

Galax City Council
Minutes
January 14, 2019

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on January 14, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Mitchell called the meeting to order with the following Council persons present and they are as listed: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

At 6:00 p.m. Vice Mayor Plichta made the motion to go into executive session per **Personnel - § 2.2-3711 A.1 of the Code of Virginia** - Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. Councilman Greene seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

At 7:30 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 taken, with the following affirmation: Mayor Mitchell-yea, Vice Mayor Plichta – yea, Councilman Greene – yea, Councilman Haynes –yea, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White- yea.

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

Mayor Mitchell presented a resolution of recognition and thanks to William Bottomley, creator of High Country Lights. Mr. Bottomley was recognized by Council for his generous contribution of time and effort in bringing his High Country Lights show to Galax.

Vice Mayor Plichta made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on December 10, 2018. Councilman Greene seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Mayor Mitchell welcomed Chris Pollins - Chestnut Creek School of the Arts Director, and Brenda Marrah - Galax Grants Administrator, who gave a presentation on a recommendation from the Public Arts Committee concerning banners for the downtown area. The funding would be from the Public Arts Committee and matched with funds from the Department of Housing and Community Development for a total cost of \$6,500 to \$7,000. The display of the banners would be on Main Street, the Grayson St. Stage, and at Felts Park. Since this was a Public Art Project it required City Council approval. Ms. Marrah noted that there were 70 submissions for the project and 1000 votes, which were impressive.

Mayor Mitchell thanked Ms. Marrah for her work on this grant. Amy Jackson, CCSA Marketing Coordinator, was also thanked by Vice Mayor Plichta for her extensive work on the project. Councilman Haynes made the motion to approve the art project. Councilman Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Chief Dewitt Cooper of the Galax Police Department was present representing the Traffic Safety Committee to discuss proposed revisions to school traffic due to the elementary school project. The committee met on January 8 and the recommendation was to eliminate parking on S. Main St. from in front of the swimming pool and create a left turn lane and a straight drive through lane. Chief Cooper further explained for Calhoun St. the recommendation was to install in-street pedestrian crossing signs before considering the 4-way stop. It was also recommended to install in-street pedestrian crossing signs in front of the Municipal Building and on S. Main at the crosswalk from Maroon Tide Drive. Councilman Greene made the motion to approve the recommendations from the Traffic Safety Committee. Vice Mayor Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Keith Barker, City Manager, informed Council that we had received the FY2018 audit and letter from Mr. Corbin Stone with Robinson, Farmer, Cox. He said Mr. Stone would be present at the next meeting to present the audit findings. Mr. Barker noted that in the past, the Council members that served on the finance committee had met with Mr. Stone to go over the audit in more detail prior to the meeting. There was a consensus among Council for Mr. Stone to present the audit findings with everyone during the next Council meeting and not to appoint 2 members to a budget committee.

Keith Barker informed Council of a memorandum he received from Ms. Tammy Smith, GDSS Director, concerning the consideration of Ms. Kisha Johnson to the CPMT as the parent representative. He said Dr. Tom Whartenby was the parent representative prior to recently resigning due to another meeting conflict. He said a discussion on possible candidates was held at the last CPMT meetings and Ms. Johnson was approached after due consideration by the board members. Councilman Greene made the motion to appoint Kisha Johnson to the CPMT Board. Councilwoman White seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Keith Barker made Council aware that with some recent vehicle issues within the Galax Police Department and the uncertainty of possible grant funding, staff met with representatives of Enterprise Fleet Management concerning leasing of police cars.

He explained Enterprise was approved under state procurement to lease vehicles to a locality and they have relationships with localities across the state. He said the general concept was that we would consider leasing 4 police cars for a three-year period at \$29,472 per year with a resale of the vehicles handled by Enterprise at the end of the lease period. Any funds obtained from the resale would then be applied to a new lease. One of the benefits noted was that using the lease program would permit vehicles to remain under warranty during the majority of a lease period and would rotate first run new vehicles into the department every 3 years. Mr. Barker said that we would still continue to apply for USDA grants with the intent of replacing other police vehicles that were used by the Chief, Captain, Canine Officer, transport vehicles, etc. As the lease was considered as a debt, it would require City Council's consideration and approval. In addition, Mr. Barker said if Council approved this lease, funds for the lease would come from the sale of other police cars and asset forfeiture vehicles (estimated at \$10,000), and the Police Asset Forfeiture Account (\$8,000). The existing police vehicles to be sold would be turned over to Enterprise for resale through their national network. Asset forfeiture vehicles would be sold through GovDeals. The equipment and decaling of the car would be approximately \$15,000 assuming all new equipment was needed vs. reusing some of the existing equipment, and the proposal was that this be paid from the Capital Contingency. Mr. Barker said that proceeding with the lease does not reduce our chances of the USDA grants and we would be under no obligation to continue any leasing beyond the original lease period. Councilwoman White made the motion to approve the lease proposal and direct the City Manager to proceed with completion of the lease documents and budget amendments. Councilman Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Keith Barker informed Council that Appalachian Power had contacted the regional partners for Wildwood and asked that we consider supporting HB1840. He explained further this bill would direct the State Corporation Commission to establish pilot programs by Dominion Energy Virginia and Appalachian Power with the purpose of promoting economic development in the rural areas of the Commonwealth. This will allow the utility to complete the construction phase of electric transmission infrastructure for a megasite prior to the public announcement of a prospective occupant of the megasite and also authorizes a utility to recover the costs of the transmission facility through a rate adjustment clause. This would also allow the construction of the proposed 138Kv line to Wildwood, at a cost of \$16,000,000, prior to a company announcing their interest in the site. Currently the lines would not be constructed until a company announced their intent to locate at Wildwood or the localities would have to pay for the construction of the line. Mr. Barker said he had spoken to Ms. Amanda Cox with Appalachian Power and their plan was to be working to submit a specific addendum to the bill that would name Wildwood as a pilot program site. Grayson and Carroll Counties were also considering their support for this bill. The bill was filed on January 2, 2019 and may be considered in committee prior to the next Council meeting, which was why the resolution was proposed at this meeting. Vice Mayor Plichta made the motion to approve the resolution for HB1840. Councilman Haynes seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Keith Barker informed Council with the resignation of Councilman Davis, there were openings on the BRCEA Board as an alternate and on the GGEMS Board as a member. There was a consensus among Council to hold these appointments over to a later meeting after a new Council member is appointed.

The following calendars were presented for consideration and approval for 2019:

- Festivals and Street Closures – 2019
- City Council Meeting Calendar – 2019
- Holidays & Sanitation Calendar - 2019
- FY2020 Budget Calendar

Vice Mayor Plichta made the motion to approve the 2019 calendars. Councilman Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Councilwoman White announced there would be an upcoming Foster Care Information Workshop and told of the great need for keeping children who are in foster care in the area where they live.

Mayor Mitchell opened the floor for public comments, however there were none.

At 8:47 p.m. Councilman Haynes made the motion to go into executive session per **Personnel - § 2.2-3711 A.1 of the Code of Virginia** - Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body.

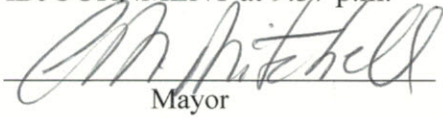
Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

At 9:37 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 taken, with the following affirmation: Mayor Mitchell-yea, Vice Mayor Plichta – yea, Councilman Greene – yea, Councilman Haynes –yea, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White- yea.

Mayor Mitchell opened the floor for nominations for the open Council seat. Councilman Haynes offered the nomination of Michael Larowe. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the nomination. With no further nominations, Councilman Greene made the motion to close nominations. Vice Mayor Plichta seconded the motion. The nomination and appointment of Michael Larowe was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

With no further comments the meeting adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:37 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk

