

Galax City Council

Minutes

January 26, 2015

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on January 26, 2015 at 7:30 pm.

At 7:30 p.m. Mayor Mitchell called the meeting to order with the following council persons present and they are as listed: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, and Councilman Davis. Councilwoman Crouse and Councilman Lazo were absent.

Councilman Garner prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Mitchell recognized and congratulated Mike Brown from the Galax Water Treatment Plant for being awarded the Water Fluoridation Quality Award. Mayor Mitchell said that Council was proud of the Galax Water Treatment Plant staff and the great job that they do.

Councilman Garner made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on January 12, 2015. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Corbin Stone with Robinson, Farmer & Cox was present to review the FY2015 audit with City Council. After giving his presentation, Mr. Stone commended Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Director of Finance, along with her staff on doing such a great job.

Mayor Mitchell announced that this was the date advertised for a public hearing for revisions to the Erosion & Sediment Control Ordinance. Keith Barker explained that the DEQ requested amendments based on revisions to the state model ordinance. He noted that staff have reviewed the ordinance and see no major changes to the overall document. With no further public comment Mayor Mitchell declared the public hearing closed. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to accept the revisions to the Erosion & Sediment Control Ordinance. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Tom Jones, Airport Commission Chairman, presented to City Council an update on the Airport Commission and airport. Mr. Jones thanked Keith Barker and Judy Taylor-Gallimore for now being the physical agent for Twin County Airport. Mr. Jones noted that the airport is doing very well and is in good shape.

Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Director of Finance asked for City Council approval of a policy regarding the write-off of Utility account balances which are greater than three years outstanding. Ms. Taylor-Gallimore explained that since the probability of collection decreases with the age of the account, and it was likely that the amount recovered from these old accounts would be low. In addition, the

Finance Director requested approval from City Council to engage Taxing Authority Consulting Services (TACS) for collection of Utility account balances which were currently greater than 30 days outstanding but less than 3 years.

She explained to Council that TACS had been collecting personal property taxes for the City for a few years and had proven to be very effective in this area. She went on further to explain the fees associated with service from TACS. Councilman Garner suggested putting the names of the citizens with written off accounts in a word document where the names could be easily accessed for 3 to 5 years when the account clerks open new utility accounts. Councilman Garner made a motion to approve the write-off policy change and to approve the outsourcing of delinquent utility accounts to TACS. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Keith Barker explained to Council that the Carroll County Public Service Authority had requested that Galax consider amending the sewer use agreement with them to allow additional sewer flow from the County, and to reserve sewer flow for Wildwood Commerce Park. He further explained that Staff and our consulting engineer had reviewed the document and would note the following major changes:

- Increase of flow from 260,000 gpd to 1,000,000 gpd to reflect additional County flow (450,000 gpd total) and flow from the Wildwood Commerce Park (550,000 gpd).
- The new term on the agreement is 45 years, however each locality may opt out with a 60 month notice.
- If either party opts out of the agreement prior to 60 months' notice, the party opting out would remit \$100,000 per year to the other party.
- The current agreement imposed a 20% surcharge rate if the flow exceeds the agreed upon rate for a specified time. The new agreement divides the flow rates into Carroll County and Wildwood, but maintains the 20% surcharge on each part.

Mr. Barker noted that all other provisions of the original document would remain. He said that in order to provide the requested flow for the County and still maintain adequate sewer capacity for Galax, that some modifications to our system would be required at a later date if the full flow amounts from the County are needed. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve amending the sewer use agreement. Councilman Garner seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council that Harmony House located at 1149 Glendale Road, has requested that City Council approve a resolution for approving their parcel as a "revitalization area" under the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA). Keith Barker told Council that after he spoke with representatives with VHDA, he learned that the City Council can designate a parcel or parcels as a revitalization area under the program. He further said that with this designation, the properties within it become eligible for possible tax credits from VHDA that can be used for renovation to the building(s). Mr. Barker also noted that the City attorney reviewed the request so we are in compliance with the Code of Virginia. Councilman Davis made the motion to approve the resolution for Harmony House and authorize the City Manager to send a letter of support. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Mayor Mitchell told Council of a vacancy on the Community Policy Management Team (CPMT). He explained that the CPMT meets monthly to approve funding for the Comprehensive Service Act (CSA) through the Galax Dept. of Social Services. Mayor Mitchell said that Ms. Elizabeth Vaughan had resigned as the Parent Representative for the CPMT. Dr. Thomas Whartenby recently rotated off of the DSS Advisory Board and expressed an interested in serving on the CPMT. Mayor Mitchell reminded Council that they could consider Dr. Whartenby for the appointment or may seek additional individuals for consideration. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to appoint Mr. Whartenby to the CPMT. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Corrine Greeson was present to speak to City Council concerning the Galax Farmers Market. Ms. Greeson requested that funding be sought for a farmer’s market manager. Keith Barker explained that we have received one grant from USDA for a manager, however it expired and the funds were spent. He added that additional grant requests have been submitted to USDA and conversations have been had with representatives of DHCD for funding for the market and downtown area. Mr. Barker said that we have not been successful in obtaining additional funds but would continue to look for grant opportunities.

Councilman Davis made the motion to adjourn, Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:50 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk