

February

2025

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 Citizens,

As we enter the month of February, we are given two powerful reminders of what makes our community strong—**Love and Black History Month**. Both represent the heart of who we are, where we come from, and how we move forward together.

The Power of Love

Love is more than a fleeting emotion—it is the force that binds families, strengthens friendships, and unites communities. Love is shown through our acts of kindness, our willingness to listen, and our commitment to lifting each other up. In times of challenge and change, love reminds us that we are stronger together.

This month, let us be intentional about spreading love—whether through a kind word, a helping hand, or simply by showing respect for one another. Love is not just about romance; it is about how we treat our neighbors, how we serve our city, and how we build a future where everyone belongs.

Honoring Black History

Black History Month is not just about remembering the past; it is about celebrating the resilience, achievements, and contributions of Black Americans who have shaped our history and continue to inspire our future. It is about recognizing the sacrifices made, the barriers broken, and the excellence that continues to shine in every field—from education and business to science, sports, and the arts.

This is a time for reflection, education, and appreciation. It is a time to tell the stories that don't always make it into the history books, to honor the leaders—both famous and unsung—who paved the way, and to inspire the next generation to reach even greater heights.

Moving Forward Together

I encourage everyone to take time this month to learn, to listen, and to celebrate. Support Black-owned businesses, attend local events, engage in conversations, and take pride in the diversity that makes our city great. Love and history go hand in hand—when we know our history, we understand our strength, and when we act with love, we build a future that honors us all.

Let's continue to work together to create a community where **love leads the way and history lights our path**.

With gratitude and hope,

Willie

**Willie T. Greene, Sr
Mayor**

February City Council Meeting 2/11/2025

Here is a quick summary of our last Council meeting.



RECOGNITION Rodeo Athletes Brody Robinson and Kyrie Edmondson

Council honored two area students who have achieved amazing accomplishments. Brody Robinson is a local 18-year-old who graduated early to travel & compete more frequently. Brody is the International Professional Rodeo Association World Champion Bull Rider Champ & Rookie of the Year. You read that right WORLD CHAMPION!

Nine-year-old, fourth grader Kyrie Edmondson won the Youth Bull Riding World Finals Calf Riding Reserve Champion in Texas. He also was the North Carolina State Champion Calf Rider and the Carolina Rodeo Mini Bull Champion.

We are so proud of these young men and wish them well and safety as they follow their passion. Our community is full of amazing students that train, perform, and compete with excellence. Be sure you catch the rodeo in Galax this summer. These Hometown Cowboys will be competing.

OLD BUSINESS Review of the 2024 High Country Lights Event



Mr. William Bottomley reviewed the most recent edition of the High Country Lights event held at Felts Park over the past Thanksgiving and Christmas season. It was yet another excellent year for the event.

City Council thanked Mr. Bottomley for all the hard work he puts into setting up High Country Lights for the city.

Approval of Term Contracts



City Manager Burnette requested approval of term contract to several regional professional services firms. Term contracts allow public bodies to “pre-approve” qualified firms so that the City can quickly award contracts up to a certain size

without having to go through a lengthy procurement process. The term contract process is, in reality, the normal procurement process but allows it to be done one time rather than for each project that comes up. This allows Staff to shave weeks or even months off the time it takes to do projects. In 2017, the City advertised for term contracts for engineering services. The contracts were for an initial two-year period with two potential extensions of two years each. The term contracts expired in 2023. In late 2023, Council gave permission for Staff to review these term contracts, adding to or deleting from them as needed, and re-advertising for professional services term contractors. These contracts have recently been advertised and were expanded to include ten different professional services needs the City may have. **City Council authorized the City Manager and City Attorney to prepare and execute agreements with the recommended firms to provide term contract services to the City.**

NEW BUSINESS

Downtown Galax Grows Request to Apply for Grants

Main Street Director Hailey Ryan noted that Downtown Galax Grows has been working for months to enhance the City’s downtown area to make it more inviting to visitors, residents, and developers while growing our existing business base. To achieve these goals, Downton Galax Grows will request City Council approval to move forward with applications for three key grants aimed at supporting business development, community

February City Council Meeting 2/11/2025 (Continued)

engagement, and downtown revitalization in our city. The grants provide funding to improve various aspects of our city's economy and quality of life. Below is a detailed breakdown of each grant and the specific areas where they can be utilized:

1. \$100,000 DHCD Community Business Launch Grant (\$12,500 grant match required) - This grant aims to support the startup and growth of local businesses, particularly in areas of the city that may be underdeveloped or lack sufficient commercial activity. It is designed to foster job creation, innovation, and economic diversity. The grant can be used for business startup costs, business expansion, equipment and technology purchases, workforce development, and marketing.

2. \$15,000 Virginia Main Street Community Vitality Grant (\$5,000 grant match required) - This grant is intended to enhance the overall vitality of our community by fostering cultural, social, and economic engagement through projects and initiatives that encourage public participation and local pride. Funds can be used for community events, cultural



Director Hailey Ryan

programming, public space activation, wayfinding signs, community outreach, and volunteer programs.

3. \$50,000 Virginia Main Street Downtown Investment Grant (\$25,000 grant match required) - This grant is aimed at investing in the revitalization of our downtown area. The funds are meant to improve infrastructure, increase foot traffic, and support the development of a thriving business district that attracts both locals and tourists. Eligible uses of the grant include public infrastructure improvements, business district revitalization, urban design projects, placemaking, and event planning.

The total of grants being requested is \$165,000 with a required match of \$42,500. The matching funds will come from a combination of local funds, private contributions, or in-kind services. It is anticipated that the City will be able to meet these match requirements through existing budget allocations, partnerships with local organizations, and support from private stakeholders. City Council was asked to hear the presentation and approve the submission of the three grants along with the approval on the required match funds.

Council approved the submissions and the required match.



Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan Adoption



Gavin Blevins, Mount Rogers PDC

Like all communities, the City is required to adopt an updated hazard mitigation plan every few years. It is once again time for all the localities within the region to adopt the five-year update of the Mount Rogers Planning District's Pre-disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) have asked the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission to assist in this process. This action will make all MRPDC localities eligible to apply for pre-disaster hazard mitigation grant funds such as Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA), Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC), as well as receive disaster relief after a Federal Disaster Declaration. This action does not obligate any county, city, or town to participate in such a grant. However, if a locality wishes to seek Pre-Disaster Mitigation Funds, a resolution must be adopted in order to be eligible for such projects.

City Council to adopted the resolution approving the updated Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan.

February City Council Meeting 2/11/2025 (Continued)

2025 Proposed Street Closings



Tourism Director Patti Price-Love

Annually, Staff compiles a list of requested street closures for the calendar year. These closure requests typically come from events that help the City attract visitors to the downtown area. Attached is the list of requested street closures for 2025 events to be held downtown. The list includes event name, streets, dates and contact info. For these events to be held, Council would need to approve these street closures.

City Council approved the street closings list for 2025 either as presented.

Request to Apply for Virginia Tourism Grants

Tourism Director Patti Price-Love requested approval to apply for two upcoming grant opportunities through the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC): the Marketing Leverage Grant and the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) Grant. These grants are instrumental to the success of the City's tourism efforts as they provide increased funding to our advertising budget, allowing the City to

expand its marketing efforts beyond the region and into out-of-state markets. The Marketing Leverage Grant operates on a 1:1 match, meaning VTC and the City of Galax would each contribute \$20,000, for a total of \$40,000 in marketing funds.

The DMO Grant is a 2:1 match, in which VTC would award \$20,000, and the City of Galax would contribute \$10,000, providing a total of \$30,000 for marketing initiatives.

These grants operate on a reimbursement basis, meaning that the City of Galax must first spend the approved marketing funds before receiving reimbursement from VTC. Once expenditures are documented and submitted, VTC reimburses the City for its awarded portion of the grant. This structure ensures that funds are used specifically for tourism marketing initiatives as outlined in the grant application.

The next grant cycle opens February 12, 2025 and if awarded, funds will be available July 1, 2025. Approval to apply for these grants ensures that we maximize available resources to promote Galax as a premier travel destination, supporting local businesses, events, and tourism-driven economic growth.

City Council approved the submission of two VTC grants to the state.

Call for Interest in Expiring School Board Appointments

The Galax City School Board is made up of five (5) appointed positions whose terms are staggered with two seats coming up one year, one seat in the second year, and two seats in the third year. On June 30, 2025, Reverend Doctor Kevin Rosenfeld's and Ms. Jessica Whitaker's terms expire. Both have requested to be re-appointed to the School Board. Historically, the City puts out a call for other interested residents / voters that would like to be considered for the seats. The City Manager requested guidance from Council on continuing this process and to authorize a call for interest in the two School Board seats.

City Council authorized the City Manager to advertise for interest letters for the School Board terms beginning July 1, 2025.