

Galax City Council
Minutes
April 27, 2015

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on April 27, 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, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Lazo, and Councilman Davis.

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

Mayor Mitchell gave special recognition to Tim Webb, Galax Police Department Communications Officer. Mr. Webb was recently honored by the Association of Public/Safety Communication Officials (APCO) at the APCO yearly event as the Telecommunicator of the Year for his outstanding service in 2014. Mr. Webb assisted a grandmother whose grandchild had quit breathing and coached her through CPR, thus saving the child's life. Council commended Mr. Webb for his quick thinking.

Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on April 13, 2015. 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 Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea. Councilman Lazo stepped away for a moment.

Galax School Superintendent, Bill Sturgill presented the FY16 School Budget to Council. After Mr. Sturgill gave an update on the schools which included: Continuing the extended year calendar, 1.5% raise for all staff, addition of three new teachers. Mr. Sturgill said that student enrollment was good and the non-resident requests are good as well. Mr. Sturgill closed by asking that May 11, 2015 be the date set for the public hearing on the FY16 Galax City Schools budget. Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to approve the public hearing request. 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, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Keith Barker gave an update on the Galax Bottom Area Project, Phase II Contract. Mr. Barker said that he was pleased to inform City Council that DHCD has contractually entered into the second phase of the Bottom Area project. He said that as Council was aware, the Bottom Area Grant was broken into two phases by DHCD. Mr. Barker said that we have met threshold amounts for housing projects (13), commercial projects (6), and construction of the stormwater utility system (33%). He noted that we have 18 months to complete the remaining portions of the project.

Dr. Charles White gave an update on Wytheville Community College and presented the FY16 budget request. Mayor Mitchell thanked Dr. White for his many years of service to WCC as he announced to Council of his plans to retire in June 2015.

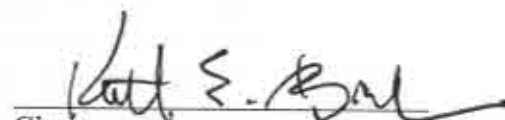
Safe Routes to School Coordinator, Linda Mock presented an update of the SRTS construction project as well as upcoming activities. Ms. Mock introduced Kathryn Osborne, the new SRTS Coordinator. Keith Barker thanked Ms. Mock for implementing the SRTS Program and seeing the many phases of its success since the program was first implemented.

Keith Barker informed Council of a request to consider the adoption of a resolution for the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area Trail System Realignment. Mr. Barker explained that the Grayson County Board of Supervisors had asked that we consider the resolution which was presented for adoption. He said that the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area was proposing some updates to the biking/hiking/horse trails within the recreation area, but part of the proposal was to eliminate a number of user created trails (200 miles) within the system. The intent was to create a Forest Supervisor's closure order which would allow citations and ticketing to individuals that are not on an official trail. According to a University of Virginia study the horse riding industry employs 90 individuals and generates \$3.5M in sales each year. The concern was that this industry would be severely impacted. After Mr. Barker had spoken with the County Administrator, the county did not feel that enough studies had been done to justify the trail closure and that the MRNRA had not kept up with demand for trails which was why so many new trails have been created. Mr. Barker said that he had spoken with Ms. Merz, Area Ranger with the MRNRA system in Marion. Ms. Merz said she felt that continued discussion with the County and groups in opposition to the trail closure plan would be worthwhile. She said perhaps a resolution in that manner would be productive to bringing all parties in line with an agreed upon plan. Councilman Garner made the motion to adopt the alternate resolution provided. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was 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. Councilwoman Plichta – nay.

Mr. Barker informed Council of a number of board appointments which were set to expire in June. Those included were to the Galax Planning Commission, Recreation Advisory Board, IDA and Library Board. Mr. Barker said with Councils permission, advertising for citizens interested in these board appointments would begin.

With no further business to come before Council, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:25 on a motion by Councilwoman Crouse.


Mayor


Clerk