

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
MAY 12, 2025**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on May 12, 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, and Mayor Cohen Barnes. Alderman Carolyn Zasada and Alderman John Walker were absent.

Mayor Barnes stated that Alderman Zasada and Alderman Walker had notified him of their absence.

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

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

D. PRESENTATIONS

1. Swearing in of Newly Elected Officials.

The following newly elected officials were sworn in by Recording Secretary Scott:

- a. Cohen Barnes, Mayor (2025-2029)
- b. Barb Larson, Second Ward Alderman (2025-2029)

Just after the swearing in of Alderman Larson, Mayor Barnes and City Manager Nicklas presented Alderman Perkins with a street sign, which is a tradition for outgoing Council members, that read "Perkins Way".

- c. Justin Carlson, Fourth Ward Alderman (2025-2029)
- d. Andre Powell, Fifth Ward Alderman (2025-2027; Two Year Unexpired Term)
- e. Mike Verbic, Sixth Ward Alderman (2025-2029)
- f. Brad Hoey, City Clerk (2025-2029)

Following the swearing in ceremony, each of the newly elected officials gave brief comments.

Alderman Larson stated she looks forward to serving another four years on the City Council.

Alderman Carlson thanked Greg Perkins, former Ward 4 Alderman, for his service to the residents of the City of DeKalb and for his guidance.

Alderman Verbic thanked his wife for her support. He also thanked the residents of Ward 6 for their confidence in his leadership, noting he looks forward to working with them over the next four years.

City Clerk Hoey stated he's excited to represent the citizens of DeKalb in this capacity and thanked them for their support. He also stated he's looking forward to working with the established team of elected officials and City staff. City Clerk Hoey then explained that he would be leaving the meeting early to participate in a Sports Illinois Huddle in Peoria, Illinois, on behalf of the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau in an effort to bring more sporting events to DeKalb and DeKalb County.

Alderman Powell thanked the citizens of DeKalb, especially Ward 5, for the support they give not only to him but the entire City Council. He also thanked Greg Perkins, former Ward 4 Alderman, for his guidance and support. Alderman Powell also stated that he looks forward to working with members of the City Council on future endeavors.

Mayor Barnes stated that Alderman Powell filled a vacancy in the Ward 5 seat approximately one year ago, noting he's been a wonderful contributor.

Mayor Barnes thanked his wife for her support. He also thanked City staff for their hard work. He also remarked on the professionalism of the DeKalb Police Department during a recent ride-along and thanked them for keeping DeKalb safe.

Continuing, Mayor Barnes thanked the DeKalb Fire Department and the Public Works Department for being dedicated to moving the City of DeKalb positively forward. He then thanked DeKalb's leadership team, especially City Manager Nicklas, for enabling staff to be successful. Mayor Barnes also thanked the City Council for coming together to do the best job possible for the residents of DeKalb. He noted that while some may not agree with decisions made by the Council, a lot of time, energy and thought has gone into every decision made and they do the best they can with what they have to represent DeKalb.

2. DeKalb Fire Department 2024 Annual Report.

Prior to giving an overview of the report based on the information provided in the agenda packet, Fire Chief Thomas thanked his administrative team, Jill Voight and Samantha Ruby, for putting the report together. He also thanked the Firefighters and Paramedics for their hard work.

Noting that the FY2024 report is available on the City's website, Fire Chief Thomas provided highlights from the report, including Call Volume, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Fire Incidents, Mutual and Automatic Aid, Training, and Public Education and Community Outreach.

Noting the nationwide difficulty in recruiting, Fire Chief Thomas thanked the City's Human Resources Department for the terrific job they're doing in recruiting fire personnel for the DeKalb Fire Department.

Concluding his report, Fire Chief Thomas stated the new King Cobra Rosenbauer aerial ladder is expected to be delivered by the end of May, noting it should provide 25 to 30 years of service to DeKalb.

3. Proclamation: National Police Week, May 11 - 17, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to Police Chief David Byrd and members of the DeKalb Police Department.

4. Proclamation: National Public Works Week, May 18 - 24, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to Public Works Director Andy Raih and Public Works Department staff.

5. Proclamation: National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week, May 19 - 25, 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to Fire Chief Thomas and EMS staff.

6. Proclamation: Motorcycle Awareness Month – May 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to representatives of ABATE Illinois.

7. Proclamation: Older American's Month – May 2025.

Mayor Barnes read the proclamation in its entirety and presented it to Alderman Smith.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Jo Plenger-Schulz thanked the City Council for the good work they do. She then stated that she's troubled by the shooting incident that took place last week on Kimberly Drive and that she's losing faith in DeKalb and the community. Ms. Plenger-Schulz then stated that she believes the law stipulates that any crime occurring within Section 8 housing is reported to Section 8, which could result in eviction. She also noted her concern for the students of the new elementary school who will be walking to and from school in that area. Concluding her comments, Ms. Plenger-Schulz stated she hopes the City Council is supporting Police Chief Byrd and his team so that the students remain safe, adding that while a lot of good things are happening in DeKalb, there are some things going on that are not okay.

DeKalb Community Unit School District No. 428 Board President Chris Boyes stated one thing he appreciates about this newly elected council is that he knows when the word "we" is used, it isn't just "we" as a City, but the entire community across all bodies of government, as well as other public services such as the DeKalb County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation. Concluding his comments, Mr. Boyes stated he believes this team is ready to do what needs to be done to make DeKalb a place that people want to work, live, play, and learn in.

Mayor Barnes stated he believes that everyone is looking at the bigger picture for the future of DeKalb.

F. APPOINTMENTS

There were none.

G. CONSENT AGENDA

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

1. Joint Review Board Meeting Minutes of October 25, 2024, Meeting.
2. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of April 28, 2025.
3. Accounts Payable and Payroll through May 12, 2025, in the Amount of \$2,240,745.31.
4. Investment and Bank Balance Summary through March 2025.

5. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures through March 2025.
6. Crime Free Housing Bureau Report – April 2025.
7. FY2025 Human Services Funding 1st Quarter Report.
8. FY2024 Police Pension Treasurer's Report.
9. FY2024 DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) Report.
10. FY2024 DeKalb County Convention & Visitors Bureau Report.

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

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

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

I. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Consideration of the 2025-2035 Water System Master Plan.

City Manager Nicklas encouraged the Council to review the reports listed under the Consent Agenda because these agencies and entities, who are financially supported by the City, provide great services throughout the community. He then gave an overview of this item based on the information provided in the agenda packet.

Alderman Larson asked how long it would take to start pumping water from a new well. City Manager Nicklas replied that it would be approximately one year.

Brief discussion ensued.

Alderman Verbic stated the City needs to look to new development to help with the funding model for future needs. He then noted that the report mentioned there have been discussions with Sycamore about providing emergency services. City Manager Nicklas stated the City would not be doing that, noting that the report referred to installing an air connection between valves for fire protection in case of a disaster.

Discussion ensued regarding watermain replacement priorities and the age of some DeKalb's water and sewer drains. It was noted that replacing the drains is a big project and must be coordinated over a long period of time.

Mayor Barnes commented that it's important to him to figure out how the City is going to support continued growth on the south side of DeKalb.

J. RESOLUTIONS

1. Resolution 2025-053 Authorizing an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2035, for Maintenance Costs on Illinois State Route 38 and Illinois State Route 23.

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 was confirmation that funding from IDOT is a contribution to the City to help support Public Works.

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

2. Resolution 2025-054 Amending Resolution 2024-044 to Increase the Not-to-Exceed General Contract for the Construction of Fire Station No. 4 at 1130 S. Malta Road from \$3,688,000 to \$3,772,642.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

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

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

Alderman Smith noted that this amount is still lower than the second bidder.

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

K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING

There were none.

L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING

1. Ordinance 2025-020 Approving a Water Service Agreement with Tim and Erin Martens for 2581 Pleasant Street.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Smith 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 was brief discussion regarding unincorporated homes that do not receive City water services because although surrounded by the city of DeKalb, they're not in the city of DeKalb.

City Manager Nicklas stated there are some occasions where the City would be allowed under state law to force annexation if DeKalb surrounds the properties and there are gross acreages of a certain level. He further stated that requests such as this one are taken one at a time.

City Manager Nicklas then mentioned that a proposal from the residents of Greenwood Acres Drive may be before the Council in the near future regarding their annexation into DeKalb.

Discussion ensued.

Alderman Smith asked if unincorporated property would be hooked up to receive City water if their well failed. City Manager Nicklas stated that would be between the property owner and the Health Department.

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

2. Ordinance 2025-021 Approving a Special Use Permit at 611-615 N. First Street for the Expansion of Oakwood Cemetery (DeKalb Township).

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.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

Mary Hess, DeKalb Township Supervisor, stated the Township is excited for this project for multiple reasons. One is that most of the project is funded by a donor, so it's coming at a very low cost to taxpayers. Secondly, the project is going to provide alternatives for those choosing to be cremated at various levels of affordability. Lastly, the space will be left as natural as possible because it is a beautiful area.

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

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

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

3. Ordinance 2025-022 Approving the Final Plat of the Dirks Resubdivision for 3435 and 3447 Owens Lane in the Bridges of Rivermist Subdivision (Marshall Dirks).

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Carlson.

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

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

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

4. Ordinance 2025-023 Amending Chapter 51 "Traffic", Schedule C "Parking Prohibited", as it Pertains to Minor Alterations of Parking Restrictions for Normal Road Due to Roadway Modifications.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

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.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

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

MOTION: Alderman Carlson moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Verbic.

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

5. Ordinance 2025-024 Amending Chapter 51 "Traffic", Schedule S "School Speed Limit 20 MPH on School Days When Children Are Present", to Establish a School Speed Zone Along Ridge Drive and Normal Road (Mitchell Elementary School).

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.

There were no questions or comments from the Council.

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

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

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

M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Council Member Reports.

Alderman congratulated graduating students, noting this is an exciting time of the year for the Ward 6 business district as it will see over 100,000 visitors.

Alderman Carlson reported on recent events he's attended, including a car show at the Elks Lodge and the 90th birthday of long time resident Mary Simons.

Alderman Smith reported that Sullivan's will be celebrating their 80th anniversary on May 17. He also reported that a Sketchers store will be opening in DeKalb soon and he's happy to see development starting to take place in some of DeKalb's empty storefronts.

Mayor Barnes opened his report by noting the passing of Jim Rhodes, who served DeKalb for over 50 years in several capacities, which include several positions within the DeKalb Police Department, as well as being a long time member of the Airport Advisory Board. He noted the number of people that reached out to him asking for recognition of Mr. Rhodes at a Council meeting is a reflection of the individual himself.

Continuing, his report Mayor Barnes stated a resident of the Knolls reached out to him to say thank you for resurfacing the roads there. He also reported on a recent ride-along with the DeKalb Police Department. He noted that while there is a lot of work to do in DeKalb regarding crime, this ride-along was less eventful compared to the one he did four years ago. Mayor Barnes encouraged Council members to go on a ride-along to see what it's like on a Friday or Saturday night in DeKalb.

Mayor Barnes also reported on recent events and meetings he's attended, including a meeting he and City Manager Nicklas had with the Terraces, which he felt was productive, their regularly scheduled collaboration meeting with Northern Illinois University leadership, and the recent Northern Illinois Mayor's Association meeting to present on Illinois Municipal League activities.

Concluding his report, Mayor Barnes commented on the number of compliments he's received regarding the recent Back Alley Market event.

2. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas commented on the recently distributed property tax bills, noting that the city has experienced historical EAV increases of from 2020 through 2024. He also noted that the historic valuation (wealth) accumulated from 1836 to 2020 was \$585,726,839 and it's now \$1.339 billion, which is staggering.

City Manager Nicklas then thanked the Mayor and City Council, particularly Mayor Barnes, for providing the leadership, cajoling, pleading, and sometimes frank conversations to see that the taxing bodies are pulling together.

Continuing, City Manager Nicklas stated that the City's partnership with Meta has been a phenomenal experience. Without Meta's contributions in terms of new construction value, these numbers would not be where they are. He also noted that Meta has given away \$1.2 million to DeKalb's social service agencies.

Concluding his report, City Manager Nicklas stated that other corporations have contributed to new construction values as well, adding that Ferrara Candy Company recently contacted him to find out ways they can engage in a larger way to the city of DeKalb.

Mayor Barnes thanked City Manager Nicklas for all the work he's done to make this happen.

N. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was none.

O. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 6-0-2 roll call vote. Aye: Larson, Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Barnes. Nay: None. Absent: Zasada, Walker. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on May 27, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the May 12, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the May 12, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.