

Galax City Council
Minutes
November 24, 2014

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on November 24, 2014 at 7:30 p.m.

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, and Councilman Lazo. Councilman Webb was absent.

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

Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on November 14, 2014. Councilman 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 Lazo – yea.

Mayor Mitchell stated that this is the date advertised as the public hearing for the right of way request from AEP. The intent is to acquire the right of way from the City so AEP can proceed in upgrading electrical service on the west side of Galax in order to reduce the possibility of a power loss due to overloading of circuits. Part of the project would require them to install two (2) poles on the Mountain View Park, adjacent to the parking lot. Mr. Barker stated that he has met with AEP reps and Dave Nelson, Galax Recreation Director, to view the project. While AEP will need to remove a few trees, the main trees in front of the park would remain and trees that are removed would be replaced with smaller trees. The line would be mainly over the parking lot, behind the trees along Mt. View Street. AEP has also offered to install a transformer on the pole to accommodate lights for the parking lot at a future time if the City decides to install them. This is a cost savings of approximately \$1300 to have this done now. Mayor Mitchell opened the public hearing at 7:35 PM. There was general discussion among Council concerning lights at the parking lot with the acceptance of the transformers at this time and lights at a later date. At 7:38 the public hearing was closed. Vice-Mayor Greene made the motion to approve the ROW request from AEP. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Crouse and it was approved unanimously by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

Galax City Schools is requesting an amendment to the FY15 School Budget as a result of an increase in enrollment and state funds. Council was asked to set December 8th as the date for the public hearing for this request. Councilman Garner made the motion to set December 8th as the public hearing date for the school board budget amendment. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Plichta 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 Lazo – yea.

Mr. Barker informed Council that the City had received notice of the state budget reductions to various items within our budget, or within the budget of agencies we fund. A copy of those reductions and spending reduction recommendations was provided to Council.

Mr. Barker has spoken to the departments with the larger reductions and he made the recommendation that reductions be made within the categories provided by the State. The recommendation was that reduced revenue from the Board of Elections (Registrar), 599 Funds (Police), Commissioner of Revenue, & Recordation Taxes be adjusted down by a total \$10,381; but adjust for an increase in revenue in Sales Tax by a like amount. The other category reductions (Library, Galax DSS, and Juvenile Services) would be within those operating budgets or amounts we currently provide since we typically budget more than we spend. There would be no need to reflect a change within our budget for these accounts. Councilman Garner made the motion to provide for reductions in the categories provided by the state through budget reductions in revenue within those categories and an increase in sales tax revenue by a like amount. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Plichta 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 Lazo – yea.

Council was informed that there would be a training session provided by Sands Anderson on December 15 from 9AM – 12PM at Crossroads. The training is free of charge and a light breakfast will be served.

While not on the agenda, Mayor Mitchell read a letter from Councilman Webb announcing his resignation from City Council. It was with deep regret that Council heard the resignation.

Mr. Barker informed Council that based on the Code of Virginia, Council must petition the court within 15 days on setting a special election to fill the unexpired term of Councilman Webb. After discussion Councilman Garner made the motion to petition the court to set the November 2015 general election as the special election date for the Council seat. Councilman Lazo seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

Mr. Barker informed Council that they also must appoint a new Council member to serve in the vacant seat within 45 days. This is before the first January 2015 meeting. Councilman Lazo suggested that Council members begin thinking about prospective citizens that could be appointed to the position and Council can discuss this at the December 8 meeting. If needed, a called meeting or the second December meeting can be used to talk to candidates.

Mayor Mitchell opened the floor to any citizens who had comments to bring to Council.

Mayor Mitchell accepted a motion from Councilwoman Plichta to enter into closed session per **§2.2-3711 A.1 of the Code of Virginia** - Candidates for employment; the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, discipline, salaries, compensation, or resignation of employees.

and

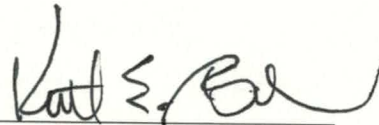
§2.2-3711 A.5 of the Code of Virginia - Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it passed unanimously by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

At 9:10 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, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, and Councilman Lazo – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:11 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Mitchell", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl E. [unclear]", written over a horizontal line.

Clerk

