

Galax City Council  
Minutes  
September 14, 2015

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on September 14, 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.

Mayor Mitchell prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on August 10, 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 to consider amendments to our joint enterprise zone. Keith Barker explained that 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 of Housing and Community Development staff that our 2007 Enterprise Zone had been rescinded due to lack of applications for the state incentive program.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 while we have had a number of businesses take advantage of local incentives, there had not been an application to the state program for five years. Mr. Barker noted that we were awarded a joint Enterprise Zone with Carroll and Grayson County that began in 2015. We would be eligible to amend this enterprise zone to include areas in our past zone, along with joint properties we have presented to DHCD. Mr. Barker had given the revised map to Council that we presented to the state. It recaptured our industrial park, downtown, manufacturing areas along Railroad Ave. and added the property around Albany Industries. He closed by saying if Council approved the amendment request, we would forward this information to Grayson and Carroll for their support and approval since this was a joint zone. He said once they had approved this at their October board meetings, we would then submit the final package to the state for approval. Mayor Mitchell opened the Public Hearing by asking if there were any public comments. Mayor Mitchell declared the Public Hearing closed after there were no public comments made. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the amendments to the Galax Enterprise Zone. 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.

Keith Barker informed Council that we have received an easement request from a real estate agent on behalf of Amanda Anders of 102 West Avenue. The house on the property was built in 1962, and it encroached on the street and right of way. He said the owner had asked for an easement so that the house may be sold. Council was given a copy of the easement request and a plat of the property. Mr. Barker noted that a similar situation was approved by Council on Circle Drive a few years ago where a 30 years easement was provided, which was what this owner had also requested. He closed by saying that the City's mapping showed no conflict with water or sewer.

Councilman Lazo made the motion to approve the 30 year easement. 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 welcomed members of the Parent Advocacy & Advisory Council for the SWVTC. Wanda Robinson, along with Wade Robinson - Vice President of PAAC, was present to let Council know of their activities to keep the SWVTC open beyond 2018. Governor McDonnell issued an order to close training centers throughout the state as part of a settlement regarding an ADA case. Ms. Robinson explained how the close would affect residents at the center as well as over 300 employees. The intent of the advocacy group has been to bring awareness to the issues of placing these residents in the community and the lack of adequate housing and training. A presentation and handouts was provided at the meeting and a Resolution was requested by the group which asked Council to support keeping the SWVTC open. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the resolution. 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.

Keith Barker informed Council of a vacancy to the Bottom Area Management Team. He said that Ms. Kelsie Adams, a representative on the Bottom Area Management Team, had moved from the area and must be replaced on the team. Mr. Barker said that we had spoken to Silverio Gonzales, a neighborhood resident and Galax Police Officer, and he had agreed to serve on the team if Council approved. He noted that Officer Gonzales had been instrumental in assisting with getting information to residents in the area and it was felt that he would be an asset to the team. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to appoint Silverio Gonzales to the Bottom Area Management Team. 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.

Judy Taylor-Gallimore was present to update Council on a request for a budget amendment at the next meeting, October 12<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Taylor-Gallimore explained there were some additional revenue in FY2016 and there were also some projects that crossed over from FY2015 to FY2016. She noted the following items would be included:

|   |                                 |                  |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Juvenile Probation Office Remodeling            | Appropriated Fund Balance       | \$ 10,000        |
| Bottom Area Project                             | Appropriated Fund Balance       | \$ 40,000        |
| Street/Highway Funds                            | Increase in Maintenance Funds   | \$ 76,604        |
| Heal Grant                                      | Small Grant                     | \$ 5,000         |
| Arts Council Donation to Rex Theater            | Rex Theater lighting            | \$ 22,709        |
| Va. Dept. of Forestry/Vol. Fire Assist. Program | Fire Dept. Equipment            | \$ 2,650         |
| Safe Routes to Schools                          | Grant Funds, Project Completion | \$ 89,000        |
| <u>Gang Prevention Grant</u>                    | <u>Grant Funds</u>              | <u>\$ 10,000</u> |
| Total Estimated Budget Amendment                |                                 | \$255,963        |

Ms. Taylor-Gallimore closed by stating the total estimated amendment would be more than 1% of our current budget, therefore Council must conduct a public hearing. She asked Council to set October 12, 2015 as the public hearing date for the proposed amendment to the FY2016 budget. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to set October 12<sup>th</sup> as the date for the public hearing to consider the budget amendment. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion as 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 addressed Council regarding a request from USDA and Natural Resource Conservation Services. The request asked Council to take action to close out the Chestnut Creek Watershed Land Treatment Project.



He said the project undertook several small projects to protect watersheds in our area such as fencing, stream bank stabilization and protection, water troughs for farm animals, erosion protection, etc. He closed by further explaining that funds had been expended and they were asking each participating locality to authorize the closure of the project. Councilman Davis made the motion to take action to close out the project and authorize the City Manager to sign all required documents. Vice Mayor Greene 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 informed Council as part of the conditional use permit City Council approved for the proposed Galax Elementary School project, there were to be two committees developed which included a design committee and a financial review committee. Mr. Barker explained the school system had begun the process of making staff and board appointments to each committee and had asked City Council to make our appointments also.

The School Board appointed the following staff and members to date on the design committee:

|                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Ray Kohl         | School Board            |
| Helen Kyle       | School Board            |
| Larry Spangler   | School Board            |
| Bill Sturgill    | Superintendent          |
| Rebecca Cardwell | Asst. Superintendent    |
| Dr. Kristie Legg | GES Principal           |
| Emily Boyles     | GES Assistant Principal |

*A neighboring resident and various teachers would be appointed.*

The School Board appointed the following staff and board members to the finance committee:

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Dr. Jim Adams    | School Board         |
| Stu Merdian      | School Board         |
| Ray Kohl         | School Board         |
| Bill Sturgill    | Superintendent       |
| Rebecca Cardwell | Asst. Superintendent |
| Dr. Kristie Legg | GES Principal        |

Keith Barker said under the conditional use permit, City Council could appoint two council members and one staff member to the design committee. City Council could appoint Council members and staff as necessary for the finance committee. Mr. Barker asked City Council to appointment himself to the design committee and Ms. Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Finance Director, to the finance committee. Mr. Barker asked Council to appoint up to two (2) City Council members to each committee. He noted that once the appointments were made, he would inform the School Board.

After a brief discussion, it was decided that Councilman Lazo, Councilwoman Crouse and Keith Barker would serve on the GES Design Committee. Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Garner, Judy Taylor-Gallimore, and Keith Barker would serve on the GES Finance Committee.

Councilman Lazo made the motion to approve the appointed Council members along with Keith Barker and Judy Taylor-Gallimore to the specified Design & Finance Committees. 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.

Keith Barker informed Council that notice had been received to appoint two staff members to the Mt. Rogers Alcohol Safety Program Board of Directors. Mr. Barker said that he had spoken to Chief Clark regarding the appointments. He said that we have two officers that desired to be appointed to this board, Capt. James Cox and Officer Chris Hines. Councilman Crouse made the motion to appoint Capt. Cox and Officer Hines to the board. 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.

Keith Barker told Council the SWVA EMS Council had requested our support in seeking the re-designation as the EMS Council for our region. He noted that Council offered this support in 2012. A draft letter of support was given to Council prior to the meeting. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to authorize the City Manager to send the letter of support for the SWVA EMS Council. 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. a motion was made by Councilwoman Crouse to enter into closed session under the following Code of Virginia:

**Candidates for 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 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.

At 9:25 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 9:25 p.m.

  
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Mayor

  
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Clerk