

April

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 APRIL 2025

Happy Easter!



Mayor's April Newsletter

Dear Citizens,

As we step into April, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for the spirit and strength you bring to our community. The days are getting a little longer, the air a bit warmer, and signs of spring are beginning to show—reminding us that with each new season comes fresh opportunity. This is a great time to look ahead and continue building on the progress we've made together. Whether it's lending a helping hand to a neighbor, supporting local businesses, or getting involved in community events, every small act contributes to the greater good. Let's keep working together to make our city a place where kindness, pride, and unity shine bright. I'm honored to serve as your mayor, and I look forward to all we'll accomplish in the months ahead.

April is also Volunteer Appreciation Month, so if you've ever lent a hand—big or small—thank you. Your efforts keep our community vibrant and caring. Whether you're planting trees, shopping local, or sharing your voice at a meeting, every action makes a difference. I'm proud to serve you and excited for all we'll achieve together this spring. See you around town!

Sincerely,

Willie

Willie T. Greene, Sr
Mayor, City of Galax



April City Council Meeting 4/14/2025

Here is a quick summary of our last Council meeting.

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION



Melanie Summey, former Interim Director of Galax Department of Social Services

City Council recognized the contributions of recently retired Interim DSS Director Melanie Summey for her service to the community. Melanie was originally set to begin her duties on September 30, 2024, but answered the call to assist when Hurricane Helene roared through our area on September 27. Through her leadership at the DSS and the partnership with the Virginia Department of Health and City Staff, an emergency shelter was opened and manned 24 hours a day during the disaster to provide food, water, electricity, and showers to the residents of Galax, Grayson, and Carroll. She will long be remembered for her tireless work and selfless response to the needs of our City and the caring, supportive way in which she guided the Staff of the Department of Social Services in their time of need.

URGENT NEED CDBG GRANT PUBLIC HEARING



Brian Reed, Mount Rogers PDC

The City held a public hearing to solicit public input on local community development and housing needs in relation to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for a project to install permanent backup generators at the Water Treatment Plant and Pump Stations. Citizens were also given the opportunity to comment on the project as well as the City's past use of CDBG funds. The Department of Housing and Community Development is making available approximately \$5,000,000 to be used by local governments in Planning District Commissions 1-4, to support long-term recovery from the damage created by Hurricane Helene. Staff recommend that Council approve an application through this grant fund for up to \$1,000,000 to procure and install generators at the Water Treatment Plant and three (3) water pumping stations. **City Council approved for MRPDC to submit a grant for the City of Galax for up to \$1,000,000 to procure and install generators at the Water Treatment Plant and three (3) water pumping stations.**

CITIZEN COMMENTS



KJ Holbrook, Chief Clinical Officer for Mount Rogers Community Services

Ms. Holbrook thanked Council for their cooperation and collaboration with the MRCSB. She provided an update on the Turning Point program, which helps children with severe behavioral issues.

The program, operated in partnership with the Galax Public Schools, has received several referrals and is hiring staff to manage the clinic. God's Storehouse is providing space at their facility for this program.

OLD BUSINESS

- **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. The City advertised for other

April City Council Meeting 4/14/2025 (Continued)

interested residents/voters that would like to be considered for the seats to submit their interest by March 31, 2025. Only Reverend Rosenfeld and Ms. Whitaker submitted interest by the deadline. By state code, a public hearing regarding the candidates must be held prior to appointment.

City Council authorized the City Manager to advertise a public hearing related to the School Board seats and applicants for May 12, 2025.

NEW BUSINESS

• **Regional Water Supply Plan Resolution**

Virginia state code requires that a regional water supply plan be completed by 2029 and that each locality in the Commonwealth participate. Galax is part of the region that also includes Carroll County, Grayson County, Wythe County, Bland County, Town of Fries, Town of Hillsville, Town of Independence, Town of Rural Retreat, Town of Troutdale, and the Town of Wytheville. The Mount Rogers Planning District Commission has agreed to take on the coordination of the plan. There will be an as-yet unknown cost to each community for the creation of this state-mandated plan, but doing the plan on a regional basis is the most cost-effective. The PDC's first task will be the hiring of an engineer to kick off the project.

City Council approved joining this regional effort and to approve the required resolution.

• **Illegal Gaming Machines Discussion**

Chief Cooper noted that the Police Department has confiscated five illegal gambling machines within the City limits. State law provides that the City can file a civil action against the owners of these machines with fines up to \$25,000 per machine. For the City Attorney to begin this action, Council will need to authorize such legal action.

City Council authorized a civil lawsuit to be filed against the owners of these illegal gambling machines and direct the City Attorney to begin such a suit on the City's behalf.

• **Request to Apply for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Grant**

The Virginia Department of Health is making grant funds available through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for owners of community waterworks and nonprofit non-community waterworks with documented impacts from Hurricanes Helene or Milton to apply for construction funds.

Eligible projects must reduce flood or fire damage risk and vulnerability or enhance resiliency to rapid hydrologic change or natural disaster. VDH anticipates a funding level of approximately \$23 million for Virginia. Staff requested Council approval to submit an application to this grant opportunity not to exceed \$4 million. Staff currently plans to apply for funds to purchase and install the needed backup generators at the Water

Treatment Plant and at the City's water pump stations, as well as to construct the needed one-million-gallon water tank to increase the City's limited current water storage. Should funding for these items be received from another source to which the City has applied, these funds should be able to shift towards other required fixes at the Water Treatment Plant.

City Council authorized Staff to file an application to VDH in an amount up to \$4 million for water system improvements as detailed above.

• **Request to Schedule a Public Hearing on Proposed Changes to the City's Animal Nuisances Code**

Council's Public Services Committee has been working on clarifying the City's animal nuisance code for several months. By making the code clearer, it will allow the City's Animal Control Officer to better enforce Council's intent behind the code section. To amend City code, a public hearing on the matter must be held before a vote can be taken. Staff requested such a public hearing be held at the Council's May 12th meeting.

City Council scheduled a public hearing on May 12, 2025 to hear public comment on the proposed changes to the City's animal nuisance code.