizing the Transit Manager to Act as the Authorized Official to Submit Grants and Sign Certifications and Assurances on Behalf of the City of DeKalb for the Federal Transit Administration 5307 Transit Grant.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Smith 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: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING**

There were none.

## **L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING**

1. Ordinance 2025-011 Publishing the Official Zoning Map of the City of DeKalb.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic 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 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

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

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

2. Ordinance 2025-012 Amending Chapter 23 “Unified Development Ordinance”, Article 3 “Definitions”, Article 7.04 “Accessory Uses, Buildings and Structures”, and Article 12.07 “Supplemental Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations”, as it Pertains to Text Amendments for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic 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 were no questions or comments from the Council.

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

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

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

3. Ordinance 2025-013 Amending Chapter 64 “Smoking Regulations”, Section 64.16 “Tobacco/Smoking Sales, Use and Licensing”, Subsection f) “Retail Tobacco Store License”, as it Pertains to Limiting the Number of Retail Tobacco Stores in the City of DeKalb to Four (4).

MOTION: Alderman Walker 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.

Alderman Walker thanked City Manager Nicklas for bringing this forward to Council.

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

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

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

4. Ordinance 2025-014 Amending Chapter 50 “Citizens’ Environmental Commission” (CEC) by Renaming Section 50.07 “P.R.I.D.E. Awards” to “DeKalb STARR (Sustainability Through Action, Resiliency, and Responsibility) Award.

MOTION: Alderman Larson 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.

Alderman Larson, who is the Council liaison for the CEC, stated there had been confusion regarding the name of the award so the CEC felt that changing it would make it clearer that the award is for those trying to protect the environment.

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

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

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

## **M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **1. Council Member Reports.**

Alderman Smith noted that citizens are becoming more active as warmer weather approaches and cautioned drivers to slow down.

Alderman Walker reported on recent discussions he's had with those residents affected by the fire that took place in December of 2024 at 1024 W. Hillcrest Drive, and 934-930 Greenbrier Road, which revealed that plans to get them back into their homes isn't going as smooth as believed. It was also revealed that the owner's representative has stated it's the City's fault that things aren't moving as quickly as anticipated.

Alderman Walker then provided a summary of the events that took place on the night of the fire, including the City's efforts to ensure the residents and their families were taken care of by making arrangements for shelter, food, and other needed amenities. He also noted the hardship these residents are still facing, such as long commutes to their jobs and school from other towns such as Rockford and Aurora, as well as having to move frequently from apartment to apartment due to a 20 day stay limit. Expressing his irritation of the situation, Alderman Walker stated he doesn't understand why the owner isn't taking care of their responsibilities when people are in need.

Alderman Walker then asked City Manager Nicklas and Assistant City Manager Redel to explain what the City is doing to get the residents back into their homes.

City Manager Nicklas stated the City has been doing everything it can to get the residents back in their homes. He also stated he's attended several community meetings attempting to clear the air with the residents because the owner and their representative have, from the beginning, stated the City's isn't doing its part.

Continuing, City Manager Nicklas provided a list of just some of the things that need to be done, such as restoring the sprinkler system in the basement, the placement of emergency exit signs, and cleaning up the mess that was left behind by the fire.

Assistant City Manager Redel stated the City has not and will not slow progress but will hold the owner accountable, making sure repairs are being done correctly. However, they never asked the City to inspect the work that's been done so City staff had to reach out to them regarding the status. About two weeks ago a meeting was scheduled for the City to walk through the buildings and none of the fire life safety requirements were complete. Another meeting was scheduled a week later with their architect and developer and again, repairs were not done, including fixing the fire doors, lighting, and alarm system. Assistant City Manager Redel noted that none of those repairs are hard to do and could be done with a contractor within a week.

Continuing, Assistant City Manager Redel noted that the owner is questioning whether the 934 building will be reopened. Once the work is complete on the 930 building, it will be inspected and opened to residents as soon as possible.

Alderman Walker then stated he recently found out the Tower building on Annie Glidden Road didn't have heat for three months and were given space heaters to keep their homes warm.

City Manager Nicklas recalled that the City was at the Tower building within weeks of the fire incident to address the issue of no heat. Apparently, the boiler system had stopped operating, which caused freezing in the building, particularly in the lower areas and in the basement that then led to the failure of the elevator, so the City had to evacuate the building. Again, the City arranged for accommodation for the displaced residents. The City then had to force repairs to get the residents back into their homes. It was noted that the City has cited property maintenance violations in both cases.

Alderman Walker thanked City Manager Nicklas and Assistant City Manager Redel for the update.

Discussion then ensued regarding the funding assistance provided to the owner in the amount of \$1 million in 2021 (via Resolution 2021-103) to clean up the subject properties.

Alderman Perkins wondered if perhaps the owner and their representatives shouldn't be invited to a Council meeting to provide an update on the progress.

City Attorney Rose provided information on what can be done legally to compel compliance with the City's property maintenance codes and deter future violations. He noted there are numerous cases pending against the owner that are being prosecuted zealously, adding he speculates their business model is not investing in their buildings, nor did they intend to possess the assets as long as they have. It was also noted that the buildings in question are currently for sale.

Discussion ensued. Alderman Walker was encouraged to advise the residents reaching out to him to seek the assistance of private legal counsel through the Prairie Legal Service for representation if the issue continues.

Further discussion ensued. This topic will be brought back before Council as a consideration for an update at a future meeting.

Alderman Perkins congratulated DeKalb's middle school wrestlers on their second place finish in the state competition this past weekend.

Alderman Larson stated a rumor is going around that the proposed roundabout on N. First Street will be taking up the Ellwood House's front lawn, which is false.

Mayor Barnes reported on events and meetings he's recently attended, including getting to introduce the middle school wrestlers at their event, noting there were approximately 6,000 people in attendance. He also reported that he visited with some of DeKalb's Hispanic community to discuss a letter they received from someone that contained hate speech about immigration status and telling them to go home. He also noted that the issue was brought to Police Chief Byrd's attention who has visited with them as well. Mayor Barnes noted for the record that DeKalb is a place where everyone belongs but there are behaviors that don't.

Continuing his report, Mayor Barnes stated that he and City Manager Nicklas have been meeting with state representatives, including the Governor's liaison, Jack McCann, and ComEd, regarding the Biometric Information Privacy Act to advocate for some change. He also reported that he met with the Boys and Girls Club who are seeking to open a location in DeKalb.

Concluding his report, Mayor Barnes noted his attendance at the retirement of Donny Faulhaber after 30 years with the DeKalb Fire Department.

1. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas thanked Deputy Fire Chief Howieson for attending this meeting on behalf of Fire Chief Thomas. He also thanked Police Chief Byrd for meeting with some of DeKalb's Hispanic business owners who were recipients of the letter Mayor Barnes spoke of. The Hispanic community are appalled by the inflammatory correspondence but want everyone to know that they're not afraid and they're here to stay.

City Manager Nicklas also thanked Brad Hoey, who was in attendance, for his leadership at the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau (DCCVB), adding one of the reasons the wrestling event is in DeKalb is because of the great work they do.

**N. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was none.

**O. ADJOURNMENT**

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on March 24, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the March 10, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the March 10, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.