

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 10, 2023**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, held a Regular meeting on April 10, 2023, 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 6:02 p.m.

Recording Secretary Ruth Scott called the roll and the following members of City Council were present: Alderman Carolyn Morris, Alderman Barb Larson, Alderman Tracy Smith, Alderman Greg Perkins, Alderman Scott McAdams, Alderman Mike Verbic, Alderman Tony Faivre, and Mayor Cohen Barnes.

Others in attendance included City Manager Bill Nicklas, City Attorney Matt Rose, City Engineer Zac Gill and Police Chief David Byrd.

Sasha Cohen was absent.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to amend the agenda by moving item L.1. (Ordinance 2023-017) to item J.1.; seconded by Alderman Verbic.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

**1. National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, April 9 - 15, 2023.**

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety.

**2. DeKalb Police Department 2022 Annual Report.**

Police Chief Byrd praised the City's telecommunicators for their hard work. He also praised Police Department staff for their work on the report.

Police Chief Byrd then provided highlights of the Police Department's 2022 report, which included thanking the Council for their support as the Police Department continues its hiring initiative, noting there are currently 61 Police Officers with plans to hire nine more for a total of 70.

Other highlights included:

- License plate readers (LPRs) have been extremely effective, noting more will be needed as technology is an important part of safety.
- The K9 program has grown to three with the addition of Chase, a firearms detection dog.

- DeKalb citizens continue to assist the Police Department with crime detection and other helpful actions.
- Community engagement continues to be a big part of the Police Department.

Concluding his report, Police Chief Byrd praised every division in the Police Department for their hard work and leadership.

Mayor Barnes asked Police Chief Byrd for his perspective on crime in DeKalb, to which the Police Chief responded he believes things are getting safer.

Brief discussion ensued.

On behalf of the entire Council, Mayor Barnes expressed appreciation for all the Police Department does for DeKalb and its citizens.

### **3. DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) 2022 Annual Report.**

DCEDC Executive Director Paul Borek presented their 2022 annual report, noting the DCEDC has been honored to work closely with City staff to facilitate the development of \$2 billion of development in the last three years, which equals the cumulative county investment in the prior 30 years of DCEDC's operations. He also noted that more development is pending for 2023 and 2024.

Continuing, Mr. Borek stated that with the City's leadership, combined with the DeKalb County government, one of the most successful enterprise zones within Illinois has been created.

Mr. Borek also reported on the Opportunity Unbound branding initiative, which was created to attract and retain talented professionals, students, and families to fill DeKalb's numerous job openings.

Both Mayor Barnes and City Manager Nicklas thanked the DCEDC for their partnership and representation of DeKalb County as a whole.

## **E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Prior to public participation, Mayor Barnes reminded the audience about meeting decorum.

Jerry Smith thanked Alderman Faivre for his service to the City of DeKalb and then spoke in support of the DeKalb County Community Gardens (DCCG) CHEF (Community Health Education and Food) project proposal for the redevelopment of City owned property in the Annie Glidden North (AGN) neighborhood (see agenda item I.2.).

Joel Maurer also spoke in support of the CHEF proposal from DCCG.

Glen Roby, Vice President of Opportunity DeKalb, spoke in favor of having DCCG and Northern Illinois University (NIU) work together to join their proposals for the property redevelopment.

Mayor Barnes commented that Opportunity DeKalb consists of many organizations, including DCCG, NIU, and the City of DeKalb and noted there's been a lot of dialogue about what everyone thinks will be the best for the AGN neighborhood.

Syd Kincaid read a statement on behalf of J.J. Wett regarding the recent election and what he feels was a smear campaign against Alderman McAdams. Mr. Wett also commented on the

“mudslinging” during the election period, of which he regrets taking part, and the overall ethics of the community.

Mr. Kincaid then provided his own remarks regarding the recent election and the alleged retaliation by Alderman McAdams on certain citizens. Noting that citizens have a right to hold their elected officials accountable, he stated they should do so in a responsible manner. Mr. Kincaid thanked Mr. Wett for recognizing his own responsibility in the “mudslinging” and hopes that elected officials and members of the public ask themselves if their actions are helping their fellow citizens.

## **F. APPOINTMENTS**

There were none.

## **G. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Barnes read the following Consent Agenda items by title only:

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of March 27, 2023.
2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through April 10, 2023, in the Amount of \$2,761,065.99.
3. Investment and Bank Balance Summary through February 2023.
4. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures through February 2023.
5. DeKalb Chamber of Commerce 2022 Annual Report.
6. DeKalb County Convention & Visitors Bureau 2022 Annual Report.
7. DeKalb Municipal Band 2022 Annual Report.

MOTION: Alderman Morris moved to approve the Consent Agenda; seconded by Alderman Faivre.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **I. CONSIDERATIONS**

- 1. Consideration of a Status Report from Sam Schwartz Consulting, LLC Regarding the Feasibility of Commuter Rail Service to DeKalb.**

Mayor Barnes read the item by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to bring this item to the floor for discussion; seconded by Alderman Larson.

City Manager Nicklas provided a brief overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet. On January 9, 2023, the City Council approved a consulting agreement with

Sam Schwartz Consulting, LLC to explore the financial feasibility of a commuter rail connection to the City of DeKalb. The focus of the study is the potential ridership, capital costs, and operating requirements of rail service to DeKalb.

Matthew Orenchuk spoke on behalf of Sam Schwartz Consulting. The study will review the potential travel market and ridership, costs, grant programs and decision making involved with the project. The final report is scheduled to be delivered in May and will include costs and benefits that can be used by decision makers, including the Council, to decide whether to move forward.

Some highlights of Mr. Orenchuk's presentation included the following:

- Approximately 10,800 people travel daily between DeKalb County and the communities along the Union Pacific West (UP-West) line, including the City of Chicago.
- The closest transit service to connect to Chicago is the Metra Union Pacific West line, which operates between Elburn and the Ogilvie Transportation Center in downtown Chicago. There are approximately 23 weekday, 10 Saturday, and nine Sunday round trips between Elburn and Chicago.
- The top five Amtrak stations in the state of Illinois each connect to a nearby university, demonstrating the mutually beneficial relationship between passenger rail and higher education facilities. NIU is the largest university in the state without passenger rail service.
- 64% of students enrolled at NIU come from the six county Chicago Metropolitan Area, with 14% coming from communities along the UP-W line. Seventeen percent (17%) of NIU employees live along the UP-W line as well.
- The 15-miles of track between Elburn and DeKalb is owned and maintained by Union Pacific Railroad. Union Pacific must give permission for Metra to operate on this track.
- Union Pacific has indicated significant infrastructure upgrades would be required to grant Metra the right to provide service to DeKalb. The feasibility study will determine what infrastructure is needed and the capital cost of the improvement.
- The City will need to enter into an agreement with Metra to operate the extension. The feasibility study will explore the annual cost for Metra to operate and maintain the service, along with options for DeKalb to pay for the service. The study will also define the number of Metra trips that would be extended to DeKalb, as well as explore what grant programs are available to help pay for the capital cost of the project.
- The presence of NIU will influence who wants to travel and when, creating the need for more transit trips during midday, evening, and weekend hours.

Alderman Morris asked how the number of trips between DeKalb County and the other communities was estimated. Mr. Orenchuk replied they used a software program called Replica that models trips and uses a blend of cell phone data and other census information to determine how many people are traveling.

Brief discussion ensued.

City Manager Nicklas stated City staff is working with Sam Schwartz Consulting to schedule tabling options at NIU and around the community when the report is complete. Then the report will be presented to the Council.

## **2. Consideration of Proposals for the Redevelopment of the Annie Glidden North Neighborhood.**

Mayor Barnes read the item by title only and reminded the audience of meeting decorum, noting this item is up for discussion only to determine what the next steps should be.

The following citizens, organization leaders, and students spoke to their support of the DCCG CHEF project: John Rey, David Castro, Andrew Wanek, Malia Jones, Linda Slabon, Sheryl Nak, Jennifer Johnson, Brandon Olsen, Linh Nguyen, Tiffany Sanders, Danita Sims, Jessica Cima, Raaif Majeed, Anita Zurbrugg, Eric Ogi, Sheila Chase, and Andrew Tillotson.

Ellingsworth Webb encouraged Council to look beyond the two proposals to the other buildings that may currently exist on the property and what can possibly be done to those to allow for expansion for both projects to work effectively.

Jeff Liesendahl spoke in support of NIU's proposal for a Greek Life Community Center. However, he encouraged Council to consider how both proposals can work for the benefit of the entire neighborhood.

MOTION: Alderman Faivre moved to bring this item to the floor for discussion; seconded by Alderman Larson.

Clint-Michael Reneau, Vice-President of Student Affairs at NIU, spoke on behalf of NIU's proposal for the Greek Life Community Center. He also noted that NIU welcomes a partnership with DCCG if so desired, as well as looking for another space for the project if that's what's determined as the best thing for the neighborhood.

Discussion surrounding NIU's proposal ensued regarding their space needs and whether another space would be more suited to their proposal, increased bus service to the area and/or the creation of transportation hub at the location, and increased police presence by DeKalb and NIU.

Utilizing a PowerPoint presentation, Dan Kenney, founder of DCCG, spoke to their proposal. He also noted that DCCG has reached out to NIU regarding collaboration.

Discussion surrounding DCCG's proposal ensued regarding the possibility of having a daycare element, space needs, a much-needed full-service grocery store, necessary funding, finding common ground and collaboration.

Alderman Verbic, Alderman Morris, Alderman McAdams offered support of the DCCG proposal.

Mayor Barnes stated the City has invested a lot of money into the neighborhood and he's in no hurry to rush to a decision. He added that he believes operational costs will be an issue for the large-scale project proposed by DCCG. Mayor Barnes also stated he would like to see a Greek Life Community Center on the property and isn't in favor of awarding all five acres to DCCG and indicated he would like to see collaboration between DCCG and NIU.

Alderman Larson stated she isn't in support of either proposal and recommended a collaboration between DCCG and NIU.

Alderman Morris reiterated her support of the DCCG project, noting it would be a core transformational project, as recommended in the original AGN plan.

Discussion ensued.

Alderman Smith noted his concern over the aggressive timeline. He also noted that he's torn between both projects and will remain neutral at this time.

City Manager Nicklas reminded the Council that they can accept or reject both proposals, noting it's up to them to define what they want to see there. He also stated that the proposal made by NIU is unique and should be embraced, adding there's plenty of room on the site for both organizations.

Further discussion ensued regarding the timeline of a decision. City Manager Nicklas stated that discussions between NIU and DCCG regarding collaboration will be encouraged and he hopes to come back to Council with an update within 60 days.

At 9:07 p.m. there was a brief pause to allow the large crowd to leave the meeting. The meeting resumed at 9:13 p.m.

### **3. Consideration of a Recommendation from the Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission for a City Hall Mural.**

Mayor Barnes read the item by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to bring the item to the floor for discussion; seconded by Alderman Verbic.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet. A design for the City Hall mural has been chosen based on community ideas gathered at workshops facilitated by the artist, Danielle Casali. It will be a mix of mosaic pieces and painted imagery. The mosaic pieces include the entire sunflower, the Kishwaukee River, all animals and pollinators, and various vegetables and flowers. Community members worked in small groups to brainstorm ideas for imagery centered around the notion that "We All Belong." Ms. Casali's aim for the mural is to represent diversity and inclusion in DeKalb without repeating images that already exist in downtown murals.

The Citizens' Community Enhancement Commission (CCEC) provided feedback on a draft of the design in late March. Ms. Casali incorporated their suggestions into the final design, which was recommended unanimously by the Commission at a special meeting on March 27.

Mayor Barnes expressed his excitement for the project.

Alderman Morris asked about the downspout area that will be incorporated into the mural. It was determined that must stay because it's a necessary part of the City Hall building.

Brad Hoey, Chair of the CCEC, thanked Ms. Casali for her patience throughout this process. He also thanked the Council and City staff for working to allow the project to move forward. Mr. Hoey added that this is a public participation project for anyone that wants to volunteer with this want multimedia project that will include paint, mirror, glass, and ceramic.

There was consensus among the Council to move forward with the project.

### **4. Consideration of an Amendment to Chapter 7 "Water Service", Section 7.18 "Water Rates", and Section 7.18-6 "Water Service Fee".**

Mayor Barnes read the item by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Faivre moved to bring the item to the floor for discussion; seconded by Alderman Morris.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet. The water rate and water service fee are components used in calculating the billed user rate for City water service. The water rate is specifically tied to water consumption, whereas the water service fee is a minimum flat fee billed bi-monthly and varies based on water meter size. Chapter 7.18 (Water Rates) of the City's Municipal Code states that the water rate and water service fee shall be "subject to a positive adjustment annually using the increase, if any, in the most recent Consumer Price Index (CPI)." Using the most recent annual CPI would result in a water rate increase of 5.4%. This adjustment would be effective April 1, 2023, for bills issued in the July 1 billing cycle. The impact of a 5.4% CPI Water Rate and Water Service Fee increase would result in the average single-family home paying approximately \$25.65 more per year in water cost and would generate an estimated \$365,735 annually in revenue to the Water Fund, assuming water sales remain flat.

City Manager Nicklas recommended a 3.5% rate increase, which will support the water system at a level substantially below the current regional rate of inflation, despite dramatic inflated costs and expanding demands for infrastructure improvements.

Brief discussion ensued.

There was consensus among the Council to move forward with the 3.5% rate increase.

## **J. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING**

### **1. Ordinance 2023-017 Approving the Rezoning of the Site at 2239 Sycamore Road from the "SFR1" Single-Family Residential District to the "PD-C" Planned Development Commercial District (Pappas Glasgow Development LLC).**

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

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

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet. The City has received a petition from Pappas Glasgow Development LLC represented by John Pappas to rezone 2239 Sycamore Road from the "SFR1" Single-Family Residential District to the "PD-C" Planned Development Commercial District. The intent of the petitioner is to establish a tent rental showroom, offices, and warehouse in the existing building on the site, which comprises about 30,000 square feet. The 1.96-acre property is behind the Ellwood Steak & Fish House.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

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

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **K. RESOLUTIONS**

### **1. Resolution 2023-042 Authorizing the Approval of a Bid and a Professional Services (Advisor) Agreement with Bourne Transit Consulting, LLC for On-Call Transit Consultant Services.**

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Faivre moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman McAdams.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for On-Call Transit Planning Consultant Services was released in January for the purpose of qualifying up to five firms to assist with transit projects on an as-needed basis for FY2023 and FY2024. Only two proposals were received – one from Bourne Consulting LLC, and one from Sam Schwartz Consulting LLC. Both are presently pre-qualified for transit consulting.

Bob Bourne of Bourne Transit Consulting has worked with DSATS and City staff as an on-call transit consultant since 2010 and served as acting Transit Coordinator for the City during the 2018-2019 transit consolidation. Mr. Bourne has considerable knowledge of the DeKalb transit program and has a thorough understanding of small urban bus operations. He will be instrumental with projects such as capital procurement, route development, and assisting with FTA program compliance.

The attached resolution authorizes an on-call consulting retainer for bus transit services for the remainder of 2023 and throughout 2024 with a not-to-exceed amount of \$15,000 per fiscal year.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

### **2. Resolution 2023-043 Authorizing the Award of a Bid with D. Ryan Tree & Landscaping, LLC for Tree Removal, Trimming, and Emergency Services from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2025.**

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

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

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet. The City's forestry crew is tasked with the maintenance of over 5,500 City-owned parkway trees. While the Public Works Department manages the forestry program with in-house personnel, the steady workload requires staff to call upon an outside contractor on occasion, particularly as the height of failing limbs exceeds the safe reach of the City's equipment or during weather events when greater resources are needed in a timely fashion.

To fill this need, a Request for Bids (RFB) was circulated on February 16, 2023, for a three-year contract for tree removal, trimming, and emergency services, replacing a prior three-year contract which has expired. The bid opening was held on March 9, 2023, and resulted in a sole bidder, D. Ryan Tree & Landscaping. D. Ryan is a local company based in DeKalb that has been performing tree services for the City for the past several years. The City staff have been pleased with the services and timely responses of this company.



There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**3. Resolution 2023-044 Authorizing the Purchase of LiveScan Equipment for the DeKalb Police Department from IDEMIA for Electronic Fingerprinting in an Amount Not to Exceed \$25,000.**

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman McAdams moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Faivre.

City Manager Nicklas provided an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet. The Police Department's electronic finger-printing equipment and associated booking camera that connect to crime labs in Springfield are approximately 10 years old and out of warranty. The system is now requiring regular repair, and the most fiscally responsible course is to replace the live scan equipment.

All LiveScan systems include on-site installation, training, and a one-year on-site warranty.

Brief discussion ensued between Alderman Smith and Police Chief Byrd.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**4. Resolution 2023-045 Authorizing the Award of a Contract to Curran Contracting, Inc. in the Amount of \$2,444,006.27 for Resurfacing and Concrete Repairs on Greenwood Acres Drive, Certain Knolls Subdivision Side-Streets, and Various Other Locations, with Staff Authority to Approve Change Orders Up to a Combined Project Total Not to Exceed \$2,560,000.**

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Morris moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Faivre.

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

The annual street maintenance program undertakes pavement removal and replacement to repair City streets. One bid was received for work projected on side streets in the northern third of The Knolls, continuing where last year's program left off, and the entirety of Greenwood Acres Drive, with the addition of on-street bicycle striping. It also addresses segments of E. Locust Street and Oak Street in conjunction with recent development agreements with Nehring Electric and American Marketing, and the repair and resurfacing of Bethany Road as it stretches west from N. First Street toward Sangamon Road.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**L. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING**

There were none.

## **M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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

Alderman Faivre congratulated Alderman McAdams on his reelection and John Walker for being elected as the next 7<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman.

Alderman McAdams thanked the citizens of DeKalb for reelecting him.

Alderman Larson encouraged citizens to clean up their storm drains. She also encouraged caution while walking and biking around traffic.

Alderman Perkins offered an update on the traffic calming device on Fairview Drive with assistance from City Engineer Gill, who noted the project isn't complete, nor was it intended to be complete last fall. Pavers will be put in and the asphalt patching will be repaired.

Alderman Morris asked City Engineer Gill why he didn't recommend just adding a stop sign at the intersection. City Engineer Gill replied that the island provides a pedestrian refuge from those who may be driving irresponsibly on Fairview Drive, which is a high traffic area, and does not stop for the stop sign.

Alderman Verbic thanked those who responded to the RFPs and to all those who attended this meeting.

### **2. City Manager Report.**

City Manager Nicklas thanked Mayor Barnes and the Council for leading an interesting and challenging meeting.

## **N. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was none.

## **O. ADJOURNMENT**

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

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 voice vote. Aye: Morris, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Faivre, Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on April 24, 2023.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the April 10, 2023, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the April 10, 2023, Regular City Council meeting.