

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 14, 2025**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on April 14, 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 6:01 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 Andre Powell, Alderman Mike Verbic, Alderman John Walker, and Mayor Cohen Barnes.

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

**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 Perkins.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

1. Proclamation: National Public Safety Telecommunications Week, April 13 - 19, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to those representing the City of DeKalb telecommunications.

2. Proclamation: Sexual Assault Awareness Month – April 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to representatives of Safe Passage.

3. Proclamation: Disability Book Week, April 20 - 26, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to Disability Book Week Director Lindsey Larsen.

**E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Christopher Hudson spoke about a portion of the subdivision he lives in being recently redrawn into Ward 6 from Ward 5 and asked the Council to reconsider the change because the subdivision has a unique identity that sets it apart from surrounding areas.

City Attorney Rose explained that when the census result is released each decade, the City is obligated to redistrict based on the one-person, one-vote principle. He added that the map could be redrawn in the middle of the decade, however, a special census would have to be requested, which is very expensive and creates an inaccurate census count. The only value of doing a special census would be to see if there would be an increase in the City's overall population to gain federal revenues tied to population numbers. City Attorney Rose stated his recommendation would be to not undertake a special census.

Discussion ensued regarding a special census. It was noted that data collected during a special census does not delve into income strata, demographics, etc.

Mayor Barnes stated the 2020 census, which occurred during the COVID pandemic, indicated that DeKalb's population had decreased by approximately 4,000, yet our school district seems to be bursting at the seams.

DeKalb Township Supervisor Mary Hess and Director of General Assistance Casey Pachochin invited the Council and the community to a two-hour poverty simulation on April 22, 2025, where community leaders and other participants will play the role of someone from an organization offering assistance or the role of a person living in poverty. They added that the simulator will give participants a snapshot of living the life of a person in poverty for one month and having to make the choices that those individuals make, such as purchasing shoes for their children or paying the electric bill, and/or purchasing food or paying for prescription medication. A debriefing will take place after the simulation to discuss what can be done to help those living in poverty in our community and how barriers can be broken down.

## **F. APPOINTMENTS**

There were none.

## **G. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Barnes read the Consent Agenda into the record as follows:

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of March 24, 2025.
2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through April 14, 2025, in the Amount of \$3,876,021.02.
3. Investment and Bank Balance Summary through February 2025.
4. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures through February 2025.
5. Crime Free Housing Bureau Report – March 2025.
6. Resolution 2025-038 Authorizing a Workers' Compensation Lump Sum Petition and Order in the Amount of \$25,927.75 (Christopher Ziola).

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

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

1. Vacation of a Portion of Simonds Avenue.

Mayor Barnes opened the Public Hearing at 6:21 p.m. and read the title for the record.

No one from the public spoke to this item.

Mayor Barnes closed the Public Hearing at 6:22 p.m.

## **I. CONSIDERATIONS**

There were none.

## **J. RESOLUTIONS**

1. Resolution 2025-039 Authorizing the Approval of a Proposal from Fehr Graham for an Environmental Site Assessment of the Former Protano's Auto Salvage Property at 1151 S. Fourth Street in the Amount of \$120,300.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins 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 asked if the assessment had to be done so that the property can be developed in the future. City Manager Nicklas stated that's correct and added the neighborhood would like to see the property cleaned up.

Alderman Zasada thanked City Manager Nicklas for bringing this topic to the Council with a forward-thinking plan.

Mayor Barnes stated there's a lot of work to be done on the property and he appreciates that the City is getting it done because it's hard to have redevelopment when there's a brown field like this.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

2. Resolution 2025-040 Authorizing the Award of a Contract to Curran Contracting Company in the Amount of \$4,083,655.11 for Asphalt Resurfacing with Staff Authority to Approve Change Orders Up to a Combined Project Total of \$4,248,000.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson 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. He added that City choosing Curran over Schroeder isn't about the intent or the professionalism of Schroeder as a company, it's about what their capacity is rated by the only independent arbiter, which is the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Alderman Larson stated she'd like to go with a company that can provide a product that can be trusted and doesn't start deteriorating within a year.

Alderman Powell asked if the other bidder, Schroeder, would be getting asphalt mix from Curran. City Manager Nicklas explained there are other places they can get it from at a farther distance than Curran.

Alderman Perkins noted that the \$300,000 difference between bids is a lot of money.

City Manager Nicklas stated this is a major street operation and the City doesn't have the personnel or funds to repair a job done incorrectly.

Lengthy discussion ensued regarding reliability, accurate representation, the warranty timeline, and the availability of a project engineer.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: Powell. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

3. Resolution 2025-041, Authorizing the Purchase of Traffic Signal Equipment through Mobotrex in an Amount Not to Exceed \$32,834 and Appropriating \$8,208.50 in Local Funds.

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 an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

At this point in the meeting, Mayor Barnes referred to the subject matter in Resolution 2025-040, stating he's glad to see repair on some of DeKalb's most deplorable roads begin.

4. Resolution 2025-042 Authorizing the Purchase of Thirty (30) Police Portable Radios from J&K Communications in an Amount Not to Exceed \$91,000.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins 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 an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

5. Resolution 2025-043 Authorizing the FY2025 Payment for a Continued Law Enforcement Embedded Social Worker Agreement with Northwestern Medicine Ben Gordon Center in the Amount of \$135,714.

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.

Mayor Barnes commented on the behind the scenes work done by the social workers to assist DeKalb's Police Officers when they encounter issues involving the elderly, the homeless, and those with mental illness.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

6. Resolution 2025-044 Approving a Retail Tobacco Store License for Zone Tobacco & Convenience, Inc., Located at 110 E. Hillcrest Drive.

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 an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

7. Resolution 2025-045 Approving a Bar/Restaurant Liquor License for Iniga Inc., Doing Business as Iniga Pizzeria Napoletana, to be Located at 206 E. Lincoln Highway.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Smith 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 noted that when the owner, Tim Cottingim, came to the City with his project idea, everyone brainstormed for ideas to make this project successful, so he's happy to see it's close to being complete.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

8. Resolution 2025-046 Authorizing a Land Lease Agreement with Iniga Pizzeria Napoletana for a Part of the Property Located on the East Side of S. Second Street at 206 E. Lincoln Highway for an Outdoor Patio.

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. He noted that the land (patio) lease agreement indicates signage advertising for other businesses is not allowed.

Alderman Verbic commented on businesses with patio leases posting signs advertising for other businesses and wondered what could be done about that. City Manager Nicklas replied those would be taken care of separately.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

Mayor Barnes welcomed Iniga to DeKalb and thanked Mr. Cottingim for investing in DeKalb.

9. Resolution 2025-047 Approving a Bar Liquor License with Licensure for Supplemental Gaming for Redjepi LLC, Doing Business as Zana's Woodfired Pizza, Located at 1406 Sycamore Road, Suite A-B.

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.

Alderman Verbic stated that Council has discussed the topic of reducing video gaming terminals (VGTs) in DeKalb several times and he doesn't support this request.

Discussion ensued. It was noted that the Council limited the number of video gaming establishments in DeKalb to 10 but allowed businesses with bar liquor licenses to place no more than six VGTs.

Alderman Larson recalled denying the placement of VGTs in a laundromat because children would most likely be there, which would be the same situation for this restaurant.

Mayor Barnes stated the proposed set-up would be the same as Fatty's, which is a family friendly restaurant with VGTs.

Alderman Zasada stated she understands the challenge local businesses are having to face to make ends meet. She further stated that it sounds like Zana's remodeled so they could accommodate VGTs, and since their request is aligned with the City's current rules, she will support it in context.

Alderman Perkins stated that placing VGTs in a laundromat was denied because it was across the street from a school. He noted that he views this request as a gaming parlor dressed up as a pizza place.

Discussion ensued.

City Manager Nicklas stated he was briefly involved when this request was brought forward and staff dutifully said, "here's what you can do, here's what you can't do", and what you can do is do what they did.

Further discussion ensued regarding the placement of VGTs within a business that's not a VGE. It was noted that VGTs must be in an enclosed area that can only be accessed by those 21 years of age or older. It was also noted that enclosed doesn't mean a room with a door, it could simply be a roped off area.

It was determined that Chapter 38 "Intoxicating Liquors" will be discussed at a future Council meeting to decide whether a moratorium should be placed on video gaming terminals in DeKalb.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 5-3 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Smith, Powell, Walker, Barnes. Nay: Larson, Perkins, Verbic. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING**

There were none.

## **L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING**

1. Ordinance 2025-015 Approving a Plat of Vacation for Simonds Avenue.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Zasada 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 an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

2. Ordinance 2025-016 Approving the Rezoning of Property Located at 209 Grove Street from the "LI" Light Industrial District to the "CBD" Central Business District (Michael Warfel).

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

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 an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

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

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

## **M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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

Alderman Verbic congratulated the Glidden Homestead for earning four awards from the Illinois Association of Museums.

Alderman Perkins stated as his time on the Council winds down, he's been thinking about what this Council has accomplished and he's most proud of the growth that's occurred within the community. He also stated one of the things this Council has worked on is partnering with the school district regarding their code of conduct and the placement of School Resource Officers (SROs). Alderman Perkins then stated that he's curious about how that's going as he's concerned about the long-term growth prospects of the community, adding if the issues within the school district aren't addressed, he's afraid DeKalb isn't going to continue to grow.

City Manager Nicklas stated that a proposal to extend the SRO contract will be on the next Council agenda.

Alderman Larson reported that she and Mayor Barnes attended Earth Fest on April 5, 2025, at Northern Illinois University where the City's Communications & Engagement Manager, Scott Zak, on behalf of the Citizens' Environmental Commission (CEC), updated residents on the status of getting Metra service in DeKalb.

Mayor Barnes agreed that Mr. Zak's presentation was phenomenal, adding he's impressed by all the good work the CEC has been doing.

Continuing, Mayor Barnes reported on recent meetings and events he's attended, including meeting with Habitat for Humanity to discuss their long-term goals and how they might align with the City of DeKalb, an art reception at the Egyptian Theater that goes through the first week in May, talking with TD Ryan, who formally worked at WLBK, but now has his own podcast, attending Meta's community action grant event, meeting with a new fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon, and the Tugs event, which is unique to Northern Illinois University.

Alderman Perkins thanked Fire Chief Mike Thomas for giving him a tour of the new firehouse.

Mayor Barnes stated the new firehouse looks great and noted a ribbon cutting ceremony or something of the sort will be held soon and the community will be invited.

## 2. City Manager Report

City Manager Nicklas had no report.

## **N. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1. Approval to Hold an Executive Session Meeting to Discuss Executive Session Minutes as Provided for in 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21).

Mayor Barnes read the title above for the record.

MOTION: Alderman Powell moved to recess for Executive Session; seconded by Alderman Smith.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and recessed the Regular meeting at 7:44 p.m.

Following the adjournment of the Executive Session, Mayor Barnes opened the meeting to the public at 7:56 p.m.

## **O. ADJOURNMENT**

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

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 roll voice vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the Regular meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on April 28, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the April 14, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the April 14, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.