

Galax City Council  
Minutes  
January 10, 2022

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on January 10, 2022, 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, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Councilman Warr prayed the opening prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance - Sophie Beth Hanks, Ava Haynes, and Kami Whisenhunt led the Pledge of Allegiance, and was recognized for taking over and operating Galax Conservatory of Dance and Theatre.

Special Action

City Manager, Matt Settlemyer welcomed the Honorable Gerald Eugene Mabe II who administered the Oath of Office to the following Council members:

Mayor Willie Greene  
Councilman Travis Haynes  
Councilman Evan Henck  
Councilman Sharon Ritchie

Mr. Settlemyer announced it was time for the selection of the Mayor and Vice Mayor. He called for a nomination for Mayor. Councilman Haynes made the motion to nominate Councilman Greene. Councilman Warr seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Mayor Greene thanked his colleagues for their support and vote of confidence in appointing him as Mayor.

Mayor Greene opened the floor for nominations for Vice Mayor. Councilman Haynes made the motion to nominate Councilwoman Beth White. With no further nominations, Mayor Greene asked for a motion to close the nominations for Vice Mayor. Councilwoman Ritchie made the motion and Councilman Warr seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Mayor Greene then requested a motion to appoint Councilwoman White as Vice Mayor. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the appointment and Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of



“yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Mayor Greene administered the Oath of Honor to the recently hired Galax Police Officer, Tiffany Melton.

#### Communications from Staff, Boards, Commissions & Agencies

Mayor Greene requested approval from Council for the following items on the consent agenda:

- Adoption of minutes of the November 16, 2021 special meeting
- Adoption of minutes of the December 13, 2021 regular meeting

Councilman Larrowe made the suggestion to defer the approval of the November 16, 2021 Strategic Planning Meeting minutes until the items discussed at that meeting, which were resolved to be made as top priority, could be listed and attached. Councilman Henck suggested that the minutes were required to be submitted. Councilman Larrowe and Mr. Settlemyer clarified that the minutes were incomplete and would be added to the February agenda for approval.

Councilwoman Larrowe made the motion to approve the consent agenda with the November 16, 2021 meeting minutes removed. Councilman Haynes seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

#### New Business

Mayor Greene informed Council of a request to approve a resolution proclaiming Galax-Carroll Regional Library Week February 7-11, 2022, then he read aloud the resolution. Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the request as presented. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Mr. Settlemyer discussed the importance of the City’s Strategic Plan and its approval by Council which was necessary to implement the plan. He said the approval would initiate the framework which would contain the crucial components for the City’s successful future. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the City of Galax Strategic Plan. Vice Mayor White seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Councilman Larrowe discussed the importance of establishing City Council Committees. He informed Council that having City Council Committees would be an important tool to move items forward, instead of them being stalled without progression. He noted the committees would offer structure for Council. The categories discussed were broken down by functional area which included:

- Audit & Finance



- Tourism & Downtown
- Communication
- Public Services
- Education
- Infrastructure
- Commerce

There was a consensus to move forward with Councilman Larrowe's proposal of establishing City Council Committees.

Mayor Greene requested approval by Council for the following 2022 City Calendars:

- Holidays & Sanitation
- City Council Regular Meeting Dates
- FY2023 Budget Calendar

Mr. Settlemyer noted that the street closing and events calendar would be on the February agenda as Tourism, GDA and the Chamber were planning to meet later this month to finalize. He said that Juneteenth had been added to our holiday calendar because it was approved last year as a federal holiday as well as a Virginia state holiday.

Councilman Haynes made the motion to approve the 2022 City Calendars with two Council meeting dates revised due to their occurrence on holidays. Councilman Larrowe seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Mayor Greene informed Council of a request to appoint a Council member to the Carroll-Grayson-Galax Solid Waste Authority, due to C.M. Mitchell's retirement. Mr. Settlemyer explained that C.M. Mitchell had requested to be re-appointed to this Board as he had been active with the Solid Waste Authority and would like to continue in that role. He noted that Council could appoint him as a citizen representative on the Board and Mayor Greene would continue to serve as the other City appointment to the Solid Waste Authority. Vice Mayor White made the motion to re-appoint C.M. Mitchell as a citizen representative to the Carroll-Grayson-Galax Solid Waste Authority. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck. Councilman Haynes left for a moment and returned after the vote.

Mayor Greene informed Council of a request for a Council member to be appointed to serve on BRCEDA – Blue Ridge Community Economic Development Association. Mayor Greene said Councilman Larrowe currently served as the alternate and Council was asked to fill the primary position and an alternate. Councilman Henck made the motion to appoint Councilman Larrowe in the primary BRCEDA seat. Councilman Warr seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Councilman Haynes made the motion to appoint Councilwoman Ritchie as the alternate BRCEDA seat. Vice Mayor White seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the



following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Mr. Settlemyer informed Council the Requests for Proposals to replace Tower 11 Ladder Truck at the Galax Fire Department had to be re-advertised. This was due to the ad not being posted on the State’s procurement website. In order to comply, the RFP was published again in a newspaper. He explained that only one vendor submitted an adjusted RFP from the one originally submitted. Mr. Settlemyer said the Galax Fire Department’s recommendation had stayed the same to purchase the Pierce manufactured truck. Vice Mayor White made the motion to re-affirm the previous motion from the December 13 Council meeting, that the Pierce Arrow XT demo truck was clearly most suited to the City’s needs and the City intends to award the contract to Pierce Manufacturing-Atlantic Emergency Solutions. Councilman Warr seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

#### Citizen Comments

Ms. Jill Burcham, Pastor & founder of PUSH Ministries, along with Ms. Danielle Cooper, addressed Council regarding the homeless population in our area. Ms. Burcham explained how her organization had been helping those in need. She requested that additional routes and buses from District Three’s transit buses were needed in our area. Ms. Cooper spoke about a homeless shelter which would teach life skills and be operated by donations. Chief Dewitt Cooper inform Council of how the finances were organized between the PD and PUSH Ministries for bus tickets & motel accommodations for the homeless.

#### Communication from the City Manager

Mr. Settlemyer provided a City Manager’s report to Council prior to the meeting and was readily available for any questions Council may have.

- Planning Commission & IDA vacancies need to be filled soon.
- RFP for Kipling Lane Housing Project to go out soon – bids to be solicited.
- Financial Disclosures due February 1, 2022.
- Discussed “branding” Galax through an allocation of ARPA funds through Virginia Tourism.
- Demolition of condemned houses discussed and how to fund.

#### Councilman Henck

Mayor Greene welcomed Councilman Henck. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to be a part of Galax City Council. He discussed the importance of visiting & supporting local businesses to learn more about how to bring growth to Galax.

#### Councilman Haynes

Explained how he was encouraged about how the City Council had been coming together, building momentum to get things accomplished. He said he was glad to have Councilman Henck to be a part of Council and thankful for the Council members who were serving. He complimented each Council member by noting how each had unique contributions to bring to City.



Councilman Larrowe

Informed Council of how much he appreciated Council's efforts in all they do. He felt the first of each year is the best time to assess to decide what Council would like to accomplish in the new year. Councilman Larrowe discussed the Strategic Plan, the Succession Plan, Cannabis legislation discussion, and requested the policy regarding clearing sidewalks.

Councilman Larrowe made a request to go into an unplanned closed session after the regular meeting to discuss Personnel.

Councilwoman Ritchie

Discussed the Kipling Lane Project and how incentives need to be offered for doctors, nurses, and other professionals to locate to Galax.

Mayor Greene accepted a motion made by Councilman Larrowe at 9:10 p.m. to enter into closed session under the following Code of Virginia which Councilman Larrowe read aloud:

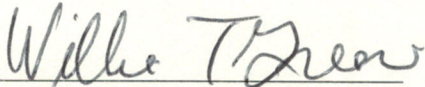
**Personnel Matter – § 2.2-3711 A.1 of the Code of Virginia - Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body.**

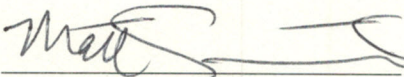
Councilman Henck seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

At 9:50 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 votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Councilwoman White made the motion to adjourn. Councilman Warr seconded the motion.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:50 p.m.

  
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Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk

