

Galax City Council
Minutes
November 14, 2022

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on November 14, 2022. 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 White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.

Councilman Henck prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

SPECIAL ACTION

The following employees received recognition for going above and beyond performing their duties for the City of Galax:

- 911 Dispatchers, Abigail Hennis and Pam Shupe received Stroke Awards from TCRH for their quick actions that saved lives.
- Galax Police Corporal, Meagan Parks – Mothers Against Drunk Drivers Award
- Galax Public Works, David Flippin was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by City Manager, Barry N. Moore.
- Mayor Greene administered Oaths of Office to newly hired Galax Police Department Officers - Matthew Evans, and Ricardo Ortiz.
- Mayor Greene presented proclamations to the Galax High School Boys Golf Team for winning the title of VHSL 2022 State Champion, and to Grayden Laird for earning the title of VHSL 2022 Virginia Class 1 State Golf Individual Champion.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Council Meeting of October 11, 2022

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the October 11, 2022 regular meeting minutes. 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.

OLD BUSINESS

Public Hearing – Rosenwald Felts School Building

Vice Mayor Beth White announced this was the date and time that Council had set for a public hearing regarding the sale of the Rosenwald Felts School Building. Mayor Greene abstained from the participation regarding the Rosenwald Felts School Building discussions or voting due to a conflict of interest. Mayor Greene’s wife, Sue Greene is employed by Rooftop of VA, the organization who has requested to purchase the building which currently houses the Rooftop of VA Head Start Program. Mayor Greene shared how he had been a voice for the Rosenwald Felts School for many years, and that concern for the school lead to his decision to run and be elected

as a Galax Councilman. Vice Mayor White opened the floor for comments after a video of the history of the Rosenwald Felts School was shown. The guests who signed up to speak on the subject included: Gail Dutchess, Chauncy Robinson, Verl Brown, Tracy Tucker Owens, Dionne Tucker, Sylvia Richardson, Binti Villinger, and Jill Williams. Each of the speakers explained what the Rosenwald Felts School meant to them and how the school had impacted their lives for the better. There was a discussion regarding the school's historic site status and plans to move forward to have it added to Virginia's Historical Registry. After closing comments from the public and Council, Vice Mayor White declared the public hearing closed. **Councilman Haynes made the motion to not sell the Rosenwald Felts School at this time. Councilman Henck seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes of "yea": Vice Mayor White, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Larrowe, Councilman Warr, and Councilman Henck.**

Public Hearing – FY2023 Budget Amendment

Mayor Greene announced this was the date set by Council to hold a public hearing for a FY2023 budget amendment requested by Judy Taylor Gallimore, Director of Finance. Mayor Greene opened the floor for comments. Ms. Taylor-Gallimore discussed at length details of the budget amendment due to the various sources of revenue in the following categories:

- General Fund: 3,339,066
- Utility Fund: 150,000
- Stormwater Fund: 12,500

With no further comments, Mayor Greene declared the public hearing closed. **Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the FY2023 budget amendment. 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.**

City Code Revision Request

Mayor Greene announced this was the date Council set to hold a public hearing regarding revisions to the City Code, Chapter 66. Mayor Greene opened the floor for public comments. Barry N. Moore explained the current City Code had no definitive timeline on compliance notices given by the City's Code Compliance & Zoning Official to residential or commercial property owners, lessees, or landlords in violation of Chapter 66, Article I, 66-2 and 66-3. The proposed revision would add a 30-day period from date of the initial notice to comply with the City Code before being penalized. Additionally, it was requested the height of grass be lowered on "other" structures (which includes commercial lots and buildings) from 24" to 12". The code compliance title needs to be changed to reflect current usage (Official instead of Officer). No further comments were made. Mayor Greene closed the public hearing. **Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the proposed code revisions to the City Code. 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.**

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution - Virginia America 250 Commission (VA250)

Barry N. Moore informed Council of a request to adopt the Virginia America 250 Commission (VA250) Resolution to demonstrate the City of Galax's commitment to prepare for and commemorate the 250th anniversary of Virginia's participation in American Independence. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to adopt the resolution. **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.**

Resolution Authorizing Participation in the DHCD Mobilizing Main Street Program

Jolena Young, Grants Administrator, made a request of Council to adopt the Resolution for Mobilizing Main Street in order to file a Mobilizing Main Street application. She said if selected, a Main Street Steering Team would be formed and would have access to specialized training, one-on-one consulting and some free design services with an estimated value of \$200,000. She said the participation would open up additional grant opportunities, and would enhance DHCD Downtown Improvement grant scoring. **Vice Mayor White made the motion to adopt the resolution. 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.**

Twin County Recovery Court

Brandon Boyles and Vicki Novak with Twin County Recovery Court gave an informative presentation of how the rehabilitation program operates that they oversee. Mr. Boyles discussed the possibility of using the opioid abatement funds received by the City for this program since the funds are mandated to go to drug recovery. Council discussed the program with the speakers and asked several questions. **Councilman Larrowe made the motion to direct the City Manager and staff to collect more information and bring back the topic to the December 12 meeting. 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.**

Tree Removal Update - Downtown Marketplace Area

Barry N. Moore lead a presentation regarding tree removal from downtown Galax. A slideshow of photos was presented of two trees on East Grayson Street that were removed by Public Works. Mr. Moore discussed the sidewalk and infrastructure damage that the massive root systems had been causing. Vice Mayor White reminded Council that the City had lost a grant because of the downtown curbs at intersections not being ADA compliant due to trees that needed to be removed at the curbs first. The guests who signed up to speak on the subject included: Charlie Morrison, Dave Bremmer, Elizabeth Lael, Kimberly Tilley, and Nancy Luague. Each spoke of their opinions of why the trees should or shouldn't be left.

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to direct the City Manager and staff to meet with an arborist or tree expert (VA Tech) to discuss the downtown trees and to see what our options were and then bring back the topic at a later Council 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.

Galax Water Treatment Plant Improvement Project - VDH State Revolving Loan Fund offer letter
Barry N. Moore informed Council the City recently received an initial loan/grant offer letter with terms and conditions from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). The loan/grant offer letter proposes FY2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding through the Virginia Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF). The SRF loan/grant offer would be in the amount of \$3,000,000 (\$660,000 loan and \$2,340,000 principal forgiveness) and was proposed to be used for engineering design fees for improvements to the Galax Water Treatment Plant as described in the City’s SRF application and Preliminary Engineering Report submitted to the VDH on May 5, 2022. The VDH offer letter requests a response to remain eligible for a future loan/grant award. Mr. Moore added the response letter would not bind the City to complete loan closing activities; it is the requested written expression of interest to continue with participation in the proposed SRF loan/grant program. **Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the initial loan/grant offer letter and authorize the City Manager to send it. 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.**

CITIZEN COMMENTS (Limited to 3 minutes per person)

Willing Partners – Kathy Cooley & Frank Ceary – Requested assistance from the City in obtaining grant opportunities to assist in paying taxes on the Willing Partners store.

COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Councilman Larrowe

- IT Security Discussion
- Galax Fire Dept. Retirement Plan

Councilman Haynes

- Friends of New River Trail Meeting
- State Trails Office/VDOT

Vice Mayor White

- Warming Center at Cornerstone Church

Councilwoman Ritchie

- Lots of Visitors in Galax

Councilman Henck

- Beyond Catering Ribbon Cutting
- Budget Comments/ Tourism/Building Permits

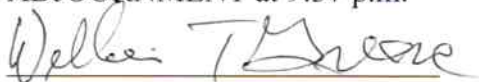
Councilman Warr

- Tourism Meeting
- Christmas Festival
- Parking Lots

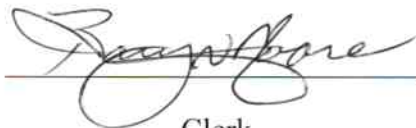
ADJOURN

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

ADJOURNMENT at 9:37 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk

