

Galax City Council
Minutes
May 9, 2022

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on May 9, 2022, at 3:30 p.m.

At 3:30 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.

Mayor Greene accepted a motion made by Councilman Haynes at 3:30 p.m. to enter into closed session under the following Code of Virginia:

- **School Board Appointments - Personnel Matter § 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.

Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes: Mayor Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr. Councilman Henck abstained due to a conflict under the following **VA Code - § 2.2-3112** Prohibited conduct concerning personal interest in a transaction; exceptions.

At 6:15 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, and Councilman Warr.

Mayor Greene prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Special Action

Mayor Greene recognized the Galax Police Department by proclamation recognizing May 15-21 as National Police Week.

Mr. Todd Clingenpeel DCJS-Accreditation Center Manager, presented the 6th accreditation award to Galax Police Department. Council congratulated Chief Cooper and the GPD on their hard work to earn this special award.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & AGENCIES

Galax Police Chief Dewitt Cooper gave an in-depth update report to Council regarding the statistics, accomplishments, and goals of the Galax Police Department. Chief Cooper also introduced the City Police Officers & staff that were present and informed Council of their duties.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Adoption of Minutes April 11, 2022 Regular Meeting
- Adoption of Minutes April 19, 2022 Closed Session Meeting
- Acceptance of City Manager Notice of Resignation effective June 1, 2022

Councilman Haynes 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.

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Greene announced a request of an appointment to the Public Art Committee to fill the vacancy left by Ms. Brenda Marrah. Councilwoman Ritchie made the motion to appoint Ms. Jolena Young, Galax Grants Administrator to the vacant seat on the Public Art Committee. 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.

Mayor Greene announced a request the approval of City Council Committee Charters as follows: Audit & Finance Committee, Tourism & Downtown Committee, and Commerce Committee.

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the City Council Committee Charters as presented. 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 informed Council of a request to set a public hearing to consider the City of Galax Comprehensive Plan as presented at the June 13 regular meeting. Matt Settlemyer added this public hearing would be a joint hearing with the Planning Commission at the June Council meeting. Councilman Haynes made the motion to set June 13 as the date to hold the public hearing to consider the City of Galax Comprehensive Plan and authorize the City Manager to advertise. 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.

Matt Settlemyer informed Council of a request to consider the approval of a resolution guaranteeing God’s Storehouse’s \$250,000 commitment in matching funds for the ARC Grant. Mr. Settlemyer said we had revised our estimate for the God’s Storehouse ARC grant to phase in improvements over time if necessary to minimize the City’s financial contribution. He explained part of the grant required a commitment of private fundraising of \$250,000 from God’s Storehouse, and this resolution would cover the City’s guarantee of that funding in the event God’s Storehouse was not able to meet that commitment.

Ms. Jolena Young, Grants Administrator, provided an update on contract discussions between Mount Rogers Planning District Commission, on behalf of City of Galax, and Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), on behalf of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

The regional DHCD resource indicated they believed a reduction to a 50% match was feasible. However, since the larger match was part of scoring, ARC would need to review if additional match was required for the application scoring to be in range with other awards. The City and God's Storehouse would need to meet all other program elements: scaled down construction of kitchen, bathrooms, façade improvements, addiction recovery services for 80 participants and workforce employment for 40 participants. God's Storehouse Board met and voted to accept the scaled down construction as part of a phased approach. Ms. Young closed by saying in the short-term, MRPDC and DHCD had asked the City for a guarantee of the \$250,000 commitment by God's Storehouse.

Councilwoman White made the motion to approve the resolution guaranteeing the \$250,000 commitment in matching funds for the ARC grant for God's Storehouse. 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 announced a request to set a public hearing to consider an amendment to the Galax City Code, Section 154-36, Determination of Charges. Matt Settlemyer further explained since water and sewer rates were set in the City Code, Council would need to call a public hearing and amend the code at the June meeting to coincide with the approval of the annual budget if the rates were going to be raised as required by our wastewater loan and the need for water infrastructure improvements. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the request. 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.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mayor Greene announced this was the date Council set for a public hearing to consider the City of Galax FY2023 Budget. Mayor Greene opened the floor to hear public comments. Ms. Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Director of Finance, gave an overview of the proposed FY2023 Budget which was summarized to include the following:

General Fund	\$24,945,257
Utility Fund	\$ 4,505,200
Stormwater Fund	\$ 607,500

With no further comments, Mayor Greene declared the public hearing closed. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the FY2023 Budget at the June 13 regular meeting as presented or amended. 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.

Mayor Greene announced this was the date Council set for a public hearing to consider the Galax City School FY2023 Budget. Mayor Greene opened the floor to hear public comments. Ms. Susan Tilley, Galax School Superintendent, gave an overview of the proposed FY2023 School Budget which was summarized to include the following:

- No increase in funding for FY2023 to a total of \$4,100,291 - excluding debt service.
- 5% raise for teachers – state funded, and would address other salaries within the budget.

With no further comments, Mayor Greene declared the public hearing closed. Councilwoman White made the motion to consider the FY2023 School Budget at a special called meeting as presented or amended. Councilman Haynes 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 the following **VA Code - § 2.2-3112** Prohibited conduct concerning personal interest in a transaction; exceptions.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

COMMUNICATION FROM CITY MANAGER

Mr. Settlemyer reminded Council that the City Manager’s report was included their Agenda packet and he was available for questions.

COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Councilman Larrowe gave a summary for the following Committees:

- Audit & Finance
 - There was a consensus when Council re-appoints committee members for 2 year terms, at their first meeting, each committee will elect and appoint a Chair to serve
 - Preliminary Budget Discussions
 - ARPA Funds
 - 911 Interoperability Project
 - Grant Funding – Several Projects
 - God’s Storehouse Project
 - Parking Study Downtown
 - Strategic Planning
 - Downtown Bathrooms
- Commerce
 - Discussion of proposed ordinance for local tax impacts on businesses
 - Marketing efforts to reach out to local businesses to survey their needs
 - Discussion of Cannabis
 - Historic Districts
 - Promotion of Kipling Lane Housing Development

Councilman Warr gave a summary on the Tourism & Downtown Committee which included:

- The Rex Theater
- New Tourism Director
- Galax Farmer’s Market
- Overall efforts in working together to make Downtown Galax a successful “Destination Location.”

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Greene accepted a motion made by Councilman Larrowe at 8:20 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 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.


At 8:43 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.

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was 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 at 8:45 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk Interim City Mgr.

