

A Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hickory was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 6:00 p.m., with the following members present:

Tony Wood	Hank Guess	Anthony Freeman
Charlotte C. Williams	Aldermen	David P. Zagaroli
Danny Seaver		Jill Patton

A quorum was present.

Also present were City Manager Warren Wood, Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller, Assistant City Manager Rick Beasley, Assistant City Manager Yaidee Fox, City Attorney Timothy Swanson, Administrative Assistant Iris Childers, and City Clerk Debbie D. Miller

- I. Mayor Guess called the meeting to order. All Council members were present.
- II. Invocation by Reverend Dr. Alderman Freeman
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Special Presentations
 - A. Presentation of a Proclamation to Lenoir-Rhyne University's Head Softball Coach Shena Hollar.

Mayor Guess asked all the representatives of the Lenoir-Rhyne softball program to come forward. He commented he had a very special presentation that he would read and present to these young ladies. He asked Head Softball Coach Shena Hollar to come forward. He advised the proclamation thoroughly explained all the accomplishments of this team under Shena's direction and guidance as their Coach. Mayor Guess read and presented the proclamation to Coach Shena Hollar.

Coach Shena Hollar thanked Council for the day. They had tried to do this in May but got busy and went outside of Orlando to the National Championship. They represented Lenoir-Rhyne and showed them who they were and how good they were. It was awesome.

Mayor Guess commented on how proud they were of the entire team and certainly under Coach Hollar's direction. This was just another day for them to recognize Lenoir-Rhyne and all of their contributions that they give to the community. He thanked them.

- V. Persons Requesting to Be Heard
 - A. Ms. Keisha Collins, just recently purchased a home at 815 3rd Street Court SW, Hickory, commented "What I want to say tonight is what is the citizen to do when they are being discriminated against by Schools, certain Police, Hospitals, etc. She wanted to know what a citizen was to do when they go to the City or County officials or entities, trusting them to investigate, protect and serve in honesty, yet she began to experience retaliation and the Police being called on me. What is a citizen to do when you have purchased the home through the City of Hickory's affordable housing initiative and the home begins to fall apart within one week? What is a citizen to do when we don't have money to hire an attorney and no one is being held accountable to do what's right, or legal? What is a citizen to do of color when they address the City in a Council meeting, no one acknowledges that what the citizen's concern is, and that same citizen witnessed Councilman Freeman stand up and openly apologize to an elderly white lady. What is the citizen to do to hear the Mayor has forwarded my concerns to all Council members, and not one Council member have reached out to me. What is the citizen to do when all they want to do is just be heard, respected and responded to, yet been ignored, things swept under rug and no acknowledgement? What is a citizen to do when the only one who understands them most of the time is the Chief of Police? I will acknowledge them, Captain Demas, Bryan Adams. And they understand that I mean well in anything that I address. But due to me already been labeled to society, people already have me judged and misunderstood. And even the officer over here, he has told me that Keisha, you do care. Yeah, I do care. But then when sometimes an officer is talked to me for no reason, I say, I don't care. I don't care what's going on. But like he said, you do care. Yeah, I do. But nobody's hearing my concerns. So, I'm here tonight to say what I'm gonna do as a citizen. I'm gonna keep emailing. I'm gonna keep showing up. I'm gonna still keep expressing my concern, because I'm a citizen with valid points that expects to be respected and heard. Thank you."
 - B. Mr. Cliff Moone, 4340 North Center Street, Hickory, referred to Ms. Collin's comments and commented that was a very passionate comment from that lady, and he knew his friends here would take care of the things that need to be taken care of. He advised he does this kind of normally, and he apologized ahead of time for anyone present for sounding like an old educator when he comes up to do this, but it was an important day. First, he thanked the City Council for providing the citizens the opportunity to do just what was done to address the Chair, the Council in these meetings. It was not too many years ago that he and others advocated to have this citizen's time moved to the front portion of the meeting. He thanked them again. While not unique, it was somewhat unusual that they meet here tonight, elected leaders, public administrators, staff and citizens on the anniversary date of the signing of the United States Constitution, September 17, 1787. Two-hundred thirty-

seven years ago, this now oldest written Constitution was birthed in the same Philadelphia room where, just eleven years earlier, the Declaration of Independence was adopted. He hoped and felt sure they all felt the importance of pausing a moment to commemorate, to celebrate, and to reflect upon the abiding significance of the heritage they had been bequeathed and the responsibility they all share to regularly read and reread the constitution, to consider its contents, and to in bide the wisdom and spirit of its purposes stated in its preamble, which ordained and established republican democracy, our civic consciousness, and our freedoms. In an era where so many of us have become jaded and cynical, even despairing of the integrity of our cultural and civic institutions, renewing our understanding and shared commitment to our common values and principles found in the Constitution, seems to him to be of the utmost urgency. He left them with the words of Constitutional Scholar Yuval Levin, who became an American Citizen in 1998, he was born in Israel. He was the Author of American Covenant, How the Constitution Unified Our Nation and Could Again, he recommended the book. He wrote, "we" is the first word of the Constitution. It is the first word of the glorious second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. Both documents speak in the first person, plural, because they speak, both of them for a people taking joint ownership of their common faith. The Declaration of Independence helps them understand why it was worth the effort to make that "we" a reality. And the Constitution helps us see just how that could be done. We now need to be reminded of both the why and the how. That reminding will need to take the form of civic practice and constitutional renewal. But its purpose was ultimately to let us see one another as belonging together again. The Constitution thereby offers us the hope of greater unity. We should be cheered by that hope, and we should profoundly be grateful for the glorious fact that we all get to be Americans together. Thank you for the time.

Mayor Guess asked if anyone else present wished to be heard. No one else appeared.

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of September 3, 2024

Alderman Patton moved, seconded by Alderman Seaver that the Minutes of September 3, 2024 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. Reaffirmation and Ratification of Second Readings. Votes recorded on first reading will be reaffirmed and ratified on second reading unless Council Members change their votes and so indicate on second reading.

Alderman Patton moved, seconded by Alderman Williams that the following be reaffirmed and ratified on second reading. The motion carried unanimously.

- A. Approval of an Ordinance Amendment Adding Section 23-9 to the Hickory Code of Ordinances for Nonresidential Fees. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
- B. Approval of the Implementation of a Speed Limit Reduction to 25mph along 11th Avenue NE from 5th Street NE to 3rd Street Drive NE, and along 4th Street NE from 11th Avenue NE to 10th Avenue Drive NE. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
- C. Budget Revision Number 4. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)

VIII. Consent Agenda: All items below will be enacted by vote of City Council. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council Member so requests. In which event, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered under Item IX.

Alderman Patton moved, seconded by Alderman Freeman approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

- A. Called for a Public Hearing to Consider the Preliminary Assessment Roll for Curb and Gutter Petition 24-01, for Property Located at 525 9th Avenue NW, Hickory, and Approval of the Resolution Authorizing Preparation of the Assessment Roll (Authorized Public Hearing for October 1, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building).

RESOLUTION NO. 24-55
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PREPARATION OF ASSESSMENT ROLL AND
PUBLIC HEARING ON PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT ROLL
NO. 24-01

WHEREAS, the curb, and gutter project along a portion of 525 9th Avenue NW, Hickory has been completed and it has been determined that the project consisted of 109 linear feet of curb and gutter at \$32.50 per linear foot and 24 linear feet for driveway(s) at \$65.25 per linear foot for the property located at 525 9th Avenue NW, Hickory.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT, the property whose owners that have not paid their proportionate part of the project shall be assessed at the rate of \$32.50 per linear foot for curb and gutter and \$65.25 per linear foot for driveway(s);

THAT, the Clerk be, and she is hereby ordered to prepare an assessment roll or ledger to show the names of persons assessed as far as they can be ascertained, the amount assessed against them, respectively, with a brief description of the lots or parcels of land assessed, and

THAT, the Clerk shall file the Preliminary Assessment Roll in the City Clerk's Office available for public inspection and shall publish and notify property owners of the public hearing as required by North Carolina General Statute 160A-227.

THAT, a public hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building, located at 76 North Center Street, Hickory, North Carolina, on the 1st day of October 2024, for the purpose of hearing all interested persons who appear with respect to any matter covered by the Preliminary Assessment Roll.

- B. Authorized Staff to Apply for Rural Community Capacity Building Funding from the North Carolina Department of Commerce in the Amount of \$45,000.

Staff requests that the City Council authorize staff to apply for Rural Community Capacity Building Funding from the NC Department of Commerce. The Rural Community Capacity Building program provides technical assistance to communities in North Carolina to assist their ability to apply for grants and spur economic development in their communities. City staff has been attending this training since May 2024, and the program concludes in September 2024. As part of the program, the City is eligible to apply for a \$45,000 grant to promote economic development. In the City's original application to participate in the program, staff requested using the implementation funds to update the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan. This plan was approved by City Council in December 2017. Given the construction of the Hickory Trail, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and commuting patterns, along with construction of significant housing in downtown Hickory, and additional issues, the plan is ready for an update. The funds will be used to hire a consultant to assist staff in updating the plan and ensure it meets the City's current economic development needs. Staff recommends that City Council authorize staff to apply for Rural Community Capacity Building Funding from the NC Department of Commerce in the amount of \$45,000.

- C. Approved on First Reading Budget Revision Number 5.

**ORDINANCE NO. 24-35
BUDGET REVISION NUMBER 5**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Governing Board of the City of Hickory that, pursuant to N.C. General Statutes 159.15 and 159.13.2, the following revision be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and for the duration of the Project Ordinance noted herein.

SECTION 1. To amend the General Fund within the FY 2024-25 Budget Ordinance, the expenditures shall be amended as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
General Government	6,752	-
Public Safety	1,220	-
Culture & Recreation	3,336	-
TOTAL	11,308	-

To provide funding for the above, the General Fund revenues will be amended as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Miscellaneous	6,752	-
Other Financing Sources	1,220	-
Sales and Services	3,336	-
TOTAL	11,308	-

SECTION 2. Copies of the budget revision shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Governing Board, and to the City Manager (Budget Officer) and the Finance Officer for their direction.

- IX. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None
- X. Informational Item
- XI. New Business

A. Public Hearings

1. Approved the FY2023-2024 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for Submission as Required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development – Presented by Business and Community Development Manager Dave Leonetti.

Consideration of the FY 2023-2024 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for submission as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires the City of Hickory, as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement funding recipient, to report on CDBG monies spent within the previous fiscal year. The CAPER evaluates the effectiveness of the use of resources in addressing identified goals and objectives cited in the Annual Action Plan which is prepared before the fiscal year begins. CDBG resources were used for the following activities: Housing Rehabilitation - \$168,887.45; Housing Rehab Administration - \$36,850.82; ALFA - \$10,000; Exodus Homes- \$8,000; Family Care Center - \$6,500; Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club - \$8,000; Hickory Soup Kitchen - \$8,000; Catawba Science Center - \$8,000; Public Infrastructure Improvements - \$188,992.55; Fair Housing - \$1,419; and Program Administration-\$64,180.49; for a total of \$508,830.31. The City of Hickory, in complying with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's requirements, is preparing the CAPER, for submission to HUD. The CAPER outlines the City's CDBG expenditures from July 1, 2023 thru June 30, 2024.

Notice of the availability of this document for public review and notice of the public hearing was advertised in a newspaper having general circulation in the Hickory area on August 31, September 7, and September 14, 2024.

City Manager Warren Wood advised the public hearing was consideration of the FY 2023-2024, consolidated annual performance and evaluation report, also known as the CAPER, for submission as required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. He asked Business and Community Development Manager Dave Leonetti to the podium for the presentation.

Business and Community Development Manager Dave Leonetti gave a PowerPoint presentation. He advised he would present the consolidated annual performance and evaluation report to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, CAPER. As an entitlement recipient of Community Development Block Grant funds, the City was required to submit an annual report each year, and that outlines how the City spent its Community Development Block Grant money and what was accomplished during the previous year. The period under consideration was July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. He gave a brief overview of the major projects and line-item expenditures. He noted Council had the entire document in their agenda packets. They spent approximately \$119,000 on improvements to Civitan Park and approximately \$70,000 on improvements to the Westmont Senior Center and accessible routes. There were a couple of areas where the sidewalks did not have curb cuts and accessible routes to the pickleball courts. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed some photos before and after of Civitan Park. He advised the former location of the playground was down in a hole on the opposite side of the parking area. They put in a brand-new play structure that included new climbing structures, slides and all that, and also a new picnic shelter. That was right at the main parking lot. They also improved the access to the community garden area. It was a lot easier because honestly, he worked at the City for several years before he realized that there was a playground at the bottom of that park. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed before pictures of the Westmont Senior Center. He pointed out the bus stop curb area as well. He referred to a photo and advised they had removed some of that awning and redid a lot of the fascia and gutters along that to spruce that up, and also added a lot of concrete to allow wheelchair access to the courts.

Mr. Leonetti discussed other projects that they did this year. In the housing rehabilitation program, they rehabilitated six different homes occupied by low to moderate income owners. Promotion of fair housing and general program administration was approximately \$64,000. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed photos of some of the repairs that they did. A lot of the times there were bathroom remodels, steps, things that were going to help a low- and moderate-income homeowner either reduce hazards or help them stay in their home longer. He advised in public services they had a cap of 15% of their annual grant that they could spend on public service activities. They granted that this past year to six nonprofit organizations. ALFA to fund case manager services for persons living with HIV and AIDS. Exodus Homes which funds employment services for people in their substance abuse residential programs. The Family Care Center that

provided case management services to their folks, families experiencing homelessness. Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club this funded their after-school program. The Soup Kitchen funded their pantry and their daily lunches. The Science Center funded a portion of their portal to science program, which provides low- and moderate-income families access to educational camps and memberships to the Science Center.

Mr. Leonetti advised the Community Development Specialist, Anna Beth Walker and Civil Engineer I, Sam Abernethy worked on improvements to Cliff Teague Park. They were upgrading the restrooms over there and doing some overall facelifts to the park. Funds were used for some street resurfacing in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. They continued the promotion of the small business loan program and micro enterprise grant programs. They had approved one of those this year. A microenterprise grant to a music school downtown. The housing rehab program would continue, and they would continue to support nonprofits in the community. He asked for any questions.

Mayor Guess asked for any questions for Mr. Leonetti.

Alderman Wood asked how the grant amount was calculated and what it was a function of.

Mr. Leonetti explained the amount that they received from HUD each year was based on a very elaborate formula. No one really knows, but it was based on poverty rates, population and all those things, and the total amount that was approved.

Alderman Wood asked if it was consistent from year to year, the amount of the grants.

Mr. Leonetti had been working in it since 2012, and he thought the smallest amount they had received was \$287,000, \$330,000 - \$340,000 was on the high end.

Alderwoman Williams commented that it does not incrementally go up with cost of living or anything.

Mr. Leonetti replied no, it does not. It was actually whatever Congress approved each year.

Alderwoman Williams referred to the six agencies that were recipients of the public service grants, were those the people that applied every year? Or could other people apply?

Mr. Leonetti advised it was open to apply, and the application period opens normally in January and the deadlines were in February. This current year that they were in, he believed there were nine agencies that were funded. He thought there were two - three brand new agencies that they had not funded in the past.

Alderwoman Williams commented that it seemed like ALFA had been there for as long as she had been following this. But they could rotate.

Mr. Leonetti responded correct. Whatever agency they have to meet one of their consolidated plan goals. One of the consolidated plans goals was services to persons with HIV and AIDS and one of the only nonprofits.

City Manager Warren Wood commented that process went through the Citizens Advisory Committee in terms of the recommendations.

Mr. Leonetti advised that they would be doing a new consolidated plan this spring. The City's five years were up this year. This was the final year of that plan.

Alderman Seaver asked if the City used some of that money for loans. Low interest loans.

Mr. Leonetti advised they have a deferred loan. The housing rehabilitation program was a deferred zero interest loan to low- and moderate-income homeowners.

Alderman Seaver commented recycle some of that money.

Mr. Leonetti replied, correct, it was partially forgivable, but they do receive money back into the program to provide more loans.

Alderman Seaver commented still try to use it all up.

Mayor Guess asked for any other questions for Mr. Leonetti. He thanked Mr. Leonetti. He explained the rules for conducting the public hearing. He declared the public hearing open and asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition to the proposal. Mayor Guess asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the proposal. Mayor Guess closed the public hearing.

Alderwoman Williams moved, seconded by Alderman Wood approval of the FY2023-2024 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The motion carried unanimously.

B. Departmental Reports

1. Update on Various City of Hickory Projects

City Manager Warren Wood presented a PowerPoint presentation. He knew that City Council had seen what he was going to discuss, but it wanted to put it out for public consumption. Capital projects, specifically the bond program, the City had approximately \$115 million worth of projects related to the bond program. The \$40 million in bond funds that the City citizens approved in 2014, they had leveraged that \$40 million, now up to \$75 million to go with that, \$115 million worth of projects specifically related to the bond program. They could make a case that what had been done so far had created over 1,500 new jobs. A lot of those at the Trivium Corporate Center. There had been a total of \$845 million in private investment within a half mile along the trail system and Trivium. The same for housing units within that same half mile each side of the trail system. Over 1,300 new housing units. You could argue that some of those would have happened anyway, but the message was it had an impact, a very positive impact. That was measurable to some degree. They said it would create private investment, new jobs, and it had and continued to.

City Manager Warren Wood referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a map of the Hickory Trail. It was actually closer to twelve miles with the existing greenway. The idea, over time, was to loop this. He knew a lot of it looked like dead ends, but over time, the next generation of the trail system would loop in places. He noted they could already see where they were doing that incrementally. The City Walk was the first piece of the trail system to be completed. That was two and a half miles. Of course, that also included a complete redo of downtown, which looked great. They continued to get great feedback about the impact that the City Walk has had. The Riverwalk was the second project to be completed, 2.3 miles. Looked great during the day, and it looked great at night as well. That was the second piece to be completed. The Aviation Walk, 3.1 mile, they opened that section a month or two ago. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a map. He pointed out where they had started to loop some of the trail system. He noted a section that would tie into the Aviation Walk down Clement, which was a different project that would tie into a section at ASU Hickory. That would tie the ASU Hickory extension into the Aviation Walk down by those storage units and through that small business park there. He referred to the PowerPoint map and noted the piece that would connect to ASU Hickory from Clement Boulevard. The other piece tied into this. If they drove down Clement Boulevard, they could see they were really making a lot of progress. That would be a road and a piece of the trail system. It would go right up to ASU Hickory. That was under construction. The other piece tying into the Aviation Walk was the piece that goes down to Goat Farm Road. They had conversations with Burke County. They saw what this was doing. How do they start planning to tie into what the City has? Ideally on the Burke County side of Hickory, out by the Airport. That section was also under construction.

City Manager Warren Wood discussed the Historic Ridgeview Walk. That was almost finished, hopefully by the end of this calendar year, if not sooner. That project had gone really well. That was 1.2 miles. There would also eventually be a crosswalk there at US70, at the end of the Historic Ridgeview Walk that crosses over to the Walmart Neighborhood Store.

City Manager Warren Wood advised the last piece that would tie everything in together was the OLLE Art Walk, which was under construction. They did the groundbreaking for that, and they were just getting started on that piece. That would tie everything into the bond projects. Originally, the bond program was going to be 5 miles of trail, they had doubled that with the grant money that had been received and extended it even further.

City Manager Warren Wood commented that Trivium Corporate Center was the last piece of the bond program. He thought they had four lots left on the Trivium west side, and then there was the large 106-acre piece on the east side, which they had the infrastructure installed with the road, and water and sewer. That had also spurred development. There were a couple housing developments that had

also started to go up beside the Trivium Corporate Center. They thought it was going to take a couple of decades to build that out and they were really ahead of schedule. That was a Class "A" advanced manufacturing business park.

City Manager Warren Wood referred to the PowerPoint and advised this was not a City project but would have a big impact on the City. The US 321 widening, that number, kept going up, it was probably a \$400 million project. It would start in the next two years, and it would probably be an eight-year buildout, six to eight years to finish that project. That was going to have a huge impact on the west side of town. There were 45,000 cars a day that go up and down US 321. That was a high-profile area for Hickory.

City Manager Warren Wood discussed Airport projects. They had talked about extending the runway. That was actually a three-phase project. There was an EMAS system that needs to be built on the east side, before they could start the expansion. It was like a runaway truck ramp construction project. He noted that he and Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller went to Memphis a couple of weeks ago and they felt good about getting a \$9 million allocation to do that first phase of that project. That would clear the way to do this. It was a 200-foot extension on the east side and a 400-foot on the west side. It was actually going to be one more foot than that somewhere because they were going to say it was over 7,000 feet, 7001-feet. It was a marketing ploy. Also at the airport, they were really working on hangar expansion, both T-hangars and box hangars. They did the first set of the twelve T-hangars and have another set of twelve going in now, under construction. They would be starting construction on a 12,000 square foot box hangar as well. He thought there was 50 or 60 aircraft on a waiting list at the Airport. There was definitely a demand. Having closed the secondary runway, it really allowed them to build tax base. They have that partnership with Burke County where there was a baseline and anything revenue wise off those planes, the taxes off those planes that they received, they remit half of that back to the City to go back into more hangar development. It was a good partnership. They do not have commercial service, but they have a 139 certificate with the FAA that allows them to have commercial service. They were still pursuing that and would continue to keep that certificate. They got the Aviation Museum as well that he talked about. There was also going to be some taxiway improvements and that sort of thing. They also got a \$750,000 grant to upgrade the lighting system at the Airport. They found out about that today. That was not on this list. They continue to upgrade and keep the Airport modern. Airport Director Chad Hunsucker had done a great job out there. He stressed there was a tremendous demand for hangars, and hangar space. The idea with those T- hangars was to get the small planes out of the big hangar space so they could put the big planes in the big hangars, because obviously those were much more valuable. That was the thought there.

City Manager Warren Wood advised the Aviation Museum was under construction. That was a \$20 plus million-dollar project allocation. CVCC had a component of that. There was a \$15 million allocation from the State, as well as private fundraising that went into that. He referred to the PowerPoint and pointed out the connection of the Aviation Museum to the Aviation Walk. There was a fourth extension of the Aviation Walk that was being done. Most of this was grant money.

City Manager Warren Wood discussed Appalachian State University – Hickory Campus. He thought they received approximately \$50 million, and they were going floor by floor. Their enrollment was over 500 for the fall and they were hurrying to do these floors so they can continue to accommodate their growth. Eventually, they would start looking outside the footprint of their current facility and looking at building new buildings. They had really done a great job renovating that building and repurposing that Corning Headquarters space.

City Manager Warren Wood noted that CEO of Hickory Metro Convention Center Mandy Hildebrand was present. The Convention Center had a \$15 million expansion, 35,000 square foot open space with tall ceiling heights that allow them to have more sporting events, boat shows, things that require big, tall ceiling heights. It was overall about a 45,000 square foot expansion, which was complete. There were some odds and ends, but it was mostly complete. They did a great job of operating that while construction was going on. They were redoing all the roofs. It was like a new facility. There were also two new hotels, one was under construction, Home2Suites, which was right near the Convention Center, and another one out near Bob Evans, which he thought was in the design phase, but there would be two new hotels coming. Some other projects were the sidewalk project from Sandy Ridge Road and the intersection of Sandy Ridge Road and Springs Road down to McDonald Parkway. There was no sidewalk along that section. That was an area where people walked out of necessity. They had worked with the Department of Transportation (DOT) on a project there. There was one or two places where they had to cross the street, but that was the best they could do.

They would have crosswalks and all that. That project was under design. That would be a really good project for Springs Road. In addition to that, the roundabout at Sandy Ridge Road and 8th Street Drive NE. That was a congestion mitigation grant that they received. It had been on the books for a long time, but they were moving forward with the design now. That process was going to take approximately 18-months to 2-years to finish that project on the roundabout, but that would help traffic flow tremendously in that intersection.

City Manager Warren Wood advised all that he went through that was not DOT or ASU, that was all City projects, was about \$180 million worth of projects. He advised 90% of that was funded primarily through grants. They hit all that when there was a lot of money available over the last few years. They were able to tap into that. That was not normal to see that much money. There was always going to be grants, but the level of grant allocations that they saw, they probably would not see that again. Just managing expectations, they would continue to go after grants. They had some in the hopper. He knew the State was not going to have nearly as much money as they had been allocating coming up. They would still continue to pursue grant opportunities and then some projects would be of such significance that they would want to do their selves, even if they did not have a grant in hand, particularly on the water and sewer side. He did not really add any water and sewer projects in here, but they have a lot of really nice projects that they finished, a lot under construction, and a lot in design that were all funded. That was a good position to be in. A lot of these projects were shovel ready which allowed them to be put ahead of some others that were also seeking some of these grant funds. That was a tribute to Infrastructure Grants Manager Karen Dickerson, and Transportation Project Coordinator John Marshall, and others that go after these grant monies. It was a lot to manage too. They really did not add any more staff. He mentioned Public Works Director Steve Miller, Transportation & Engineer Manager Caroline Kone, Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller, Assistant City Manager Yaidee Fox, and Public Utilities Director Will Hamblin. It was like having a second job, but they had done it really without adding additional staff. That was a testament to them and their work.

Alderman Wood referred to the senior staff, and commented their senior staff had done a lot in this. They had been intimately involved in all these projects. He recognized a group that he saw on a regular basis. That was the people that were doing the maintenance and keeping this pristine. These walks and things like that. They just picked it right up. There was no fall off whatsoever. He was looking at it this evening on the way here and it was immaculate, and they deserved a lot of credit for that. Everybody does. He did not think there was anybody in the City that had not been affected by these projects and they owed all of them a big thanks, but he did not want them to be overlooked.

City Manager Warren Wood appreciated that because they really had not added any more maintenance staff. They thought they would, but they had been able to keep up. There was overtime and weekends and all that, but they had really been able to manage that with the staff that they had in place. He appreciated all that.

Alderwoman Patton appreciated that they have not let any other park, or anything slip. They were at one of the parks on a Sunday. As sure as fate, they pulled up and emptied the trash. Someone asked if they worked-on Sundays. She said yes, they take care of it, and it shows on all of their parks.

City Manager Warren Wood asked staff to make sure that got back to their folks.

Mayor Guess commented that they had said it from here before, but it certainly was worth repeating, all of their coworkers do an amazing job each and every day. That was not just from what they see. But he hears the same thing when he was out in the community. Whether it was someone who had lived here all their life, or if it was somebody that comes to him and says, you know what, we were looking for a place to go, and we started looking at Hickory. We started hearing about Hickory and all the wonderful things that were going on, and so they decided to come and be a part of Hickory. Again, it was not because of any one individual it was because of the collective bunch of coworkers that they have and the working relationships and partnerships that they have with the surrounding municipalities and other entities. They were extremely fortunate that they live here in Hickory and that they have the dedicated, loyal folks that they have, not only in the community, but in the City of Hickory as their coworkers. He could not tell them enough, and they had heard it from all the Council members, and they would continue to give them the praises and thanks for everything that gets accomplished all the time. He thanked staff again.

City Manager Warren Wood thanked Assistant City Manager Rick Beasley; he had not recognized him.

2. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 (Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) Appointed by City Council
 At-Large (Council Appoints) VACANT

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION
 (Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
 At-Large (Outside City but within HRP) (Council Appoints) VACANT

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
 (Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
 African American (Council Appoints) VACANT
 Caucasian (Council Appoints) VACANT
 Caucasian (Council Appoints) VACANT
 Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT
 Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT

Alderwoman Williams Nominated Christy Lohr Sapp as a Caucasian Representative on the Community Relations Council.

HICKORY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
 (Term Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms with Unlimited Appointments) (Appointed by City Council)
 Burke County Representative (Mayor Appoints with Recommendation from Burke County) VACANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
 (Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
 Historic Properties Owner (Council Appoints) VACANT

PUBLIC ART COMMISSION
 (Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
 Ward 1 (Wood Appoints) VACANT
 At-Large (Mayor Appoints) VACANT
 At-Large (Mayor Appoints) (Dana Andreasson Resigned 9-5-2024) VACANT

RECYCLING ADVISORY BOARD
 (Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
 Ward 4 (Freeman Appoints) VACANT
 Ward 5 (Zagaroli Appoints) VACANT
 Ward 6 (Patton Appoints) VACANT
 At-Large (Council Appoints) VACANT
 At-Large (Council Appoints) VACANT

YOUTH COUNCIL
 (Terms Expiring 6-30; 1-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)

Youth Council Applicant Review Committee Recommends the Following Appointments:

Homeschool VACANT

Alderwoman Williams moved seconded by Mayor Guess approval of the above nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Presentation of Petitions and Requests

XII. Matters Not on Agenda (requires majority vote of Council to consider)

XIII. General Comments by Members of Council, City Manager or City Attorney of a Non-Business Nature

Alderman Wood referenced something he saw on social media. Positive. That might be unprecedented, actually, but a positive comment he saw on social media from a young person. He did not know the lady's age. Her mom posted it, a comment that her daughter made about Hickory. They were out this past weekend in the evening on the City Walk and things like that. And the mom put on social media that her daughter, who was probably, ten or twelve maybe, he was guessing, said, "mom, it's like we're in Raleigh or something". Because of the activity and everything that was going on downtown. He took it as a positive. That was an observation of what kind of impact it was having, and young people were noticing.

Mayor Guess commented he was talking about the hustle and bustle.

Alderman Wood replied yes, he was impressed by that comment.

Mayor Guess commented and rightfully so. Although Hickory was not trying to be Raleigh or Charlotte or anybody else, we want to be Hickory.

City Manager Warren Wood commented that ironically, his brother and his wife were in from Greensboro this weekend for his 45th Class Reunion. And they went down the Riverwalk, the Aviation Walk, and the City Walk, and they were just blown away. They were like, we do not have anything like this in Greensboro. They said we have something special here.

Alderman Freeman commented being a Pastor and a City Councilman he was certainly used to hearing the blues. He wanted to encourage the community that the nationally renowned bluesman Mac Arnold and Plate Full O'Blues would be in town this coming Saturday on the Samuel William Davis Sr. Multipurpose Field starting at 4:00 p.m. Collectively, they could come out and hear the blues.

Alderman Wood inquired if he was on America's Got Talent.

Alderman Freeman did not know.

Alderman Wood thought he was if it was not mistaken.

Alderman Seaver commented that he had been here about every year.

Mayor Guess thanked the Elks Lodge for hosting their 911 remembrance ceremony, of course, on 9-11, and that happened to be the same day as the Farmers Market. Obviously the downtown was really congested with activities going on with the Farmers Market. They partnered with the folks from the Elks Lodge and moved the 911 remembrance ceremony to their front lawn. He certainly wanted to thank them for partnering with them on that remembrance ceremony and allowing them to use their front lawn for that. He commended the Fire Department and Police personnel. As always, they had a good remembrance ceremony, and they appreciated everybody's efforts and time spent related to that.

XIV. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk