

Galax City Council
Minutes
May 11, 2015

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on May 11, 2015 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, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Lazo, and Councilman Davis. Councilman Garner was absent.

Councilwoman Plichta prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Mitchell recognized the Galax Water Treatment Plant for recently earning the 2014 Excellence in Waterworks Operations Gold Award. This award was presented to Mike Brown, Chief Operator by Mayor Mitchell. The award was for the Virginia Optimization Program Goals for water clarity, filtration and filter backwash. The Galax WTP has won this award for three (3) consecutive years and Council commended the staff of the WTP for their excellent work.

Mayor Mitchell recognized and congratulated Evelyn Bottomley and Nancy Hutchens on their upcoming retirements. Each were presented a plaque and watch by Mayor Mitchell. Ms. Bottomley, who has worked as a Utility Billing Clerk, will retire with 21 years, 3 months of service. Ms. Hutchens, who has worked as an Accounts Clerk will retire after 15 years, 9 months of service to the City. Mayor Mitchell, along with Council, commended the ladies for a job well done and wished them well.

Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on April 27, 2015. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Mayor Mitchell announced that this was the date advertised for a Public Hearing regarding the FY16 Galax School Budget. Mayor Mitchell opened the floor for public comment. Bill Sturgill, Galax School Superintendent spoke briefly. He explained that the total budget was \$14,691,796 with \$3,956,823 in local funds and \$60,000 in additional funds re-appropriated to the schools from their carryover amount (total local funding \$ 4,016,823). Mr. Sturgill said if there were no objections or changes, he asked City Council to consider approving the budget as presented. Mr. Barker informed Council that the funds would be appropriated at the July meeting. Mayor Mitchell announced that the Public Hearing was closed after there were no further comments. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the FY16 Galax School Budget. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Susan Clark, Galax Department of Social Services Director, presented an update of DSS activities. She also spoke on Adult Abuse Prevention Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Ms. Clark thanked Mr. Sturgill on behalf of the schools as well as the Galax Police Dept. and Council for working with the DSS. Mayor Mitchell and Vice Mayor Greene commended her and the staff of DSS on the great job that they do.

Keith Barker explained to Council that we were recently notified by Dept. of Housing and Community Development staff that our 2007 Enterprise Zone had been rescinded due to lack of applications for the state incentive program. Mr. Barker said that while we have had a number of businesses take advantage of local incentives, there had not been an application to the state program for five years. He said that we were awarded a joint Enterprise Zone with Carroll and Grayson County beginning in 2015. He explained that we were eligible to amend this enterprise zone to include areas in our past zone, along with joint properties we presented to DHCD. Mr. Barker referred to a revised map that he said we'd been working on that shows joint areas we presented to the state; and it recaptures our industrial park, downtown, manufacturing areas along Railroad Ave. and adds the property around Albany Industries. He noted that we were limited however to 650 acres total so we have reduced the size of the zone within the downtown area and S. Main Street. Mr. Barker said that with Council's permission, we would like to submit a revised map to DHCD for review and then proceed with required public hearings to officially amend the zone. Mr. Barker closed by saying that no action was required at this time, however we would ask Council to consider the enterprise zone map as presented and consider advertising the amended zone at a future Council meeting.

Keith Barker, City Manager, announced to Council that the Galax IDA has been awarded a \$7,500 Building Entrepreneurial Economy (BEE) Grant to develop a micro lending program. Mr. Barker explained that the intent was for the IDA to develop a loan program and apply for a follow-up grant to DHCD and USDA for possible loan funds. He said that the hope was to have a program that can assist existing and new businesses/industries with small loans that might not be available otherwise through conventional lending.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council that Chris Thompson with Rooftop of VA CAP had asked City Council to consider adopting a resolution that would honor them for 50 years of service. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the resolution. Councilman Davis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Mayor Mitchell announced that it had been asked of Council to consider setting a public hearing for the Galax FY16 Budget for May 26, 2015 at 7:30 PM. Mayor Mitchell said that a final draft budget would be available at that time. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to approve May 26, 2015 at 7:30 PM for the public hearing date. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

Vice Mayor Greene made the motion to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell – yea, Vice Mayor Greene – yea, Councilwoman Crouse – yea, Councilwoman Plichta – yea, Councilman Lazo – yea, and Councilman Davis – yea.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:10 p.m.


Mayor


Clerk