

Galax City Council
Minutes
August 10, 2020

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on August 10, 2020, 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, Councilman Haynes, Councilwoman Ritchie, Councilwoman White, Councilman Larrowe, and Councilman Warr.

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

Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 13, 2020. 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.

Mayor Greene announced this was the date set to hold public hearings for FY2020 & FY2021 budget amendments. Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Director of Finance addressed Council regarding the amendments to the General Fund. With the receipt of CARES Act funds, as well as other needed adjustments, public hearings on both budgets were required. Ms. Taylor-Gallimore explained the FY20 budget amendment for expenditures & revenue totaled \$574,559. She explained the total included CARES Act funds and grants from DHCD virtual training & support, VA Rules Camp – OAG, HIDTA Grant, and DCJS Byrne JAG Crime Analysis.

Ms. Taylor-Gallimore informed Council the FY2021 budget amendment for expenditures & revenue totaled \$1,235,832. These funds included carry over CARES Act funding, funding for the GCG Animal Shelter building project, Fire Dept. airline replacement, DHCD virtual training, and two trucks purchased for the Parks & Recreation Department. Mayor Greene opened the floor for public comments. With there being none, he declared the public hearing closed. Councilman Larrowe made a motion to approve the FY2020 and FY2021 budget amendments. Councilman Haynes 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.

Keith Barker discussed a second round of CARES Act funding the City would receive in the amount of \$553,571; for a total of funds being received in the amount of \$1,107,502. Mr. Barker said in reviewing the funds and how they could be spent, we were continuing to use round one funds for additional cleaning equipment and supplies, mandated leave for staff that had been impacted by Covid, etc. He shared with Council a general breakdown on possible spending of CARES Act funds based on the CFR Survey sent out by the state. Mr. Barker asked Council for their input on possible items that could be considered with the new funds. The options included:

- a. **Business Grants, Current Budget \$150,000 – Possible Revised Budget \$300,000 - \$350,000** –A recommendation from staff was to consider an additional \$150,000 - \$200,000 for business assistance grants from the Round 2 funds, and consider revision of the eligibility criteria.
- b. **Food Assistance Program, Current Budget \$43,200 – Possible Revised Budget \$135,000** – God’s Storehouse is asking that we consider additional funds for food assistance programs. The additional funds would allow them to work with the school system to identify 75 total students and family members in need of meals 4 times a

week. They've also requested \$15,000+/- in funds for gas vouchers for meal delivery drivers, truck rental to pick up food from Roanoke, storage fees for bulk food purchases, and administrative support. All of these funds allocated for meals would be spent in local Galax restaurants. The majority of funds for the food boxes has been spent in local retail and grocery stores.

- c. **Equipment/Uniforms, Budget \$135,000** – Council was asked to consider allocating \$100,000 to the Galax Fire Department for approximately 33 sets of turn out gear for firefighters and \$35,000 to the Galax PD for additional uniforms for officers. This would provide additional equipment/uniforms to allow more cleaning between uses, especially with turn out gear for firefighters.
- d. **Galax DSS and Rooftop, \$21,000** – Keith Barker contacted DSS and Rooftop to assess other community needs. Tammy Smith, DSS Director, has identified daycare needs in the community due to shortened school hours. She has requested \$10,000 for this need. DSS also requested \$6,000 to provide shopping assistance to elder clients that are deemed high risk for shopping. Rooftop requested \$5,000 in funds to provide hygiene packages to elder clients they serve.
- e. **Galax Health Department, \$10,000** - Dr. Shelton and her staff believe rapid testing kits would be beneficial, as well as supplies for outdoor fall immunization clinics which would include tents, tables, chairs, PPE, etc.

Keith Barker said the funding requests would still allow for us to obtain additional personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, staffing needs, technology for remote work, etc. as we continue to navigate the CARES Act and Covid pandemic. He said that all funds must be spent by December 30, 2020.

After Council discussed the disbursement of the second round of CARES Act funds, Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to approve the funding as presented by Mr. Barker. Councilman Larowe 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 Larowe, and Councilman Warr.

Keith Barker informed Council of a funding request from Twin County E911. He explained that at their July meeting, the Twin County E911 Commission agreed to request proportional reimbursement of Covid-19 costs related to personnel from each member jurisdiction. The intent was that these funds would be reimbursed from each localities CARES Act funds. He said the request from Galax was \$1,365 and was eligible from the CARES Act funds we had received. There was also a request to consider additional funding of \$6,405 for mobile communications console that would allow social distancing in the event of Covid issues in dispatch. Mr. Barker said that funding would be contingent on funding from Grayson and Carroll.

Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to approve the funding request of \$1,365 from Twin County E911, payable from the CARES Act. Councilman Haynes 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 Larowe, and Councilman Warr.

Councilman Haynes made the motion to approve the E911 request for \$6,405 for a mobile communications console payable from the CARES Act funds contingent on funding from Grayson & Carroll counties. 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.

Keith Barker informed Council of a request to set public hearings regarding amendments to the City’s enterprise zone on September 7 and October 5. He said a draft application had been prepared and we were required to hold two public hearings. Councilman Larrowe made the motion to approve setting the public hearing on the enterprise zone amendments. Councilman Haynes 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.

Keith Barker informed Council that TCRH had requested Council to consider the adoption of an ordinance that had been discussed at a prior meeting. The ordinance would allow possible fund to come back to TCRH through Medicaid funding. The process was discussed among Council members. Mr. Barker said he had spoken to our attorney and auditor, who explained that this program/ordinance was not widely used and had only recently come into state law. He noted that our auditor said he was not familiar with how the program worked. Through talking with our attorney, Mr. Barker said that a draft ordinance had been presented to Council for review. A representative from Sands Anderson had been asked to attend the September meeting to go over the ordinance and process. Mr. Barker said a representative from the hospital would also be invited to attend this meeting. He explained that if Council chose to proceed, we would need to advertise the ordinance and hold a public hearing. Depending on the amount of revenue involved with the assessment, he said we may also be required to hold a public hearing for a budget amendment. After Council discussions, Councilman Larrowe made a motion to approve moving forward to consider the TCRH ordinance which would also allow the City Manager to send advertisements regarding the public hearings for the ordinance to the Gazette. Councilman Haynes 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.

Keith Barker gave an update on the major items in our budget that had reduced projections – specifically sales tax, meals tax, and lodging tax. He noted in the July financial report that we collected the following vs. the projected collections:

<u>Tax Category</u>	<u>Projected</u>	<u>Collected</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Sales Tax	\$177,520.00	\$216,611.00	\$39,091.00
Meals Tax	\$150,790.00	\$176,804.00	\$26,014.00
Lodging Tax	\$9,500.00	\$12,767.00	\$3,267.00
	<u>\$337,810.00</u>	<u>\$406,182.00</u>	<u>\$68,372.00</u>

Mr. Barker said that he hoped the trend would continue with higher collections than what we projected. He also recognized that court fines, admissions tax, etc. were behind or may not be collected.

Council was made aware that Mr. Barker had spoken with our VDOT representatives and learned that the Commonwealth Transportation Board had not made any decisions on Revenue Sharing Grant applications to date, and they may not until their September meeting. The S. Main St./Calhoun St. Stormwater Project was based on approximately \$1M in Revenue Sharing Grant funds from VDOT. He said that he wanted to make sure Council was aware that if we did not receive funds this fiscal year, it could push that project back a year.

Keith Barker informed Council that the Galax Public Arts Committee had submitted a public art project for Council's consideration. The project would consist of drawing then painting quilting patterns at the S. Main St/Oldtown St intersection, the Main St./Grayson St. intersection, and the N. Main St./Center St. intersection.

The proposal would be to use traffic rated paint for the intricate patterns as presented, and while originally conceived to occur during a festival, the work would occur with a street closure only now. There were concerns among staff on how the paint might decrease traction vs. standard pavement, how the various colors would hold up, and long-term maintenance/repainting. Mr. Barker said he had asked VDOT staff to also review but had not received a comment as of the time the agenda was completed. The consensus was to hold the request over until the next meeting so the concerns could be addressed with VDOT.

Keith Barker said that Tammy Smith, Galax DSS Director, had informed him that the terms of Ms. Edit A Mar Castillo & Ms. Theda Early on the DSS Advisory Board would expire in September 2020 and they had both asked to be reappointed. The appointments would be for 4 years, through August 2024. Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to re-appoint Ms. Castillo & Ms. Early. Councilman Haynes 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.

Keith Barker made Council aware of a request from the United Way of Southwest Virginia to approve and sign a memo of understanding which would allow the United Way to seek reimbursement from federal funds due to the Covid-19 issue, if they were available. Mr. Barker said this would not affect our funding in regards to the pandemic event. Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion to approve the United Way request. Councilman Warr 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.

Keith Barker spoke with City Council regarding the pursuit of another housing project. He said with the possibility of the Galax Bottom Area project being wrapped up in the next few months, staff wanted to gauge the interest of City Council in pursuing another housing project. Mr. Barker asked how to direct staff on the possibility of a future housing project. He said while there was a focus on stormwater issues in the western portion of the City, housing needs were still prevalent in other areas and funding was still available from DHCD, with new spending limits for houses and new housing grants of up to \$1,000,000. Councilwoman White made the motion to proceed with a future housing project. 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.

Keith Barker informed Council of information he had received from Ms. Stacey Reavis, Galax Voter Registrar, concerning the new No Excuse Early Voting procedures that would be implemented. He said the new laws which would allow early voting, also raised issues with Covid. Mr. Barker said the Registrar's office would limit how many people would be allowed in the municipal building at a time.

Keith Barker informed Council the VML Conference would be virtual this year. Seminars are scheduled to be held the afternoon of October 7th and morning of October 8th. He said that attendees would be able to join by smartphone, tablet or computer.

City Manager's Report – Keith Barker gave Council an overview of various projects and initiatives there were underway with the City or regional boards he is part of. These included:

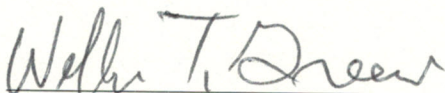
- Bottom Area Project – Eastview Phase
- Various VDOT Projects
- Galax Elementary School Renovations
- Galax Wastewater Treatment Plant & Pump Station Upgrades
- Stormwater Projects
- T. G. Vaughan Furniture Plant Study, VT Economic Development Dept.
- MRPDC Assistance – Kipling Ln., Galax East Site
- Animal Shelter Project
- COVID-19/CARES Act Funds

Council Comments – Council members spoke regarding various topics & issues. These included:

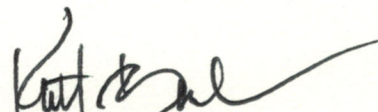
- The Sparta Earthquake
- Parkwood Drive Project – Commending the Water Department
- Census Update
- Masks & Covid-19 Prevention, Dr. Shelton Information
- Importance of Communication – Future Work Session

With no further discussion, Vice Mayor Mitchell made the motion for the meeting to adjourn. Councilman Warr 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 Larowe, and Councilman Warr.

ADJOURNMENT at 7:54 p.m.



Mayor



Clerk

