

**Galax City Council
Minutes
August 12, 2024**

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on August 12, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Greene called the meeting to order with the following Council members present: Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers. Vice Mayor White and Councilwoman Ritchie were absent.

PRAYER AND PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE – Councilman Warr

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of July 8, 2024

Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilman Bowers seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

PRESENTATION OF AWARD

Tourism Director, Patti Price-Love presented awards to Council the City won for tourism efforts at the Southwest Virginia 5th Annual “Celebrate Tourism Summit” in Wytheville. Ms. Price-Love informed Council that the City had received three awards for “Best Print Ad”, “Best Long & Short Videos”.

GALAX GRAYSON EMS

Jason Busick, Galax Grayson EMS Chief thanked Council and Staff for their support.

PUBLIC HEARING - TEMPORARY BUSINESS LICENSE OPTION FOR FOOD TRUCKS

Mayor Greene announced this was the date and time set to hold a public hearing to receive public comments on an ordinance amending Section 86-9(B)(9)(b), Chapter 86 of the City Code of the City of Galax. City Manager Burnette explained the proposed ordinance amendment had been discussed previously. It would allow food trucks and similar vendors providing food for sale from mobile or temporary facilities to obtain a temporary business license enabling them to make sales for up to 7 consecutive days upon the payment of a license fee of \$25.00. The current ordinance required an annual license in the amount of \$200.00 for such vendors. The purpose of the amendment is to remove a disincentive to such vendors from offering foods for sale within the City and to encourage participation of such vendors in the many festivals and cultural, recreational and arts events within the City. Mayor Greene opened the floor for public comments. With no comments made, he declared the public hearing closed. City Manager Burnette made a recommendation by Staff to approved the ordinance amendment as presented.

Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the adoption of the ordinance amendment for food trucks to have a temporary business license option. Councilman Henck seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

PUBLIC HEARING – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO FY24 GALAX CITY BUDGET

Mayor Greene announced this was the date and time set to hold a public hearing to receive public input on amending the FY24 operating budget for the City of Galax. Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Director of Finance, informed Council the purpose of the amendment was to adjust the General Fund, Utility Fund, and Storm Water Fund revenue and expenditures for updated projections that recognized grants and donations totaling \$714,754. Mayor Greene opened the floor for public comments. With no comments made, he declared the public hearing closed.

Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the FY24 Budget amendments as presented. Councilman Warr seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

MRCSB UPDATE – REQUEST TO ADOPT DBHDS

Sandy Bryant, Exec. Director, Mount Rogers Community Services Board, along with Logan Nester and Patti Belcher presented an update to Council on activities by the MRCSB, and made a request of Council to approve an amended contract between the City, Community Service Board, and the Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services (DBHDS).

Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the proposed contract as presented. Councilwoman Burnett seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

OLD BUSINESS

LEAD WATER SERVICE LINES INVENTORY

Brian Houston with CHA Consulting, gave an in depth presentation on the Lead Service Line Inventory Program. He explained the federally mandated program was created with a goal of enhancing the safety and reliability of the Nation’s water distribution infrastructure. It was defined by the US EPA’s 2021 Lead and Copper Rule Revision and the proposed 2024 Lead and Copper Rule Improvement. The program requirements apply to ALL utilities in the Country, regardless of size or history of lead or lead-related issues, and not due to any deficiencies in the City of Galax’s drinking water supply. Mr. Houston explained the City’s drinking water remains safe and fully compliant with all national regulations. The City’s inventory program, which was fully funded through a loan-forgiveness program administered by the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water (VDH ODW), and as such had no impact on user rates.

PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST FOR FY25 BUDGET AMENDMENT

Finance Director Taylor-Gallimore made Council aware of several potential changes to the FY25 budget, mainly carry-over and grant funds, that may cause a total change of more than 1% which would require a public hearing. Director Taylor-Gallimore discussed the potential changes and requested that a public hearing be scheduled for the September 9 City Council meeting to amend the FY25 budget.

Councilwoman Burnett made the motion to schedule a public hearing for September 9 for the FY25 budget amendment. Councilman Warr seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

VARIOUS LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

City Attorney, Steve Durbin discussed with Council potential changes regarding the City Code. He addressed the vacant building issues within the City, especially those in the Downtown. He and Rene Funk, Commissioner of Revenue, also discussed addressing the annual versus temporary license for peddlers operating in the City. After City Attorney Durbin discussed various issues with Council, he requested feedback so that Staff could prepare the best possible first draft of any such legislation for Council review. City Attorney Durbin informed Council of the new Kroger Opioid Settlement, and requested approval for the City to join the settlement and approved the agreement.

Councilman Warr made the motion to approve joining the Kroger opioid settlement. Councilwoman Burnett seconded. Councilman Henck requested to review a copy of the agreement and hold the final vote until the end of the meeting. All were in agreement.

NEW BUSINESS

OPIOID GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Grants Administrator, Jolena Young discussed current potential grant uses for Opioid Grant funding including from dollars being received through Direct Distribution from Opioid Settlements. Funds must be used for abatement activities, to date, the City has received approximately \$100,000 and approved distributions of \$17,000, with a remaining balance in the Direct Distributions of \$82,000.

1. Staff requested \$20,000 of the Direct Distribution funding be used to replace the plate glass storefront windows at 406 W. Oldtown Street. The Opioid Abatement Authority and Steve Durbin confirmed this would be a "Gold Standard" use of the funding.
2. A second proposed use would be to pay the \$700 entry fee needed to enter The Hope Center program, not to exceed of \$7,000. Applicants seek help who cannot raise the \$700 fee for the annual program.
3. The third recommended use was for continued reimbursement of Peer Recovery groups for counseling materials, Chips for milestones, and staff training. Staff would continue to work with local agencies to identify other programs to reduce the local opioid crisis.

Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the request as presented. Councilwoman Burnett seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

Industrial Revitalization Fund with DHCD

Grants Administrator Young also gave an update on the Industrial Revitalization Fund with DHCD notified us that they had \$800,000 in supplemental funding available. She explained that we had submitted an application requesting additional funding in the following areas for the 406 W. Oldtown Street Project:

1. To fill the gap between what was originally estimated for the project and what the lowest bid came in at.
2. For funding to pave the parking lot and resolve a change order that was disputed.
3. Requested for addition equipment.

Ms. Young has not heard back yet from the application.

Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources

Ms. Young said the VA Dept. of Historic Resources had awarded 20M dollars for preservation funds related to our 250th Anniversary. It doesn't have to be a building to qualify. Program celebrates milestones in our Country. She requested authorization to submit a pre-application to the DHR for the Rex Theater for installation of an elevator, a lift for the stage and an ADA bath room in the basement to improve accessibility. There would be a 1:3 match. Our match would not exceed \$250K.

Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the request. Councilman Warr seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

Mayor Greene announced Council would take a five-minute recess to obtain information related to an open item that was discussed. Council was in agreement. After the break, Mayor Greene announced the meeting had reconvened.

Mayor Greene revisited the Kroger Opioid Settlement item which was on hold until Council could review the agreement. Councilman Henck had made the motion to approve earlier, and Councilwoman Burnett had seconded. No further comments were made, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

CITIZEN COMMENTS (Limited to 3 minutes per speaker or 5 minutes per group)

- Jason Beduhn – Various complaints

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER, MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

City Manager Burnette

- Rosenwald Felts School – Hearing scheduled for 9/19 for inclusion to the Nation Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register. More information available.
- Rex Theater – Totals for July & early August for nine events was 664 attendees.
- Virginia Tourism Leverage Marketing Grant – Requested approval to apply for grant with 10K match.

Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the request. Councilwoman Burnett seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

Chief Cooper

- Blue Line Solutions – Chief Cooper discussed the recommendations from the Public Services/Traffic Safety Committees.
 - Start at one location and then evaluate.
 - Slow traffic down in school zone areas on Main Street.
 - Speed limit public awareness will be made.
 - Current before & after school speed limit - 15 mph

After Council discussed, Councilman Henck explained he had put a lot of research into his decision. This topic has been discussed for close to a year. He then made the motion to allow 15 mph over the school zone speed limit at 15 mph mornings & evenings, allowing tickets at the speed limit of 30 mph and over. Councilwoman Burnett seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

Councilman Bowers

- Thanked all first responders working local accidents and volunteering for community events, and thanked all who took part in making the Fiddler’s Convention happen.

Councilwoman Burnett

- Deer population – GPD working on permits to eliminate a number of deer through the Deer Eradication Program.
- Traffic Safety Committee on 8/13 – Golf carts to be discussed.
- Public Services Committee
- GGEMS – June 337 calls
- Street lights discussion

Councilman Henck

- Center & Main Street construction updates on opening; City Manager Burnette informed the company working on a one way opening, creating a safety plan approved by VDOT, finish one side while waiting on permit – hoping for changes in 30 days.
- ATM at Recreation Center discussion – moving forward.
- Summer Activities Program at Recreation Center – Questioned why the program closed the week before Fiddler’s and discussed if there could be an alternate location such as the elementary school during the week of Fiddlers. Closure is tough on working parents having to find day care.
- Golf Course discussion
- Assisted living facility needed

Councilman Warr

- Business owners really appreciate more police presence Downtown.
- Showers at Fiddler’s – received good feedback.
- The Great Race – Tom Littrell back for third time next year.

Mayor Greene

- Attended the Carnival, Smoke on the Mtn., Fiddler’s Convention, Rex Theater – movie night, Airport Commission meeting, Mt. Rogers meeting, and spoke positively about Galax.

CLOSED SESSION

At 8:20 p.m., Mayor Greene entertained a motion to enter into closed session.

Councilman Henck made the motion to enter into closed session in Accordance with Code of VA 2.2-3711:

- (A)(1) *Personnel Discussion of appointments to City Boards, Commissions, etc.*
- (A)(3) *Discussion of the acquisition of real property or the disposition of real property*

- (A)(8) Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

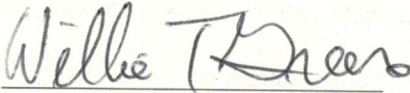
Councilman Warr seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

At 10:40 p.m. by a motion by Councilman Bowers, and seconded by Councilwoman Burnett, Council reconvened in open session, with unanimous approval by all, and 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 affirmation: Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

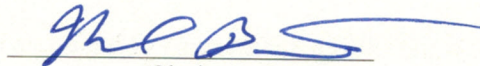
ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION

Councilwoman Burnett made the motion to appoint Brandon Boyles, Jennifer Morris, and Derek Spraker to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Councilman Bowers seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

ADJOURNMENT at 10:45 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk

