

CITY OF DECATUR  
COMMON COUNCIL MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

The City of Decatur Common Council met on Thursday, September 17, 2024, at 6:32 P.M. at City Hall in Council Chambers, 172 N. Second Street, Decatur. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Dan Rickord who then invited those present to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Roll call was taken to show Jenny Bowers-Shultz, Matt Dyer, Tyler Fullenkamp, Scott Murray, and Abby Wilder were in attendance. Also present were Clerk-Treasurer Kevin Hackman and City Attorney Anne Razo.

The Clerk-Treasurer had emailed the minutes from the September 3, 2024 meeting and Dyer made a motion to adopt the minutes of the September 3, 2024 meeting as emailed. Seconded by Murray, the motion was adopted.

The first item on the agenda was Assistant Building and Zoning Superintendent, Brad Roe seeking funds of \$5000 to donate to NeighborLink Adams County. Roe shared NeighborLink had provided work and dumpsters at no cost and would be assisting with a big project in the near future on Schirmeyer Street. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to make a \$5,000 donation to NeighborLink from the City Council promotional fund. Seconded by Dyer, the motion was adopted.

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Crowe representatives Jennifer Wilson and Jenessa Carter regarding water and sewer rate studies. Ms. Wilson first review the process as they studied the revenues and expenditures for the water utility, noting there was a deficit. It was shared the cash funded capital improvements plan combined \$4.4 million over the years of 2025-2029. It was noted that with the projects listed about \$840,000 was needed yearly. As a result of the study it was recommended to have the rate increase in two phases. Phase 1 would take effect immediately and would be a 28% increase while Phase 2 with a 12% rate increase would be put into effect beginning January 1, 2026. The average user Phase 1 increase would be \$12.42 and when the Phase 2 rate is included there would be a total increase of \$19.25. Mayor Rickord noted it takes about \$4 million to operate each year with about \$3 million incoming revenues.

Ms. Carter then shared the process used to study the revenues vs the expenditures for the sewer rates. It was shared there was only one year recently that the revenues exceeded the expenditures and that was 2021 with an amount of \$60,638. She recommended that the sewer rate increase in two phases. Phase 1 would start on January 1, 2025 with a 10% increase and Phase 2 would start on January 1, 2026 with a 14% increase. It was shared the average user would see an increase of \$4.68 with Phase 1 and a total increase of \$11.88 with the start of Phase 2.

No action was taken this evening, but later in the evening it was shared that as a result of the Crowe rate studies, an ordinance would be prepared for the October 1, 2024 meeting with a Public Hearing to be set for October 15, 2024.

Jamie Gephart, Community Coordinator, appeared before the Council with two Event Forms. The first Event Form was for the Annual Decatur Fire Department's Open House scheduled for October 9, 2024. First Street from Monroe Street south would be closed. Dyer made a motion to accept the Fire Department's Event Form. Seconded by Fullenkamp, the motion was adopted.

The second Event Form was for the Annual Tree Lighting Event to be held on Friday evening, November 22, 2024. A portion of Second Street would be closed for the event. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to accept the Event Form for the Tree Lighting Event. Seconded by Wilder, the motion was adopted.

Ms. Gephart also shared that as of October 1, 2025 email addresses would be changed with the current name used followed by @cityofdecatur.in.gov.

Community Coordinator Jamie Gephart shared that the Mayor's Youth Council members had been selected with their first meeting to be held next Thursday, September 26, 2024. It was shared there were 30 applications with 20 selected which included 12 members from this past year. It was suggested to keep those not chosen active by asking them to volunteer for things to keep them interested.

Ms. Gephart also shared that Laurinda Goode had been selected as the new Director of the HIVE. It was shared the HIVE will be open from 4-7 each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and from 9-11 on Saturday.

Fullenkamp made a motion to make a matter of record the appropriate publication of the Public Hearing notice regarding the 2025 Budget. Seconded by Dyer, the motion was adopted.

Dyer made a motion to suspend the Council Meeting. Seconded by Wilder, the motion was adopted.

Bowers-Shultz made a motion to open the Public Hearing regarding the 2025 Budget. Seconded by Fullenkamp, the motion was adopted.

Clerk-Treasurer Kevin Hackman shared the 2025 Budget (\$13,554,395 total) was an increase of \$39,536 over the 2024 Budget (\$13,414,859 total). Hackman shared the following figures to be included in the ordinance: General Fund, \$6,815,975; MVH \$2,056,075; Parks & Recreation \$1,008,445; Fire Pension \$329,425; Police Pension \$606,750; Cumulative Capital Development \$191,430; Cumulative Capital Improv (CIG tax) \$66,000; Economic Development (CEDIT) \$1,105,000; Rainy Day \$50,000; Local Road & Street \$145,000. Thus, a total of \$12,374,100, which included \$5,545,528 as the adopted Tax Levy, and an adopted Tax Rate of 1.1961. The Home-Ruled Funds (not

reviewed by DLGF) include: Riverboat \$50,000; LLECE \$30,000; LIT-Public Safety \$601,170; Redevelopment Commission \$479,125; Public Art \$20,000; ARP Coronavirus Grant \$0, for a total of \$1,180,295.

City Attorney Anne Razo noted the purpose of the Public Hearing being residents' opportunity for input. Attorney Razo asked for any one wishing to speak in favor or opposition. There being no one seeking to speak, Attorney Razo recommended the closure of the Public Hearing.

Dyer made a motion to close the Public Hearing and re-open the Council Meeting. Seconded by Wilder, the motion was adopted.

Ordinance 2024-10, an ordinance for appropriations and tax rates for budget year 2025, was brought forth. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to place Ordinance 2024-10 on its first reading by short title only. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed and City Attorney Anne Razo read Ordinance 2024-10 by short title only. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2024-10 on its first reading. Seconded by Wilder, a roll call vote was held and passed 5-0. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to place Ordinance 2024 on its second reading by short title only. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed and Attorney Razo read Ordinance 2024-10 by short title only. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2024-10 on its second reading. Seconded by Wilder, a roll call vote passed 5-0. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to table Ordinance 2024 until October 1, 2024 for its third reading. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed.

Ordinance 2024-11, an ordinance updating the vacation times for full-time employees, was brought forth. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to place Ordinance 2024-11 on its first reading by short title only. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed and City Attorney Anne Razo read Ordinance 2024-11 by short title only. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2024-11 on its first reading. Seconded by Wilder, a roll call vote passed 5-0. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to place Ordinance 2024-11 on its second reading by short title only. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed and Attorney Razo read Ordinance 2024-11 by short title only. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2024-11 on its second reading. Seconded by Wilder, a roll call vote was held and passed 5-0. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to table Ordinance 2023-11 for a third reading on October 1, 2024. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed.

Ordinance 2024-12, an ordinance updating the vacation time for the police and fire employees, was brought forward. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to place Ordinance 2024-12 on its first reading by short title only. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed and City Attorney Anne Razo read Ordinance 2024-12 by short title only. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2024-12 on its first reading. Seconded by Wilder, a roll call vote passed 5-0. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to place Ordinance 2024-12 on its second reading by short title only. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed and Attorney Razo read Ordinance 2024-12 by short title only. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2024-12 on its second reading. Seconded by Wilder, a roll call vote was taken and passed 5-0. Bowers-Shultz made a motion to table Ordinance

2024-12 until October 1, 2024 for its third reading. Seconded by Wilder, the motion passed.

The next item on the agenda was an update regarding a City Flag. Bowers-Shultz shared she and Councilman Murray served as part of a committee which also included Mary Byer who was present to assist with the update. It was shared the Committee had met several times and plans are to have public involvement in the design. The Committee shared they are seeking \$1,500 to assist with costs in developing the project and awards. The Committee has checked with surrounding areas regarding how to design a flag—the process—and it was noted a You Tube program had been helpful. Specifications have been drafted and it is hoped to take entries until February. Perhaps entries could come from individuals and school projects. It was noted it will take work to come up with a design that represents the City's history. Preliminary entry rules are in progress. Dyer made a motion to use \$1,500 from the City Council Promotional Fund to assist in getting the project started. Seconded by Wilder the motion was adopted. Mayor Rickord thanked the Committee for their work so far.

#### Department Heads Input:

Fire Chief Jeff Sheets gave a brief update regarding a train incident that took place in the City last evening. Chief Sheets also reminded everyone of their upcoming Open House.

Jamie Gephart, Community Coordinator, reminded the group of the Adams County Cancer Coalition Benefit Concert to be held on Madison Plaza on Saturday.

#### Council Input;

Dyer noted that in the absence of Operations Manager Jeremy Gilbert who had to leave early, that people are taking advantage of heavy trash pick-up. Too many from outside the City are bringing in trash. City Attorney Anne Razo suggested if the owners are permitting those outside to bring in trash, that could be treated as a violation of the nuisance ordinance. Fullenkamp noted that perhaps some specific ordinance may be needed to address the issue.

Dyer made a motion to pay the claims against the City. Seconded by Murray, the motion was adopted.

There being no other business to be brought before the Council, Dyer made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Bowers-Shultz, the motion was adopted.

Adjournment was at 7:34 P.M.