

Galax City Council
Minutes
April 11, 2022

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on April 11, 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.

Councilwoman White prayed the opening prayer.

Mayor Greene welcomed Robert "BJ" Dalton, Jr. and Kaitlyn "KC" Dalton who led the Pledge of Allegiance. They were presented a certificate of appreciation from Council and by their grandfather, Mayor Greene.

Special Action

Vice Mayor White read aloud a proclamation in recognition of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, April 10 – 16, 2022 and the National Day of Prayer, May 5, 2022.

Councilman Haynes made the motion to approve the proclamations. 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.

Mayor Greene along with Council recognized the retirement of the following employees:

- Ms. Brenda Marrah, Grants Administrator
- Ms. Rita Lundy, Department of Social Services

Councilman Warr made the motion to amend the agenda to move the discussion from visitors who were in attendance to speak regarding the Rex Theater to unfinished business. 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.

Communications from Staff, Boards, Commissions, & Agencies

Ms. Susan Tilley, Superintendent, presented the proposed the Galax Public Schools FY2023 annual budget to Council.

Ms. Crystal Morphis, a Certified Economic Developer from Creative EDC and LEED Green Associate, gave Council an informative presentation in which she discussed the importance of strategic planning and economic development opportunities for Galax.

Consent Agenda

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

- Adoption of minutes of the March 14, 2022 Regular Meeting

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilwoman 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.

Unfinished Business

Mayor Greene informed Council due to the prior amendment of the agenda, the floor would be opened for public comments. The guest speakers included:

- Laura Romanowski – Twin County Arts Council Director
Ms. Romanowski addressed Council regarding the Rex Theater RFP progress. She noted that there was a need for improvements to the Rex but her main concern was making sure the agreements with various organizations to use the Rex were honored.
- Dr. Cameron Gillespie – Introduced himself as being a citizen of Galax who was interested in health care and our community. He had several detailed questions regarding the proposed leasers of the Rex Theater. Mr. Gillespie also questioned the length of the proposed lease and what their goals were. He asked that Council consider carefully the questions he presented when making a decision on the lease of the Rex Theater.
- Carol Waddell informed Council of her role in playing a major part of bringing the Theater Guild, Arts Council, multiple plays to the Rex Theater. She discussed her concern about the money raised by volunteers and time donated to make the Rex thrive. Ms. Waddell explained how important the Rex was to the community and asked Council to take that into consideration when making a decision regarding the Rex Theater.
- Mariah Nunn – Explained her love for the Rex Theater and told of how she had worked behind the scenes over the years and seen the confidence children developed after being involved in plays and productions. She wants the community to be able to continue to use the Rex Theater in the future.

Mayor Greene addressed the visitors who spoke to Council of their concerns toward the leasing on the Rex. He said their concerns would definitely be considered in making the decisions regarding a lease. He closed by thanking the volunteers for the hours spent on the Rex.

Mr. Settlemyer addressed Council regarding the consideration of the RFPs received to lease the Rex Theatre for private management. He said that Council could move forward if they chose to. One RFP was received.

Stevie Barr spoke to Council and the visitors regarding the questions about the management group. He said that he wanted to put their minds at ease. He said that the goal of the proposed leaser of the Rex was not to destroy anything, but only make it better. Mr. Barr said that his role with the proposed management company would be to handle the bookings for Friday night music.

Councilwoman White read aloud an email received from Tom Peddy in favor of the Rex having a management company take over.

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to assign the evaluation of the RFP received to the Tourism Downtown Committee that was scheduled to meet on April 13 for further review. He said if conditions were met, then we could move forward in the drafting of an agreement for Council's consideration at the May Council meeting. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion. After additional comments from Councilman Warr about the positive impact the Rex Theater could have on our City, it was approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr. Councilman Henck abstained after explaining that he was not comfortable moving forward yet until further review. After a lengthy discussion regarding the Rex Theater by Council members and Mr. Settlemyer, they moved to the next item.

New Business

Mr. Settlemyer informed Council that Councilman Warr & Councilman Henck had requested to be appointed to the Audit and Finance Committee. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the appointments. 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 informed Council of a request to appoint Mr. Thad Austin to the Workforce Development Board. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to appoint Mr. Austin. 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 requested that May 9, 2022 be set for a public hearing to consider the City of Galax FY23 annual budget, and to authorize the City Manager to advertise the public hearing. Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the request. 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.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council of the request by Ms. Susan Tilley to set a public hearing at the May 9, 2022 to consider the Galax Public Schools FY23 annual budget, and to authorize the City Manager to advertise the public hearing. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the request. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr. Councilman Henck abstained due to a conflict under VA Code 2.2-3112.

Mr. Settlemyer requested the authorization to extend advertising in the newspaper & Facebook for two upcoming appointments to the Galax School Board for two additional weeks, and to schedule a closed session meeting to interview candidates at the May 9, 2022 meeting, with the

appointments made at the June 13, 2022 meeting. Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the request as presented. Vice Mayor White seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr. Councilman Henck abstained due to a conflict under VA Code 2.2-3112.

Communication from City Manager

- Mr. Settlemyer informed Council that after the Audit & Finance Committee meeting on April 6, 2022, for a review of the FY23 Budget, and there were questions regarding the status of the funding for the ARC Grant and God’s Storehouse. He said that he would be meeting with Judy Taylor-Gallimore and report back to Council with an update. Mr. Settlemyer reminded Council that the full City Manager’s report was included in the meeting packing and he was available for further questions.

Communication from Mayor and City Council

Councilman Larrowe

- Made a request to amend future agendas to include a time slot to hear Committee updates.
- Commended staff for their efforts in briefing everyone at the Audit & Finance Committee meeting on April 6, 2022.
- Reminded Council of the Commerce Committee scheduled to meet on April 14, 2022. Scheduled to discuss the requirements on a referendum regarding Cannabis, and come back with a recommendation to Council.
- Follow up on the budgetary commitments for the Vaughan Project & God’s Storehouse after Mr. Settlemyer’s update is received.
- Complimented the job which was done on the RFP that was prepared for the Rex Theater.

Councilwoman White

- Invited Council to the following events:
 - National Day of Prayer event
 - Blue Ridge Discovery Center
 - Education Resource Fair – Galax Schools
 - God’s Storehouse – Mother’s Day Tea
 - Celebrate Recovery Team invited to speak at Life Center

Councilwoman Ritchie

- Informed Council the final Planning Commission meeting was scheduled for April 20 with a final draft of the Comprehensive Plan expected.

Councilman Henck

- Reminded Council of the grand opening at New River Trail Outfitters.
- Toured MOOG and said it was an asset to our community.
- Discussed prospects for Rosenwald Felts Community Center. He said a lot of people care deeply for this center and want to make sure their voice would be heard, such as the input from the community regarding the Rex Theater.

Councilman Warr

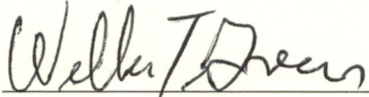
- Invited everyone to the Downtown Galax clean-up on April 12. This brings the community together.
- Chief Cooper said he would provide extra patrols in the area during the clean-up.

Mayor Greene

- Informed Council that he was re-elected MRPDC President.
- Thanked Council for allowing his grandchildren to lead the pledge of allegiance.

With no further business, Councilwoman Ritchie made the motion to adjourn the meeting. 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.

ADJOURNMENT 7:55 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk