

Galax City Council  
Minutes  
May 13, 2019

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on May 13, 2019 at 7:30 p.m.

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 Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White. Councilman Haynes and Councilman Larrowe were absent.

Mayor Mitchell prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Mitchell presented proclamations to the following Galax High School students for their recent state awards:

- Essence Brown - 2018-19 VHSL Class 1 All-State Girls Basketball Team
- Kristen Bartlett and Kami White – VHSL State Champions for Serious Duo in Forensics

Councilwoman White made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 22, 2019. Councilman Greene seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Mayor Mitchell announced this was that City Council advertised the FY2020 Galax City Schools Budget. Mr. Sturgill was present and gave a brief presentation on the budget and was available to answer questions. The requested funds from the City were \$3,986,291 in operational funds. The total school budget was \$16,018,666 and there was no request for increased funding from the City. The proposed budget would provide 3% raises to all staff based on the state providing a 5% raise of the state’s biennium budget. Salaries may be paid from multiple categories depending on federal/state/local/grant funding. Mayor Mitchell opened the floor for public comments. With no comments made, he declared the public hearing closed. Councilman Greene made the motion to approve the FY2020 Galax Schools Budget. Vice Mayor Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council of a request to set the public hearing for the Galax FY2020 Budget. Prior to the meeting, Council was presented with the draft FY2020 City Budget for the General Fund, Utility Fund, and Stormwater Fund for review. The draft budget included the 4.5¢ tax levy increase on real estate as recommended for the next step towards funding the Galax Elementary School Project.

Vice Mayor Plichta made the motion to set May 28<sup>th</sup> as the date for the public hearing for the FY2020 Galax City Budget. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council of a request to set a public hearing for revisions to the City’s Sanitation Ordinance. The draft Ordinance was presented to Council. He said as discussed in the budget planning meetings, the Carroll-Galax-Grayson Solid Waste Authority (CGGSWA) was raising rates by \$5 per ton for disposal of waste as part of a long-term financial assessment. The rate increase was needed at the CGGSWA to keep the authority financially viable for the next 20+ years. Mayor Mitchell said our rate modification was based on \$1 per month increase for a standard household service, bringing our rate from \$13 per month to \$14 per month. The tier charges for more than the typical service or multiple pickups per week were also shown in the draft ordinance. Mayor Mitchell asked Council to set May 28<sup>th</sup> as the date for the public hearing on the ordinance change. Councilwoman White made the motion to approve the request. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Keith Barker, City Manager, informed Council that we had been notified by USDA that we were awarded a \$25,000 grant and a \$23,700 loan towards the purchase of two police cars. He explained that we were required to adopt certain documents to continue working through the grant process. He said Council must adopt the Resolution of the Governing Body, the Loan Resolution, and the Code of Conduct. He said once the documents were approved, we would need to procure the vehicles through the state contract, or other approved method, and submit that information for USDA review. Mr. Barker stated the loan closing would take place once we had procured the vehicles and had a delivery date. The loan would be for 3 years at \$703 per month but could be paid off prior to the end of the loan, depending on FY2020 expenses and revenues. Mr. Barker closed by saying we could not obtain the grant without the loan and the loan was built into the FY2020 budget. Councilman Greene made the motion to adopt the necessary documents and authorize the City Manager to sign all necessary paperwork for the police vehicles. Vice Mayor Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Keith Barker informed Council of a request to approve a resolution in support of Building Safety Month, which was May. He explained the local building officials from Galax, Carroll, and Grayson had worked together to create a contractor appreciation day at Lowes on May 31<sup>st</sup> from 10:00 to 2:00, with state dignitaries and state code officials planning to attend. He said Building Safety Month was sponsored by the International Code Council as a campaign to make individuals aware of the importance of the building codes and the efforts of local code officials to help promote safe, efficient, and livable buildings.

Vice Mayor Plichta made the motion to adopt the resolution. Councilman Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

Keith Barker informed Council that he attended the VDOT Public Hearings in Roanoke on May 7 to speak on two projects, but learned that we had been recommended to receive funding to pave areas along N Main St. and S. Main St, and areas along E. Stuart Drive westbound. He said the total projects are \$390,000 +/- and we should find out soon if they had been accepted by the state Commonwealth Transportation Board. Mr. Barker said if awarded, we would need to have the projects bid by December, but could also concurrently run our paving bids for the year with the goal of getting a lower per ton price for asphalt.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council of a number of appointments to local boards that were expiring on June 30. He explained while some individuals were eligible for reappointment, others were not or had asked to not be considered for reappointment. Council may wish to advertise for those board appointments. The appointments were as follows:

- **Library Board** – Ms. Elizabeth Whartenby was eligible for a second 4-year term on the Library Board. She had indicated a willingness to be reappointed and her letter of interest was included. This term would be from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2023.
- **Recreation Advisory Board** – Mr. William Suite's term was expiring and he was not eligible for an additional term. Ms. Jennifer Morris's first term was expiring, but she was eligible for a second term and her letter of interest was included. This would be a 2-year term and would be through June 30, 2021.
- **Planning Commission** – Mr. Ron Catron, Dr. Jim Adams, and Ms. Margo Crouse all had terms that were expiring for the Planning Commission. All had expressed an interest in being reappointed. This would be a 4-year term and would be through June 20, 2023.
- **Board of Zoning Appeals** – Mr. Roger Martin and Ms. Fayma Nye have appointments to the BZA that were expiring. Mr. Martin had indicated he did not want to be reconsidered for reappointment. Ms. Nye had expressed an interest in being reappointed. These would be 4-year terms but would be court appointed based on recommendations from City Council.
- **District III** – Councilman Larowe currently serves as the appointee to this board, with Councilwoman Ritchie serving as the alternate. Mayor Mitchell said we typically received notice of the District II appointment after the June meeting, but with an effective date of July 1.

Councilman Greene made the motion to approve the appointments as presented and to direct staff to advertise the open seats on the BZA and Recreation Board. Vice Mayor Plichta seconded the

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

Mayor Mitchell opened the floor for any public comments. Mr. Mike Birmingham addressed Council regarding an issue of flooding and washing gravel from an alley behind his home on Parkwood Drive.

With no further public comments, Mayor Mitchell accepted a motion made by Vice Mayor Plichta at 8:05 p.m. to enter into closed session under the following Code 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.
- Prospective Business or Expansion of an existing 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.

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

At 8:54 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 in the closed session meeting, with the following affirmation: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:54 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk