

Galax City Council  
Minutes  
January 11, 2021

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on January 11, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

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

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

Councilwoman White made the motion to approve a correction on the November 9, 2020 meeting minutes which concerned Project Light where a motion was added. Vice Mayor Mitchell seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr.

Councilwoman White made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 14, 2020. Councilwoman Ritchie seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr.

Mayor Greene announced this was the date set for the public hearing for a request to rezone a portion of 108 Kenbrook Drive. City Manager, Keith Barker explained the request was made by Andrews Business Park. The request consisted of a portion of the parcel from M-1 Light Industry to R-5 Residential/Office in order to house the USDA Service Center. He said the intent was only to rezone a portion of the property that is 5000 sq. ft. and included the former Sawyers Furniture office building. Mr. Barker informed Council the Galax Planning Commission met on January 6, 2021 and recommended that Council consider the re-zoning as requested. A copy of the packet, application, and minutes were previously given to Council. Ms. Stephanie Dalton, GIS/Zoning Administrator was present to answer any questions. Mayor Greene opened the floor for public comments. With no comments made, he declared the public hearing closed. Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to approve the request. Councilman Warr seconded the motion and it was approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, and Councilman Warr. Councilman Larrowe abstained due to a conflict of interest.

Mayor Greene announced this was the date advertised for the public hearing for input on the proposed housing application to the Department of Housing and Community Development. Keith Barker and Janet Jonas spoke informing Council the intent of the public hearing was to generally discuss Community Development Block Grants overall. Mr. Barker said that a second public hearing would be held in March concerning the specific project we were considering submitting for funding. He said two community meetings were held in December at the Rex Theater, with



residents from the Eastview St. and Matthews St. communities present. He closed by saying a housing assessment for both communities was underway and that, along with neighborhood interest, would determine the recommended neighborhood for the application. Mayor Greene opened the floor for public comments. With no comments made, he declared the public hearing closed.

Keith Barker informed Council the Social Media Policy discussion was held over from the December Council meeting. He said the City's attorney was working on a much more detailed policy and this item would be brought back at the next Council meeting.

Mayor Greene welcomed Ms. Terri Gillespie, Rooftop of Virginia. Ms. Gillespie gave Council an overview of Rooftop of Virginia and their use of CARES Act funds.

Keith Barker made a request of Council to review and approve the following calendars: Festivals and Street Closures – 2021, Holidays & Sanitation Calendar – 2021, City Council Meeting Calendar – 2021, FY2022 Budget Calendar. The Holidays and Sanitation which would be included on the City's website and a future water billing mailing. The Council calendar would be on the City website. Mr. Barker asked Council if they would like to consider moving the Council meetings to a single meeting per month. He provided alternate calendars for the meeting schedule as well as the budget calendar. He noted if an additional meeting was required, we could schedule those as needed.

Councilwoman White made the motion to approve the 2021 calendars & FY2022 Budget Calendar which would reflect Council going to a single meeting each month. Councilman Larrowe seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of "yea": Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr.

CITY MANAGER REPORT – Mr. Barker gave an overview of projects include on the City Manager report. It specifically called out included the Chestnut Creek study from the USACE and the DHCD approval of the Enterprise Zone amendments.

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilwoman White – Discussed the school situation and virtual teaching. She reminded everyone that the school board was meeting virtually on 1/12 to discuss when in person classes would resume.
- Councilwoman Ritchie – No Comment
- Mayor Mitchell – congratulated Mayor Greene on the recent article in Virginia Town and City, thanked Public Works for their efforts during recent snow events and for the recent leaf cleanup.
- Councilman Warr – spoke about downtown during Christmas and shops that were open.
- Councilman Larrowe – spoke about the upcoming CARES funds for payroll protection (round 2) and qualifications, certifications, loan forgiveness.
- Councilman Haynes – Be vigilant with Covid and stay safe.
- Mayor Greene – let Council know there would be a VML state overview, asked Council to sign up for VML E News for updates on pending legislation.



With no further public comments, Mayor Greene accepted a motion made by Councilman Warr at 7:30 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.
- **Public Contract – § 2.2-3711 A.29 of the Code of Virginia** - Discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

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

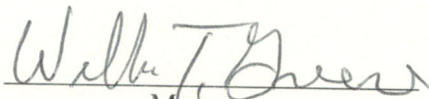
At 7:47 p.m. Council reconvened in open session. Mayor Greene certified that no items other than those allowed under the cited Virginia code section were discussed and no action was taken, with the following affirmation: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr.

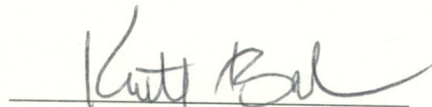
Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to accept the DCJS funding and amend the budget as necessary. The full grant funds are to be used for GPD staff retention bonuses and funds are to be moved by the City Manager to provide an equivalent retention bonus to all communication employees. Councilman Larrowe seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes of “yea”: Mayor Greene, Vice Mayor Mitchell, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr.

City Manager, Keith Barker gave notice of his upcoming June 14, 2021 retirement to Council.

Councilwoman Ritchie made the motion to adjourn. Councilwoman White seconded the motion.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:08 p.m.

  
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Mayor

  
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Clerk

