

Galax City Council
Minutes
March 14, 2016

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on March 14, 2016 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 Lazo, and Councilman Davis.

Councilman Garner prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Mitchell along with Council congratulated and presented a resolution to Austin Funk for attaining the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest honor given by the Boy Scouts of America.

Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on February 22, 2016. Vice Mayor Greene 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Galax Fire Chief, David Hankley, introduced Radford University staff and students who were in attendance to give a power point presentation on the long term viability of volunteer fire departments. Dr. Tay Keong Tan, along with other college representatives and students discussed their findings with Council. Their final recommendation was to consider a “hybrid department” that would provide some paid support staff for administration, bookkeeping and equipment maintenance services while volunteers would be allowed to train, raise funds, respond, etc. The implementation would occur over a three year window but could shorten or lengthen depending on need and available funds. After discussion among Council, Mr. Hankley and Dr. Tan, Mayor Mitchell thanked Dr. Tan and the graduate team for their hard work on the study. Chief Hankley recognized Penny Kyle, outgoing Radford University President, who played a crucial part in having the Mobile Command Center donated to the City for use by the Galax Fire & Police Departments. A bench was presented to Ms. Kyle in honor of her late father, Lannie Kyle.

Mayor Mitchell announced that this was the date advertised for the interview of possible school board candidates for July 2016 – June 30, 2019. Two letters of interest in the appointments were received, both from the current board members, Dr. Jim Adams and Mr. Stewart Meridian. Both applicants were present and thanked Council for the opportunity to serve and work together with Council to support the schools. Mayor Mitchell explained to Council that appointments would be made at the March 28th meeting.

Chris Pollins, CCSA Director, was present and asked Council’s approval for a public art project. The requested project would be to remove and rebuild the City entrance signs (3) over the next 6 months. Ms. Pollins said that funding would be from public art funds the committee was currently holding, as well as a portion of the funds from the FY2017 budget.

A drawing of the sign was shown to Council as well as a cost estimate. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the requested art project.

Councilman Lazo 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Ms. Pollins also made Council aware that Dr. Tom Whartenby had respectfully declined his nomination to the Public Art Committee, but Dr. Samuel Luague had accepted an offer to serve on the Public Art Committee. Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to approve Dr. Luague's appointment. 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

At 8:43 p.m. a motion was made by Councilwoman Plichta to enter into closed session under the following Codes of Virginia: **School Board Appointments** - 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

At 9:03 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Keith Barker informed Council that he met with David Vaughan, Vaughan Furniture, a few months ago concerning a portion of E. Webster Street that joins Railroad Avenue. He said that while the road was shown or used as a street, the property was actually part of Vaughan Furniture. He explained that we also had water and sewer lines across this property. Vaughan Furniture agreed to the easement which Council reviewed. This would allow our utilities to remain in place as well as the "road" to continue to be used by the public. Mr. Barker said that in return we would continue to maintain it as we have in the past. The easement was requested as Vaughan Furniture began marketing the building in order to protect the interest of both parties. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the easement with Vaughan Furniture. 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Keith Barker informed Council the Rt. 58 Reserve Blvd. Safety Improvement Project was bid on March 8 and the bids had been approved by VDOT as of March 11. He hoped the work on the tree removal would begin prior to April 15 and expected the project to progress through the summer. The accepted bid was \$1,102,276 which would allow all paving, pavement milling, guardrails and a portion of the tree removal to take place. Mr. Barker noted that the City also had a grant application in to VDOT for an additional \$386,136 which would permit the remainder of the tree removal and the replacement of the street lights. We won't find out about that application until June, however VDOT had verified that they would permit the contract to be amended to

incorporate the additional work if the grant was approved. He closed by saying there were no local tax dollars in this project.

Keith Barker informed Council that he had received notice of an open VML appointment to the Virginia Fire Services Board. He said if there was a desire from Council to make a recommendation, he would need to notify VML. Mr. Barker noted that possible recommendations from Galax could be Vice-Mayor Greene or Chief Hankley. He said that VML would consider all candidates and would make three suggestions, however the final appointment would be made by the Governor. Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to recommend Fire Chief David Hankley for the appointment. Councilman Garner 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Keith Barker informed Council that the Galax Smokehouse, Hair Classics, and Chapters Bookstore had requested to close Grayson Street from Main Street to Rex Lane on April 9 from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM. He said the intent was to hold a community fundraiser among the three businesses to help offset medical expenses for the Max Brown family. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to authorize the street closure for the event. Councilwoman Crouse 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

At 9:11 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.

Purchase of Property, § 2.2-3711.A.3 of the Code of Virginia - Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

Councilwoman Plichta 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

At 9:21 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

At 9:21 p.m. a motion was made by Councilwoman Plichta to enter into closed session under the following Codes of Virginia: - **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.

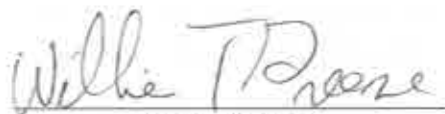
Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilman Garner – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

At 9:25 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to renew the City Manager's contract thru January 1, 2022. Vice Mayor Greene 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Mr. Barker informed Council that at the February 8, 2016 meeting, Council approved the purchase of approximately 3 acres of land for \$25,000. The land approved for purchase was located at 77 Easter Lane (which adjoins the closed Bedsaul Road Landfill). Mr. Easter, who agreed to sell the property to the City, misunderstood the map description. After discussion with staff and Mr. Easter, it was agreed to increase the purchase price by \$7,000 pending City Council approval. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to pay Mr. Easter an additional \$7,000 for the property. Councilwoman Crouse 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 Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 10:00 p.m.


Vice Mayor


Clerk