

**December
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

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

Dear Galax Residents,

As the year draws to a close and the holiday season embraces us with its warmth, I want to take a moment to reflect on the spirit of community that makes our city so special. This time of year is not just about celebrating with family and friends, but also about extending kindness, compassion, and goodwill to those around us.

2024 has been a year of challenges and triumphs, and through it all, our city has shown resilience and unity. I am grateful for the dedication and contributions of every citizen, from our hardworking city employees to the countless volunteers and community members who go above and beyond to make Galax a better place to live. As we gather to celebrate the holidays, let us remember those who may be facing hardships. Whether it is through donating to a local charity, volunteering your time, or simply offering a kind word, every act of generosity strengthens the bonds that hold our community together.

Looking ahead to the new year, I am filled with hope and optimism. Together, we will continue to build on our successes and work toward an even brighter future for Galax.

May this holiday season bring joy, peace, and love to you and your loved ones. On behalf of the entire city leadership, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Willie

Willie T. Greene, Sr
Mayor, City of Galax



**Merry Christmas
from
Willie & Sue**

December City Council Meeting 12/9/2024

Here is a quick summary of our last Council meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Students of the Galax Gymnastics Center



CITY COUNCIL OATH OF OFFICE



Clerk of Court Nester swearing in of newly-elected Council member Chauncey Robinson.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

Mayor Greene recognized the service of former Councilman Hunter Bowers who recently retired from the Galax City Council. Mr. Bowers served from January 8, 2024 to November 26, 2024.



POLICE OFFICER OATHS OF OFFICE



Mayor Greene administered the oaths of office to auxiliary officers Wade Johnson and Michael Peters. These two auxiliary officers work at GGEMS and volunteer on the City's SERT team as medics. They will be provided training by the current director of the Academy so they will know how to protect themselves should the situation arise.

PUBLIC HEARING

Downtown Galax Grows Revitalization Plan



Main Street Director Hailey Ryan and representatives of consulting firm Destination By Design led a discussion and presentation of the final proposed plan for the revitalization of the downtown Galax area. For many months, Staff has been working with a committee of interested local citizens and Destination by Design

to craft a vision and roadmap for the revitalization of the downtown Galax area. These efforts have included numerous opportunities for Staff, the public, and Council to review and comment on the plan as it was being developed and has resulted in a final draft document that was presented to Council for final review and discussion. City Council was asked to hear this presentation and provide any input deemed appropriate. Council heard public comment regarding the proposed plan.

Council unanimously adopted the plan.

OLD BUSINESS

Hurricane Helene Recovery Assistance

Anna Núñez,, Public Affairs Specialist with the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience, provided information to Council on federal assistance to residents and businesses impacted by Hurricane Helene.

Swanson Street Stormwater Contract

Adrienne Norman presented a request to execute a contract for additional stormwater system improvements along Swanson Street in the downtown area. After approval of the low bidder during the October 7th Council Meeting, the consulting engineer proceeded to prepare a formal Notice of Award for signature by Galax City and issued it to the successful bidder, BW Infrastructure, LLC (BWI), with a proposed construction agreement. BWI proceeded to return the required Performance

December City Council Meeting 12/9/2024 (Continued)

and Payment Bonds and Certificates of Insurance. With approval from Council, the Staff will finalize and execute the contract. BWI has already begun the shop drawing submittal process in good faith. The next steps after executing the agreement will be to schedule a Preconstruction Conference and issue a Notice to Proceed in anticipation of construction commencement in early January 2025.

City Council was asked to authorize the City Manager and City Attorney to finalize and execute the contract as described.

City Council heard this presentation and authorized the City Manager and City Attorney to finalize and execute the contract as described.

Discussion of the FY2025-2026 Budget Calendar

During the November 12 Council meeting, City Manager Burnette sought and received direction from City Council to proceed with the coming year's budget process in a similar fashion as this year's process. Staff presented a proposed budget calendar for Council's approval so that the FY2025-2026 budget process can begin. The next fiscal year begins on July 1, 2025 and ends on June 30, 2026.

Council received the proposed calendar and approved it as presented.



Amendment of City Code Regarding Golf Carts

In October, Council held a public hearing regarding amending Chapter 148 of the Galax City Code, Article VI to allow the operation of golf carts on City streets where the speed limit is limited to 25 miles per hour or less. After hearing public comment, Council sent the proposal to the Public Services subcommittee for further study. The subcommittee has met and has made a recommendation to allow golf carts on all roads with a posted speed limit of 25MPH or less, **except** for Country Club Lane, Fries Road, Kenbrook Drive, Chestnut Drive, and Poplar Knob Road.

City Council heard this recommendation and approved the proposal.

Amendment of City Code Regarding Itinerant Merchants

Council has previously expressed concerns that the conducting of business by itinerant merchants within the City on an ongoing basis may disincentivize the establishment of permanent businesses within the City, may contribute to congestion and alterations of traffic patterns in areas of the City not designed or intended to accommodate such traffic on a permanent or regular basis, and may cause disruption to neighboring businesses and residences. For this reason, Staff has prepared the attached draft ordinance for Council's consideration. This change would limit an itinerant merchant to setting up within the City no more than three times per year or any property from hosting such merchants more than three times

per year. Exceptions were proposed for merchants that set up at City events or on City property with written City approval. A public hearing will need to be scheduled before a change in the ordinance can be adopted.

Council scheduled a public hearing on this issue for their January 13, 2025 meeting.

Blue Line Solutions



Chief Cooper updated Council on the Blue Line Solutions product and partnership. Blue Line Solutions is a law enforcement owned and operated photo speed program with a vision and mission based solely on the reduction in speed, crashes and injuries in school and work zones. Blue Line Solutions has noted partnerships in several states and with many localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia with over a 90% reduction rate. Staff has been working with the company on the final contract and requested Council approval to authorize the City Manager and the City Attorney to finalize and execute a contract with Blue Line Solutions.

Council heard the presentation and authorized the City Manager and the City Attorney to execute a contract as discussed.

December City Council Meeting 12/9/2024 (Continued)

NEW BUSINESS

Police Department Vehicle Take Home Policy

The City of Galax Police Department recognizes that take home vehicles offer benefits to both the agency and the city. Maintenance costs are reduced, quicker response times are achieved and crime deterred by the increased presence. Staff has put together a policy for take home vehicles for Council to review. If adopted, vehicles will be assigned for take home status based on seniority and availability while ensuring access to vehicles by officers which are not eligible for the program. Chief Cooper presented the proposed policy and answered questions from Council.

City Council heard the presentation and approved the policy as outlined.

for the historic location. Based on the research of other historic sites, the committee believes we would need a plaque for the building, a custom outdoor site sign with a brief history, and at least 3 wayfinding signs: 1) near the intersection of Country Club Ln and E Stuart Dr; 2) near the intersection of Calloway St and Country Club Ln; and 3) near the intersection of Rosenwald Felts Dr and Calloway St. A rough estimate on cost would be \$3,000 - \$4,000. City Council was asked to authorize Staff to procure and install a historic plaque on the Rosenwald-Felts School building, a historic site sign, and approximately three wayfinding signs for an estimated cost of \$4,000.

Council approved the request.

SMARP Grant Request

Grants Administrator Jolena Young made a request to Council to award a design contract to Destination by Design. The Grant Administrator and Main Street Director are working with Destination by Design to develop a scope of work and contract to complete a small area plan for Grayson Street to connect the Rex Theater and Chestnut Creek School of the Arts. The project will result in key documents needed to apply for a VDOT Revenue Sharing Grant to fund detailed design and construction. The contract will have a not to exceed of \$30,000.

Council approved and authorized the City Manager to execute the resulting contract with Destination by Design as a Sole Source procurement for a price not to exceed \$30,000.

Rosenwald-Felts Historic Designation



The Rosenwald-Felts School has been approved for inclusion on the National Registry. Unfortunately, the National Park Service no longer provides signage for these facilities. Staff and Councilmembers have researched what kind of signage would be needed and appropriate



2024 Old Time Appalachian Christmas

DECEMBER 14TH 12PM-6PM | MAIN STREET GALAX, VA

ARTISAN VENDORS | FOOD TRUCKS | FIRE PITS

HERITAGE DEMONSTRATIONS | LIVE MUSIC

HOT CHOCOLATE & SMORES | VISIT WITH SANTA

SQUARE DANCE | JAM SESSION | STORY TELLING

PETTING ZOO | BAKED AND CANNED GOODS

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