

A special May Meeting of City Council for Public Input on the Proposed FY 2012 Budget was held on May 12, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located on the Fourth Floor of the Municipal Building. The following Council Members were present: L. G. "Larry" Campbell Jr., John B. Gilstrap, Alonzo L. Jones, Vice Mayor T. David Luther, Gary P. Miller, Albert K. "Buddy" Rawley Jr., Fred O. Shanks III, and Adam J. Tomer (8). Mayor Sherman M. Saunders was absent (1). (*Mayor Saunders arrived at the meeting at 7:40 p.m.*)

Staff Members present were: City Manager Joseph C. King, Deputy City Manager David A. Parrish, City Attorney W. Clarke Whitfield Jr. and City Clerk Susan M. DeMasi.

Other Staff Members present were: Finance Director Barbara Dameron, Budget Director Cynthia Thomasson, Director of Economic Development Jeremy Stratton, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Bill Sgrina and Chief of Police Phillip Broadfoot.

Vice Mayor Luther presided.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Reverend L.G. "Larry" Campbell offered the Invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag followed.

PUBLIC INPUT ON THE PROPOSED FY 2012 BUDGET

Vice Mayor Luther opened the floor for Public Input on the Proposed FY 2012 Budget and noted that each topic would be discussed individually.

Closing of Westover Branch of Danville Public Library

Vice Mayor Luther recognized the following citizens:

Ms. Jenny Wagner, 321 Hanley Circle, Danville, Virginia. Ms. Wagner spoke in favor of keeping the Westover Library open, and noted that the Westover Library is a valuable asset to the community. She presented to Vice Mayor Luther a petition with respect to keeping the Westover Branch open. The petition included 121 signatures.

Mr. Jerry Soyars, 4507 Westover Drive, Danville, Virginia. Mr. Soyars expressed his concern over the proposed real estate tax and also noted the advantages of keeping the Westover Library open.

Mr. Gary Uitto, 110 Ginger Drive, Danville, Virginia. Mr. Uitto questioned the budget with respect to the library and what savings to the City would be realized with closing the library.

Mr. Thomas W. Motley, 2865 Westover Drive, Danville, Virginia. Mr. Motley spoke in support of keeping the Westover Library open and noted his grandchildren use the library when they visit in the summer.

Khalil Ali Mohammad, 505 Jefferson Street, Danville, Virginia. Mr. Mohammad noted that children are our future and supported keeping the Westover Branch open.

Ms. Janice Ward, 622 River Ridge Road. Ms. Ward spoke in support of keeping the Westover Branch open.

Eliminating Backyard Trash Pick- Up

Vice Mayor Luther recognized Khalil Ali Mohammad, 505 Jefferson Street, Danville, Virginia who spoke in support of the trash bill but asked Council to consider the elderly and ways to accommodate them.

Council Member Gilstrap asked if there were exceptions for the elderly or handicapped who cannot get their trash to the curb. Mr. King noted that a service at a fee is being proposed for people in those circumstances.

Council Member Tomer noted his concern that the fees may be too high for the elderly and disabled on fixed income and would like to address the amount of the fee.

Vice Mayor Luther recognized Thomas Motley, 2865 Westover Drive, Danville, Virginia who spoke on behalf of the elderly and disabled who could not attend tonight's hearing. He spoke of their concern about not being able to get their trash to the curb, being on a fixed income and having to pay a fee.

Cigarette Tax

Vice Mayor Luther recognized the following citizens:

Khalil Ali Mohammad, 505 Jefferson Street, Danville, Virginia who noted he was in agreement with a cigarette tax, but at a lesser amount. He also asked how the non-smokers would contribute to the City.

Mr. Gary Uitto, 110 Ginger Drive, Danville, Virginia who spoke in favor of the cigarette tax but would like a greater tax amount than is currently proposed.

Larry and Starr Bell, 3103 West Main Street, Danville, Virginia. Mr. Bell noted he is the owner of Carter's Quik Shop convenience store. Mr. Bell noted that 75-80% of his customers come from North Carolina and buy cigarettes and the tax would adversely affect his business.

Council Member Gilstrap asked Mr. Bell if he knew what the difference in price between cigarettes in Virginia and North Carolina. Mr. Gilstrap also asked Mr. King the amount of revenue realized for the City with the cigarette tax; Mr. King noted the revenue would be about \$100,000 per \$.10 of tax.

Kirpal Singh, 5022 Cobblestone Drive, Danville, Virginia, owner of the Quik and Plenty Market on Mount Cross Road. Mr. Singh noted he is not in favor of the cigarette tax. Mr. Singh noted consumers could go a short distance to the County and not pay a tax and this would impact his sales.

Council Member Tomer asked Mr. Singh the amount of his cigarette margins. Mr. Singh responded they are 20%.

Mr. Oscar Graves, 3112 Douglas Court, who asked Mr. King that in addition to a cigarette tax, was any consideration given to a tobacco tax.

Real Estate Tax

Vice Mayor Luther recognized the following citizens:

Mr. Thomas Motley, 2865 Westover Drive, Danville, Virginia who spoke for the disabled and elderly who could not attend tonight, in opposition to the real estate tax. As they are on a fixed income and struggling to pay their bills, an increase in real estate tax would be a burden.

Lee Vogler, 118 Grove Park Circle, Danville, Virginia who stated he did not support the proposed tax increase in light of the decreased population and an increased City government size, with less money coming in and more money going out.

Paul Cassell, 108 Kemper Court, Danville, Virginia who stated he did not support the proposed real estate tax increase and noted the decreased property value in Danville. He also stated that he would like the City to go back to the practice of the employees of the City of Danville must live in the City of Danville.

Parks, Recreation & Tourism

No one wished to comment.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Vice Mayor Luther recognized Mr. Stuart Sutphin, Unit Coordinator for the Danville Office of the Virginia Cooperative Extension. Mr. Sutphin gave a brief synopsis of the various aspects of the 4H program and the contribution requirements of the City in order to keep the 4H extension agent and program in the City.

Layoff of City Staff/Consolidations

No one wished to comment.

Industrial Development/Elimination of Blight

Vice Mayor Luther recognized Mr. John Hyler, 6009 Cobblestone Court, who asked to comment from the perspective of a business owner with respect to blight and also the rental inspection program. Mr. Hyler noted that he was opposed to the rental inspection fee as he believed it would put additional hardship on Danville property owners as well as the tenants.

Vice Mayor Luther recognized Mr. Buster Goodale, 845 River Ridge Road. Mr. Goodale questioned Joe King about the blight program and how the City would deal with the blighted properties.

Council Member Miller noted that the City of Lynchburg's program was very successful and also noted that Greenville, SC had redeveloped their downtown.

Council Members discussed blight and possible options for the City.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications from the City Manager, City Attorney or the City Clerk.

ROLL CALL

Council members thanked all the citizens for coming down tonight and expressing their concerns and opinions. They encouraged everyone to continue to contact Council to voice their concerns. Council members also thanked the citizens for their ideas and suggestions.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

APPROVED:

VICE - MAYOR

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK