

Galax City Council
Minutes
March 9, 2015

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on March 9, 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 Crouse, Councilman Lazo, and Councilman Davis. Councilwoman Plichta was absent.

Councilwoman Crouse prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on February 23, 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 Crouse – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Mayor Mitchell reminded Council that this meeting was one of the two dates set for interviews for prospective candidates for upcoming school board terms which are expiring. Mayor Mitchell explained that there would be a closed session at the end of the Council meeting to talk with School Board members whose terms would expire on June 30, 2015.

Keith Barker informed Council that he had been to a project meeting on March 4th for the stormwater work. The contractor told him that they anticipated being at Meadow Street and crossing it from March 11 – March 25. He added that during this time Meadow Street would be closed. He noted that weather delays then it would be slightly longer. He closed by saying that notices would be given to affected businesses and also we would run Nixel alerts for the public of the traffic detours.

Mayor Mitchell explained to Council that Galax City Schools has requested a second amendment to the FY15 School Budget as a result of an increase in enrollment and state funds. Mayor Mitchell invited Bill Sturgill, School Superintendent, to speak on the request. Mr. Sturgill stated that this amendment represented an additional \$237,140 in state and federal funds and that neither amendment required any additional local tax dollars and were additional funds from other sources only. It was asked that Council set March 23, 2015 as the date for the public hearing for this request. Councilman Davis made the motion to set March 23, 2015 as the date for the public hearing for the School Board Amendment. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Dave Nelson, Recreation Director was present to give an update on recreation activities through the Galax Recreation Department. He spoke to council about visitation and programs being offered. Mr. Nelson also spoke about the mentoring grant that the Recreation Department, Police Department, Galax DSS, Galax Schools and Cornerstone Church are implementing to assist at-risk teens.

Keith Barker asked Council to consider forwarding three items to the Traffic Safety Committee for review. These included:

- Intersection of Lafayette and W. Grayson Street – Mr. Barker told Council that included in their packets were maps which showed where we have seen accidents in the area from Downtown to Lafayette Street over the last three years. The intersection we have asked the committee to review has seen 11 accidents in this time frame. While this intersection may not be suitable for a traffic calming measure similar to what was installed on Lafayette/W. Grayson, there may be other options for consideration such as a 4-way stop. Council or the Committee may also want to review the overall traffic flow in these areas to develop safer and more consistent traffic signage.
- Swanson St. – Mr. Barker told Council when we began the Safe Route to School project, a recommendation from a state consultant was to consider changing the traffic direction on Swanson Street in order to reduce the number of cars introduced into an intersection. He noted that this was a one way street with traffic entering on Calhoun Street and exiting at the Swanson/McArther/Circle Drive intersection. He added that with a change of direction in the one-way street, there may be an improved traffic flow in this area.
- Front Street – Mr. Barker explained that Kevin Heath, P.E. with Lane Group and the lead engineer on the SRTS project, has brought the overall street width on Front Street to our attention. He said that Front Street was a narrow street and the SRTS project reduced the overall width by 12” due to the requirement we install 5’ sidewalks. Mr. Barker added that a consideration may be to eliminate parking on the east side of Front Street, which was also the lane of the bus traffic from the high school to the elementary school. He added that if parking was revised, there may be a desire to continue the permit parking within this neighborhood.

Keith Barker informed Council that if they choose to forward these items to the committee, he recommended asking Chief Hankley and Chief Passmore to both be involved in the discussion concerning Lafayette Street since emergency vehicles from the Galax Fire Department and the Galax-Grayson EMS both used this street to access Rt. 58/E. Stuart Drive. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to forward these listed concerns to the Traffic Safety Committee for review. 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 Crouse – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Mayor Mitchell asked if Mr. Kohl or Ms. Kyle had any public statements concerning their interest in the school board appointment. Mr. Kohl spoke about the many positive comments he and other staff members receive concerning the Galax students as the travel to other jurisdictions and represent Galax.

At 8:45 p.m. a motion was made by Councilman Garner to enter into closed session under the following Code of Virginia:

§ Personnel Matter §2.2-3711 A.1 of the Code of Virginia - Candidates for employment; the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, discipline, salaries, compensation, or resignation of employees. 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 Crouse – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

At 9:16 p.m. Council reconvened in open session. Mayor Mitchell certified that no items other than those allowed under the cited Virginia code section were discussed and no action was taken, with the following affirmation: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:16 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk

