

Galax City Council
Minutes
November 12, 2019

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on November 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.

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

Mayor Mitchell, along with Council, recognized and presented a resolution to Jackie Greene-Dalton who was recently named to the Emory & Henry College 2019 Sports Hall of Fame.

Mayor Mitchell, along with Council, recognized and presented a resolution of appreciation to Kaitlin Hodge, Marketing Director for Access Home Health Care, LLC, for their efforts in bringing their 3rd Annual Fall Festival to downtown Galax.

Councilman Greene made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 14, 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.

City Manager - Keith Barker, gave a status update on current VDOT projects which included: Bottom Area Project, Safe Routes to School (Anderson St. to Swanson St. Sidewalk & Swanson St. to W. Stuart Dr.), McArthur St. Traffic Signal, Cranberry Road, Paving Projects.

Keith Barker informed Council of an upcoming training opportunity. He said the Virginia Industrial Advancement Alliance (VIAA) was planning to host a regional economic development orientation for all local elected officials in our region. He explained the groups being invited to present included VIAA, VEDP, the Secretary of Commerce Office, GO Virginia, and the Tobacco Commission to help share information and provide a comprehensive overview of how these pieces fit together. This event would be made available for both new and incumbent members of councils, boards of supervisors, and local IDAs and EDAs. The event would be on December 5th from 11:30-2:00 in Wytheville at WCC.

Ms. Vickie Myers, Director of Rooftop, was present to request that Council consider a possible sale of the Rosenwald Felts building to Rooftop for their Head Start Program. She explained that Rooftop had been working with their federal funding agency to secure funding on the purchase of a building in Galax and with the recent sale of the facility they were pursuing, Rooftop was now asking if the City would permit that funding to be used to purchase the Rosenwald Felts building. Ms. Myers and Mr. Barker met and he explained the steps necessary for a sale including an appraisal and public hearing. A price had not been negotiated, but with a sale Rooftop would be making facility improvements out of the grant dollars they received. Mr. Barker noted that any final price would require Council action prior to an approved sale. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the City Manager to proceed with an appraisal and to set and advertise a public hearing as he deems necessary. 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.

Mayor Mitchell and Councilman Greene volunteered to represent Council (as needed) during the price negotiations. Councilwoman Plichta made a motion to approve the appointments. 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 made Council aware of information from the Twin County 911 Commission regarding some organizational changes. Mr. Barker explained in a review of the Next Generation-911 (NG-911) changes by our attorney, it was noted that there are references to the commission organization structure that were never completed and that also referenced state tax code sections that had changed. He said our attorney had prepared the revised ordinance for consideration by Galax, Carroll and Grayson; as well as the Joint Services Agreement. Mr. Barker closed by saying the Commission had already approved the documents and forwarded them to the localities for proceeding with the necessary public hearings. Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to set the public hearing for December 9th. 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 gave Council an overview of his review of the City's Stormwater Ordinance. He met with staff and had spoken to a developer regarding a small parcel in the city that could be subdivided for residential construction. He said our current stormwater ordinance follows the state stormwater code and sets the requirement for a stormwater plan when a parcel is divided into three or more lots. He spoke to the local developer in regards to the difficulties of providing a stormwater plan for smaller developments and also reached out to DEQ regarding the requirements. He continued that in a review of other locality's stormwater ordinances there were minor changes in their respective ordinances that were permitting development to occur on subdivisions provided the total disturbed area was under one acre rather than setting a restriction for a plan based on the number of parcels. Mr. Barker contacted the engineer that helped to write our ordinance and had requested a review of the state code and our ordinance to see if our program could also be changed. His hope was to bring back a report to Council at the December meeting regarding this issue. He said any changes would require a public hearing since this is an ordinance within the City code.

Keith Barker informed Council that he was contacted by USDA reps and said because of our declaration as an impacted area with the October 2018 storms, we were eligible for a higher Community Facilities Grant from them, with a \$50,000 grant and matching \$41,000+/- loan. David Hankley, Fire Chief, was present and indicated the Fire Department would like to apply for the grant/loan to replace a significant amount of radio equipment for personnel and trucks. The loan would be paid by the FD through other grant funds they receive on a yearly basis. The grant/loan would require a public hearing per USDA. Councilwoman White made the motion to proceed with setting December 9 as the date for a public hearing on the USDA application. 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 informed Council that he was please to that we had received three grants from the Twin County Foundation for our Recreation Center. The grants would be used in purchasing/replacing equipment at the center. Grants were received for cardio equipment

(\$15,000), starting blocks for the outdoor pool (\$14,000), and for football helmets and portable backstops (\$11,500). Council was asked to accept the grants and amend the budget as follows:

- a. Revenues - *10.3.3180.0167 Twin County Community Foundations, \$40,500.*
- b. Expenditures - *10.4.9950.1569 TCCF Grant, \$40,500.*

Councilman Haynes made the motion to accept the grant and approve the budget amendment as presented. 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.

Keith Barker presented a budget amendment for consideration for the animal shelter project. He explained our original plan was to proceed with the design on the first phase based on the PetCo Foundation Grant, however our designer had offered to do the additional design work for the proposed addition on the north side of the facility for a \$14,000 fee increase. He said with the additional design complete, it may be possible we could seek other grant funds for a "shovel ready project". Mr. Barker has met with Mary Ellen Vaught, a volunteer with the Animal Shelter, regarding the proposed project. Ms. Vaught has been instrumental in raising funds for needs at the shelter and has raised funds (approximately \$10,000) towards those additional fees. Mr. Barker asked that City Council amend the project budget to cover the additional design work. The remaining fees would be moved from the current animal shelter budget. He said the amendment would be \$10,000 total between prior year contributions (fund balance) and current contributions. He asked that Council amend the budget as follows:

- c. Revenues - *Appropriated Fund Balance 10.3.3510.0101, \$ 4,724*
- d. Revenues - *Animal Shelter Contributions 10.3.3180.1031, \$5,276.*
- e. Expenditures - *Animal Shelter Building Addition 10.4.9900.1196, \$10,000.*

(The remaining costs would be taken from the current animal shelter budget.)

Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve the budget amendment and approve the additional project design work. 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, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Larrowe.

Keith Barker presented a request to Council from Smyth County to consider adopting a resolution of support to establish a Women's Residential Treatment Facility that would be housed at a building on the grounds of the Southwest Virginia Mental Health Institute in Marion. Mr. Barker explained the facility would be used for assisting women in the area to stay clean and sober. All renovation costs would be handled by Smyth County and the only request is to consider the resolution of support. Councilman Greene 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.

Mayor Mitchell informed Council of a request to approve a joint proclamation to recognize Ms. Linda S. Richardson who has plans to retire at the end of December. Ms. Richardson is being recognized for her service to Crossroads and the community. Vice Mayor Plichta made the motion to approve the resolution. 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.

City Manager Report:

Keith Barker presented the City Manager Report to Council which gave an overview of the status of various projects and initiatives that are underway with the City or with regional boards he is a part of. The items included the following:

- Bottom Area Project, East View
- Various VDOT projects
- Galax Elementary School Renovations
- Galax Stormwater Treatment Plant & Pump Station upgrades
- Stormwater Projects
- T.G. Vaughan Furniture Plant Study, VT Economic Development Department
- Kipling Lane Property Update
- Several misc. items

Council Comments:

Councilman Larrowe gave an in-depth status report on the Vaughan Furniture Company and City of Galax Committee meeting. Councilman Larrowe said the meetings were to recognize what the objectives were, to ensure that everyone was on the same page, and to set goals to bring something of value to Galax which would improve the economic development. The topics that were discussed included items from the minutes from each meeting which included:

- Status of contacts
- Environmental review and funding status
- Legal entity questions
- Possible expansion of the Committee
- Consideration of a local OZ fund
- Update on Missy Gentry, Shelor CFO (Jackson Park Inn & Al's on Main)
- Pulaski development
- Possible historic credits
- Project ideas such as hotel, residential, retail, court yards, convention center, college involvement, indoor athletic facilities, etc.

Council discussed with Councilman Larrowe their thoughts and ideas. Councilman Haynes said he was excited about the Vaughan Furniture Project. Councilman Greene said he was concerned about the initial proposal with the City and what the role for the City would entail. He said he was also concerned of the City investing \$100,000 a year for a few years. Councilman Larrowe responded that this is the initial discussions but that the City invests far more in other recreational opportunities for its citizens and that this project has the potential to be impactful for the region.

Councilman Larrowe informed Council that this is VFCo's 100th anniversary. Mr. Barker informed him that a resolution would be presented at the December meeting.

Councilman Greene recognized Vice Mayor Plichta and Councilman Greene for their military service.

With no public comments, Mayor Mitchell accepted a motion made by Councilman Haynes at 9:35 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.
- **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.

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.


At 11:15 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.

Councilman Haynes made the motion to appoint City Manager, Keith Barker to continue ownership discussions with Monta Vista Cemetery. Councilwoman 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.

ADJOURNMENT at 11:20 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk

