

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DEKALB  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 27, 2025**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on May 27, 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 6:02 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 Justin Carlson, 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 City Clerk Brad Hoey.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION: Alderman Carlson moved to approve the agenda; 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.

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

There were none.

**E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

**F. APPOINTMENTS**

Mayor Barnes read the appointment by title only.

1. Appointing Greg Perkins to the Finance Advisory Committee for a Four-Year Term through December 31, 2029.

MOTION: Alderman Powell moved to approve the appointment; 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.

**G. CONSENT AGENDA**

Mayor Barnes asked for a motion to modify the Consent Agenda to remove the following item due to a scrivener's error:

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of May 12, 2025.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to modify the Consent Agenda as requested; seconded by Alderman Verbic.

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.

Mayor Barnes then asked for a motion to bring the May 12, 2025, minutes forward for approval, but with modification. The minutes listed Alderman Verbic as making and seconding the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. However, the minutes should have stated that Alderman Verbic made the motion, which was then seconded by Alderman Powell.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to approve the correction; 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.

Mayor Barnes then read the remaining items on the Consent Agenda for the record as follows:

2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through May 27, 2025, in the Amount of \$3,786,991.74.
3. Freedom of Information Action (FOIA) Report – April 2025.

MOTION: Alderman Carlson moved to approve the modified Consent 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.

## **H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **I. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Consideration of a Supplemental 2025 Round of Human Services Funding (HSF).

Mayor Barnes read the consideration by title only.

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

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

Voluntary Action Center (VAC) representative Nate Closter noted that VAC is one of the recipients of the City's annual HSF grants and provided perspective on the impact it makes, specifically to their Meals on Wheels program. Forty-four (44) percent of Meals on Wheels clients reside in DeKalb. However, due to unprecedented demand, VAC was forced to put a cap on the program in November of 2024 and start a waiting list. They are currently serving 360 clients, which equates to approximately 90,000 meals a year. There are 85 people on the waiting list, of which 51% reside in DeKalb, which translates to about 19,000 potential meals. Fifty-five (55) percent of their recipients receive a meal for a year or longer and noted it would cost \$155,000 annually to move those on the waiting list to the client list. He also noted that 17% of the population in DeKalb are age 60 plus, which is the qualifying age for the Meals on Wheels service.

Brief discussion ensued.

Alderman Verbic noted that the need is extensive and urgent.

Alderman Larson asked if funding alone would move those on the waiting list to the recipient list.

Mr. Closter replied that funding is a roadblock at this time.

Alderman Smith stated the LaSalle Meals on Wheels operation handles 550 meals a day with the capacity of 700 or more. While the DeKalb operation has the same capacity, it's literally just funding that's lacking.

Mayor Barnes noted there would be an application process, which will follow the same guidelines and process.

There was consensus among those Council members present to move forward with the supplemental HSF grant funding. Mayor Barnes noted this item will be brought back for official approval at the June 9, 2025, Council meeting.

2. Consideration of a Proposal to Revise Chapter 23 "Unified Development Ordinance" (UDO), Section 7.18.07 "Other Development Restrictions", to Permit "Tasting Rooms" in Locally Licensed Cannabis Dispensaries.

Mayor Barnes read the consideration by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Carlson moved to bring the item to the floor for discussion; seconded by Alderman Powell.

Noting that the Excelleaf dispensary opened approximately a 1.5 years ago, Nakia McAdoo stated the community has embraced the dispensary and thanked the Council for supporting their vision of providing safe, tested, legal cannabis products to the community, noting the responsibility isn't taken lightly and they are constantly looking for ways to educate and inform customers. She added that Excelleaf served over 87,000 customers in 2024 and sold over 150,000 products, but there's still more work to be done.

Ms. McAdoo then stated Excelleaf is passionate about ensuring customers have a clear understanding of the products sold and how they can be used safely and effectively. Therefore, a new space has been created within the dispensary they hope will serve that purpose by allowing customers to sample a small amounts of product, learn how to use it safely, and sample it before purchasing.

Continuing, Ms. McAdoo stated there's a lot of confusion surrounding cannabis and products sold in dispensaries versus hemp, Delta 8 and Delta 9, which are sold at gas stations and convenience stores right here in DeKalb. This confusion leads to misuse because of the misleading dosing information, underage purchases at these sites, and the lack of regulation of the hemp industry. This space will allow customers to consume product samples in a safe regulated and law-abiding environment. It will also provide an opportunity to engage with customers about the importance of choosing the legal market for cannabis, current laws, consumption limits, and responsible use, while reducing the stigma associated with the regular use of cannabis.

Ms. McAdoo further stated that this is also meant to support the Illinois market as many customers are opting to go to cheaper, which offer cheaper prices at lower quality and take tax dollars out of Illinois. It is estimated that Illinois has lost approximately \$1 billion to Michigan and Missouri because customers are choosing to travel for cheaper prices and less tax. Customers that have an area to consume are more likely to purchase at that on-site dispensary and keep those tax dollars locally.

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

Alderwoman Larson stated as someone who fights chronic pain to the point of requiring major surgery, a place to sample products that could let her function pain free would be wonderful.

Alderman Verbic asked City Attorney Rose if Chapter 38 (Intoxicating Liquors) of the City's Municipal Code would need to be amended to accommodate the request.

City Attorney Rose stated that Chapter 38 doesn't cover cannabis, but Chapter 23 (Unified Development Ordinance, also known as the "UDO") would need to be amended as it currently prohibits cannabis dispensaries from allow ingestion of product on site. He noted that Chapter 52 (Offenses Against Public Peace, Safety and Morals) prohibits the possession and use of cannabis in certain circumstances but he's unsure if it would need to be amended at this time.

There was consensus among those Council members present to move forward with the amendment to Chapter 23.

There was brief discussion regarding the Council's procedural preference pertaining to text amendments within the Municipal Code, either by consideration and then first reading with the waiver of second reading, or on first reading at one meeting and second reading at another. It was noted that either way, there's ample opportunity for Council discussion and public input.

Alderman Verbic noted the evolution of next steps for businesses who will want to allow smoking within their businesses, as is occurring in other locations in Illinois, asking if it should be taken care of in this step or will it be something in addition later.

City Manager Nicklas replied that the Building Code defines the amount of smoke allowed in a building and when to evacuate, so it's not covered in this amendment.

Mayor Barnes thanked Ms. McAdoo for her comments, noting he's heard nothing but positive comments about Exceleaf.

## **J. RESOLUTIONS**

1. Resolution 2025-055 Authorizing a Third Amendment to the Land Lease and Solar Easement Agreement with DeKalb Taylor Solar, LLC (SunVest).

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.

At this point in the meeting, Mayor Barnes asked for a motion to consider the passage of the following resolutions in omnibus form and read them by title only:

2. Resolution 2025-056 Authorizing a Supplemental Professional Construction Engineering Services Agreement with Hampton, Lenzini, and Renwick, Inc. for the Widening and Reconstruction of Peace Road in an Amount Not to Exceed \$279,475.

3. Resolution 2025-057 Authorizing an Amendment to the Joint Funding Agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation for the Reconstruction of Peace Road to Increase the City's Local Share of Construction Costs from \$2,000,000 to \$2,011,500.
4. Resolution 2025-058 Requesting Illinois Department of Transportation Authorization to Appropriate Motor Fuel Tax Funds in the Amount of \$545,500 for the Peace Road/Fairview Drive Widening Project.
5. Resolution 2025-059 Authorizing a Supplemental Professional Construction Engineering Services Agreement with Hampton, Lenzini, and Renwick, Inc. for the Replacement of the Bridges at N. First Street and Lucinda Avenue in an Amount Not to Exceed \$161,020.
6. Resolution 2025-060 Authorizing an Amendment to the Joint Funding Agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation for the Replacement of Bridges at N. First Street and Lucinda Avenue to Increase the City's Local Share of Construction Costs from \$1,121,000 to \$1,582,357.15.
7. Resolution 2025-061 Requesting Illinois Department of Transportation Authorization to Appropriate Motor Fuel Tax Funds and the Remaining Rebuild Illinois Funds for a Total Allocation of \$800,000 for the N. First Street and Lucinda Avenue Bridge Projects.

MOTION 1: Alderman Verbic moved to consider the resolutions in omnibus form; seconded by Alderman Carlson.

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

Brief discussion ensued regarding reimbursement from the State of Illinois for some of the expenses.

Mayor Barnes stated he recently spoke with a family that lives in the Knowles Subdivision who were appreciative of how great their streets look and nice they are to drive on.

City Manager Nicklas recognized an employee from Fehr Graham who is responsible for overseeing the construction engineering of these projects on a daily basis, noting his knack for communicating with the various trades involved, residents, and in this case, Northern Illinois University.

VOTE 1: 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 2: Alderman Smith moved to approve the resolutions in omnibus form; seconded by Alderman Powell.

VOTE 2: 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.

There was brief discussion regarding the procedure of approving items in omnibus form.

8. Resolution 2025-062 Authorizing the Award of a Contract to D. Ryan Tree & Landscaping Service, LLC for Hazardous Tree Removal and Tree Pruning in an Amount Not to Exceed \$230,300.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson 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.

Noting the grant awarded by Morton Arboretum to place trees in parkways, Alderman Larson commented there are strict guidelines that must be followed when pruning the trees.

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**

There were none.

#### **L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING**

1. Ordinance 2025-025 Approving a Special Use Permit to Allow for the Construction of a New Public Swimming Pool Facility at 1403 Sycamore Road (DeKalb Park District).

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 recognized DeKalb Park District Executive Director Paul Zepezauer and architect Steve Nelson who were in attendance. He then 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 Powell moved to waive Second Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman Carlson.

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 Smith reported that Target's reconstruction project is moving quickly, noting they hope to have it complete by Fall. He also reported that a Sketchers store will be opening soon, which is a good thing for DeKalb.

Alderman Carlson reported on the successful Sullivan's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration over the weekend. He also reported that Mary Simons, who had just celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, passed away yesterday and reminisced on her contributions to his life and her service to DeKalb and DeKalb County.

Concluding his report, Alderman Carlson reported on the Memorial Day events he attended, including the Mayoral Breakfast, the parade, and the ceremony at Ellwood House.

Mayor Barnes reported on recent meetings and events he's attended, including a telephone meeting with multiple state representatives, state senators, lobbyists regarding the Biometric Information Privacy Act, Memorial Day events as mentioned by Alderman Carlson, a meeting he attended with City Manager Nicholas with the Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District and

residents regarding properties that are not in incorporated parts of DeKalb, and a Police Memorial Service where fallen officers, both civilian and sworn, of the DeKalb Police Department were recognized, a ribbon cutting ceremony for Infinity Truck Sales, and Ferrara Candy Company about how they can make a larger impact in DeKalb as it pertains to community need.

2. City Manager Report.

City Manager Nicklas thanked Alderman Larson for her dedication and Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary Ruth Scott for her perseverance (both were struggling with voice issues during the meeting).

Mayor Barnes agreed.

**N. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was none.

**O. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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 and adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on June 9, 2025.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the May 27, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the May 27, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.