

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 28, 2025**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on April 28, 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.

Mayor Barnes noted that Alderman Zasada had notified him of her absence.

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 Larson.

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

D. PRESENTATIONS

1. Honoring Elected Officials Leaving Service in 2025 – Fourth Ward Alderman Greg Perkins (2019-2025).

Mayor Barnes read the title above for the record.

City Manager Nicklas, Alderman Verbic, Alderman Smith, Alderman Larson, Alderman Powell, Alderman Walker, and Mayor Barnes thanked Alderman Perkins for his service to the residents of the Fourth Ward and the City of DeKalb. Comments of praise included his financial acumen, willingness to serve, how great he was to work with, how much he'll be missed, his encouragement of other Council members, making himself available to other Council members who may have had questions regarding a particular matter, and his calming demeanor.

Alderman Powell relayed a message from a former Alderman, Pam Verbic, who stated she appreciated Alderman Perkins' voice and that he will be missed.

Mayor Barnes thanked the Perkins' family for their strength during difficult challenges, adding that frequently Council members and other community leaders become targets of certain individuals within the community who are relentless and ruthless in their comments in an effort to destroy characters. They also make up things and outright lie about it.

Concluding his comments, Mayor Barnes thanked Alderman Perkins for how impactful he was during his service to the City of DeKalb.

Alderman Perkins thanked everyone for their comments, adding that his time on the City Council has been a great experience, noting a lot of ground has been covered during his service and the success has been infectious.

Mayor Barnes and City Manager Nicklas then presented Alderman Perkins with a plaque, which noted his years of service to the City of DeKalb.

2. Proclamation: International Firefighter's Day – May 4, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to representatives of the DeKalb Fire Department.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

F. APPOINTMENTS

There were none.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Barnes read the items on the Consent Agenda by title only.

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of April 14, 2025.
2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through April 28, 2025, in the Amount of \$2,548,102.43.
3. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Report – March 2025.
4. DeKalb Chamber of Commerce 2024 Annual Report.
5. DeKalb Municipal Band Annual 2024 Report.
6. Resolution 2025-048 Authorizing the Approval of Certain Executive Session Meeting Minutes of the City of DeKalb City Council.

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0 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 2025-049 Authorizing an Intergovernmental Agreement with the DeKalb Community Unit School District No. 428 as it Pertains to School Resource Officers (SROs) for a Five Year Term (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2030).

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

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

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

Prior to his comments regarding the subject matter, Police Chief Byrd, on behalf of the entire Police Department, thanked Alderman Perkins for his continued support of the department. He noted their appreciation for his commitment to doing the right thing, holding them accountable, and understanding how complicated the law enforcement job truly is.

Police Chief Byrd thanked SROs Sullivan, Gordon, Densberger, Sorenson, and Remnes, who are led by Police Commander Lekkas, for the positive impact they're making for the students within DeKalb Community Unit School District No. 428 (D428). He also noted the strong collaboration between the Police Department and D428, who meet on a regular basis to discuss concerns within the framework of the school and how the Police Department can assist.

Continuing, Police Chief Byrd provided information regarding the Handle With Care Program, which notifies law enforcement (mainly the SROs) of difficult situations that may have occurred in a student's home overnight. In turn, the SROs advise D428 regarding the matter and that there might be a need for soft treatment of the student for the day.

Alderman Verbic thanked Police Commander Lekkas, SRO Sullivan, and leaders of D428 for meeting with him to discuss his concerns regarding truancy within D428 and providing information regarding what's involved to curb the situation.

Alderman Verbic then asked why the SROs are excluded from supporting the truancy issue, not from a punitive standpoint, but by building relationships and advising the importance of being in school.

Police Chief Byrd replied that he doesn't think the SROs are excluded and a lot of what they do every day is part of that program. However, actively seeking truant students takes the SROs away from their core duties, one of which is providing public safety.

SRO Gordon shared a situation that occurred during the past school year where a parent called stating she was having an issue with getting her child out of bed to go to school and he was able to share some tips and tricks.

Continuing, SRO Gordon stated that a separate unit of law enforcement would be needed to seek truant students. However, he believes that on a day-to-day basis, students, including those that face daily challenges, do make it to school.

It was also noted that there have been positive results from meetings with D428, which included Transit Manager Mike Neuenkirchen, regarding students who miss the bus and how the City's bus system can assist with getting them to school.

Discussion ensued.

Alderman Larson thanked the SROs for their unwavering support of DeKalb's students and stated she's seen them in action during events such as Fun Jam in the Park, etc. She noted past comments from Police Chief Byrd regarding such events, which provide a safe spot for children to be, someone to talk to, and show them they're cared for.

Mayor Barnes agreed, stating the events look like protection, not policing, which builds relationships, and he appreciates that.

Discussion ensued.

Police Chief Byrd mentioned other programs within the community that are focused on assisting the community's children, such as Opportunity DeKalb, B.L.A.C. Inc., and the DeKalb

Park District. He also noted the attendance of City leaders at Fun Jam in the Park and how impactful it is for the children.

Alderman Perkins asked about the progress of D428's Code of Conduct.

D428's Director of Student Services, Kyle Gerdt, reported that the Code of Conduct (COC) is still being utilized as a tool to guide D428 to ensure they have measured consequences that also incorporate restorative practices, which are more progressive than traditional discipline. He noted that the COC is disseminated each year by including it on the D428 website and within the parent-student handbook. Mr. Gerdt further stated that the COC will be reevaluated heading into the next school year by examining data and getting feedback from administration.

Discussion ensued regarding past discussions of the COC, how it wasn't prevalent throughout every school within D428, and some of its deficiencies.

Mr. Gerdt stated that D428 has been intentional about creating alternative pathways for students who aren't seeing success within the traditional school setting, such as the Kishwaukee Education Consortium and the Menta Academy. He also noted that early intervention is key, as well as the importance of the Handle With Care Program.

Discussion ensued.

Alderman Smith and Alderman Powell thanked Mr. Gerdt for the good work being done within D428.

Mayor Barnes encouraged D428 to reach out to the City if there's anything that can be done to help improve safety within schools, not only for students, but for faculty as well. He also thanked the SROs for the good work they continue to do.

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

2. Resolution 2025-050 Authorizing the Purchase of a 2025 Escape AWD SUV and a 2025 Maverick AWD SuperCrew Light Duty Truck to be Used as Transit Staff Support Vehicles Based on State Bid Contract Pricing through Morrow Brothers Ford Division in an Amount Not to Exceed \$64,180.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

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

3. Resolution 2025-051 Awarding a Bid to Five Star Energy Services, LLC in the Amount of \$2,938,677 for the 2025/2026 Lead and Galvanized Steel Water Service Line Replacement Project Consisting of the Replacement of Up to 260 Lead and Galvanized Water Service Lines through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Principal Forgiveness Loan.

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.

Mayor Barnes stated this project will continue the City's tradition of providing quality water.

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

4. Resolution 2025-052 Authorizing an Amendment to a Professional Service Agreement with Engineering Enterprises, Inc., to Include Construction Phase Professional Engineering Services in an Amount Not to Exceed \$290,952.

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.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0 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

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

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to approve Second Reading of the ordinance; 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 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING

1. Ordinance 2025-017 Amending Chapter 7, "Water Service," Section 7.18 "Water Rates," and Section 7.18-6, "Water Service Fee."

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 a 7-0 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 Powell.

There was brief discussion between Alderman Smith and City Manager Nicklas regarding the condition of the City's wells and water. City Manager Nicklas noted that the water usage anticipated three years ago with the expansion and industrial growth to the south side of DeKalb has not occurred. One of the reasons for that is due to businesses investing in more efficient recycling and other ways to cool their equipment and buildings to control costs.

It was noted that not only does DeKalb's water taste good, but it's thanks to the concern for our corporate authority by not only this Council, but those going back 20 to 25 years, that's paying off right now.

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

2. Ordinance 2025-018 Amending the City's Fiscal Year Budget Ending December 31, 2024.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Powell 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.

Discussion ensued regarding the differences between the estimates on the bridge projects, and the Peace Road and Fairview Drive projects. It was also noted that these projects have brought better driving experiences to DeKalb residents.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0 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 Perkins.

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

3. Ordinance 2025-019 Amending Chapter 51 "Traffic", Schedule C "Parking Prohibited", in Order to Establish a No Parking Zone in the 1200 Block of Normal Road, West Side.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson 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.

Assistant City Manager Redel noted that the median has been poured and stamped.

Alderman Verbic wondered if closing the road during school days is a consideration to ensure the safety of students crossing the street.

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

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to waive Second Reading; seconded by Alderman Smith.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0 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 Larson reported on her attendance at the grand opening of Fire Station No. 4 and what a great community turnout there was.

Alderman Smith reported on his attendance at the Fire Station No. 4 grand opening, and at the Police Benevolent breakfast, noting that Police Chief Byrd did a great job cooking the eggs. He also commented on upcoming road repairs and advised residents to be prepared for stalled traffic, etc.

Alderman Powell reported on his attendance at the Fire Station No. 4 grand opening and thanked Fire Chief Thomas for his hospitality. He also noted his attendance at the Police Benevolent breakfast, adding that the biscuits and gravy were phenomenal.

Alderman Verbic congratulated the Fire Department for the grand opening of Fire Station No. 4. He also reported that the City's business district was busy over the weekend due to several athletic events at Northern Illinois University.

Mayor Barnes noted that the Fire Station No. 4 grand opening was attended not only by the community, but also by neighboring fire departments. He also attended the Police Benevolent breakfast, agreeing that the food was excellent. Continuing, Mayor Barnes reported that he attended the April 25 Joint Review Board meeting, as well as meeting with Meta to discuss community need and where they might be able to invest funds.

2. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas had no report.

N. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was none.

O. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0 voice vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Perkins, Powell, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on May 12, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the April 28, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the April 28, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.