

Galax City Council
Minutes
August 12, 2019

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on August 12, 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, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

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

Mayor Mitchell along with Council recognized the following students from Galax on their recent achievements:

- Derrick Scott Davis II - Earned the rank of Eagle Scout on June 9, 2019. His Eagle Scout Project was an informational kiosk at Matthews Living Farm with 120 volunteer hours on project.
- Sarah Elmasry - VHSL Girls Tennis Group 1A State Tennis Singles Champion.
- Cade Ashworth, First Baseman & Kolby Barnes, Catcher - VHSL Boys Baseball Group 1A First Team All-State.
- VHSL Boys Soccer Group 1A State Championship: Team's 5th state title in the last 6 years and 3rd in a row. Players named to First Team All-State: Eduardo Ortiz, Eric Escobar, and Zosimo Cueva. Coach Troy Barkley named Coach of the Year.

Councilwoman White made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 8, 2019. 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Keith Barker informed Council the draft version of the amended golf cart ordinance was ready for review and consideration for further approval. He explained that Council's July 8 meeting comments and revisions had been reviewed and amended by our attorney to verify we were in compliance with state law. Mr. Barker noted if the draft ordinance was approved, Council was asked to consider setting September 9, 2019 as the date for a public hearing. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the draft golf ordinance and set September 9th as a public hearing. 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Keith Barker informed Council of a request from the Community Policy Management Team (CPMT) regarding an appointment. He explained further at City Council's request, the CPMT met on July 16 for their regular meeting. During that meeting, they agreed to increase the number of private agency providers on the board from one to no more than two. Mr. Barker said at this time, the CPMT recommended Ms. Courtenay Houston from Youth Advocacy Partners be appointed to the CPMT. Vice Mayor Plichta made the motion to appoint Courtenay Houston to the CPMT board. 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Keith Barker gave Council an update regarding the primary paving project in Downtown Galax. He explained while a conference call was scheduled with our engineer and VDOT staff on Tuesday August 13, we had been informed by VDOT staff that the repaving of Main St. would require all curb ramps that are on the project path to be removed and rebuilt to meet the newer ADA standards. He said essentially this would require 12 to 14 sidewalk corners at intersections to be removed and rebuilt providing 24 to 28 new ramps, and included the possible removal of trees on the project path due to the proximity to the corners. Mr. Barker said we had our consultant reviewing the issue, but the funding we received was for milling and paving only. The additional work would more than double (or triple) the funding we received. He said in our opinion, this project was no longer feasible with this funding, but it was possible to re-apply in a year and request funding for all elements. He said the current funding could not be retained for a future project and he would advise Council of the final determination.

Emily Brown, Tourism Director, made Council aware of a new outdoor family movie event to occur on the grassed area on the corner of N. Main St. and W. Center St. on Aug. 31 at 8:30 PM. Ms. Brown said the Tourism Dept. and Briar Patch Marketplace & Café had been working on hosting the event together. Briar Patch Marketplace & Café would offer popcorn, candy & drinks for \$1. The request was to allow a portion of the parking on N. Main St. and the turn lane on W. Center St. adjacent to the lot to be coned or barricaded off as a safety precaution. After a brief discussion, Councilwoman White made the motion to approve the street closure requests. 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Kaitlin Hodge from Access Home Health Care and Rehabilitation in Galax, was present to make a request for a street closure. Ms. Hodge explained that AHHCR would partner with the Galax Downtown Association for a fall festival event. The proposed street closure and event would be on October 5th from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Detailed information regarding the event was given to Council. Vice Mayor Plichta made a motion to approve the street closure on October 5th, 2019. 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Keith Barker informed Council that the City was working on the right of way acquisition for the Cranberry Road Project. He said while we adopted a resolution concerning the grant and required paperwork, our attorney had recommended that Council adopt a resolution specific to these property acquisitions. All ROW acquisition costs would be covered within the grant funding. A resolution prepared by the City's attorney was presented for approval. Councilman Greene made a motion to approve the ROW resolution for the Cranberry Project. Councilman Haynes seconded the motion, and it was approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, and Councilwoman White. Councilman Larrowe abstained.

Keith Barker was pleased to announce to Council that the Galax-Carroll-Grayson Animal Shelter had been awarded a \$285,000 grant from the PetCo Foundation for facility improvements at the animal shelter and to increase staff levels for three years. Mr. Barker said the award would be given in advance over three years with year 1 - \$225,000, year 2 - \$30,000 and year 3 - \$30,000. Mr. Barker explained the facility expansion was based on a plan done a few years ago that would be updated as needed, but the anticipated cost of that 1000 s.f. addition was \$195,000.

The goal would be to perform that project in the next 12 months. He explained the additional \$90,000 would be provided in yearly intervals of \$30,000 per year to increase our current part time staff person to full time and to allow an additional 16 hour per week part time staff person to be hired. Mr. Barker said the ongoing costs after year three would be approximately \$10,000 per year per locality to maintain staffing levels. Information was presented to the county representatives for the shelter and they were in agreement with the application and award. Mr. Barker noted with execution of the grant documents, we would expect to receive the first installment of the PetCo Foundation funds within 8 weeks. A formal press release was to be issued by the PetCo Foundation concerning all grants they were awarding in Virginia. Councilman Greene made the motion to accept the PetCo Grant and to authorize the City Manager to execute any document related to the grant. Councilman Larrowe 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Keith Barker informed Council of a request for a FY2020 Budget Amendment and to set a public hearing. Mr. Barker explained based on the PetCo Foundation Grant, the recent award from the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) for a middle school resource officer, and the award from USDA for police cars, we needed to amend our FY2020 budget to reflect these revenues and expenditures. He said the total of the awards was over 1% of our current budget so we needed to set a public hearing to amend the budget. He asked Council to set September 9 as the date for a public hearing. Mr. Barker closed by stating that other grants and budget changes would be included in the budget amendment for the public hearing. Councilwoman Ritchie made the motion to set Sept. 9 as the date for a public hearing to amend the FY2020 budget. 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council that we had received a resolution from TCRH requesting support from our legislators to develop the Medicaid medical assessment reimbursement program as discussed at the April 22, 2019 meeting. He explained the resolution would offer support to the program as described by the TCRH CFO Tim Prestridge. Mayor Mitchell said if legislation was eventually developed by the General Assembly, further action would be required of City Council to adopt an ordinance and to set up financial controls for such a program. Keith Barker told Council any consideration on a final adoption would need to be carefully reviewed by our attorney and auditor to make sure we were in compliance with state and federal law and to assess how we would implement such a transfer of funds. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the resolution. 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

City Manager Report – Keith Barker gave an overview of the status of various projects and initiatives that were underway in the City which included:

- Bottom Area Project, Eastview Phase
- VDOT Projects – Cranberry Road Improvement Project, Safe Routes to School, McArthur Street Traffic Signal, Main Street Sidewalk Improvements, and Primary Paving Projects.
- Galax Elementary Renovations
- Galax Wastewater Treatment Plant & Pump Station Upgrades
- Stormwater Projects
- T.G. Vaughan Furniture Plant Study

- Chestnut Creek & US Army Corps of Engineers Study
- MRPDC Assistance
- PetCo Grant
- Training Center Meeting
- Tourism Goals & Ideas
- Interviews for new staff VIAA

Mayor Mitchell opened the floor for public comments. Mr. Travis Belton briefly spoke regarding his business on Main Street, Studio B. Council thanked him for attending and speaking with them.

With no further public comments, Mayor Mitchell accepted a motion made by Councilman Larrowe at 8:25 p.m. to enter into closed session under the following Codes of Virginia:

- **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.
- **Investment of Public Funds - § 2.2-3711 A.6 of the Code of Virginia** Discussion or consideration of the investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected.
- **Legal Matters - § 2.2-3711 A.7 of the Code of Virginia** - Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. For the purposes of this subdivision, "probable litigation" means litigation that has been specifically threatened or on which the public body or its legal counsel has a reasonable basis to believe will be commenced by or against a known party.

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

At 10:02 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 Plichta, Councilman Greene, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

ADJOURNMENT at 10:02 p.m.



 Mayor



 Clerk