

Galax City Council
Minutes
August 14, 2017

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on August 14, 2017 at 7:30 pm.

At 7:30 p.m. Mayor Mitchell called the meeting to order with the following Council persons present and they are as listed: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Councilman Davis asked all that was present to observe a moment of silence for the lives that were lost in Charlottesville, VA, then he led the opening prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

In special action Mayor Mitchell welcomed recent City retirees, Veronica "Ronnie" Bryant and Gina Dalton. Ms. Bryant was the City Animal Control Officer for 14 years, 8 months. She received a plaque for her service. Gina Dalton was the Animal Shelter Supervisor and was employed with the City for 30 years. Ms. Dalton received a plaque and watch for her service. Mayor Mitchell, Council, and the City Manager - Keith Barker, congratulated and thanked them for their service to the City and wished them well.

Mayor Mitchell recognized the following student athletes by reading proclamations and giving each one a copy in their honor:

Girls Softball

- First Team 1A All-State Softball – Ally Bartlett
- Second Team 1A All-state Softball – Kylee Hill

Boys Soccer

- Team – VHSL 1A State Champions
- All State 1A – Josehl Urbina, Brayan Estrada, Sabastian Gomez, Dario Lopez
- State 1A Player of the Year – Josehl Urbina

All student athletes were congratulated by Council for their accomplishments.

Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on July 10, 2017. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell announced this was the date advertised for a public hearing for the FY2017 budget amendment. He opened the floor to receive public comments. Keith Barker stated that the reason for the amendment was to capture some of the loans that were taken and then closed on. Also because of the bonds that were approved right before the end of the previous fiscal year rather than the current fiscal year.

Judy Taylor-Gallimore - Director of Finance, further explained the total of the proposed FY2017 budget amendment was \$7,508,613. Ms. Taylor-Gallimore itemized the categories and totals as follows:

• Loan proceeds:	Garbage Truck	140,725
	Revenue Anticipation Note	1,251,000
	High School Turf Field	509,000
	Fire Truck	711,000
	Refinance Existing Debt	4,553,000
• Purchase & engraving of pavers for Veterans Memorial		4,650
• ATL funding and use of prior year grant receipts for Fire Dept. purchase		45,171
• Use of carryover funding from Dept. of Fire Programs		5,791
• Use of program income from North Central revolving loan		48,895
• Carryover additional street funding		50,000
• Grant awards and expenditures – Bottom Area Planning Grant, Phase 3		30,000
• Grant awards and expenditures – Bottom Area Project – DHCD		<u>159,381</u>
Total budget amendment		7,508,613

Councilwoman Crouse asked if these were funds that were just received. Keith Barker stated that we had received the money through the year but they were not included in the budget amendment prior, he said we spent the money within the first quarter of the last fiscal year of FY2017, between July and October, but we hadn't done an amendment to show those revenues. Councilwoman Crouse asked if the Fire Department had received their truck. Mr. Barker explained they had not. He said they were developing the bid specifications for it, and we would hold the funds until the truck was actually bid and built. It may take between 9 & 11 months for the construction after the bid has been received. Mr. Barker said they were still in the pre-design phase from the department side and were getting ready to put this out to bid. He said it was a possibility for the funds not to be used until FY2019 depending on the bids and construction time.

Councilman Helmick asked if he would be correct if he included all of the payments made to the bond counsel and financial advisors to total \$100,000 in costs to refinance current loans as well as obtain bond issuances. Mr. Barker told Mr. Helmick that he was correct. Ms. Taylor-Gallimore explained the funds were paid to Davenport as well as the City attorneys Sands Anderson. Mr. Barker added the funds included the fees charged for developing ordinances, and the closing documents. Mr. Helmick asked if the turf project and fire truck was under the same loans. Ms. Taylor-Gallimore replied that they were under separate loans. Councilwoman Crouse asked what kind of truck we would be getting for the \$50K listed as a carryover for FY18. Mr. Barker stated the type of truck was for a tandem axle dump truck that had been bid and ordered. He said we wouldn't receive it until October to December and it would be the largest dump truck we would have. It would cut hauling trips down to one instead of two or three trips that our smaller dump trucks would have to make for the same sized load. He said one of the oldest trucks would be retired. Councilwoman Crouse asked what kind of vehicle the Fire Dept. would be getting that cost \$50K. Mr. Barker replied that it was a first response Tahoe the officer who was on call would drive. This officer would arrive first on scene to notify the department which trucks and equipment would be needed. He said it was a pre-wired emergency vehicle that was purchased from a state contract from New Jersey. He said the price should include everything that has to be ordered such

as lights, sirens, etc. to make the vehicle complete. Vice Mayor Greene agreed that it would help in the long run to have this vehicle. Mr. Greene serves on the Galax Fire Department. Councilman Helmick asked what would be done with the old Tahoe. Mr. Barker stated that it was rotated to Capt. Mike Ayers. He said the Fire Department was getting ready to surplus an old Expedition on Gov. Deals. Judy Taylor- Gallimore said that the new vehicle would be purchased with ATL (Aid to Life) grant funds which had to be reported and used for equipment. It could be held over for two or three years to go on a larger project. Mr. Barker said this new vehicle would not only be used in the city, but also in Carroll County & Grayson County and there was a need for a reliable vehicle. Mayor Mitchell declared the public hearing closed after there were no further public comments. He asked for a motion from Council concerning the FY2017 budget amendment. Councilman Helmick commented since we had to separate the votes (before) due to conflicts of interest, from bond issuance, was it important that we separate the amendment as well with each one of these. Keith Barker answered that he wasn't sure you had to because would not be approving the bond (which was the conflict issue before), and this was a total budget amendment. He said these were just specific items within that budget amendment. Mr. Barker said that was his understanding of it. Councilman Helmick said he wanted to make note that he was fully in support of the Fire Dept. and the service that they provided our community. He stated that he was currently an athlete and a coach and was excited about the possibility of a smooth surface to play on, however, he felt the priorities of the City had been to increase education, create jobs and to grow tourism. He felt a re-vamped field did not address these concerns. He further stated that meanwhile discipline and physical education was a byproduct of athletics and the current field had not prevented our football team nor our soccer team from winning state titles. He said while the City was already having to refinance debt in order to pay for an elementary school, often times one had to borrow money for a need, but it was never a good idea to borrow money for a want. He closed by saying that while attempts that were made to get money from the NFL and the Athletic Boosters, had not garnered much traction, he thought the lesson kids should be taught in the community was if you want something, you should save up for it. Councilman Garner made the motion to accept the budget amendment. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, and Councilman Davis. Councilman Helmick was opposed.

Keith Barker gave an update on undeveloped alleys. This item was carried over from the last meeting. Mr. Barker said he had spoken to our City Attorney concerning the idea of a mass abandonment of undeveloped alleys. He said while technically it could be done, the method for an abandonment was set out in the state code (15.2-2600) and would pass the costs for advertisement and assessment to the requesting party. Mr. Barker said the opinion of our Attorney was that the intent of the code was to handle these individually in order to properly assess each request, to consider existing and future utility locations, proper notification of each adjoining property owner, etc. so that a property isn't abandoned incorrectly. He explained that staff was still working to assess the alleys in the city in order to better determine which may be available for abandonment with a future request. Staff would also work with our attorney to better clarify the process we have used in the past for requesting an alley abandonment. Keith Barker asked Council what direction they'd like to take at this point. He stated we were not dropping the issue at this time, but with Council's approval we'd like to continue to work to identify these alleys to present to Council with the help of Daniel Riegel – GIS Coordinator. He explained at some point in the past we had adopted a guideline or resolution to go by but that wasn't a document we had in hand anymore so a guideline would also be developed for presentation at a later point. Mayor Mitchell asked if this issue was taking up a lot of Staff time. Keith Barker stated at this point it wasn't. He said Daniel Riegel had been working on it in between his other duties with E-911 mapping and zoning issues. Mr. Barker said approximately 60% of the time was spent for GIS work for the City, and 40% was spent with E-911 mapping. Councilman Garner asked how much

utility was involved on the work being done on the alleys and asked if it would be worthwhile. He said he felt we should deal with this issue on a single case basis due to the fact that it isn't cheap to do because of everyone's property lines and deeds would have to be changed. Councilman Garner went on to say if there was a benefit of having this utility in place if someone made an inquiry, then it may be worthwhile to pursue it, but if not, then he asked why we were pursuing the issue. Mr. Barker explained he believed there was potentially a benefit to have a utility in place such as this. He said if we had someone to come in off the street or an attorney inquiring about abandoning an alley, we could easily identify a current water, sewer, storm water line, or another access in place and easily pass that information along to who had inquired about it. He said we then could pass this information along to Council so they would have full knowledge to determine if there would or wouldn't be any conflicts from the staff side in making a decision regarding abandonment. He said we could develop steps to follow in cases of abandoning an alley and Council could make sure the steps were taken. Council agreed to carry over this item to the next meeting on September 11th.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council that our City Attorney/Bond Council had requested that City Council set September 11, 2017 as the advertised date for a public hearing regarding the VRA funding for the Waste Water Treatment Plant Project. He stated that a public hearing was required as part of the overall loan process. The City has been waiting for the final plan review on the construction plans/documents before bidding on the project. The projected loan closing has been set for the end of September. Councilman Garner made the motion to set September 11 as the date for the public hearing for VRA funding. Councilwoman Crouse seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker informed Council of a request for a Homecoming Parade. He said Mr. Justin Iroler, GHS Principal, had requested that Galax High School be permitted to have a Homecoming Parade on Thursday, October 5, at 7:00 PM. The parade would begin on North Main St. and end at the Galax Recreation Center as it had in past years and would be coordinated with the Police Department and Recreation Department. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the parade. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Judy Taylor-Gallimore was present to ask for consideration of approval to publish the delinquent tax payer list for real estate as of June 30, 2017. The list would be amended to reflect any additional payments received prior to the ad going to the paper. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to authorize the Director of Finance to publish the delinquent taxpayer list. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell explained the October Council meeting had been previously changed from the second Monday to the fourth, which was October 23rd. Due to scheduling conflicts, Keith Barker asked for the meeting to be changed back to the original date of October 9th. After a short discussion, Councilman Garner made the motion to move the Council meeting to October 16th. Councilman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell stated that he wanted to address the comment that was made regarding the football field earlier in the meeting. He said there were times when we *had* to do things for our community. He went on to say that sometimes it was easier to do than other times. Mayor Mitchell said if we do not continue to improve and build on our community, it was almost certain to degrade over time like any other structure, but there were just some things that you had to do. He said that he was down on the football field visiting with folks last Saturday and said the community was excited about the field. He explained that he has always been an "academic" person and he had always believed in academics but he thought that athletics teaches very important life lessons that would be difficult to learn in other circumstances other than playing sports. Mayor Mitchell stressed again that sometimes there were things that you had to do for your community to make it better and to ensure that you were moving forward. He said he realized that these decisions were difficult and everyone had struggled with them, but as a former city manager had taught him a long time ago, if you had taken your time, you would make the right decision. He said he felt we had taken our time and made the right decision regarding the football field, and felt this was a good move for our community.

At 8:25 p.m. a motion was made by Councilwoman Crouse to enter into closed session under the following Codes of Virginia:

- Prospective Business or Industry - § 2.2-3711.A.5 of the *Code of Virginia* - Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.
- Personnel Matter § 2.2-3711 A.1 of the *Code of Virginia* - Candidates for employment; the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, discipline, salaries, compensation, or resignation of employees.

Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Davis – yea, and Councilman Helmick – yea.

At 8:55 p.m. Council reconvened in open session. Mayor Mitchell 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 Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Davis – yea, and Councilman Helmick – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:55 p.m.


Mayor


Clerk

