

Galax City Council  
Minutes  
September 11, 2017

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on September 11, 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 Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick. Councilwoman Crouse was absent.

Vice Mayor Greene prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

In special action Mayor Mitchell welcomed City retirees, Sgt. Mark Burnette and Arvel Blevins. Sgt. Burnette has been with the Galax Police Department for 12 years, 1 month. He received a plaque for his service. Mr. Blevins has been with Twin County E-911 for 15 years, 7 months. He received a plaque and a watch for his service. Mayor Mitchell congratulated and thanked them for their service to the City and wished them well.

Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on August 14, 2017. Councilman Garner seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell announced this was the date Council set for a public hearing concerning the VRA funding for the Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrades. Keith Barker, City Manager spoke briefly explaining that a public hearing was required as part of the overall loan process. In June, Council adopted the new rate structure to support the debt service required for the project loan. Mr. Barker said we were currently waiting for the final plan review on the construction plans/documents before we could bid on the project. The projected loan closing has been set for the end of October after we have received project bids. Mr. Barker said Council was asked to adopt the bond ordinance which was required with the public hearing. Mayor Mitchell opened the floor for public comments. There were none. Councilman Helmick asked why the WWTP was being upgraded. Mr. Barker explained the equipment was old and how new equipment would handle more capacity and be more energy efficient. Mayor Mitchell declared the public hearing closed. Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to adopt the bond ordinance. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, and Councilman Davis. Councilman Helmick abstained.

Keith Barker gave Council an update on the continued discussion of underdeveloped alleys. He said mapping was approximately 50% complete. He said he had spoken with the City attorney who had provided an example of a road alley/road abandonment policy for consideration. The consensus vote was to hold this item for future discussion.

Chris Pollins, Chestnut Creek School of the Arts Director, was present to give an update on the latest Public Art Project - a mosaic mural wall at the West Grayson Street parking lot. She informed Council that she was seeking their consideration and approval of the next project, which is puzzle pieces of pottery for a mosaic mural on the wall next to the Woodworking Studio.



She said when the next phase is approved, the plans will go back to the Public Art Committee, and then on to the Planning Commission for approval. Ms. Pollins added that some of the costs may be coming out of next year's budget. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the next Public Art Project. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker informed Council of a draft ordinance that would consider revisions to the current parking ordinance. He explained the ordinance as it was currently written was vague in regards to penalties and how to appeal a ticket, but puts the authority to make changes on the City Manager or his staff. The draft ordinance as presented would still have the City Manager as the authority to make changes, but only after a resolution of support from City Council. It would also call out how to appeal a ticket and would allow fines to be increased from the current \$5 per ticket to an amount approved by resolution from Council. Mr. Barker explained the City had been considering how to address issues such as the slight moving of cars after tires were marked, long term parking in front of businesses, customer and visitor parking, etc. Mr. Barker closed by saying the ordinance would permit us to begin making recommended changes to Council that would address what have been perceived parking issues in the downtown area but also would provide some recommendations that would be beneficial to businesses. Council was asked to review the ordinance, but no action was required. Council agreed to carry over for a future meeting.

Keith Barker informed Council of a proposed Public Event Permit Application. He explained after events elsewhere in the state, he had asked our City Attorney to review our code and application process for public use of property for events or demonstrations. While we must allow use of public property for parades, gatherings, demonstrations, etc.; there is a need to consider issues such as crowd control, costs to implement such an event, location, security for the event, insurance, etc. Mr. Barker said while the City attorney felt our ordinance was sufficient, a revised application form from the City attorney was presented for review by Council. The application would allow us to collect relevant information to better prepare for such a request. Current festivals and events would not be affected by this application and would still be considered City sponsored since the City currently assists each group and provides some funding for their operations. Councilman Garner made the motion to accept the Public Event Permit Application. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker explained there had been discussions about the possible desire for a recycling convenience location that citizens could use. He said there was a private business that currently provided some recycling services, however hours and items accepted are at the discretion of the business owner. Individuals could also haul recycling to Hillsville at the regional landfill, however that would be approximately 12 miles from Galax. Mr. Barker said he had spoken with Grayson County and they had tentatively agreed to pick up a recycling dumpster from Galax if we could find an agreeable location. Mr. Barker said he had been working with Charles Joyce, Public Works Director, and Tony Quesenberry, Galax Recreation Director, and they felt that we could develop a fenced location at Felts Park where recycling could be collected in a 30 yard dumpster that has dividers for recycling. The area would not interfere with the Fiddlers Convention or other events in the park, however it would be convenient enough to use and visible enough to prevent non-recyclable items from being dropped off. Items accepted would include: cardboard, paper, plastic, and metals (aluminum/tin/etc.) in a 30 yard divided dumpster. Anticipated costs would be for site prep, fencing, signage, and possible monthly rental of a dumpster. Mr. Barker said it was possible that we could recoup some of those costs through decreased tipping fees over time.



Councilman Helmick made the motion for Staff to continue working on plans for the recycling convenience location. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker informed Council that staff was currently working on possible project applications for VDOT grant funded projects. He said VDOT had changed their funding formula and applications to a 2-year cycle. He explained this year we would apply for Transportation Alternatives (TA), Highway Safety Improvement Projects (HSIP), or Revenue Sharing. Within each of these project categories were the projects we have done in the past including SRTS, Enhancement Projects, etc. As part of the new requirements, each project must be specifically called out in a capital improvement project for the locality. The projects we have been developing applications for are:

- Safe Routes to Schools Phase III and Phase VI (TA) – This would include sidewalk from Swanson St. to W. Stuart Drive and from W. Stuart Drive to Alderman Street. These projects typically require a 20% match and would be for FY19 and FY20.
- Downtown Sidewalk Projects, (HSIP) – We envision this as a series of projects (3 or more) that would increase sidewalk width and remove extra turn lanes in the downtown area. Mr. Barker felt that these would assist in providing some additional parking downtown, help in marketing some vacant properties, and provide an opportunity to include more of S. Main Street in some of our festival events. Mr. Barker said cost estimate were still being developed, and these funds were typically 100% grant at this time.
- Bottom Area Phase III, Revenue Sharing – Mr. Barker said this application was envisioned to be a series of revenue sharing projects for stormwater and roadwork tied to the proposed Bottom Area Phase III. These grants would be a 1:1 match and the match funding would come from DHCD funds, MRPDC grants (engineering and construction), and some of our paving funds. Mr. Barker said these project were anticipated in FY19 and FY20.

Mr. Barker explained that future projects could include a sidewalk along Meadow Street (creek walk), additional SRTS projects, Smart Scale projects, etc. The request of Council was to set a public information meeting for October 16 to set the above mentioned projects as formal Capital Improvement Projects so that we can consider applications by November 1. Council would also be asked to adopt a resolution of support for the Revenue Sharing Application at that time also. Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to set October 16<sup>th</sup> as a public information session for Galax Capital Improvement Projects as related to VDOT grant funds. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell reminded Council of the annual Virginia Municipal League (VML) Conference in Williamsburg VA Oct. 1-3. Mayor Mitchell gave a general explanation of what the VML Conference consisted of and its purpose in assisting towns and cities in Virginia.

With no visitors, or public comments, Mayor Mitchell entertained a motion made at 8:40 p.m. by Councilwoman Plichta to enter into closed session under the following Codes of Virginia:

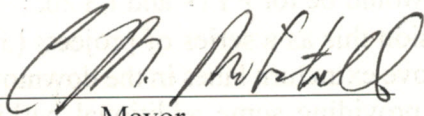


**Prospective Business or Industry, § 2.2-3711.A.5 of the Code of Virginia** - Discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.

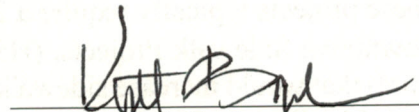
Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

At 9:10 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, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:10 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk