

Galax City Council  
Minutes  
August 9, 2021

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on August 9, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Greene called the meeting to order with the following Council persons present and they are as listed: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe. Councilman Warr was absent.

Councilman Haynes prayed the opening prayer. Special guest, Bill Parks representing the Celebrate Recovery – Peer Recovery Team, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

In special action, Mayor Greene presented Allen Widner, a plaque and a watch for his retirement from the Public Works Department.

Mayor Greene recognized 17 members of the Celebrate Recovery – Peer Recovery Team for their accomplishments in the area of addiction recovery as well as their service to the community. Councilwoman White, the Chaplain for Celebrate Recovery, spoke briefly honoring the members for their extraordinary efforts and achievements.

City Manager - Mr. Settlemyer requested approval from Council for the August consent agenda. Councilman Haynes made the motion to approve the following items:

- Adoption of Minutes of July 12, 2021 Regular Meeting.
- Adoption of Minutes of July 28, 2021 Joint Session 911 Regional Commission.

Councilman Larrowe seconded the motion and noted a correction of Martin Warr's name on the Joint Session minutes. It was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Mr. Settlemyer informed Council of new business items which included the following:

A seat on the Galax Carroll Regional Library Board was opened after a recent resignation. Trish Fore, Librarian, received a request by Lee Chaffee to serve the remainder of the vacancy. A letter of interest and qualifications from Mr. Chaffee was received and reviewed by Council.

Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to appoint Lee Chaffee to the library board. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

A request for authorization and approval of the Virginia Abatement Fund and Settlement Allocation. City Attorney, Steve Durbin provided a Resolution and the MOU regarding a settlement in the opioid lawsuit of which Galax was a party. It was the consensus of the Council earlier this month to accept the terms of the settlement. Mr. Settlemyer explained in terms of funds for the City, the best we had right now was a ballpark figure, because we don't know exactly



how much Virginia would eventually get, deductions, etc. This MOU would not only govern the Purdue Bankruptcy settlement funds (\$5.3-6.3 billion), but also the J&J/"Big 3" settlement (approximately 26 billion). The ultimate value of the Purdue settlement would only be known once the company winds down and sells assets over the next several years. A rough estimate from Steve was around \$160K -- \$200K to Galax over time.

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the resolution and direct the City Manager to execute and enter into Memorandum of Understanding on the City's behalf. Councilman Haynes seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Mr. Settlemyer informed Council of a request by Chris Pollins, CCSA Director to consider an ordinance that would allow a tax exemption for newly purchased property. CCSA purchased the current pottery studio at 110 E. Oldtown Street. The purchase would allow CCSA to secure the facility, and also save rent they were paying. The request was made under the Code of Virginia which would allow a non-profit to request a real estate tax exemption from the local government. The City's attorney will be drawing up an ordinance for this request. The request would require and public hearing as well as an advertisement.

Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to set September 13, 2021 for the public hearing for the CCSA request and to authorize the City Manager to advertise the hearing. Councilwoman White seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Mayor Greene announced this was the date set for a public hearing for FY2021-2022 budget amendments. The floor was opened for public comments. Ms. Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Director of Finance spoke regarding the budget amendments. The amendment for FY21 included additional ARPA revenue in the amount of \$3,292,559. The amendment for FY22, included the carryover funding for HVAC improvements at the Rec Center as well as ARPA revenue which totaled \$2,794,599. Mayor Greene opened the floor for public comments. With no comments made, he declared the public hearing closed.

Councilman Haynes made the motion to approve the FY2021-2022 budget amendments. Vice Mayor Mitchell seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Mayor Greene announced this was the date set for a public hearing regarding VDOT Transportation Alternative Project Pre-Applications. He opened the floor for public comments. Grants Administrator - Ms. Brenda Marrah, spoke about the projects and requested that Council approve the resolutions which would commit a 20% match and authorize the City Manager to execute agreements on behalf of the City:

- West Stuart Drive Sidewalk: A Safe Routes to School completion of the sidewalk to the Library. Approximately 450 linear feet of sidewalk on West Stuart Drive from McArthur to Murphy Street and crosswalks. (Estimated cost would be \$217,500 with a required 20% match of \$43,495.)



- Main Street Sidewalk: The project would consist of approximately 225 linear feet of sidewalk on each side of Main Street between Center and Washington Streets, excluding the intersections. (Estimated cost would be \$649,000 with a required 20% match of \$127,532.)

Mayor Greene opened the floor for public comments. Project Manager – Jimmy Moss, spoke briefly regarding extra VDOT funding. With no further comments, Mayor Greene declared the public hearing closed.

Vice Mayor Mitchell made a motion to approve the VDOT Transportation Alternative Project resolutions and authorize the City Manager to execute agreements on behalf of the City. Councilman Larrowe seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Mayor Greene opened the floor for citizen comments.

Greg Cromer – America From The Sky Photography, showed a large aerial photo of Galax with Council and made everyone aware of his business which sells the photos.

#### Communication from City Manager

Mr. Settlemyer offered to answer any questions from Council regarding the August update report. The report contained the status of various projects & initiatives that were underway with the City or regional boards. The updated projects included:

- Bottom Area Project – Eastview Phase
- VDOT Projects

#### Communication from Mayor and City Council

- Mayor Mitchell discussed finding an old polio vaccination poster. He spoke about the Covid virus & Delta variant and how important getting the vaccination is for our community.
- Councilwoman White gave an update on God’s Storehouse as well as the women’s shelter – which was donated, named Ms. Clair’s, which is an eleven-month program with strict requirements for rehabilitation.
- Councilwoman Ritchie discussed a recent Parks & Recreation Board meeting she attended. She said they were at 75% of the pre-Covid schedule now. Also, the need for a humidifier at the indoor pool and the discussion of a grant. Councilwoman Ritchie informed Council that the regional planner with MRPDC had three chapters of the Comprehensive Plan drafted.
- Councilman Larrowe inquired about the Parks & Recreation Department’s Summer Program as to why it was stopped a week early. He said citizens had contacted him about this since it created a hardship on working parents to find child care. Councilman Larrowe



reminded Council that Rhiannon Powers from District Three would give an update on their services at the next meeting. He discussed the Galax Fire Department's Length of Service Award Plan and noted what a great plan it is. He said an attorney at Sands-Anderson would be reviewing it and would update the documents.

- Mayor Greene informed Council as currently served as the VML President; he had the opportunity to put a "spot light" on a subject dear to his heart. He said that he had chosen to recognize the firefighters & first responders at the Galax Fire Department. He said that someone from VML would be coming to Galax to take photos & videos of the FD Volunteer Firefighters. Mayor Greene also informed Council that he had been re-appointed for another term to the State Executive Council on Children's Services. He discussed how there was a shortage of child care in Galax.

### Closed Session

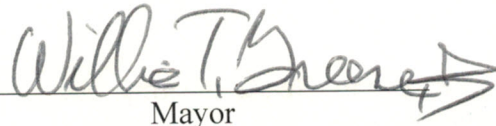
With no further public comments, Mayor Greene accepted a motion made by Vice Councilman Larrowe at 7:15 p.m. to enter into closed session under the following Code of Virginia: **§ 2.2-3711 A.1 Code of Virginia-Personnel Matters**

Councilman Haynes seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

At 7:30 p.m. Council reconvened in open session. Mayor Greene 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 Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to adjourn. Councilman Haynes seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

ADJOURNMENT at 7: 30 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk