

Galax City Council
Minutes
April 14, 2014

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on April 14, 2014 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, Councilman Webb, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, and Councilman Lazo.

Councilwoman Crouse 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 March 24, 2014. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilman Webb – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

Mayor Mitchell announced that Council had voted at the last Council meeting on March 24, 2014, to carry over the discussion regarding the conditional use permit for Galax Public Schools to this meeting. Mayor Mitchell then asked Bill Sturgill to come to the podium to speak on behalf of Galax Public Schools. Mr. Sturgill presented a revised plan for the site, and explained to Council that a letter from the school has been presented indicating that the revised site plan is the one that they will commit to and expect no significant changes. Some points of reference which Mr. Sturgill explained on the site plan were as follows:

- Vegetated buffer areas had been created between some residential areas and the site where existing tree lines were not in place.
- Existing tree lines were shown as preserved and titled “Conservation Area”.
- All entrances to the site were used in an effort to reduce traffic impact in one area.
- A letter was provided from the schools indicating that this would be the site plan that they will commit to and they expect no significant changes.

Councilwoman Crouse asked if the school on the new site plan was shifted further back compared to the original plan. Mr. Sturgill said that it was not.

Vice Mayor Greene asked what grades are currently at Galax Elementary School. Mr. Sturgill said that grades pre-k thru 4th are located there.

Vice Mayor Greene asked Mr. Sturgill if we really needed a new school. He explained to Vice Mayor Greene that in 2000 a study was performed that determined that the best solution recommended was to build a new school because of the age and condition of Galax Elementary. He also said that there is no air conditioning and the school does not dismiss classes for high temperatures. Mr. Greene then asked how many acres the school is on now and what grades would

be included at the proposed new school. Mr. Sturgill told him the existing school is on 10 acres and they are looking at no more than grades K thru 8. Vice Mayor Greene then asked if the new school does turn out to be a K-8 school, what will the existing middle school be used for. He also asked if a traffic study would be performed. Mr. Sturgill answered that the school system would use that area to create more space for the high school and that moving into the development phase of this project that would help drive whatever concept we go with, so there would be a traffic study later on.

Council woman Crouse asked if it would be feasible to allow cars and buses into the school one way, and then out different ways. Mr. Sturgill told her that we the school would prefer to separate buses and cars for safety reasons. He also noted that there could be 5 points of entry.

Vice Mayor Greene asked Mr. Sturgill if the city will have to raise taxes to buy the property. Mr. Sturgill answered no. He said that the funds would be used from the school's capital account.

Councilman Lazo voiced a concern to Mr. Sturgill regarding how the school itself would be paid for later on. He also said he is concerned because of the neighborhood tenants being so upset. He noted that there is a need for the school, but we also need to respect the property owners.

Councilwoman Plichta told Mr. Sturgill that this is such a controversial issue, that she felt that it needs more study and time.

Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to send the conditional use permit request for the school back to the Planning Commission for a second attempt at a recommendation. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilman Webb – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

Chris Brown - the Resource Development Manager for United Way Virginia Highlands, was present to speak to council about programs they offer in Galax and the Twin County area.

Chris Pollins-Shackelford - Chestnut Creek School of the Arts, was present to give an update to Council on CCSA. She also gave a Public Art update which included a power point presentation on the bass fiddle collection painted by area artists. The painted bass fiddles will be distributed throughout the City of Galax in different areas to be on public display.

Council was informed by Keith Barker that Mr. James Goad has made a request to operate a taxi service in Galax. Per City Code 140-5, City Council makes the final determination and approval/denial of a taxi cab license request. Mr. Goad's application was reviewed by Chief Clark and his review was given to Council. Mr. Barker said that Mr. Goad intends to operate a single vehicle as his business and has provided proof of insurance and his license as well as obtained a business license. Councilman Garner made the motion to approve Mr. Goad's request for the taxi cab service. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilman Webb – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

Keith Barker explained to Council that Governor McAuliffe has provided a resolution to each local government and asked that it be considered for adoption. After further review of the resolution by

Council, Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to table the resolution until the next City Council meeting on April 28, 2014. Council would like to change the verbiage to express their concerns regarding the state budget. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilman Webb – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

Keith Barker told Council that Jim Cornwell, City Attorney, has recommended that we establish a Local Board of Building Code Board of Appeals (LBBCA) as called out in the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. He explained that while we had a board a number of years ago, the board did not meet and a recent appeal was held by an adjoining jurisdiction. Mr. Barker added that the appointees must have specific experience as a registered design professional, construction, property management, etc. He also said that based on these requirements, Building Official Terry Atwell has spoken to five (5) citizens in Galax about being appointed to the board, which included:

- Dr. Jim Adams – property management
- Ron Catron – property management
- Kevin Heath, P.E. – registered design professional
- Scott Larrowe – construction
- David Wilson – construction, insurance adjuster

The Rules of Procedure that were developed for the operation of the board were given to Council members to review. These outlined the board operation, terms, etc. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the appointees by using staggered terms of 2 and 4 years, and also to adopt the rules and procedures. Dr. Jim Adams and Ron Catron's term would expire first in 2 years. Kevin Heath, Scott Larrowe, and David Wilson's term would expire in 4 years. Councilman Webb seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilman Webb – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

Keith Barker explained to Council that our FY2014 VDOT allocation is slightly higher than budgeted at an additional \$47,000. He said that we are required to spend VDOT funds on our overall road upkeep, maintenance, and equipment needs. Mr. Barker explained that at this time, we have reviewed year to date expenditures and the additional \$47,000 in revenue and would ask Council to approve the following capital purchases for FY2014: New radios for Public Works - \$7,000, and new building for equipment storage - \$40,000.

Mr. Barker also noted that this is a budget amendment to Revenue Line Item *10.3240.0301 Street and Highway Funds* and Expenditure Line Item *10.4106.6007 Streets, Repairs & Maintenance*. Funding and expenditures are revenue neutral and no additional City funds are required. Remaining maintenance funds would be directed to replenishing our salt supply, provide additional road paint for traffic lines, etc. As this is less than 1%, a public hearing is not required. Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to approve the FY2014 Budget Amendment as presented. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilman Webb – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

Keith Barker told Council that the following board or committee appointees are expiring at the end of June, except for the Social Services Board which expires in August. He added notes on each board:

- Crossroads Institute Board of Directors – Mayor Mitchell serves on this board but is not eligible for reappointment. This is a City Council appointee. This is a four (4) year term with a two (2) term limit. Meetings are typically set for the 4th Wednesday at 4:30; however the board only meets about 4 to 6 times a year.
- Board of Zoning Appeals – Ms. Fayma Nye’s term is expiring. This is an appointee of the Circuit Court; however City Council makes the recommendation for the appointment. Ms. Nye has expressed an interest in being reappointed. The meetings are called meetings.
- Recreation Board – Mr. Steven Archer and Mr. Larry Spangler are appointees to this board and are eligible for a second term reappointment. Mr. Archer and Mr. Spangler have both expressed interest in being reappointed. This board does have a two (2) term limit. Meetings are on the 3rd Thursday, on the first month of each quarter.
- Library Board – Ms. Carol Morris is the appointee to this board but has indicated that she does not wish to be reappointed. This board meets bi-monthly in the months of July, September, November, January, March, and May at 4:30 and they alternate between the Galax and Carroll libraries.
- Galax Social Services Board – The Galax Social Services Board appointments represent City Council member and 4 citizen appointees. All terms are expiring and new appointments will need to be made. These appointees have typically represented the medical fields, community service fields and are a mix of our citizen makeup. Appointment terms are for four (4) years and begin September 1. Meetings are on even number months, on the third Tuesday at 5:00. A memorandum from Susan Clark was attached regarding these appointments.

Mr. Barker explained that Council can consider re-appointing the members of each board that are eligible for an additional term. Council must appoint a council representative to the Crossroads Board. Council may advertise for the Social Services Board appointments or may direct the City Manager and DSS Director to provide a list of possible candidates. After discussion, City Council directed the City Manager to advertise the Library Board appointment and to hold the other appointments over for the discussion at a later City Council meeting.

At 9:10 p.m., a motion was made by Councilwoman Crouse to enter into closed session under:

Discussion Concerning a Prospective Business or Industry, §2.2-3711 A.5 of the Code of Virginia
Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.

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

At 9:45 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 taken, with the following affirmation: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilman Webb – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:46 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk

1

1

1