

**MINUTES
CITY OF DEKALB
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 14, 2023**

The City Council of DeKalb, Illinois, held a Regular meeting on August 14, 2023, 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 Carolyn Zasada, Alderman Barb Larson, Alderman Tracy Smith, Alderman Greg Perkins, Alderman Scott McAdams, Alderman Mike Verbic, Alderman John Walker, and Mayor Cohen Barnes.

Others in attendance included City Manager Bill Nicklas and City Attorney Matt Rose.

Sasha Cohen was absent.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Shadow Gentry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Barnes requested that Resolution 2023-080 be moved in front of Resolution 2023-078 as he would be abstaining/recusing from Resolutions 2023-078 and 2023-079 due to a conflict of interest and his ownership of property in a tax increment financing (TIF) district.

MOTION: Alderman Zasada moved to approve the requested amendment; seconded by Alderman McAdams.

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

D. PRESENTATIONS

There were none.

E. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

F. APPOINTMENTS

Mayor Barnes read the following by title only:

1. Appointment of Andrea Dahlberg to the DeKalb Public Library Board
2. Appointment of Betsy Zimmerman to the DeKalb Public Library Board

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

Prior to the vote, Alderman Perkins stated that while he would be voting in support of the appointments, he feels that members of the DeKalb Public Library Board should have more business acumen and experience.

Mayor Barnes agreed and stated with the unprecedented economic growth in DeKalb, there's no reason why taxing bodies shouldn't be able to decrease their budget.

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

G. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Barnes read the following by title only:

1. Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of July 24, 2023.
2. Minutes of the Joint Review Board Meeting of April 28, 2023.
3. Accounts Payable and Payroll through August 14, 2023, in the Amount of \$2,172,473.59.
4. Investment and Bank Balance Summary through June 2023.
5. Year-to-Date Revenues and Expenditures through June 2023.
6. Crime Free Housing Bureau Report – July 2023.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to approve the items on the Consent Agenda; seconded by Alderman Perkins.

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

H. PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

I. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Consideration of Proposed Route Upgrades to the City of DeKalb's Public Transit System.

Mayor Barnes read the item by title only.

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

Brief discussion ensued regarding funding for the proposed route upgrades. It was confirmed that all costs would be covered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP).

City Manager Nicklas further confirmed that while the upgrades would be funded as noted above, adult fares would still apply.

There was consensus among the Council to move forward.

J. RESOLUTIONS

1. **Resolution 2023-076 Authorizing an Intergovernmental Agreement with the State of Illinois Department of Transportation for the SFY2024 Downstate Operating Assistance Agreement in the Amount of \$6,282,800.**

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman McAdams.

City Manager Nicklas provided 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, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

2. Resolution 2023-077 Authorizing the Waiver of Competitive Bidding and Approving the Purchase of Structural Firefighting Gear from Air One Equipment, Inc. in the Amount of \$30,429 Plus Shipping.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

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

City Manager Nicklas provided 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, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

3. Resolution 2023-080 Authorizing the Purchase and Equipping of Six 2023 Ford Police Interceptors from Sutton Ford of Matteson at the Illinois Central Management Services Contract Pricing in an Amount Not to Exceed \$312,950.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

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

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

Alderman Zasada encouraged the procurement of hybrid buses and vehicles.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the lack availability of hybrid vehicles at this time due to low inventory, delays in manufacturing, and the delivery of electrical power. There was confirmation that hybrid vehicles would be purchased whenever possible.

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

4. Resolution 2023-078 Approving a Liquor Production Liquor License for Byer's Brewing LLC, d/b/a Byers Brewing Company, for the Location at 216 N. Sixth Street.

Mayor Barnes read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Smith moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman McAdams.

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

Alderman Walker asked if this business would be getting video gaming terminals (VGTs). Recording Secretary Scott replied that a production liquor license does not qualify for the placement of VGTs.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 7-0-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Abstain: Barnes. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed.

5. Resolution 2023-079 Authorizing an Architectural Improvement Program Economic Incentive for 255 E. Lincoln Highway in the Amount of \$22,790 (Thai Pavilion).

Mayor Barnes recused himself from this item.

Alderman Verbic read the resolution by title only.

MOTION: Alderman McAdams moved to approve the resolution; seconded by Alderman Zasada.

City Manager Nicklas provided 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, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker. Nay: None. Recuse: Barnes. Alderman Verbic declared the motion passed.

K. ORDINANCES – SECOND READING

There were none.

L. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING

1. Ordinance 2023-026 Authorizing the Acquisition through Condemnation of Fee Simple Title to the Property Located at 128-140 S. Second Street (PIN 08-23-163-013).

Alderman Verbic read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Walker moved to approve First Reading of this item; seconded by Alderman Larson. (No action taken.)

Nancy Dougherty recommended that parks be made into parking lots, that the owner of the Tangles Hair Salon receive appropriate refunding of monies spent to update the shop's current location in the subject building if the property is acquired by the City, that a plaque be placed in the proposed parking lot indicating it was the site of the first barbed wire production facility, and that the City should update its Strategic Plan, which was last updated in 2017.

Marty O'Conner stated as a volunteer of the Glidden Homestead, he found Alderman McAdams comments and references about barbed wire at the July 10, 2023, Council meeting insulting. Mr. O'Conner further stated he doesn't think the building should be forcibly condemned and that the owner should get a fair value offer.

Steve Kapitan stated DeKalb is what it is today because of the invention of barbed wire. He also stated he believes Mayor Barnes will benefit from taxpayer money if a parking lot is built on this site. Continuing, Mr. Kapitan asked how much it will cost to demolish the building and relocate utilities and

the building's current tenants. He also asked if a design for the proposed parking lot has been made available.

City Manager Nicklas stated that action on this item isn't needed at this meeting, however, he does need a recommendation from the Council on how to proceed. He also provided information on the history of the building, which was gathered from a study by the Lakota Group in 2016 to assess the buildings in the downtown area.

Continuing, City Manager Nicklas stated discussions regarding the placement of a parking lot on this site wasn't brought on by City staff, but by downtown business owners who have recognized the need for additional parking.

Discussion ensued regarding the breakdown of costs for the demolition of the building, movement of utilities, and the creation of a parking lot. City Manager Nicklas estimated it could cost approximately \$750,000.

City Manager Nicklas and Alderman Walker continued to discuss the costs involved. Alderman Walker stated he isn't in support of this item.

Alderman McAdams offered an apology for the comments he made at the July 10, 2023, Council meeting regarding barbed wire and its negative impact on history in certain situations. He also stated that this building and its history with barbed wire isn't going to bring tourists to DeKalb, but Lincoln Highway will. He further stated that the building in question is blighted and blighted buildings scare aware tourists.

Alderman Zasada agreed with Alderman McAdams stated she agrees with Alderman McAdams, adding the building isn't being used to its highest level and there are many other uses that would add value to the community, including the addition of a parking lot.

Alderman Verbic stated he's against using TIF money for a parking lot, adding it should instead be used for new development. He further stated that funding for another parking lot in the downtown area should come from more appropriate revenue streams, such as a special service area, pay stations, and perhaps a \$2.00 charge for every ticket sold by the Egyptian Theatre that would go directly to constructing and maintaining another parking lot.

MOTION: Alderman Verbic moved to cease pursuit of this property; seconded by Alderman Walker.

Alderman Larson disagreed with comments made that Mayor Barnes will benefit from a parking lot being added to the property site, adding he would actually lose an asset. She also stated we need to start planning ahead if we want DeKalb to grow, and it's going to take more than 27 parking spaces to make that happen. She further stated that making parks into parking lots, as mentioned earlier in the meeting, isn't possible because it's at the intersection of two state roads and a railroad, which can't have driveways. Continuing, Alderman Larson stated if the building is acquired, the owner of Tangles will be reimbursed, just as was done with the tenants in the Hunter Hillcrest building. Concluding her comments, Alderman Larson stated we need to think of DeKalb as a whole and try to impact the most people positively.

City Manager Nicklas reiterated that the recommendation from staff is to table this item to another meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the need or lack of need for additional parking, the potential funding for additional parking from downtown business owners, alternate uses for the site, and the enforcement of property maintenance codes in blighted buildings.

City Manager Nicklas stated that the Joint Review Board has reviewed the proposed plan for the site and is in favor of it.

Alderman Perkins stated the current owner has had possession of the building for 20 years and done nothing with it, therefore, his inaction is driving action. He added it's a blighted building and an eyesore and there are no plans to do anything with it aside from what the City has brought forward. Alderman Perkins further stated he'd like to hear what the owner wants to do with the property other than leave it sit in its current state.

Discussion ensued.

Attorney Mark Doherty, who represents the owner, confirmed that his client wants to work in good faith to resolve this issue.

City Attorney Rose stated there are currently two motions on the floor – one to approve First Reading and another to cease action regarding this matter.

Brief discussion ensued.

VOTE: Alderman Verbic's motion to cease action regarding this item failed by a 2-5-1 roll call vote. Aye: Verbic, Walker. Nay: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams. Recused: Barnes.

Discussion ensued regarding the original motion to approve the item on First Reading. It was clarified that since the owner is out of town, no action is required, rather, it's requested that this item be tabled/postponed to the September 11, 2023, Council meeting.

Brief discussion ensued.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to table/postpone the ordinance to the September 11, 2023, Council meeting; seconded by Alderman Perkins.

VOTE: Motion carried by a 5-2-1 roll call vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams. Nay: Verbic, Walker. Recused: Barnes. Alderman Verbic declared the motion passed.

2. Ordinance 2023-032 Amending Chapter 51 "Traffic", Section 16 "Parking Trucks", to Prohibit the Parking of Recreational Vehicles on Residential Streets Except During Active Loading and Unloading.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

MOTION: Alderman Larson moved to approve First Reading of the ordinance; seconded by Alderman McAdams.

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

A brief discussion ensued regarding citizen complaints about RV parking on streets, reasonable accommodations for those parking RVs on streets if they're just visiting, and parking RVs on private property, e.g., a grocery store parking lot. It was determined that in cases such as these, the Police Department should be notified as street parking is under their purview.

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

MOTION: Alderman McAdams moved to waive Second Reading of this item; seconded by Alderman Zasada.

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

3. Ordinance 2023-033 Approving a Water Service Agreement with Mark Carpenter for 209 Greenwood Acres Drive.

Mayor Barnes read the ordinance by title only.

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

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

Brief discussion ensued regarding those properties that benefit from City services (fire, police, water, etc.) but don't pay City taxes. City Manager Nicklas indicated that the City collaborates with other entities such as the DeKalb County for snow plowing and policing. Mayor Barnes indicated he'd like to see a report identifying properties collecting said services.

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

MOTION: Alderman Perkins moved to waive Second Reading of this item; seconded by Alderman McAdams

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

M. REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Council Member Reports.

Alderman Smith congratulated Alderman Verbic for taking third at the recent CASA DeKalb County "50 Men Who Cook" event.

Alderman McAdams expressed his approval of the new mural on the Annie Glidden Road underpass. He also commented that he will no longer hold Ward 5 meetings as a result of disruptions caused during a Ward 6 meeting by residents who don't live in that ward. He provided his telephone number and encouraged residents to contact him with issues. He also stated that City staff deserve better than the treatment received at the Ward 6 meeting.

Alderman Walker reported that he has received numerous complaints regarding the ongoing bridge work and requested ongoing status reports. City Manager Nicklas stated that updates could be provided during Council meetings, adding that bridgework has been delayed due to utility issues.

Alderman Verbic stated he will call less formal gatherings for Ward 6 residents moving forward, noting if a technical question is asked that he can't answer, he will refer to City staff and report back. He then thanked Fire Chief Mike Thomas and City Attorney Zac Gill for their participation at his most recent ward meeting. Continuing, Alderman Verbic stated that City Manager Nicklas was treated with unacceptable disrespect, to which he took offense and corrected immediately so that discussions could continue.

Alderman Verbic also reported on his attendance and the recent fire engine dedication and his participation in the "50 Men Who Cook" event.

Alderman Perkins stated he is considering a Ward 4 meeting; more details to come.

Alderman Zasada confirmed the Ward 1 meeting on September 12, with the location to be determined. She also stated there's a misconception that Council members are required to hold annual ward meetings. While not required, ward meetings are held to make aldermen more accessible.

Mayor Barnes reported on recent meetings and events he's attended, including a meeting with State Representatives Keicher and Yednock, a townhall meeting with Congresswoman Underwood, a meeting with DeKalb Community Unit School District No. 428, a recent Human Relations Commission meeting, an event where DeKalb received an award for being the friendliest veteran city in Illinois and where School Resource Officer Allison Remnes received a Police Officer of the Year award, the recent Aruna run that benefits survivors of human trafficking, and guest speaking on the WLBK radio show. Mayor Barnes also thanked City staff who assisted with the new mural on the Annie Glidden Road underpass, especially Scott Zak.

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 Zasada.

VOTE: Motion carried by an 8-0 voice vote. Aye: Zasada, Larson, Smith, Perkins, McAdams, Verbic, Walker, Barnes. Nay: None. Mayor Barnes declared the motion passed and adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Scott, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved by the City Council on August 28, 2023.

Click [here](#) to view the agenda packet for the August 14, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting.

Click [here](#) to view the video recording of the August 14, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting.