

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

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, convened for a Regular meeting on July 14, 2025, in the Yusunas Meeting Room of the DeKalb Public Library, 309 Oak Street, DeKalb, Illinois.

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Noting the absence of Mayor Cohen Barnes, City Clerk Brad Hoey asked the Council for a motion to Appoint Alderman Tracy Smith as Temporary Chair for this meeting.

MOTION: Alderman Barb Larson moved to appoint Alderman Smith as Temporary Chair; seconded by Alderman Carolyn Zasada.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 voice vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. City Clerk Hoey declared the motion passed.

City Clerk Hoey then called the roll, and the following members of the City Council were present: First Ward Alderman Carolyn Zasada, Second Ward Alderman Barb Larson, Temporary Chair and Third Ward Alderman Tracy Smith, Fourth Ward Alderman Justin Carlson, Fifth Ward Alderman Andre Powell, Sixth Ward Alderman Mike Verbic, and Seventh Ward Alderman John Walker. Mayor Barnes was absent.

Following roll call, City Clerk Hoey turned the meeting over to Temporary Chair Smith.

Others in attendance included City Manager Bill Nicklas, Assistant City Manager Bob Redel, City Attorney Matt Rose, Acting Fire Chief Luke Howieson, and Police Chief David Byrd.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed.

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

There were none.

**E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Kathy Gilroy congratulated the Council for banning smoking products from vending machines in DeKalb (June 23, 2025). She then provided statistics regarding underage gambling in Illinois via lottery ticket vending machines, which are not programmed to check for age, and encouraged the Council to ban the machines in DeKalb.

**F. APPOINTMENTS**

There were none.

## **G. CONSENT AGENDA**

Temporary Chair Smith read the items on the Consent Agenda by title only.

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of June 23, 2025.
2. Accounts Payable and Payroll through July 14, 2025, in the Amount of \$4,946,518.24.
3. Investment and Bank Balance Summary through May 2025.
4. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures through May 2025.
5. Crime Free Housing Bureau Report – June 2025.

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed.

## **H. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

## **I. CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Consideration of a Proposed FY2026 Budget Calendar.

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.

## **J. RESOLUTIONS**

There were none.

## **K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING**

There were none.

## **I. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING**

1. Ordinance 2025-031 Amending the Fiscal Year-End December 31, 2025, Budget.

Temporary Chair Smith 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.

Temporary Chair Smith noted that the required budget amendment is most likely due to inflation.

Alderman Verbic thanked City Manager Nicklas for his candor regarding the increased engineering costs portion of the amendment and the timeliness of finance tracking.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed.

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed.

2. Ordinance 2025-032 Amending Chapter 23 “Unified Development Ordinance” (UDO), Article 7.18 “Cannabis Business Establishment”, to Allow Onsite Consumption Lounges in Cannabis Dispensaries.

Temporary Chair Smith read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Carlson 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.

Alderman Zasada stated she’s excited to see such a contemporary project come to DeKalb.

Alderman Carlson stated he was at Excelleaf recently and spoke to a Marine veteran with PTSD who manages pain with the help of edibles. He thought the idea of allowing an onsite consumption lounge was a good idea because it would give him an opportunity to sample product prior to purchasing.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed.

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed.

3. Ordinance 2025-033 Approving a Special Use Permit to Allow a Bank with Drive-Through Facilities at 330 Grove Street (Heartland Bank and Trust).

Temporary Chair Smith 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 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed.

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed.

## **M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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

Alderman Walker stated that Ward 7 has been having issues with lawn chairs and mailboxes being thrown into local ponds and asked residents to keep DeKalb's parks and ponds clean and free from garbage and graffiti.

Alderman Verbic reported on his attendance at former Fire Chief Thomas' retirement ceremony on July 11.

Alderman Carlson reported on his attendance at the KJs Tap block party on July 12. He also reported that the Fourth of July event at Hopkins Park was loud, but it was a great event that was well attended.

Continuing, Alderman Carlson stated he's been receiving calls from residents about vacant houses in Ward 4 and other issues they're unhappy about.

Concluding his report, Alderman Carlson stated he was notified during the recent high heat index that the air conditioning of one of his elderly neighbors had not worked in approximately two years, so he contacted Elder Care Services who hired someone to come fix it, to which the neighbor was very grateful.

Alderman Larson reported that she also attended the retirement ceremony of former Fire Chief Thomas on July 11. She also agreed with Alderman Carlson that DeKalb's Fourth of July festivities were great.

Continuing, Alderman Larson noted that street repair projects sometimes find unexpected issues along the way, but they are progressing. She also explained that the repair of neighborhood streets often brings in new sidewalks for ADA compliance, however, a lot of grass must be cut away to accommodate the change. She encouraged citizens in those neighborhoods to be mindful of large holes created during the process.

Concluding her report, Alderman Larson stated she was a guest on a recent T.D. Ryan podcast and the topic of the "Freezing for Turkeys" event was discussed. She offered to volunteer during the event and advised the other Council members that Mr. Ryan may be contacting them to volunteer as well.

Temporary Chair Smith agreed with Alderman Larson, stating that street repairs get messy, especially with unexpected finds such as past materials used to repair the street that no one was aware of, but progress is being made.

Temporary Chair Smith then asked Acting Fire Chief Howieson about the department's new fire engine. Acting Fire Chief Howieson stated the engine has been delivered and is currently getting some upfitting and firefighters are receiving training on how to operate it. He also added that the engine will be on display at the next City Council meeting.

## 2. City Manager Report

City Manager Nicklas advised that ComEd has provided their 2025 tree trimming schedule, adding that most of the trimming will take place south of Lincoln Highway and east of Seventh Street and some areas of south Fifth Street and Sixth Street, and between Fourth Street and Seventh Street, down to Taylor Street.

He then asked Acting Fire Chief Howieson to speak to the importance of new Fire Station 4 as it pertains to a recent fire on July 5 on Magnolia Street in the Sixth Ward.

Acting Fire Chief Howieson explained that when the report of the fire on Magnolia Street came in, Engine 4 was on scene in less than three and a half minutes, including the time it took for the firefighters to put on their gear. They made a timely and aggressive attack on the fire, which allowed the occupants to stay in their home. He added that it most likely would have taken Station 2 and Station 3 three to five minutes to arrive on scene, possibly causing a different outcome.

Continuing, Acting Fire Chief Howieson stated that during the fire event on Magnolia Street, the Fire Department handled five other emergency calls. He added that the addition of Station 4 has provided flexibility to make a difference in the community and thanked the Council and City staff for their support during the decision making process regarding Station 4.

Acting Fire Chief Howieson then thanked those who attended the retirement ceremony of former Fire Chief Thomas.

## N. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was none.

## O. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 voice vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Carlson, Powell, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Absent: Barnes. Temporary Chair Smith declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

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

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

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