

**August
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



Dear Residents,

As we embrace the warmth and energy of August, I want to take a moment to reflect on the progress we've made this summer and the exciting plans ahead. Our community's strength lies in our collective efforts, and I am proud of how we continue to support one another.

This month, let's continue to engage with our local events, support our businesses, and enjoy the beauty of our town. Whether you're attending a community gathering or simply spending time outdoors, let's make the most of these sunny days together.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to making Galax a vibrant and welcoming place for all.

Warm regards,

Willie

Willie T. Greene, Sr
Mayor
City of Galax

August City Council Meeting 8/12/2024

Here is a quick summary of our last Council meeting.

PRESENTATION OF TOURISM AWARDS



– *Tourism Director Patti Price-Love* – Director Price-Love presented Council with three awards her office won for tourism efforts at the Southwest Virginia 5th Annual “Celebrate Tourism Summit” in Wytheville. The awards included:

- **Best Short Video** – Marketing Budget of \$50,000 or Less
- **Best Print Ad** – Marketing Budget of \$50,000 or Less
- **Best Long Video** – Marketing Budget of \$50,000 or Less

PUBLIC HEARING – TEMPORARY BUSINESS LICENSE OPTION FOR FOOD TRUCKS

– Council held a public hearing on amending the City ordinance to allow food trucks and similar vendors 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 requires 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. **Hearing no comments from citizens, Council adopted the Ordinance.**

PUBLIC HEARING – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO FY24 GALAX CITY BUDGET

– City Council heard public comment regarding amending the FY24 operating budget for the City of Galax. The purpose of the amendment is to adjust General Fund, Utility Fund, and Storm Water Fund revenue and expenditures for updated projections.

Hearing no citizen comment, Council adopted the amended FY24 budget.

MOUNT ROGERS COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD UPDATE AND REQUEST TO ADOPT DBHDS CONTRACT

– *Sandy Bryant, Executive Director of the Mount Rogers Community Services Board* provided an update on the activities of the CSB and requested Council’s approval of an amended contract between the City, Community Service Board, and the Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services (DBHDS).

City Council heard the update and adopted the proposed contract.



OLD BUSINESS

Lead Water Service Lines Inventory



Brian Houston, CHA – The Lead Service Line Inventory program is a federally mandated program with a goal of enhancing the safety and reliability of the Nation’s water distribution infrastructure. It is 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. It is not due to any deficiencies in the City of Galax’s drinking water supply. The City’s drinking water remains safe and fully compliant with all national regulations. The City’s inventory program is fully funded through a loan-forgiveness program administered by the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water (VDH ODW), and as such has no impact on user rates.

The Lead Service Line Inventory program requires the City to develop a publicly available inventory of every water service lateral pipe in the City and determine the pipe material for both the City-owned portion (between the water main in the

August City Council Meeting 8/12/2024 (Continued)

street and the meter box at the property line) and the Customer-owned portion (from the meter box at the property line to the home or building). This information is compiled from data such as billing records, historical documents, physical investigations, and customer outreach. To date, 2,858 laterals have been identified in the City of which 42% of the City-owned portions and 21% of the Customer-owned portions have been identified as non-lead. Additional updates to this inventory are ongoing.

The initial Lead Service Line Inventory will be submitted to VDH ODW by October 16, 2024. At that time, it is acceptable and anticipated that the material of some laterals will still be unknown. After the initial submittal, informational flyers will be mailed to any properties with lead, lead-influenced galvanized steel, or unknown service lateral materials. The process of refining the inventory will continue, with all materials required to be identified within the next ten years. Any laterals determined to be lead or lead-influenced galvanized steel will be required to be replaced. Additional funding is being made available for this ongoing identification and replacement work beginning in early 2025.

City Council heard the presentation and asked questions regarding the project. Additional updates will be provided at future Council meetings.

Request to Schedule a Public Hearing for FY25 Budget Amendment



Finance Director Taylor-Gallimore – Staff discussed several potential changes to the FY25 budget that may cause a total change of more than 1% which would require a public hearing. Director Taylor-Gallimore requested that a public hearing on amending the FY25 budget be scheduled for Council’s September 9, 2024 meeting.

City Council approved the scheduling of a public hearing on the matter at the September 9, 2024 meeting.

Various Legislative Initiatives



City Attorney Steve Durbin – Council has discussed several potential changes to City Code over the past several months including addressing the annual versus temporary license for

peddlers operating in the City and how to address vacant buildings, especially those in the Downtown. City Attorney Durbin discussed these issues at length and requested feedback from Council so that Staff can prepare the best possible first draft of any such legislation for Council review. In addition, Mr. Durbin reviewed the new Kroger Opioid Settlement with Council and requested approval to join the settlement.

City Council heard the presentation and provided feedback. Council approved joining the Kroger opioid settlement.

NEW BUSINESS

Opioid Grant Funding Opportunities

– Grants Administrator Jolena Young discussed current potential uses for Opioid Grant funding. Funds must be used for abatement activities. To date, the City has received over \$85,000 and approved distributions of \$23,112 for Drug Court and the regional VDH Mobile Unit. The estimated distribution for 2025 is \$13,928. Staff is requesting \$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 City Attorney have confirmed this would be a “Gold Standard” use of the Funding.

A second proposed use would be to pay the \$700 entry fee needed to enter The Hope Center program, with a not to exceed of

August City Council Meeting 8/12/2024 (Continued)

Direct Distribution funding be used to replace the plate glass storefront windows at 406 W Oldtown Street. The Opioid Abatement Authority and City Attorney have confirmed this would be a “Gold Standard” use of the Funding.

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.

Finally, 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.

City Council heard the presentation and approved the three requests as presented.

Industrial Revitalization Fund with DHCD - Grants Administrator Young also gave an update on the Industrial Revitalization Fund. DHCD has \$800,000 in supplemental funding available for this program. 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 Grant - Ms. Young said the VA Dept. of Historic Resources had awarded 20M dollars for preservation funds related to the nation’s 250th Anniversary. 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 bathroom in the basement to improve accessibility. There would be a 1:3 match. Our match would not exceed \$250K.

City Council heard the presentation and approved the request as presented.

Reports from City Manager and City Council

City Manager Burnette Report

- Rosenwald Felts School – Hearing scheduled for 9/19 for inclusion to the Nation Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register.
- 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.

City Council heard the presentation and approved the request as presented.

Blue Line Solutions – Chief Cooper discussed the recommendations from the Public Services/Traffic Safety

Committees. The Committee recommended starting at one location and then evaluate. It was noted that the intent was to slow traffic down in school zone areas on Main Street. A public information campaign will be initiated prior to implementation. The current before & after school speed limit is 15 mph. It was decided 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.

Council approved this action.

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 – Noted that the deer population has exploded in recent years and asked that the City look at permits to eliminate a number of deer through the Deer Eradication Program.
- Noted that the use of golf carts City-wide would be discussed at the next Traffic Safety Committee on 8/13.
- GGEMS – Ran 337 calls in June 2024

Councilman Henck

- Requested information on Center & Main Street construction updates on opening. City Manager Burnette informed Council that the company and City are working on a one way opening, which requires creating a

August City Council Meeting 8/12/2024 (Continued)

safety plan approved by VDOT and finishing one side while waiting on permit

- Discussed installation of an ATM at the Recreation Center.
- 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. He noted that closure is tough on working parents having to find day care.
- Discussed the City Golf Course
- Discussed the need for an assisted living facility

Councilman Warr

- Noted that business owners really appreciate the increased police presence Downtown.
- Received positive feedback for the mobile showers at Fiddler’s.
- Announced that The Great Race will be back in Galax for the third time next year.

Mayor Greene

- Attended the Carnival, Smoke on the Mountain, Fiddler’s Convention, Rex Theater – movie night, the Airport Commission meeting, and the Mount Rogers meeting

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER AT THE REX

HOSTED BY THE REX THEATER:
LIVE MUSIC
2024 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

DOORS OPEN | 6 PM
ALL SHOWS BEGIN | 7 PM

SCAN NOW TO BUY TICKETS



TICKET PRICES VARY
RESERVED SEATING AVAILABLE

SHELTON & WILLIAMS
SEPT. 12

PRESLEY BARKER & WAYNE HENDERSON
SEPT. 20

WOODBBOX HEROES
OCT. 4

THE BLUE RIDGE GIRLS
OCT. 17

THE AMANDA COOK BAND
OCT. 18

OLIVIA JO
OCT. 19

THE JOHNNY FOLSOM 4
OCT. 25

FREE MOVIE NIGHT

EVERY WEDNESDAY | 6:30 PM

AUG. 28	When Harry Met Sally
SEPT. 4	Rudy
SEPT. 11	The Replacements
SEPT. 18	We Are Marshall
SEPT. 25	Draft Day
OCT. 2	Monsters Inc.
OCT. 9	Alfred Hitchcock, The Birds
OCT. 16	Hocus Pocus
OCT. 23	I know What You Did Last Summer
OCT. 30	Hotel Transylvania