

**Galax City Council
Minutes
October 6, 2025**

Galax City Council convened in regular session in the City Council Chamber on October 6, 2025 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, Councilman Robinson.

PRAYER AND PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE – Councilman Robinson

PUBLIC HEARING: Zoning Change Request – Scott and Sharon Campbell (Parcel 36-45 – 609 Glendale Road)
Mayor Greene opened the public hearing that Council set for this date. He opened the floor for comments. Planning Dir. Williams informed Council of the zoning district change request made by Scott and Sharon Campbell for their property at 609 Glendale Road from Business General (B-2) District to the Residential and Office (R-5) District. Planning Dir. Williams explained the Planning Commission had met recently and recommended the approval of the zoning change request from the Business General (B-2) District to the Residential and Office (R-5) District. He also requested the adoption of a corresponding ordinance to amend the Galax City Zoning District Map. With no further comments, Mayor Greene declared the public hearing closed. *Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the zoning change requests 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 Robinson.*

PUBLIC HEARING: Conditional Use Permit Request – Downtown Galax Grows Application for Mural Installation (Parcel 55-266 - 105 S. Main Street) Mayor Greene opened the public hearing that Council set for this date. He opened the floor for comments. Planning Dir. Williams informed Council of a mural request by Downtown Galax Grows for a conditional use permit for Parcel 55-266, located at 105 S. Main Street (Barr’s Fiddle Shop). He explained the 8' x 8' painted mural would be installed on the side facing the alley. The Downtown Galax Grows Design Committee had reviewed the artwork for aesthetic and artistic appropriateness and has recommended for approval. The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on 9-23-25 to receive comments on the zoning request and made the recommendation to approve the conditional use request for installation of the building mural installation per Section 160-134.F of the City Zoning Ordinance. Steve Redd questioned if Tom Barr was pictured on the mural. With no further comments, Mayor Greene declared the public hearing closed. *Councilwoman Burnett made the motion to approve the zoning change requests as presented. Councilman Robinson 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 Robinson.*

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Steve Redd

- Street paving and a driveway water drainage issue on Country Club Lane

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting of 9-8-25
- Approval of September 2025 Financial Reports
- Approval of Submission of Annual Litter Grant
- CPMT Appointment and Removal
- District Three Funding Letter of Support
- Approval of Submission of Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Grant

Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilman Robinson 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 Robinson.

OLD BUSINESS

Water System Updates - Presentation on Current Status of Projects - Stevie Steele, CHA

- Mr. Steele provided an update on the water system improvements, including the design and funding plans.
- The update included a roadmap for the water treatment plant and other system improvements, funded by grants and loans.
- Mr. Steele explained the importance of shovel-ready projects and the ongoing efforts to secure additional funding.

Presentation on Utility Financing - Kyle Laux, Davenport Public Finance

- Kyle Laux with Davenport provided an update on the financial status of the water and sewer projects.
- City Council was informed about the additional grant funding received and the impact on the project costs.
- The discussion included the importance of maintaining a healthy fund balance in the general fund and the potential impact on water and sewer rates.
- City Council was advised to formalize the unassigned fund balance policy and consider the long-term financial planning for the water and sewer projects.

Grant Funding for Backup Generators at Water Plant and Water Tanks – City Manager Burnette

- City Manager Burnette provided new information related to a grant for the badly needed back-up generators at the Water Treatment Plant and at two of the City's water Tanks. The City applied for and was offered a Community Block Development Grant in the amount of \$776,000 in support of the Water Treatment Resilience – Generators Project. All CDBG awards would be contingent upon available funding from the US Dept of Housing and Urban Development (DHCD). Mr. Burnette said the City was currently in contract negotiations with DHCD and would be expected to bid out and order these generators by this Christmas. CDBG funding would be contingent on several things including the adoption of several resolutions. Council was asked to adopt the following resolutions and policies and to authorize the City Manager to continue the negotiation process.

The following necessary and crucial documents were approved by Council:

- Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan/CDBG – Water Treatment Plan Resilience Generators

Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the document as presented. Councilman Robinson 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 Robinson.

- Certification of Signatures and Addresses Re: CDBG Resilience Generators

Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the document 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 Robinson.

- Fair Housing Certification

Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the document as presented. 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 Robinson.

- Non-Discrimination Policy

Councilman Robinson made the motion to approve the document as presented. 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 Robinson.

- Local (Section 3) Business and Employment Plan

Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the document 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 Robinson.

- Section 504 Policies and Procedures CDBG – Water Treatment Plan Resilience Generators

Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the document as presented. 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 Robinson.

Water Project Reimbursement Resolution – City Manager Burnette

Mr. Burnette discussed the need to approve a resolution allowing the City to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses related to the water project. He explained it was expected that the City would be outlaying funds related to the Phase One water project prior to finalization of the up to \$8.8 million tax-exempt financing. He closed by explaining with the adoption of the resolution, the City would be able to reimburse itself for these expenses from the tax-exempt borrowing when finalized.

Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the Reimbursement Resolution as presented. 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 Robinson.

Approval of Submission of USDA grant for Water Plant Flocculators – City Manager Burnette

Mr. Burnette made a request of Council to approve the submission of a USDA Emergency Community Water Assistance Grant (ECWAG) for emergency repair of flocculators at the water treatment plant. He explained it was expected that the City would be outlaying funds related to the Phase One water project prior to finalization of the up to \$8.8 million tax-exempt financing. By adopting the attached resolution, the City would be able to reimburse itself for these expenses from the tax-exempt borrowing when finalized.

Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the submission of the USDA Grant for Flocculators as presented. Councilman Robinson 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 Robinson.

Chestnut Creek School of the Arts Update – CCSA Director Pollins

CCSA Director Pollins gave an update and short overview on events happening at CCSA. Some included a showcase of the recent winners of the Galax Youth Art Contest, an invitation to the grand re-opening of the Wood- Turning Studio, and an upcoming raffle of several hand-turned bowls. Ms. Pollins explained the bowls were particularly special because they were made from the Zelkova trees that were required to be removed as part of the 2024 Center and Main Intersection Improvement project.

Citywide Public Sidewalk Repair Initiative Update - Planning Director Williams

Planning Dir. Williams gave an update regarding the Citywide Sidewalk Repair Project that was approved to move forward at the September meeting. Staff was asked to procure an engineer to design a comprehensive sidewalk repair solution based on a 2023 assessment of all sidewalks in the City. The project aims to address 3,755 deficiencies in downtown sidewalks, primarily due to vertical height displacements. The approach would include developing a project manual and prioritizing areas for repair, such as connectivity and triage. Council was informed about ongoing negotiations with WM2A and the potential involvement of local consultants for design and engineering services.

Rex Theater Revitalization Update - City Manager Burnette

Funding and Construction Overview to Date – City Manager Burnette provided Council with an overview of the current status of the Rex Revitalization Project which included the approval of a \$700,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, bringing the total grant funding to \$2,002,672. He explained the first two projects included a sound system, lighting system, and video system, with construction expected to start in early January and be completed by February. The second phase would involve the balcony area, new bathrooms, and an elevator, and expected to be under design by late spring and construction during the summer. Mayor Greene shared a story about tourists from Maine visiting the Rex Theater. City Manager Burnette discussed various events and activities at the Rex, including jam sessions, free movies, and bluegrass shows. Upcoming events included a Tom Petty tribute band, a Johnny Cash tribute band, and Darryl Worley. Mayor Greene and City Manager Burnette discuss the importance of keeping the Rex active to attract visitors and support local businesses.

Approval of Submission for Virginia Brownfields Grant - City Manager Burnette informed Council of a previous study earlier this year found small but not insignificant amounts of lead-based paint and asbestos materials in various locations within the Rex Theater. He explained while this was expected, it needed to be remediated before major renovations to the Rex can begin. City Manager Burnette requested Council's approval to submit an application to the Virginia Brownfields Grant program for remediation of these toxic materials from the Rex. *Councilman Warr made the motion to authorize Staff to submit an application 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 Robinson.*

Hospital-Glendale Stormwater Project - Planning Director Williams

Planning Dir. Doug Williams provided an update on the Glendale Road Stormwater Project highlighting the problematic area at the base of Valley Street. The project would aim to address standing water on the road surface, particularly during heavy rain events. Mr. Williams explained the preliminary design and the involvement of the Lane Group in hydraulic analysis and design. The project included a \$2.6 million cost estimate, with a significant portion dedicated to under-boring Route 58. Mr. Williams expressed appreciation to Public Works Director, Mike Woodel and his department's input on this project.

Glendale Road Stormwater Project - Design and Surveying Contracts - Planning Director Williams

Planning Dir. Williams informed Council due to the pressing nature of this threat as well as the availability of grant funding, Staff has procured design and surveying services with two local companies through the City's term services contracts. Mr. Williams discussed details on these contracts with the Lane Group and Dalton-Walker Surveying respectively. Funds for this work were budgeted within the City's stormwater fund.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Amendment - Planning Director Williams

Planning Dir. Williams informed Council of a grant opportunity through VDEM that may be able to cover a portion of the cost of this of the Glendale Road Stormwater Project. He said it required that the Hospital project be listed in the City's and region's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which it was not currently. The amendment included 35% preliminary design documents required by the grant. To address the issue, Mr. Williams requested that Council amend the Hazard Mitigation Plan through adoption of a resolution that was presented. *Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the resolution as presented. 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 Robinson.*

Proposed Ordinance to Enact Regulations for Enforcement of Building and Maintenance Code Violations and Incentivize the Abatement or Renovation of Blighted and Derelict Properties -

Comm. of Revenue Funk & Dir. of Finance Taylor-Gallimore

Council held a public hearing on this proposed ordinance at the September meeting. The proposed ordinance would enact regulations for enforcement of building and maintenance code violations, and incentivize the abatement or renovation of blighted and derelict properties. If adopted, the ordinance would impose criminal and/or civil penalties for violations of the property maintenance code. The proposed ordinance would also add a tax assessment of 5 percent upon blighted properties within the City, and would add a tax assessment of 10 percent upon derelict buildings within the City, over the general real property tax rate, effective beginning in tax year 2026. The ordinance would also impose an obligation for owners of derelict buildings to submit plans to the City for the abatement of the derelict state of such buildings and would impose charges of up to \$500 per month for noncompliance. The ordinance would enable a tax abatement for owners of derelict buildings who renovate or otherwise abate the condition of such buildings.

Commissioner of Revenue Funk addressed the proposed blighted property ordinance issue and expressed reservations about the 15-year abatement of taxes on the increase in value to a subject property and the implementation of a tax assessment penalty on blighted structures. Director of Finance Judy Taylor-Gallimore agreed with Mrs. Funk's comments. After the proposed ordinance was discussed at length with Council, Ms. Funk was asked by Council to put her proposal into a document or email so they could better follow and understand more clearly.

Councilman Henck made the motion to table the discussion until the November meeting. 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 Robinson.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of Submission of T-Mobile Grant for Refurbishment of the Galax Skate Park - Grants Administrator McKellop

Ms. McKellop addressed Council to request authorization to submit an application for \$50,000 for the T-Mobile Hometown Grant for funding to refurbish the Galax Skate Park. She explained the current skate park in Downtown was in a state of disrepair and needed immediate attention. Council discussed their concerns about user safety, liability, how much it was being utilized, and possible alternative options for the grant funds.

Vice Mayor White made the motion to table the grant submission until a later date. 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 Robinson.

Request to Change the Name of the Industrial Development Authority

City Manager Burnette

City Manager Burnette informed Council the Galax Industrial Development Authority met in September and voted to request that Council formally rename the organization the Galax Economic Development Authority. He added this change had become common throughout Virginia in recent decades as communities look to expand their economic development efforts beyond just industrial recruitment. While attracting industry would remain at the heart of the EDA's mission, the name change would reflect a broader undertaking that includes retail attraction, housing development, workforce development, and so much more. City Council created the IDA in 1979 by ordinance, meaning that Council could change the name by ordinance after holding a public hearing. *Councilman Warr made the motion to approve the scheduling of a public hearing for public comment on the name change. 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 Robinson.*

Guynn Public Parking Lot and Bus Stop - City Manager Burnette

City Manager Burnette explained the City had been working with Jay Guynn, the Guynn family, and Guynn Furniture to create a much-needed public parking lot and bus stop in the Downtown area, and recently, the project was finalized and announced. The concept plan for the lot, updates on current design and funding progress was discussed. City Manager Burnette made a request of Council to formally accept the donation of the land from the Guynn family and enter into the donation agreement. *Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the request as presented. Councilman Robinson 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 Robinson.*

City Manager Burnette congratulated and thanked Mayor Greene on his efforts for the parking lot project. He added that we wouldn't have got that project done, certainly at the price that we did without your leadership and your hard work.

Request to Initiate Consideration of Zoning Ordinance Amendment - City Manager Burnette

City Manager Burnette informed Council of a request regarding the City Zoning Ordinance. He said the City Zoning Ordinance contains several outdated references to titles or sections of the Code of Virginia which had been recodified and were no longer operative. He explained Staff felt that the City's Zoning Ordinance should be updated in several areas. One specific area is that the Zoning Ordinance contains terms which are undefined within the ordinance itself, including the terms "special care hospital," "general hospital," and "medical office," and it was felt that the Zoning Ordinance should be updated to provide appropriate clarification to such terms. Additionally, such uses have become less compatible in a number of zoning districts due to the passage of time and changes in land use within the City. It was felt that the compatibility of uses permitted within the City should be re-evaluated, specifically with regard to the B2 and R2 districts, and the location of substance abuse treatment facilities within areas designated for general business or residential uses, as opposed to the Business Medical district. Staff requests Council initiate a review of this aspect of the Zoning Ordinance by the Planning Commission and that the Planning Commission be directed to consider such amendments to the Zoning Ordinance on an expedited basis after proper advertising of the notices of public hearings and to act expeditiously in its evaluation and recommendations to address these concerns.

Vice Mayor White made the motion to approve the resolution and the request 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 Robinson.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY MANAGER, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER, MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Assistant City Manager Holthouser

- Parks & Recreation Commission Update
- VDOT Sidewalk Project – E. Stuart Dr. meeting 10-7-25
- Galax Carroll Grayson Animal Shelter Open House 10-11-25
- Galax Flood Resilience Plan Update

City Manager Burnette

- VDOT Capital Improvement Plan Discussion – Current plan outdated. In order to apply for VDOT funding, it needs to be amended to include the projects including the Grayson Festival Street and the Grayson Guynn Parking Lot. *Councilman Henck made the motion to approve the amendment of the VDOT CIP as presented. Councilman Robinson 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 Robinson.*

Councilman Robinson

- District Three meeting update
- Parks & Recreation meeting update
- Thankful for Public Works, First Responders, Health Dept., and City Manager & Asst. City Manager

Councilwoman Burnett

- Deer Eradication Program discussion – GPD waiting on permit
- Discussion regarding Swanson St. damage and funding updates
- False Alarm Ordinance - GFD

Councilwoman Ritchie

- People Inc. – Job displacement assistance

Councilman Henck

- Galax Fire Dept. Annual Fundraiser discussion

City Manager Burnette informed Mayor Greene the item previously scheduled for closed session had been resolved and there was no longer the need for closed session.

Vice Mayor White made the motion to adjourn. Councilman Robinson 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 Robinson.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:10 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk