

June
2024

Introduction

This Newsletter is to give you an overview of the activities and discussions of council, along with the status of various projects and initiatives that are underway with the city. The intent is to be as transparent as possible.

Vision

“Galax is a vibrant, diverse, friendly, citizen engaged community that pursues a culture of excellence.”

Mission Statement

“The city provides high quality public services to sustain an excellent community in which to live, work and play.”

A Minute with the Mayor



Welcome to the month of June! As we embrace the warmth and vibrancy of summer, I am excited to share some important updates and events happening in our city. This month, we are proud to observe Men’s Health Month, with a special focus on prostate health. Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers among men, and early detection is crucial. I encourage all men to schedule regular check-ups and talk to their healthcare providers about prostate health. Awareness and prevention can save lives, so let's spread the word and support each other in maintaining good health. I found this to be very interesting and true about Men and their health.
<https://www.bmhvt.org/men-and-health/>

In addition to our health initiatives, I'm pleased to announce the completion of several key projects that enhance our community’s quality of life. Our parks and the outdoor pool is now open, offering beautiful spaces for relaxation and recreation. The launch of our summer youth programs will provide enriching activities for our young residents throughout the season.

June is also a month of celebration and community spirit. We have a variety of events planned, including our annual summer festival, outdoor concerts, and farmers' markets. These gatherings are wonderful opportunities to connect with neighbors and celebrate the vibrant culture of our city.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement. Together, we are building a healthier and more vibrant community.

Wishing you a healthy and enjoyable June!

Warm regards,

Willie

Willie T. Greene, Sr
Mayor
City of Galax



See ya on the trail....

June City Council Meeting 6/10/2024

Here is a quick summary of our last Council meeting.

RECOGNITION OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

EMILY EDWARDS
2024 VHSL CLASS 1A INDOOR AND SPRING OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD SHOTPUT STATE CHAMPION

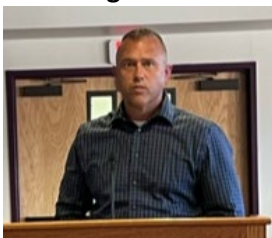
WYTHEVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE UPDATE –
Dr. Dean Sprinkle, WCC President



Dr Sprinkle provided an update on the current trends at Wytheville Community College, as well as answered questions from Council.

OLD BUSINESS

• Water Treatment Plant & Distribution System Discussion –
CHA Consulting



Mr. Stevie Steele provided an update on the review of the City's

water treatment system.

The system has been studied and a matrix completed that looks at probable failure points and begins to designate those points into priorities and potential projects. This information will help inform Davenport and their work to determine the most economically efficient way to perform the needed improvements.

City Council was asked to hear this report and direct Staff as to next steps.

Council agreed to move forward.



Dennis Jarvis, II, Economic Development and Main Street Manager –

The Office of Economic Development and Main Street updated the City Council on several key initiatives. These included the status of the Advancing Application for Virginia Main Street, a review of the comprehensive plan for Galax Grows by Destinations by Design, and the progress of the Main Street façade program. Additionally, he request the City Council to pass a resolution supporting the Advancing

Application for Virginia Main Street.

The Advancing application represents the highest tier of designation within the Virginia Main Street program. Advancing Virginia Main Street (AVMS) communities understand that the Main Street program is not a destination but an ongoing practice. They possess an unwavering commitment to bringing about positive change and demonstrating the importance of a vibrant social, commercial, and cultural center to the quality of life and economic well-being of any community. By focusing on people-centered transformation and forming meaningful partnerships, these communities continue to cultivate and embrace a strategic and comprehensive approach to creating quality jobs, advancing equity, leveraging market conditions, and increasing community wealth through innovative and entrepreneurial thinking. Currently, there are 28 AVMS communities in Virginia. These communities are highly driven and have strong organizational capacity to implement downtown revitalization efforts based on the Main Street Approach.

City Council was asked to hear the report ad ask any questions as deemed appropriate. Council was also asked to approve a resolution supporting the Advancing Application for Virginia Main Street.

Council approved the resolution supporting the advanced Application.

June City Council Meeting 6/10/2024 (Continued)

False Alarm Policy Mike Ayers, Fire Chief



– Mr. Ayers presented an updated version of the proposed False Alarm Policy. This policy is meant to give the Fire Department enforcement powers to pursue fines against those businesses that have multiple false alarms due to faulty alarm systems. It also provides a separate protocol that companies may opt into that allows those with extremely sensitive systems to avoid fees by authorizing emergency response personnel time to contact the company to determine if an alarm is real prior to dispatching personnel.

City council was asked to hear the presentation, ask questions as deemed appropriate, and provide any direction as Council saw fit. If desired, Council may want to schedule a public hearing on the matter at the July 8th meeting.

Council agreed to schedule a public hearing on the matter at the July 8th meeting

GGEMS Ambulance Financing Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Finance Director

– Ms. Taylor-Gallimore discussed the financing of the new ambulance recently approved by the City Council for the Galax-Grayson Emergency Medical Services (GGEMS). At the May 13th meeting, Council approved a lease-purchase financing of the ambulance. The total anticipated cost was to be less than \$300,000. A request for proposals went out to local banks with responses due on Thursday, June 6th. Ms. Taylor-Gallimore provided Council with a recommendation of which entity to finance with and a resolution to execute the financing agreement.

City council was asked to hear the presentation and ask questions as deemed appropriate. Staff requested approval of a financing plan and resolution.

Council approved the request of the financing plan and resolution.

NEW BUSINESS

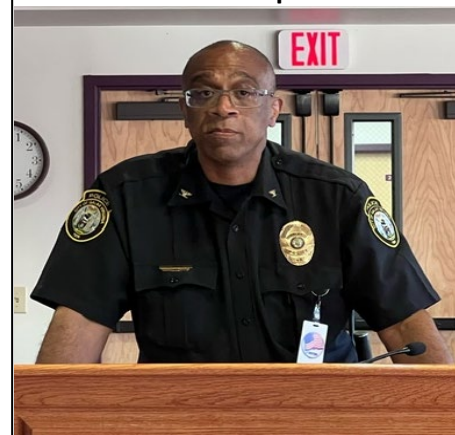
Proposed Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Changes – Michael Burnette, City Manager



Mr. Burnette proposed changes to the income limits and tax relief for the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief program. Due to the increases in reassessment valuations and the decision not to fully equalize the tax rate this year, Council has been concerned about how the new tax bills may impact the elderly and disabled. Therefore, Staff has been asked to find ways to provide some relief. The City Manager proposed that the maximum income limits for the program be raised by \$5,000 per tier and the amount of tax relief be increased by \$100 per tier.

Council decided to move forward, and scheduled a public hearing at the July 8th meeting.

Mobile Command Center – Chief Cooper



The existing mobile command center was acquired by the Galax Fire Department as surplus from Radford University for \$25,000. The unit was designed as a mobile medical clinic. The Fire Department and Police Department collaborated on possible uses of the unit and determined converting it to a mobile command center would be the most beneficial.

June City Council Meeting 6/10/2024 (Continued)

The Galax Police Department obtained a \$20,000 grant in 2010 to convert the unit for use as a mobile command center. The vehicle is a 2001 Airstream Conversion, with on-board generator, restroom, refrigerator, microwave, awning, heat and air conditioning.

With the grant funds, City Staff added four work positions for a total of five, a large work table, on-board camera system to monitor the area surrounding the vehicle, five VHF radios, one UHF radio and one lowband radio, five laptop computers, one large display screen, two printers, emergency lighting and siren and graphics to the outside. The total investment was \$45,000.

The unit has been used at street festivals, the fiddler's convention, the Hillsville Flea Market, during searches for lost persons, during bomb threats, the 100+ vehicle crash on I77, to process crime scenes and also as a backup for dispatch during the police department's remodel. It provides a place where responders can coordinate their operations, complete reports, dispatch responders and provides a noticeable location for the public to seek assistance during events.

The current unit is in need of repairs. The roof has developed leaks which will require all equipment be removed from the roof, the membrane removed, damaged wood replaced and a new protective membrane installed. There is also some

water damage to a couple of interior walls which will also need to be repaired. The current equipment also needs upgraded. Radios on the unit, computers, the printers and the surveillance cameras need to be refreshed to current standards. The generator functions but needs repairs to the transfer switch. The outside graphics have faded and are peeling from the unit which doesn't represent the city well when in use.

Staff has obtained estimates for a new command center with estimates received being: \$250,000 for a unit on a van chassis; \$425,000 for a 20' walk-in van; \$450,000 for a 22' walk-in van; and \$547,000 for a 26' walk-in van. A comparable unit to what we currently have starts at \$750,000. None of the above include a restroom, camera system, radios, computers or displays.

City Staff has contacted a repair facility and obtained a rough estimate to repair the structure of the existing unit. The price for repairs of the roof and walls are estimated at \$30,000. Repairs to the generator were estimated up to \$10,000. Replacing computers is estimated at \$5,000. Replacing the surveillance system is estimated at \$2,000. Awning repair estimated at \$1,000. Upgrades to radio equipment is estimated at \$6,000. This is an estimated total of \$54,000.

When the unit was obtained, it was desired to locate a structure

to park it in to prevent the weather damage which has developed. We were unable to locate funding to do this which has resulted in the current condition of the unit. Staff would like to seek at a shelter to store the unit in if we choose to keep it in operation. Grant funds generally prohibit purchasing or building structures. Staff is currently looking for structure prices.

City council was asked to hear the request and ask questions / provide comment as deemed appropriate.

Council agreed to authorize Staff to move forward in applying for grant funding to purchase either a new or refurbished Mobile Command Center and to get additional details on a possible structure in which to house it.

City Manager's Report – Michael Burnette

- LOVE Sign – Staff reported that the old LOVE sign has been removed due to damage and deterioration. A new sign has been erected on the side of the Chapters building and the old fiddles will be used in a future project.
- MRPDC - Ms. Dana Sworsy was the Galax Planning Commission rep on the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission and has resigned. The Planning Commission recommended Ms. Leesa Gayheart for the position.

Council approved and appointed Ms. Gayheart to the MRPDC.

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