

Galax City Council
Called Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2022

Galax City Council convened in a special called meeting in City Council Chambers on June 25, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

At 6:03 p.m. Mayor Greene called the meeting to order with the following Council persons present and they are as listed: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilman Henck, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr. Councilwoman Ritchie joined by phone.

Councilman Haynes gave the prayer and led Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Greene announced that Councilwoman Ritchie had requested to join the meeting by phone. Mayor Greene asked Councilwoman Ritchie for the reason she could not attend the meeting. She stated that she was in Ocean Isle, SC on a pre-planned vacation. Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the request to allow Councilwoman Ritchie to join the meeting by phone. 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 Henck, and Councilman Warr.

OLD BUSINESS

VDOT Smart Scale Project

Judy Taylor Gallimore reminded Council that a public hearing for a VDOT application for a sidewalk from Hanes Road to Walmart was held at the July 11, 2022 meeting. The design would include signaled cross walks and ADA landing pads at Hanes Road and Cranberry intersections. The project performance period would begin in 2025 or 2026 with an estimated cost of \$4,892,344. The SMART Scale is a 100% grant funded project. Questions regarding the ability of City staff to administer this project were discussed at the July 11 meeting. Mrs. Jolena Young, Grants Administrator, had discussed with VDOT and was advised that engineers were told to budget Smart Scale projects as if they would be administered by VDOT. This addressed the concern of the inability to administer the project due to staffing resources. Council was asked to consider adopting the resolution to authorize the City Manager to execute agreements for this project. In addition, City Council was asked to adopt the revised FY18-FY28 Capital Improvement Plan. Councilwoman White asked Mrs. Young if resource concerns had been addressed. Mrs. Young added to the information shared by Judy Taylor-Gallimore. Since VDOT estimated Smart Scale projects as if VDOT was administering, resulted in Mr. Ford being confident that 99% of the time, the estimate had sufficient funding for the locality to contract project management resource or for VDOT to administer the project. Many agencies hire an employee into a temporary grant funded position. Mrs. Young confirmed she felt comfortable there would be resourcing options and recommended submitting the application.

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to adopt the resolution as presented and to approve the revised CIP VDOT planning document for FY18-FY28. 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 Henck, and Councilman Warr.

ARC Grant – Renovation of Building for God’s Storehouse

Judy Taylor Gallimore informed Council the City had requested a budget revision from Appalachian Regional Commission grant from 1,600,000 to \$1,115,275. The funding sources were as follows:

- \$500,000 - ARC Grant
- \$250,000 - God’s Storehouse contribution (guaranteed by City Council at 5/9/22 meeting)
- \$260,000 - Building purchase (paid by City and IDA)
- \$1,010,000 – Total

ARC had requested a commitment letter for the remaining budget amount of \$105,275. This commitment required an additional \$48,000 by the City:

- \$3,775 (legal, taxes, insurance paid in prior years)
- \$3,500 (building appraisal paid in prior years)
- \$50,000 (equipment purchased and paid by CDBG Block Grant)
- \$48,000 (additional funding needed) *
- \$105,275 - Total

The City received \$48,000 for administering the CDBG COVID grant in FY22 and used approximately \$2,000 in direct expenses.

Additionally, the current approved budget for FY23 only included ARC funding. Per the Grants Administrator, the City should appropriate \$100,000 for the local share in FY23 for design costs; the \$48,000 referenced in the commitment letter, and \$52,000 of the \$250,000 guarantee for God’s Storehouse match.

Councilwoman White asked Kisha Johnson, Director of God’s Storehouse, how much was in their building fund. Ms. Johnson shared the current balance was \$40,000. Councilman Henck asked if it was a coincidence that the additional cash was the same amount as the revenue from administering the grant. Mrs. Young explained that DHDC, on behalf of ARC, had concerns if the performance targets could be achieved with the reduced, available funds. Mr. Settlemyer and Mrs. Young offered the possible \$48,000 as a negotiation point.

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to authorize the City Manager to sign a letter of commitment in the amount of \$105,275 for submittal to ARC for renovation of God’s Storehouse. 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 Henck, and Councilman Warr.

Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve and appropriate \$100,000 in the FY23 budget for the local commitment (\$52,000 from the guaranteed God’s Storehouse commitment and \$48,000 additional) to be taken from general fund balance. 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 Henck, and Councilman Warr.

Public Hearing - School Board Appointments

Mayor Greene announced this was the date set for a public hearing regarding school board appointments. He explained the purpose of the hearing was to receive public comments regarding

possible nominees or applicants to the school board to fill up to five positions, with staggered terms resulting in no more than two vacancies in any given year. Terms of office for school board members are three years with terms commencing on July 1. Mayor Greene declared the public hearing open. He announced the names of those who had requested an appointment to the school board:

- Mr. Jordan Anderson
- Ms. Jessica Whitaker
- Mr. Fred Mitchell
- Ms. Lynn Sawyers

Mayor Greene announced the names of the incumbents to appoint to finish existing terms:

- Ms. Leah Henck
- Rev. Dr. Kevin Rosenfeld
- Mr. Brett Sexton
- Mr. Larry Spangler

Mayor Greene opened the floor to citizens who wished to give input on the listed names. He advised citizens they could suggest other names not mentioned if they would like City Council to consider those other persons for appointment. Each citizen was given 3 minutes to speak.

- Ms. Helen Kyle addressed Council explaining that she had served on Galax City Council from 2004 to 2008. She also had served on the Galax School Board for 9 years. Ms. Kyle asked for clarification for a Council comment that was made on May 22 when Ms. Melissa Peddy, was not re-appointed to the Galax School Board. She explained the public comment referenced the decision was based on “going into a new direction”. Ms. Kyle asked the meaning of that statement so citizens would be informed. Ms. Kyle then announced Ms. Melissa Peddy as her nomination for the Galax School Board seat. She said that she had worked with Ms. Peddy while on the school board and she had done a great job. Mayor Greene explained the citizen comment period was only for comments by citizens. There would be no responses from Council at that time. He said that her question would be addressed at a later time by Council.
- Ms. Babette Nuckolls, who introduced herself as an educator and stated that her husband, Clark Nuckolls, was also an educator. Ms. Nuckolls spoke highly of Ms. Melissa Peddy, giving reasons why she felt she should be placed back on the Galax School Board. Ms. Nuckolls then nominated Ms. Melissa Peddy for the Galax School Board seat.
- Ms. Demeia Brown-De-Quezada addressed Council saying that she was upset with the system due to no representation in local government for her people. She stated that she is the mother of a Black-Hispanic child and tired of civil rights violations. Ms. Brown struck the podium several times to make her point and referenced her being part of the NAACP. She made a comment that next time she may not be alone referring to members of the NAACP attending a Council meeting. Mayor Greene informed Ms. Brown that we wouldn't take her comment as a threat this time.

With no further comments, Mayor Greene declared the public hearing closed.

At 6:34 p.m. Mayor Greene accepted a motion from Councilwoman White to enter in to closed session under the following Code of Virginia:

- **School Board Appointments – § 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.
- **Purchase of Property - § 2.2-3711 A.3 of the Code of Virginia** - Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

Councilman Henck informed Council that due to a conflict of interest pursuant to **Virginia Code Section 2.2-3112** - prohibited conduct concerning personal interest in a transaction, he would not be a part of the first meeting pertaining to Galax School Board appointments. Councilman Henck said he would join the meeting regarding the purchase of property when notified.

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

At 9:48 p.m. Council reconvened in open session. Mayor Greene certified that no items other than those allowed under the cited Virginia Code were discussed and no action was taken, with the following affirmation: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

*Councilman Henck only certified for the purchase of property closed session meeting. He was not present for the School Board closed session.

At 9:48 p.m. Councilman Henck 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 White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Richie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:48 p.m.


Mayor


Clerk