

**Galax City Council  
Minutes  
September 9, 2024**

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on September 9, 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, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.

**PRAYER AND PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE – Councilman Bowers**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting of August 12, 2024**

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

**RECOGNITION**

**Galax Maroon Tide Soccer Team**

Mayor Greene presented a proclamation and congratulated the players and coaches of the Galax Maroon Tide, VHSL Class 1A State Soccer Champions.

*Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the proclamation. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Proposed Amendment of FY2025 City Budget**

Mayor Greene announced this was the date and time Council set to hold a public hearing to solicit public input on amending the FY25 Operating Budget for the City of Galax. He declared the public hearing open, and asked Finance Director, Judy Taylor-Gallimore to address Council. She explained the purpose of the amendment was to adjust General Fund, Utility Fund, and Storm Water Fund revenue as well as expenditures for updated projections. Mrs. Taylor-Gallimore concluded that the total proposed FY25 budget amendment was \$4,761,197. With no further public comments, he declared the public hearing closed. City Manager Burnette confirmed when asked by Mayor Greene, the staff recommendation to approve the FY25 budget amendment.

*Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the FY25 budget amendment. Councilwoman Burnett seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

**PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED AMENDED FY2025 GALAX CITY SCHOOLS BUDGET**

School Superintendent Susan Tilley provided Council with amendments to the FY2025 City Schools budget. She explained that the schools had received an additional 2.4M funding over the past summer. After an in-depth discussion of where the funds would be used. Superintendent Tilley thanked Council for all their support.

**CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION AND APPROPRIATION OF THE AMENDED FY2025 CITY BUDGET**

After hearing public comment related to the amending of the FY2025 City Budget, Council was asked to adopt and appropriate the amended FY2025 City budget.

*Councilman Henck made the motion to adopt and appropriate the amended FY2025 City Budget. Vice Mayor White seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

## **CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION AND APPROPRIATION OF THE AMENDED FY2025 CITY SCHOOLS BUDGET**

After hearing public comment related to the amending of the FY2025 City Schools Budget, Council was asked to adopt and appropriate the amended FY2025 City Schools Budget.

*Councilman Warr made the motion to adopt and appropriate the amended FY2025 City Schools Budget. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers. Councilman Henck abstained due to a personal conflict.*

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Lead Water Service Lines Inventory Update**

Planning Director Doug Williams gave an in-depth discussion on the Lead Service Line Inventory program. He explained it was 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. He noted the City’s drinking water remained safe and fully compliant with all national regulations. The City’s inventory program would be fully funded through a loan-forgiveness program administered by the Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water (VDH ODW), and as such would have no impact on user rates.

Planning Director Williams further explained the Lead Service Line Inventory program required 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 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). He added this information was compiled from data such as billing records, historical documents, physical investigations, and customer outreach. The initial Lead Service Line Inventory would be submitted to VDH ODW by October 16, 2024.

### **Intersection of Center Street and Main Street Update**

Planning Director Doug Williams gave an update on work currently ongoing to improve the intersection of Center Street and Main Street to meet Americans with Disabilities Act regulations. He said Staff was continuing to work with the Contractor to attempt to find ways to open access through the construction zone to assist impacted businesses. Council discussed their frustration and dissatisfaction with the progress of the current contractors on the project, and hope to find a solution to get the work back on track. City Manager Burnette informed Council that he felt optimistic since obtaining a verbal agreement with the contractors to open Main Street back up when they were not working. He added that temporary signals are being worked on to get the street open.

### **Main Street Agreement**

Grants Administrator Jolena Young, introduced the new Main Street Director, Hailey Ryan to Council. She said that Ms. Ryan had hit the ground running, and she felt Council would be very pleased with her. Mrs. Young requested to change the order of the agenda to discuss the Main Street Agreement first, then discuss the Galax Grows Downtown Planning Update.

*Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the request to change the order of the agenda as requested. Councilwoman Burnett seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

Under New Business, Mrs. Young discussed a proposed agreement between the Galax Grows Downtown Development Committee and the City. The agreement between the local government and the Main Street 501(c)3 was one of the documents required for the Advancing Main Street application. Mrs. Young discussed the requirements and benefits of achieving and maintaining Advancing Main Street. She informed Council the agreement had already been approved by the Galax Grows board.

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

### **Galax Grows Downtown Planning Update**

Under Old Business, Main Street Director Ryan provided Council with an in-depth presentation and overview of the Downtown Development Strategic Plan currently in-process. Public input on the plan was received on August 27th, and Council was now being asked for their input on this proposal. After much discussion by Council, there was a consensus to choose the Rex alley as the priority initial project. City Manager Burnette said due to the budget amendment, there was potentially extra funding available. It would be discussed at a later meeting. Mrs. Young said we had \$80K to start with, and the estimates were still being worked on.

### **Potential Grant Discussion**

Grants Administrator Young discussed a potential grant from T-Mobile for \$50,000 that, if awarded, could be used to fund an initial project of the Galax Grows development plan. Ms. Young will provide various options for funding and will seek Council input and direction.

*Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the submittal of a T-Mobile grant for the Rex Alley Project. Councilman Warr seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

Grants Administrator Young, informed Council that Destination by Design would attend the October meeting to discuss the strategic plan, then hold a public hearing for public comment in November.

### **VML Voting Credentials**

Mayor Greene left the meeting for a few minutes. Vice Mayor White announced the next topic, VML voting credentials. City Manager Burnette explained at the upcoming VML Conference beginning October 13<sup>th</sup>, a business meeting of the organization would be held and each locality gets one vote. Each locality must designate a voting delegate by Friday, September 13th. Council was asked to approve a designated voter and alternate voting representative for the Section Meeting and Annual Business Meeting.

*Councilwoman Ritchie made the motion to appoint Mayor Greene as the voting member, and Vice Mayor White as the alternate to represent Galax at the VML Section and Annual Business Meeting. Councilman Henck seconded, and the motion approved by the following votes of "yea": Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers. Mayor Greene re-joined the meeting and notified him of his appointment.*

### **CITIZENS COMMENTS (Limited to 3 minutes per speaker or 5 minutes per group)**

- Sandy Bryant – Mount Rogers Community Services update
- Mike Larrowe, Bill Alley, David Ritchie – Main Street Closure, Twin County Regional Hospital – GGEMS transport issues discussion
- Patra Manocha – Galax Outdoor Art Expo

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

#### **City Manager Burnette**

Recommendation by Traffic Safety Committee:

At Main St./58  
or at controlled intersections

- To allow Golf Carts on all city streets 25 mph and less, and allow them to cross ~~on all other streets~~. Public Hearing would need to be held at the October 7 meeting.

***Councilman Warr made the motion to set a public hearing at the next meeting to amend the City Code regarding Golf Carts as presented. Vice Mayor White seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.***

- To add 4-way stops signs at Lafayette & Center, and Lafayette & Washington due to confusing traffic pattern.

***Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the request as presented. Councilman Bowers seconded. Mayor Greene mentioned a concern of emergency traffic being slowed down through that area. After further discussion, the motion was approved by the following votes of “yea”: Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers. Mayor Greene was opposed.***

- Depreciation on Business Machinery & Tools Tax – Consensus to assign the issue to the Audit & Finance Committee to consider the allowance of depreciation.
- GPD Shooting Range, formal opening, Sept. 21 at 1:00 p.m.
- VDOT funds 69K approved in budget amendment to use 60K for new building at Public Works for storage.
- Zoning requests (three) Fit’zer Upper LLC, Dave Wilson, and VA Carolina Heating & Cooling. If approved by the Planning Commission for public hearings at the October Council meeting.
- A reminder that the October 15<sup>th</sup> Council meeting will be held on October 7<sup>th</sup> due to the VML Conference.

***Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the date change, Vice Mayor White seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.***

- Deer population in City – Chief Cooper overview discussion. Permit obtained and expires in October. He said they don’t have time to thin the herd. He mentioned Urban Archery as a possible solution. Councilwoman Burnett added that there had to be 3 acres for that so it was almost impossible with the strict guidelines.

#### **Councilman Bowers**

- Main Street closure concerns
- Cleanliness of Downtown Galax

#### **Councilwoman Burnett**

- Public Safety Meeting
- Galax Schools Convocation
- Public Services
- GGEMS Meetings
- Galax Grows Meeting

#### **Vice Mayor White**

- God’s Storehouse Open House 9/16 at 4 p.m.
- The Great Race – approved for next summer

- Monta Vista Cemetery – Thanked City for their efforts

### **Councilman Henck**

- Public Services Meetings – First Tuesday every month
- Rosenwald Revamped
- Galax Grows Meetings - \$50K approved for 6-8 façade improvements Downtown businesses
- Sen. Stanley & Del. Williams – Action step for New River Trail office relocation

### **Councilman Warr**

- Next Tourism Meeting date discussion

### **Mayor Greene**

- RV Groups – New River Trail

### **CLOSED SESSION**

*At 8:55 p.m., Mayor Greene entertained a motion to enter into closed session by Vice Mayor White in Accordance with Code of VA 2.2-3711:*

- (A)(1) Personnel Discussion
- (A)(3) Discussion of the acquisition of real property or the disposition of real property
  - Kipling Lane
  - Downtown Galax Parcel(s)
  - Rosenwald-Felts

*Councilman Bowers seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

### **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION AND ACTION FROM CLOSED SESSION**

*At 10:30 p.m. by a motion by Councilman Bowers, and seconded by Councilman Warr, 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, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

### **Rooftop Lease Renewed**

*Vice Mayor White made the motion to renew the Rooftop Lease through July 31, 2025, excluding the renew clause. Councilwoman Burnett seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

### **Public Hearing Set**

*Vice Mayor White made the motion to set a public hearing to amend Chapter 51 of the City Code at the October 7 Council meeting. Councilman Henck seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

*Councilwoman Ritchie made the motion to adjourn. Councilwoman Burnett seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor White, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilman Warr, Councilman Henck, Councilwoman Burnett, and Councilman Bowers.*

**ADJOURNMENT at 10:40 p.m.**



Mayor



Clerk