

GALAX CITY COUNCIL

Minutes

April 25, 2011

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on April 25, 2011 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: Councilman Lazo, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Garner, Vice-Mayor Greene, and Councilman Webb. Councilwoman Crouse was not in attendance.

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

Councilman Webb motioned to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on April 11, 2011. Vice-Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Councilman Lazo-yea, Councilwoman Plichta-yea, Councilman Garner-yea, Mayor Mitchell-yea, Vice Mayor Greene-yea, and Councilman Webb-yea.

This was the date set for Council to consider the approval and appropriation of the Galax City Schools FY 2012 budget. This is required so that the schools may begin contracts for teachers and staff for the upcoming year. The total school budget is \$12,914,663 of which the City funding is \$4,159,885. Councilman Webb motioned to approve and appropriate the budget as presented. Vice-Mayor Webb seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Councilman Lazo-yea, Councilwoman Plichta-yea, Councilman Garner-yea, Mayor Mitchell-yea, Vice Mayor Greene-yea, and Councilman Webb-yea.

Keith Barker informed Council that Steven Nichols, owner of Sota-Pops has requested that City Council consider amending the City Code and the definition of "Pool Hall" from more than 3 tables to more than 4 tables. Mr. Barker explained that currently the City Code defines any facility with more than 3 tables as a "pool hall" and minors are not allowed in the premises unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. Mr. Nichols's business is based on service to youth mainly and while he would like to add the additional table, it would severely restrict his business to be defined as a "pool hall". Mr. Barker has spoken to Chief Clark and the City has had no incidents with this business since it went into operations in October 2010. If Council considers the request, staff can solicit information from other localities on how they address "pool halls" and bring a recommendation at the next meeting. As this is part of a City Code section, it would require a public hearing to amend the ordinance. Councilman Garner stated that more information needs to be brought to Council before a decision can be made. No action was taken at this time.

Edwin Ward updated Council on the Spivey PRV Project. He stated that as part of the City would seek to trade properties with an adjoining owner in order to relocate equipment from the current Spivey Reservoir site to a new site. He asked Council to consider setting May 9, 2011 at 7:30 as the date for the public hearing. Vice-Mayor Greene motioned to set May 9 as the date for the public hearing. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Councilman Lazo-yea, Councilwoman Plichta-yea, Councilman Garner-yea, Mayor Mitchell-yea, Vice Mayor Greene-yea, and Councilman Webb-yea.

Keith Barker informed Council on the Line of Duty Act (LODA). He stated that this year the General Assembly passed new legislation that will require localities to pick up the LODA costs for all police officers, ems personnel and fire departments (including volunteer) beginning in July 2011. It is possible that there may also be some cost associated with the Virginia Dept. of Social Services due to their requirements as "first responders" in opening any emergency shelters. This cost had been covered by the state and is now an unfunded mandate; however he explained that the estimated costs have been placed in the upcoming FY2012 budget. Long term costs are unknown and are expected to grow each year. There will be two options to coverage for the City, the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and the Virginia Municipal League Insurance (VML). VRS will be considered the state system and every locality is automatically enrolled in it unless they opt out. The pricing from VRS is projected to grow 250% within the first 3 years of coverage. VML's coverage is expected to be lower and we can select them to be our carrier if we opt out of the VRS system.

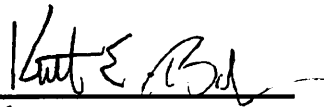
Mr. Barker informed Council that he is currently in discussions with VML to see where their proposed rates will be, however they will look at a localities number of incidents when setting the rate structure and can require localities with current experiences to pay more on the upfront fees. The City currently has no incidents. If elected to opt out of VRS, the City can do so up until June 30, 2012, however after that date we are with the carrier we select indefinitely under the new law.

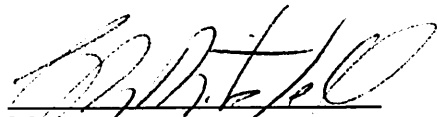
In order for the Galax Fire Department to be covered under LODA, Galax City Council will need to adopt an ordinance listing the department as part of our "official safety program". While the department is called out in the City Code, it does not list the department as part of the City's "official safety program". The same may be true for the GGEMS, however that is still being determined that at this time.

Mr. Barker has spoken to Chief Hankley about LODA and the requirement under the Dept. of Fire Programs that the GFD must provide a roster of all firefighters. Chief is working with his officers and members of the department to provide the list of active and participating firemen. One is listed at the state for the GGEMS.

Mr. Barker will have more information available at a future meeting; however he wanted Council to be aware of the requirements and the need to consider this City Code ordinance revision in May or June.

At 8:15 p.m., the Council meeting adjourned.


Clerk


Mayor