

Galax City Council

Minutes

May 26, 2015

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

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

Mayor Mitchell administered the Oath of Honor to recently hired Officer Jeremiah Foutch from the Galax Police Department. After Mr. Foutch was sworn in, City Council gave the new officer a warm welcome.

Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on May 11, 2015. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Mayor Mitchell announced that this was the date advertised for a Public Hearing concerning the FY2016 Galax City Budget. Mayor Mitchell opened the floor for comments. There were none. The proposed budget was read aloud by Mayor Mitchell:

- General Fund Budget (including DSS) - \$17,948,371
- Utility Fund Budget - \$ 2,620,090

Proposed tax rates represent no change in our current rates and remain at:

- Real Estate - \$0.73 per \$100 (5.8% increase)
- Personal Property - \$2.25 per \$100 (no change)
- Machinery & Tools - \$1.50 per \$100 (no change)

Mayor Mitchell then thanked the City Manager – Keith Barker, Director of Finance – Judy Taylor-Gallimore, and City Council for their hard work on the budget. He noted a 5.8% increase in the Real estate tax rate while Personal Property and Machinery & Tools were unchanged. Also noted, there would be no action required of Council at this meeting. Mayor Mitchell told Council that if there were no changes, the FY16 Galax City Budget would be considered for adoption at the June 8, 2015 Council meeting. Mayor Mitchell declared the Public Hearing closed.

City Manager, Keith Barker, addressed Council regarding the Galax Enterprise Zone. Mr. Barker said that as Council was aware from our previous May meeting, we were notified by Dept. of Housing and Community Development staff that our 2007 Enterprise Zone had been rescinded due to lack of applications for the state incentive program. He said that while we had a number of businesses take advantage of local incentives, there had not been an application to the state program for five years. He noted that we were awarded a joint Enterprise Zone with Carroll and Grayson County beginning in 2015. Mr. Barker further explained that we were eligible to amend this enterprise zone to include areas in our past zone, along with joint properties we presented to DHCD. A revised map was given to Council prior to the meeting, which showed the joint areas that were presented to the state. Mr. Barker explained that it recaptured our industrial park, downtown, manufacturing areas along Railroad Avenue as well as added the property around

Albany Industries. Mr. Barker noted that we would be limited to 650 acres total so we have reduced the size of the zone within the downtown area and S. Main Street. Mr. Barker closed by saying with Council's permission, we would like to submit a revised map to DHCD for review and then proceed with required public hearings to officially amend the zone. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to review the map and allow for it to be submitted to DHCD for review prior to a public hearing. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Stacey Reavis, Registrar, addressed Council with a request to consider relocating the Galax City South voting precinct. Ms. Reavis explained that due to changes in the Galax school calendar, the schools will not be closed on Election Day which creates conflicts in their use as a voting precinct. Ms. Reavis said that she and the board have met with Dave Nelson and feel that the Galax Recreation Center would be suitable as a new voting location. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the relocation of the South voting precinct to the Recreation Center. Councilman Lazo seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea. Ms. Reavis thanked Council for the approval of relocating the Galax City South voting precinct. Ms. Reavis added that she wanted to make Council aware of a recent push from the public, legislatures and the Governor for the optical scan voting machines to replace the current touch screen voting machines. She said that there have not been any issues with the touch screen machines that the City has been using for nearly ten years, but wanted Council to know that it may be mandated sometime in the near future.

Chris Pollins-Shackelford, CCSA Director, provided an update to City Council on public art and presented a Public Art Policy for consideration. Ms. Pollins-Shackelford explained that within the policy were the definitions of what makes up public art, who would be appointed to a public art committee, and how funds would be handled. Ms. Pollins-Shackelford requested three action items following the update which included:

1 - The adoption of the Public Art Policy. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to adopt the Public Art Policy. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

2 – A request for Council to formally acknowledge the Public Art Committee as a committee of the City of Galax. Councilman Lazo made the motion to approve the request. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

3 – Consideration of allocating the annual allotment in the arms of CCSA to manage to generate revenue. Keith Barker, City Manager, informed Council that in accordance with rules and procedures the funding discussion would need to be held over until the next meeting on June 8, 2015.

Galax Police Chief, Rick Clark, spoke with Council about a problem with vultures in the City. Chief Clark explained with recent actions by the UDSA to alleviate a vulture problem at the former Galax Apparel, the vultures have relocated to a residential area. He said that he had spoken to representatives with USDA and they recommend a series of small fireworks and noise shots over a period of time (10 days or so) to disperse the vultures. Chief Clark asked for Council's permission to purchase the equipment and begin the process. Councilman Davis made the motion to allow the purchase and start the process of relocating the vultures. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Keith Barker asked Council if they would like to carry over the upcoming board appointments to the June 8th, 2015 meeting to allow more time for interested citizens to present letters of interest. There was a consensus vote in agreement.

At 8:30 p.m. a motion was made by Councilwoman Crouse to enter into closed session under the following Code of Virginia:

§ Employment 2.2-3711.A.1 of the *Code of Virginia* – Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body.

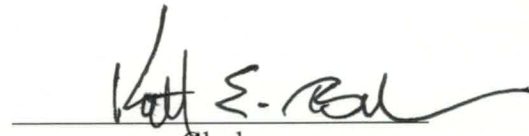
Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

At 8:40 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, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:40 p.m.



Vice Mayor



Clerk

