

A Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hickory was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 7:00 p.m., with the following members present:

	Rudy Wright	
Vernon Tarlton	Aldermen	Hank Guess
Danny Seaver		David P. Zagaroli
		Jill Patton

A quorum was present.

Also present were: Interim City Manager Andrea Surratt, City Manager Rodney Miller, Deputy City Attorney Arnita Dula, City Attorney John W. Crone, III, Deputy City Clerk Cari Burns and City Clerk Debbie D. Miller

- I. Mayor Wright called the meeting to order. All Council members were present except for Alderman Lail.
- II. Invocation by Rev. Paul Christy, First United Methodist Church
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Special Presentations
 - A. Presentation by Community Groups Requesting Appropriations from the City Council during the Next Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2017.

The Council will not take action tonight. Action will be taken when the Council considers the City's annual budget in May or June. These presentations are made so Council Members can ask questions or make comments about the requests. Presenters will be allotted no more than five (5) minutes to make their presentations to Council.

Organization	Presentation By	Amount Requested
Catawba County Economic Development Corporation	Scott Millar	\$155,620
Friends of Hickory	Allison Holtzman	\$50,000
Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley	Mitzi Gellman	\$5,440
Hickory Downtown Development Association	Connie Kincaid	\$55,000
Hickory Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau	Mandy Pitts Hildebrand and Bruce Eckard	\$47,000
SALT Block Foundation	Kimberly George	\$100,000
United Arts Council of Catawba County	Bonita Ferretti	\$40,374
YMCA of Catawba Valley	Phil Dicasolo	\$9,000

Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, President Scott Millar, advised he had been coming before Hickory City Council since 1998. He had worked with City Council and City Staff and other people in the community to make good things happen during that period of time. He advised it had been a lot of fun during that time and they had acted as Council's staff, and for their staff, to try and make good things happen. Sometimes they happen to Hickory directly, as the Corning announcement in September which was a nice project, a great expansion project at McDonald Parkway location. Sometimes those are indirectly which was the Corning announcement made on February 20th which impacted Newton directly, but certainly the opportunity exists for those folks to live and reside in this wonderful city that he calls home and it is a great opportunity for Catawba County. They had done some great things over time such as Transportation Insight, Lenoir-Rhyne's Health Science Center, and Blue Bloodhound. He mentioned other indirect impacts such as the demolition of the former Regal building near Hickory High School which is going to provide an opportunity for new development to occur in the coming months and years out there. He referenced an item later in the agenda which Council would be taking into consideration, the acceptance of almost a \$700,000 grant to develop Park 1764. They had been working with the City to try and develop that as an opportunity for advanced manufacturing opportunities of no other park of its type in Western North Carolina. The receipt of that \$700,000 opportunity will jumpstart some of the great things that are going to happen within the City of Hickory as well. He mentioned other things such as US Conec's expansion on 25th Street. That project was probably one of the highest tech facilities in Catawba County, sort of sitting there quietly being not noticed by a lot of folks but doing some of the most high tech stuff in Catawba County. He mentioned the location of Minelli Enterprises which is an Italian group which had recently located in that same vicinity doing really neat handcrafted stuff here in Catawba County, which really gives this City its special character. He looks forward to working with Council. He requested a 2.4 percent increase over their budget of recent years. That budget request was \$155,620. He asked Council if they had any questions.

Mayor Wright asked if he had plenty of things in the hopper right now too.

Mr. Millar replied they sure do and there is some fun stuff out there on the horizon.

Alderman Seaver commented keep fishing and keep reeling them in.

Mr. Millar promised to do that. That was their responsibility for Council and they had done it for quite some time. Sometimes it is fun, so they are making that fun happen here.

Alderman Seaver commented he needed to let Council know when they needed to buy more bait.

Mr. Millar thanked Council.

Mayor Wright called the next presenter to the podium, Friends of Hickory, Allison Holtzman. He commented these were the folks who did the wonderful, and led the effort, for the great new park that is wonderful today, but is really going to be wonderful when it is an integral piece of the future City Walk.

Friends of Hickory, Allison Holtzman, accompanied by Adrian Holtzman, advised they first came before City Council about two to two and a half years ago to ask for the opportunity to make a gift to the City. They are crafting Hickory. They are trying to bring more bait to the table to draw people to Hickory. They are about crafting Hickory. Their vision is to make Hickory a place where people will visit and say how can I find a place to live and work there? She quoted a non-profit in Greenville, South Carolina, "it's a 30 year overnight transformation of Greenville County happened for relatively simple reasons. Visionary, often against the grain leadership with a basic belief that nothing is impossible and understanding that a community change happens if a community believes in itself." Greenville had something called Vision 2025. It was presented by the Chamber and commissioned and put out as a vision. A non-profit group said they need to take hold of this and help bring this vision to reality with the public and private partners to bring this to fruition. In regards to that a member of the Chamber of Commerce of Greenville said that someone needs to wake up every morning thinking about where Greenville is and where Greenville is going. She acknowledged their board members who were present in the meeting. They have a 16 member, very active board right now. They are very excited about the things that they are doing. They have a lot of vision plans, Hickory does. She referenced a stack of plans she had with her. She stated that Council was familiar with a lot of these. We had Inspiring Spaces, in tandem with Innovate Catawba; Hickory City Center; Hickory by Choice; and sidewalk, bike, greenway and trail masterplan. The Friends of Hickory want to help better communicate this vision to the community consistently and clearly. They want to facilitate the realization of this vision that they have. They want to make more of the plans in the vision happen. In order to take this to the next level, where they can better communicate and draw the private sector into this process, they need to fund Friends of Hickory. There needs to be someone waking up every morning thinking about where Hickory is going and that group is Friends of Hickory. They need the City to be behind this effort. They came to Council a couple of years ago and asked for nothing but their blessing to take action and invest in creating an inspiring space. They started with the plans that they saw. They saw the plans of Inspiring Spaces and asked to take over a piece of it. They built Hickory's Lowes Food City Park with 100 percent private funding. The result exceeds expectations. If you go down there on a warm day, even today, you will see increased life downtown, a new place for community, new relationships being formed, and new people coming to downtown. She referred to people from other segments of Hickory, and people from Lincolnton and Valdese which they had met there that came downtown to see this park. Even in the winter month's people are making the trip downtown and are venturing out from the playground to food and retail businesses downtown. This a very obvious economic development. What they brought to Council was a \$700,000 park fully privately funded, which was an obvious gift to the community and it also shows the community the value of great public spaces. Increasing the livability of a town makes a community believe in itself and entices others to come. Currently they are discussing other ideas for the future while they are working on monthly meetups to engage the community, and while they are actively developing a collaborative website. A lot of this comes from the visions that they have. She advised not a comprehensive list but things that have been discussed were: partnerships for an airshow festival; development of bike trails and helping with efforts that have already come to Council and also bike lanes connecting us to other neighboring cities and improving in town commutes; new public spaces in underserved communities; promotion of downtown living; plans to facilitate buried powerlines; lighting plans; monthly meetups; comprehensive and collaborative website development; new developments by the Riverwalk; partnerships with the Science Center and Art Museum; partnering for mountain bike trails; Good Samaritan tokens was an idea; and reach across America was an idea discussed. They want to take plans and visions that are in place and make them a reality with the help of this community. She requested \$50,000 to fund a development consultant for a year and to fund programming for the year. They were not asking for the City to put them on their annual budget or for them to put the City as part of their annual budget. She advised they were asking for seed money so they can strategically develop an official and clear action plan that will make the biggest impact on our City. They developed the park as a group of very hard working volunteers. The result showed their commitment to this effort but in order to do more they need to establish a well ran business model that can develop plans and budgets, and follow-up with connections and ideas and can also, during this year develop a

way to self-fund themselves. They are committed to that. In order to go into the community and ask for funding for future progress they need to have a good plan for how this business will be viable for the next ten years. They didn't ask for money for the park because they wanted to show the community and the City that they are capable of engaging the community to invest in itself, but now they are asking the City for money to spend a year establishing a long lasting permanent entity that will continue to give to the City and raise up new leaders. They want to take the visions that City Council has adopted as City leaders and make it into reality. They realize a lot is taking place with the bond but they plan to increase the impact of that money by engaging the community to take on new projects to further the bigger vision for Hickory.

Mayor Wright thanked them for what they had done and what they are going to do.

Mrs. Holtzman asked if Council had any questions.

Alderman Zagaroli asked when it would start.

Mrs. Holtzman advised it was ongoing. The next monthly meetup would be March 30th on biking. She advised it was really about leading discussions, these are not lecture series. These are discussion starters and drawing in the community to get responses from them. What they want to do is communicate, connect and activate. They want to communicate with each other, connect interested parties, and they want to activate them. In order to activate them they need someone whose job is to wake up every day and follow up and do and take action. That is what they want to do.

Alderman Seaver asked since it had been so warm lately, when the water would be turned on.

Mrs. Holtzman responded it is your park.

Mayor Wright interjected when are we going to turn on the water? He asked if Friends of Hickory was a membership organization.

Mrs. Holtzman replied no. As they started they accepted memberships as they did their 1023 they are a sponsor organization, so it is not officially a membership organization.

Mayor Wright commented so you don't have members, dues paying members.

Mr. Adrian Holtzman commented it is completely voluntary, it is donation based. People can get on their email list, technically numbers, they keep them informed but it is not really a membership.

Mrs. Holtzman advised they asked for a suggested donation of \$25 to be on an email list and to become part of the communication that is going on, but it not required.

Mayor Wright advised Cari Burns had been helping him with his emails. He noted that he had not been getting a lot of his emails that he used to get. He asked Mrs. Holtzman to send an email to his City email address so Mrs. Burns could get it to him. He would like to make a donation and be a contributor/supporter.

Mrs. Holtzman commented they would make sure they had the right email.

Alderman Tarlton wanted to be emailed as well.

Alderwoman Patton suggested to Mrs. Holtzman that on their website they should show who the board members are. She had tried to find that out.

Mrs. Holtzman advised that had changed.

Mr. Adrian Holtzman advised it had just changed over and they do have that listed.

Alderwoman Patton had looked for it previously and couldn't find it.

Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley, Mitzi Gellman advised she was asking for funding again this year for sewer and water taps. She advised she had been appearing in front of Council since 1996. She presented a PowerPoint presentation. She explained that the taps were in Northstone neighborhood when they purchased the property. She advised they were just asking for the capacity fees, which was why the request was only for \$5,500. She updated City Council on what was going on in Northstone, which is the neighborhood off of Falling Creek Road. They purchased the property for \$169,000 out of foreclosure. There were 22 lots the way it was platted, 18 of those they determined to be buildable. The remaining four lots will be used for open playground space. All of the houses are designed for low to moderate income and it is also a mixed income community. They are establishing market rate homes as well as Habitat homes. She showed an aerial photo

and pointed out the neighborhood, and an old furniture factory plant. They decided to make certain lots available for market rate. The houses are listing for around \$150,000 to \$190,000. A step up from a Habitat house in terms of the pricing, but well within the reach of a family who is just starting with their first home. What they are finding is people who are downsizing. She noted the lots which were reserved for Habitat homes. The reason why was they felt the marketability of those houses close to the industrial plant weren't quite as high. She showed the lots which were market rate lots. She noted the market lots which had been sold. One of the lots was sold to a young couple who were young professionals in the area. She advised there were two Habitat houses that had been sold and were occupied. She pointed out two lots which had homes under construction as well as lot number 11. The only thing keeping them from finishing up the Habitat houses is lack of funding right now. They are about two-thirds of the way through. A lot of the work they did was based on an architectural firm, TightLine Designs out of Raleigh who had done a lot of work with Habitat affiliates. Part of what they showed them, that they looked at and liked a lot, was a neighborhood in Raleigh called the Cook Street Development. She advised that with Northstone they were lucky because it already included curb and gutter. They had a planned community design. They upgraded some of the ways they normally build their houses. They went to LP smart siding which looks really great. They are using standard colors which you would see in a historic neighborhood for bungalow style houses. In the neighborhood they wanted to have a basic philosophy which was provide a sense of community. They centered everything on the front so you have that "eyes on the green" kind of thing. You have front porches instead of back decks so people have to interact with their neighbors which is coming out very nicely. All the homes are built up to Habitat standards which are above and beyond typical building codes and also General Contractors in our area. All of these homes are meeting what is referred to as the Department of Energy "Net Zero Ready Standards", which means if you put solar panels on those houses those families could live completely off the grid, which is pretty terrific. She showed photos of houses built with the design from TightLines. She advised the photo was a two bedroom home that an older couple had purchased and moved into the community to be near their family. She showed the Hawkins, another plan which they had built. She noted that some of the houses had different square footages. Typically the Habitat homes would be the smaller square footage. If they build it as a market rate it would go for the larger size. She pointed out the larger homes. She advised the home contained approximately 1,100 square feet, a Habitat home. She showed the Julia design, which had been their favorite plan because it contained a wraparound porch. This plan came in a three bedroom and four bedroom and varying sizes. She noted this house had been purchased by a family in September or October. She reiterated it was net zero ready which is a neat feature and not a lot of builders are doing that in North Carolina or in the country. They were awarded a certificate from the Department of Energy in recognition of their work towards that standard. She pointed out the playground area which they are looking for equipment to go into. She commented they have a plan but are looking for funding for that as well. She showed the market rate homes and advised that Becca Morris was the architect they had been working with throughout this entire project. Ms. Morris' theory was that Habitat homes and market rate homes should look the same until you are invited into the home. The outside is going to look the same. You are not going to be able to drive through and say this is a market rate home or this is a Habitat home but once you step inside you see things like granite countertops, slightly larger floor plans, maybe 150-300 square feet larger, recessed lighting, and a detached garage is the major distinguishing feature of the homes. She commented the reason they want to do mixed income overall is it makes for better community and a better neighborhood. It also provides for more of a boost to the lower income families who have a chance to see what other people are able to do. Statistics show us that typically in mixed income communities, lower income families will increase their annual earnings by around 16 percent. They are nine percent more likely to be employed because they see their neighbors being employed successfully and usually there is an increase in earnings as well, \$45,000 over the lifetime. If children are there they also benefit more because they have the opportunity to live in a mixed income neighborhood for a longer period of time. She showed a photo of the family which bought the first market rate house. He worked for Appalachian in one of the labs and she was a Physical Therapist. They are really plugged into the Habitat model. She discussed long term affordability. Things they do include concrete porches, brick porches, architectural shingles, the whole house is energy efficient so the homes maintain an affordability for the homeowners, not only for their house payment, but also for the cost of living in the home and affordable cost as well which is where the sewer and water tap donations come in. She requested \$5,440 for the capacity fees for the sewer and water taps which would be for five new homes which they are planning to build in the upcoming year. She encouraged Council to go out to the neighborhood and look around. They have a great social media presence where they can take a look at the houses as they are being built with some of their volunteers and staff as well.

Mayor Wright asked how many occupied houses did they have now.

Ms. Gellman responded in the City of Hickory, somewhere around 89. Total in the County around 120. They had completed around 180 but a lot of the homes recycle through with different families where they sell, or move up, or transition out. She goes by the number of

mortgages they are maintaining and right now it is around 110 to 120 mortgages that they actually have payments on. Because they have been around for 30 years now you get a lot of families that have paid their houses off, which is like a miracle.

Alderman Seaver commented you can it just takes time.

Ms. Gellman asked Richard Greathouse to the podium to update Council on where they are with the repairs.

Mr. Richard Greathouse discussed the Habitat repairs program which was a new thrust for Habitat. It is going to have a major impact across the country because where Habitat can reach six or eight families here in town, they have already reached 45 repairs since July 1, 2015, of those 31 have been in the City of Hickory. City Council had given them a kick-start through the grant through the CDBG money. Of the 31 that they had worked on in the City of Hickory 15 were completed, three in progress, four applications were approved and waiting for him to develop the scope of work, and nine applications in progress. They also had developed, due to their capital campaign, they now have available funds which they can expand into the County and into other communities. He advised Council would be hearing about their capital campaign. They had raised \$700,000 towards a goal of a million dollars. With the money they had in hand so far they had done 14 in Catawba County. He described a situation he had encountered in his 16 months of working for Habitat. Almost all of their clients are widows. They are in their 70's and 80's and live mostly on a fixed income. Most of them only on social security. Some have a modest pension that either was theirs or through their deceased husbands. They live in houses which were bought 30 or 40 years ago and have lived there for the most part and raised their families there. Due to strict income limitations they have no choice but to age in place. They can't go to a retirement center, they can't afford it. Most of them don't want to go there they want to live in their house. But when the roof leaks, the plumbing wears out, HVAC goes out or the house needs painting they simply do not have the resources to pay for this in one chunk. He gave an example of what he is seeing. There is a lady who fits this profile out on 5th Street NE, four or five blocks north of Hampton Heights Golf Course in a very middle class neighborhood. Her savings was wiped out some years ago when her husband died of a prolonged illness. Right now her only source of income is her social security check. A limb fell on her roof a couple of months ago and punched a hole in it. She heard about Habitat's program and called to see what they could do. When Mr. Greathouse went out to meet with her and to develop a scope of work to see what they could do he found that she had a hole in the roof, but when he inspected the inside of the house her 35 year old, 20 year rated shingles had been leaking all over the house and she had several places in her house that the ceiling was crumbling and about to fall in. Further inspection they discovered she had been living without central heat and air for the last three years. In the summer time she went without air conditioning and in the winter time she used a kerosene heater, which is probably one of the most expensive and unhealthy ways you can heat your house. They found out when they went under the house to do weatherization that her cast iron pipes to her kitchen sink had rusted out at some point in the past and she had been dumping her kitchen waste into her crawlspace for an undetermined time. It was a mess down there. Through a combination of the City funds with the CDBG money they used that to repair her roof and to pay the plumbing bill. They also have funding from Piedmont Natural Gas for gas customers that they used to replace and give her a new updated energy efficient heating and air conditioning unit. They used some Thrivent money that they had last year for some minor exterior repairs. He had been amazed at the need he was seeing out there. This was a classic example of what they are seeing. He had told a lot of people that Hickory, and our country, are faced with a hidden housing crisis of low income elderly people living in an aging housing stock. The goal of Habitat is to help these low income people to live in a dry, warm, safe environment. He thanked Council for the funding that they had provided for them. It was their kick starter. He looks forward to a continuing partnership in the future.

Alderman Seaver mentioned this was a dream of Charlie Dixon. He remembered talking to Mr. Dixon two or three years ago about the City going along with something like that. Alderman Seaver advised Mr. Dixon, wholeheartedly, yes. He was glad to hear things were going smooth and they were in charge of it. He commented they do great work and he is proud of it.

Mr. Greathouse referring to Mr. Dixon was instrumental in getting the repair program going.

Mayor Wright thought that it was wonderful. One thing we have in Hickory, compared to some places like DC, they have a lot of young people buying up the old housing stock investing large amounts of money in it. Frankly because of where we are in terms of our demographics we don't have those young people buying up that old stock and redoing it. He stated God bless you all for what you are doing it is needed. He hoped they didn't have a single taxpayer in Hickory that resents a little bit of the money that the City had given to it.

Hickory Downtown Development Association, Connie Kincaid presented a PowerPoint presentation. She thanked Council for the continued partnership. She commented their

mission statement was very simple they want downtown Hickory to be a destination that draws visitors and customers to a commercial environment where they want to stay, have a great experience, and return another day. Every five years the Hickory Downtown Development Association holds a Community Vision Forum with citizens, property owners, business owners, and local government in order to craft a vision statement that reflects the community's shared vision for the future of downtown. The Board of Directors then creates a work plan with strategically focused projects to accomplish the goals in the community's vision. She invited City Council, to the third Community Vision Forum to be held on April 3, 2017. It would be facilitated by the North Carolina Department of Commerce Main Street Center. Main Street is economic development and they administer the Main Street program for Hickory. Their work plan capitalizes on our economic drivers. Last year they collaborated with their partners to install various amenities throughout downtown, the Catawba County Heritage Alliance donated a bicycle repair station, which the cyclist love. It was installed on Union Square. The electric vehicle charging station was installed. They also purchased lighting for the trees so they could light the sidewalks along 2nd Street so that it would be safer for people to visit those downtown businesses. They continue to work with property owners on the improvements to their buildings and the visual aspects of downtown. They worked with the City to amend the parking ordinance to reduce confusion regarding the various time limitations of the parking areas. Now the phrase is "if it is not three, it is free". Everybody loves it, it makes sense to the business owners and the customers. They are also currently working with City staff to keep downtown stakeholders informed of the construction schedule for the Trade Alley project, which is coming along fabulously. They hosted several festivals this past year which brought a very diverse group of people to our downtown. Their events cumulatively generated more than \$7.2 million dollars into our local economy. They are a volunteer organization. They coordinated 5,051 volunteer hours last year. During 2016 the downtown district experience 13 new business openings, while five closed, for a net gain of eight new businesses. The existing businesses are expanding with additional personal, equipment, and increased inventory. More than \$13.1 million dollars in private investment occurred in the downtown district. They are also partnering with CVCC's Small Business Center to offer seminars in the downtown location to make it more convenient for business owners to take advantage of continuing education opportunities. This program is continuing through this year as well. Their main focus is to have a strong impact on their customer. The impact does not drive from the individual programs, or promotions, but rather from the people they attract to downtown on a daily basis. On behalf of the Board of Directors and general membership of the Hickory Downtown Development Association she requested an annual allocation of \$55,000 for fiscal year 2017-2018. They value their partnership and appreciated Council's consideration. She advised she would be happy to answer any questions Council might have.

Hickory Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau, Bruce Eckard, Chairman of the Hickory/Conover Tourism Development Authority, addressed Council regarding the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) side of the organization. He thanked Council for their partnership. He advised he was asking for more money. He requested additional funds for the CVB because they are marketing the Hickory Metro as a place to hold conventions, to visit and to live. They are spending more money to enhance their presence and they believe it is working. He advised that Mandy Pitts Hildebrand had also been approached by several community leaders to do more marketing and to try and connect the dots between the organizations to promote with one voice. They can do that at the Convention Visitors Center but they need additional funds from their partners to cover a new position to enhance the marketing. That would assist Hickory and other organizations including the EDC. He advised Council would have more details in the formal request and they were also requesting more funds from the County and the City of Conover. He commented that Mandy Pitts Hildebrand had been with them a little over a year, it was running smoothly, remarkably well. Event revenue is up year over year. Occupancy tax is up year over year. They are doing well. A lot of things have been done, the parking deck, which they have not closed that project out yet, but he thinks they are close. As soon as they do that the payments to the City of Hickory will come down. They had done a lot of things over there, some new carpet, new lighting, and painting. He suggested Council go by and see what was going on. He asked Mandy Pitts Hildebrand to the podium to continue the presentation.

Mandy Pitts Hildebrand commented she loved this place, she is home, and where she spent more than 16 years, it was great to be here tonight. She updated Council on what had happened since last year at this time. She presented a PowerPoint presentation. She reiterated the money they were requesting was for the CVB end. She advised it was really expensive to keep up that building and to have staff. She mentioned that Alderman Tarlton had served on that board for several years and knew about the expense. She emphasized the CVB portion. She commented it is really fun to promote Hickory, especially listening to everyone talking about their passion and so many of us wake up every morning thinking about this great community and how to make it better. They have tried to enhance their marketing with their meeting space. She showed new ads that they had. Some of the funds are to go to some of these events where they meet with meeting planners. Their niche is still government, sports groups, and different religious groups. They want to come

to their facility and spend time in our community. She pointed out in one of the photos Sarah Davis, Director of Sales, who was present. Her picture was in Business North Carolina in the January edition in which they spotlighted a tradeshow she went to and they talked about Hickory was lively. She felt they pulled in some new conventions from that. She advised another thing that was really important was sports marketing. She thanked Mack McLeod for helping them put together an ad page. They were the only ones in Western North Carolina that are part of this big sports magazine. She advised Hickory was spotlighted as a place to have your next destination and they were grateful for their partnership with the City of Hickory and all of the fields and different places we have to spotlight. She advised this fiscal year they have approximately 150 events, 15 of them are brand new, new conventions, people have never been here, and they are already wanting to sign the next contract to come back in a couple of years when it is time to come west. That is exciting, that is a really big deal. Right now they have approximately ten pending contracts ready to be signed, that is going to bring ten new groups here that have never been here before. They are excited to tell Council about that when that comes to fruition. She said she thinks that one of the things that people really like about our community is we are very genuine. They are not just one extra group coming. She wasn't saying anything about the big cities, they have great places, but we have this niche for when people come here they feel comfortable they are at home. They are excited in 2018 because the League of Municipalities is coming back and four weeks before the League is here the North Carolina County Commissioners will be here. It will be fun to have all of the elected officials in the State of North Carolina right here in our backyard. She knew Council would be a part of that as well. She discussed the visitor's side, they had so much fun this year. Tourism Week is a National Tourism Week. She thanked Council for the proclamation, and hopefully they would issue another one this year, but it is just a week long. In their area they have to celebrate tourism 31 days in May, it can't just be a week. They have got so much to do. Council will hear from the Arts Council and other folks as well, and downtown activities, and things that the City of Hickory as done, they are going to spotlight that. She advised Council would see they are connecting a lot. She pointed out on a photo, Elizabeth Hudson, the editor of Our State Magazine. She shared a story that Elizabeth Hudson had stumbled across Hickory Well Crafted because she was looking for some stories. Our State Magazine will be featuring some generation manufacturers, three, four, and five generations. She commented we have that in our community. It was an easy resource to go to Hickory Well Crafted, under business and see all of the groups that had been recognized in the past. A lot of them are family and present at this meeting and had been a part of that. She stated that was exciting and they are getting attraction there, that is still a really big magazine. She showed other collaborative pieces which they had been in. She showed a photo of their intern Sarah from Lenoir-Rhyne. She showed a map and explained that they couldn't get everyone to sign a log when they come into the visitor's center, but the log they took for calendar year 2016 they had more than 35 different states which actually signed their name. She referenced former City Manager Mick Berry and commented you know he had to have family from Nevada and Utah come by sometime during the year. A lot of them are either driving through or stopping and they are here to buy furniture. It happens every week. Craftsmanship is still important in a lot of things that we do. They also want to know where they can eat, or get a drink, or experience arts. They can give them that information all day long. She showed a calendar which is connected with State of North Carolina. For example she could be staying in Asheville and go to their visitor's site and say she wants to go to live music within 75 miles and they would have anything that would be happening here with one of the arts organizations, the Sails, the Crossing, or Lenoir-Rhyne. She advised in 2015 every single number about tourism went up. She advised this was the State of North Carolina, (EDPNC) Economic Development Partnership North Carolina, which Scott Millar is a part of too. Domestic spending according to the State of North Carolina was up in Catawba County approximately 4.5 percent, travel and tourism employees was up approximately five percent and travel and tourism payroll was up approximately eight percent, and tax receipts was up approximately two million dollars. Tourism is making a big difference in our community and it is a joy to work with so many people who believe in it. They have been, like Chairman Eckard mentioned, several leaders had asked how they can connect the dots. They have a calendar here, and a calendar there, and they really want to promote this message and stay on the same target. Talking with the Board and their Executive Board they said they can take it on as long as they get partnerships from the partners they currently have to promote the area. Just to go up a notch. Everyone is spread thin but it is really important to get the word out.

Mayor Wright commented keep up the good work.

Mrs. Hildebrand thanked Council.

Alderman Tarlton thanked Mrs. Hildebrand.

Alderman Seaver commented she had talked about the visitors and where they come from, he asked how they found out about all of those, just if they come into the office.

Mrs. Hildebrand advised they come in, these are the folks that are actually stopping off of the highway and they are asking where they can go eat lunch, dinner, spend the night, what they can do. Terri von Drehle who is in the visitors center, or Sarah, or herself would ask them to sign the log because they want to hear about them and why they are here. She commented it is really interesting.

Alderman Seaver commented they could assume that there are other folks that come through that you don't even know about.

Mrs. Hildebrand stated there is a lot more folks. Some people are running in real quick and running out, but they know where they are going. Those are just the people they had captured. She joked that she had learned about measuring while at the City of Hickory, so she felt they needed to measure these things, so they can see where they are next year.

Mayor Wright commented those of us who live and work here and drive through here all of the time don't notice this, but do we have good information signage.

Mrs. Hildebrand responded we do. We have good information.

Alderman Seaver commented they are in appropriate places.

Mayor Wright commented that is how people are finding you, right.

Mrs. Hildebrand replied that is exactly right.

Mayor Wright commented maybe a few online.

Mrs. Hildebrand advised the visitors that walk in come in off the road.

SALT Block Foundation, President Kimberly George thanked Council for their time and efforts on behalf of the community. As many people had already mentioned tonight it takes all of us working together to build this community and make it a better place to live and also make it attractive to new people. The mission of the SALT Block Foundation is to pay for the costs of the physical facilities for the non-governmental organizations that live at the SALT Block. Those included the Catawba Science Center, Hickory Museum of Art, the Western Piedmont Symphony, the Hickory Choral Society, and the United Arts Council. Many of their arts organizations that are providing programs and events to attract people to our community live on the Block. They help maintain their buildings and provide the physical facilities. There are three buildings that they maintain. The Arts and Science Center, the Aquarium and Planetarium building, and the West Wing. It is an expensive proposition, all those buildings require constant updating and maintenance. They get a lot of use and the Arts and Science Center especially is a historic building which also requires additional maintenance due to its age. However, this investment does pay dividends. These SALT Block organizations are major economic and cultural assets to the community. Collectively they serve more than 300,000 people per year including most students in the area from public and private schools as well as home school students. When you include visitors to the Patrick Beaver Memorial Library, the entire block collectively serves over a half of a million people every year. The SALT Block is an important asset which helps attract businesses and individuals to our community. Since the opening of the Arts and Science Center in 1986, the City has been a wonderful partner. The City continues to help them in many ways including providing security, ground maintenance and capital replacement funds for the SALT Block buildings. The County has also been a wonderful partner for over the past 30 years providing much needed annual operating funds for the foundation. The SALT Block is fortunate to have the support of some very generous citizens and businesses as well. Over the years they have contributed a majority of the needed funding. The tenants also contribute to the ongoing expenses and upkeep. They continue to diligently raise funds from the private sector. Again this is a partnership, they help them support the SALT Block. This takes the form of annual giving, as well as estate giving. In recent years they also started a more social group called the Blockheads to attract some younger donors and to start building that relationship so that they will think of the SALT Block as they fundraise in the future. Because of the public/private partnership between the City, the County and the private donors, the SALT Block Foundation has the necessary funds to keep the lights and heat on, keep the building safe, and attractive and in good repair. They had also been able to make some improvements which was making the Block Wi-Fi accessible for educational programs as well as events and programs. People need that access. They took on a major cabling project to provide that infrastructure for Wi-Fi access. Ongoing support from the City, and matching support from Catawba County, is vital to insure that the SALT Block Foundation and its resident organizations remain strong in the near and long term. In the upcoming year they will have to replace some major HVAC units which is very common for the number of buildings which they have to maintain. They have to keep them heated and cooled. They also have plans to improve the accessibility around the block. They want to add some more sidewalks, ramps, as well as some stairs to make it easier to get up to all of the different buildings around the Block for everyone. The bottom line is that the City's investment in the

SALT Block is paying off. The capital replacement funds are enabling them to keep the three buildings on the SALT Block in good shape and make some improvements. It is an ongoing process but one they believe will keep the SALT Block strong and attractive for hundreds of thousands of our citizens each year as well as helping to attract new citizens. She thanked Council for their important ongoing support and respectfully requested their continued support during the coming year at the same rate of \$100,000. She asked Council if they had any questions.

United Arts Council of Catawba County, President Bonita Ferretti thanked Council for their past support. The City had been supporting their organization since 1984 and she asked Council for their continued support. She commented we have all seen the value of the partnership in the past and they hope that continues into the future. They believe that one of the strengths of community, and one of the key parts to recruiting new businesses to our community and younger members is the strength of our cultural organizations. She mentioned some of those: Hickory Museum of Art, Catawba Science Center and its Planetarium and Aquarium, the Hickory Community Theatre, Western Piedmont Symphony, Hickory Choral Society, Hickory Landmark Society, and the Hickory History Center. She advised those are just a few of the organizations they help to fund, that the City's dollars help them fund. They are a little different than the other organizations. They don't just take the City's money and spend it, they sub-grant it back out. All of that money gets matched. She explained the City gives them a dollar, they get that matched from other sources, State and local, so now they have two dollars. When they sub-grant that money out they require those organizations to match those dollars. So the City's one dollar turned into four dollars at a very minimum. She advised she was not including the money people spend when they come to a theatre show and go out to dinner, or they come to visit the art museum and stop and do some shopping, or buy gas, or those types of things. At a very minimum the City's one dollar turns into four. Last year they participated in a national survey. That was ran through Americans for the Arts. They collected over 800 surveys from their friends and neighbors. They don't have the results back this year, but next year they would come to Council with some concrete numbers that show what impact the arts have in our community in a very concrete way through this survey that they participated in. In 2015-2016 their operating and individual grants that they granted out totaled \$276,417. This year they anticipate that to be even higher. They didn't have a number on that yet. She asked for Council's continued support in the amount of one dollar per capita, which was \$40,374. She thanked Council for their past support and reminded them that their money does not only continue to fund organizations but to make a richer tapestry of a community. She thanked Council.

YMCA of Catawba Valley, Phil Dicasolo asked City Council for help to upgrade their two swimming pools. The YMCA had been a partner with the City since 2009 offering summer swimming and instructional lessons to residents in the City. He believed it made the "Y" an integral part of the fabric of what makes Hickory great. Through the C.L. Miller Teen Center and the Foundation Center here in Hickory they engage children and families in a variety of activities. During the past 12 months the "Y" had taught 1,132 children in their instructional program, 722 of those children had come through the City's Parks and Recreation partnership that the YMCA has with the City. Last summer the outdoor pool, which is also part of the partnership, had a little over 100,000 people visit the pool. He advised they were asking the City of Hickory to consider funding two variable speed frequency drive motors. Which will increase the efficiency of their pools and help them save energy and make them more efficient and reduce their costs. The money they save can then be used for more instruction and more swimming activities. He thanked Council for their consideration for their request and asked for questions.

Mayor Wright commented very impressed. He questioned the 722 figure.

Mr. Dicasolo responded 722 in the past 12 months and that had been going on since 2009 when the City was working to figure out what they were doing about outdoor swimming.

Mayor Wright thanked all of the presenters and the attention that everyone showed. He assured everyone that these requests would be carefully considered as Council works through their budget.

V. Persons Requesting to Be Heard

- A. Mr. Robert Russell, advised he worked with Billy Sudderth who is now deceased. He started a movement in this County and especially in the Hickory Area. He wanted to implement the Multicultural Resource Center. That was his dream for Hickory and his community. Mr. Sudderth submitted several proposals to City Council and also to Catawba County. Mr. Russell asked the status of Mr. Sudderth's proposal and if that was going to be looked at and particularly, possibly, implemented. He advised he was a former resident of Asheville, North Carolina. He came here in 1972. Things had changed since 1972 in the Hickory area and especially in the Ridgeview Community where he worked for 30 some years as a probation officer. Through his travels he had seen a lot of changes, especially in that particular area where Mr. Sudderth was trying to get a Multipurpose Resource

Center. He sees a lot of infestation, unsanitary conditions, trees that are overlapping powerlines. There is a lot that needs to be done. As a property owner in the Hickory area, he purchased property, he had seen trash all over Hickory. This causes collateral damage to downtown. When you have that type of debris, and chaos in the Hickory area, especially in Ridgeview, that overlaps into downtown. When you have a Downtown Development Corporation and Association trying to prep Hickory into a better community, and drawing people from outside, this does not do well for Hickory and its image, which is an All-American City. We hope that it will continue to be an All-American City. He advised he was here mainly for Billy Sudderth on his behalf even though he is no longer with us. He referenced Black History month, which we are in, there are people who pass through history and there are people who make history. Mr. Sudderth was one of those persons who make history, and he did a lot throughout this County in particular. When you look at the contributions that African-Americans have made, you can just pull to the stoplight. Garrett Morgan, when you see the stoplight, when you go to the red light, Garrett Morgan helped to invent that. He was an African-American. The telegram, there was a person who helped contribute to that. There are things that young African-Americans can do in the community if they have the resources pumped into that community, in particular Ridgeview, but not just particularly Ridgeview but everybody in the Hickory area, Catawba County can benefit from some development because a community development plan can expand economic development. He advised he had a program. Having worked with the criminal justice system called Striving Incorporated. That program works with intervention. There is a huge problem with opioids in this community. Several weeks ago three young men passed away. It had not been publicized but there is an epidemic as far as opioids in this County and especially in this City as well. His program will address those kinds of issues, job development. We need to create more jobs for young people. Give them more training. More mental health issues are coming on board in this area. We see pockets of poverty all over. As a Meals on Wheels person, he delivers Meals on Wheels, he had seen more poverty than he had ever witnessed since he had been in this area. He commented that was something that has to be addressed. If this program that Mr. Sudderth wanted, the Multipurpose Center, if it was placed somewhere close to CCM, where all of that land is available, that could be used for a Multipurpose Resource Center and of course if the program that he has could be funded, perhaps \$10,000, \$15,000, \$20,000, to jumpstart the program, they could get people to go into the Ridgeview community where there is poverty, drugs, debris, and cleanup that area with the trash that is flowing all over the place. Roll the stone away. People just don't have an ideal how damaging that does to the property. His property value had lost \$11,000. The taxes had gone up but the property value had gone down. That was primary because of lack of attention to the needs in that particular area. He commented he would be glad to answer Council's questions.

Mayor Wright commented Council would consider those two recommendations that he was making as they work through the budget cycle. He advised typically the powerlines and the trees are taken care of by Duke Energy, more often Council hears they are cutting the trees back too much. Mayor Wright advised they might need to take a look at that.

Mr. Russell advised the debris is all over the place.

Mayor Wright commented Mr. Russell had mentioned infestation. He wanted Council to look at that.

Mr. Russell commented you have infestation, rodent infestation. It is getting closer to spring now and you will probably have serpents coming downtown. He was sure there would be snakes and so forth. He had seen groundhogs, raccoons, you name it, all in this particular area. There is a lot to be addressed as far as rodent control. He knew that the person that goes into areas and takes out the animals, Animal Control, some of the things they don't do, but then there are other things they do take notice to. There are a lot of things. They don't have a litter bug sign. This is something all over Hickory. If you go to Belk's Department store you see litter all in the parking lot. If you go anywhere around Hickory folks throw trash out of their cars. They do not care. He walks around Hickory. He walks all over Hickory, and Catawba County and this is a trend that is going on. We need to address that some way or another. He thinks his program, and what Mr. Sudderth wanted to address, all of these things will be taken into consideration.

Mayor Wright thanked Mr. Russell. He asked if anyone else wished to be heard. No one else appeared.

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of February 7, 2017

Alderman Tarlton moved, seconded by Alderwoman Patton that the minutes of February 7, 2017 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Wright announced that the motion was made by Alderman Tarlton seconded by Alderwoman Patton and 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.

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

Mayor Wright announced that the motion was made by Alderwoman Patton seconded by Alderman Seaver and the motion carried unanimously

- A. Acceptance of the Bid and Award of the Contract to Kelly-Creswell, Inc. in the Amount of \$144,380 for the Purchase of a Kelly-Creswell Model MV3-AL Truck Mounted Striper (Paint Truck). (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
 - B. Approval of a Community Appearance Grant for Non-Residential Property Owned by The Block 108, LLC Located at 108 South Center Street in the Amount of \$5,000. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
 - C. Approval of a Community Appearance Grant for Non-Residential Property Owned by Rahe Bryce, LLC Located at 117 Government Avenue SW in the Amount of \$5,000. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
 - D. Approval of a Landscape Incentive Grant for Non-Residential Property Owned by The Block 108, LLC Located at 108 South Center Street in the Amount of \$2,500. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
 - E. Approval of a Landscape Incentive Grant for Non-Residential Property Owned by Century Furniture Located at 401 11th Street NW in the Amount of \$2,329. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
 - F. Approval of the 2017 Loan Agreement with the National Museum of the United States Air Force under their Static Display Program of Loan of Aircraft to the City of Hickory. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
 - G. Acceptance and Award of the Agreement with Willis Engineers, Inc., in the Amount of \$65,000 for Evaluation and Design of the Lenoir-Rhyne University Area Waterline Improvements Project. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
 - H. Budget Revision Number 16. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
 - I. Acceptance of a Right-of-Way Dedication Non-Warranty Deed from OHM Holdings, L.L.C. (Transportation Insight) to the City of Hickory. (First Reading Vote: Unanimous)
- VIII. Consent Agenda: All items below are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. 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.

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

Mayor Wright announced that the motion was made by Alderwoman Patton seconded by Alderman Guess and the motion carried unanimously.

- A. Approved a Special Events Activities Application, Hickory Hops, Connie Kincaid, Executive Director for Hickory Downtown Development Association, Government Avenue and 2nd Street SW. Set-up Begins April 21, 2017 at 7:00 a.m. and Clean-up will end April 22, 2017 at 11:00 p.m. Event time 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on April 22, 2017.
- B. Approved the Citizens' Advisory Committee Recommendations for Assistance through the City of Hickory's Housing Programs.

The following request was considered by the Citizens' Advisory Committee at their regular meeting on February 2, 2017.

The following applicant is being recommended for approval for assistance under the City of Hickory's 2016 Urgent Repair Program. This program provides qualified low income citizens with assistance for emergency-related repairs not to exceed \$8,000.

- Shelley Tribble, 730 9th Avenue Drive SE, Hickory

The Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends approval of the aforementioned request for assistance through the City of Hickory's housing assistance programs.

- C. Approved on First Reading Amending the Parking Ordinance for the Farmer's Market.

The Traffic Division analyzed and recommends Council's approval to amend the Traffic Ordinance by prohibiting parking in the Union Square lot to facilitate the Farmers Market. Parking will be prohibited in the spaces south of Union Square along the north side of the parking lot road connecting the east and west parking lots as well as along the west parking lot to incorporate the first three angled parking spaces. Parking will be prohibited on Wednesdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. from April 15, 2017 through November 25, 2017 (excluding Saturday, October 14, 2017 which is Oktoberfest weekend, and Saturday, November 11, 2017 which is Shuck-n-Peel). Towing will be enforced. Parking Ordinance Number 16-08 will become null and void. Staff recommends approval of a new parking ordinance reflecting the change.

ORDINANCE NO. 17-06
AN ORDINANCE OF THE HICKORY CITY COUNCIL
AMENDING THE TRAFFIC ORDINANCE AUTHORIZED IN THE
HICKORY CODE OF ORDINANCES – ARTICLE III, SECTION 18-81

WHEREAS, Article III of the City of Hickory Code of Ordinances be and is hereby amended through the modification of the official maps authorized therein as follows, to wit:

Amend the Traffic Ordinance by prohibiting parking in the Union Square lot to facilitate The Farmers Market. Parking will be prohibited in the spaces south of Union Square along the north side of the parking lot road connecting the east and west parking lots as well as along the west parking lot to incorporate the first three angled parking spaces. Parking will be prohibited on Wednesdays from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM and on Saturdays from 6:00 AM until 2:00 PM during the Farmers Market season from April 15, 2017 through November 25, 2017. Towing will be enforced. Parking Ordinance #16-08 will become null and void.

All ordinances or provisions of the Hickory City Code of Ordinances which are not in conformance with the provisions of the Amendment occurring herein are repealed as of the effective date of this Ordinance.

This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

- D. Approved on First Reading the Hickory International Council's Recommendations for Grant Funding.

As part of Hickory International Council's (HIC) work plan and annual budget process, the Hickory International Council receives funds to disperse during the fiscal year. The HIC offers grants to community organizations that provide programs supportive of the goals, purposes, and projects of the HIC. Grants may be awarded to individuals, non-profit organizations, or community organizations. Grants may be requested at any amount up to a maximum of \$500 and may be given as either "seed money" or for operational costs of a program or project. At least one grant will be awarded each year to individuals or organizations that operate within the City of Hickory. Other grants can be awarded to individuals or organizations that operate anywhere within Catawba County. If there are no grant applications from the City of Hickory, grants can be awarded to applicants from Catawba County. Grant proposals must indicate how the project or program supports the goals, purposes and mission of the Hickory International Council. For the FY 2017 grant cycle, the HIC received a number of grant applications and after review, followed by a member vote at the January 19th HIC monthly meeting. The grant recipients selected were: Lenoir-Rhyne University Startup Academy: The Startup Academy or La Academia de Emprendimiento de Negocios - \$250; Leaderes Comunidad: Leaderes Comunidad of North Carolina Citizenship Preparation Educational Program - \$500; and Hickory Crawdads: Hispanic Heritage Night - \$500. The HIC recommends approval of these three grants totaling \$1,250. Funds are available in the HIC budget for the recommended grant approvals.

- E. Approved Applying for a Federal Historic Preservation Fund Pass-Through Grant Administered through the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.

The Hickory Historic Preservation Commission requests permission to apply for a Federal Historic Preservation Fund Pass-through Grant, administered through the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), to expand the Oakwood National Register Historic District. As a Certified Local Government, the City of Hickory and nonprofits within the City are eligible to apply for grants from the State of North Carolina to undertake a variety of different projects to advance historic preservation. In October 2015, a survey of historic properties was completed by a consultant on behalf of the Hickory Historic Preservation Commission. As part of the survey, the consultant identified three areas that appeared to meet the criteria to garner a successful nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. These three areas included an expansion of the existing Oakwood district, a new Hillcrest district, and a new Timberlane Terrace district. These findings were added

to the SHPO's study list, which acts as a preliminary review for potential National Register listings. In order to move forward with these potential nominations, additional research and a nomination report must be completed. This grant would help provide the funds to hire a qualified consultant to complete the nomination report for the expansion of the Oakwood National Register Historic District and update the documentation of the existing properties in the district as well. In January 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission instructed staff to move forward with efforts to apply for the grant. The anticipated cost of the project is \$16,000. If the grant was awarded for that amount, the City's match would be \$6,400 (40%). These funds would be from next fiscal year's General Fund. As part of the application, community support is a necessity. Letters were mailed to all property owners within the existing and potential Oakwood district and a community meeting was held on February 2nd at City Hall to address questions and concerns. Feedback from the letter and meeting has been positive. Staff recommends City Council authorize the Commission and staff to apply for the State grant.

- F. Approved on First Reading a Community Appearance Grant for Non-Residential Property Owned by The Block 108, LLC Located at 26 1st Avenue SE in the Amount of \$5,000.

City Council created the Community Appearance Grant program in 1999 to provide economic incentives for property owners to improve the general appearance of properties located within the City's designated Urban Revitalization Area. The Community Appearance Commission reviews applications for the grant program and forwards a recommendation of approval or denial to City Council. The grants are designed as a reimbursement grant in which the City of Hickory will match the applicant on a 50/50 basis. The maximum grant amount from the City of Hickory is \$5,000. The grant proposal requested involves the installation of new windows, and painting of the building's exterior. The applicant provided two bids for the improvements, which total \$19,600 and \$20,100. The request would qualify for a \$5,000 grant. The current tax value of the property is \$176,000. The value of the grant represents approximately 2.8 percent of the property's tax value. The application was reviewed by the Community Appearance Commission at its January 9, 2017 special called meeting. The Community Appearance Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to recommend funding of the grant application in the amount of \$5,000.

- G. Approved on First Reading a Landscape Incentive Grant for Non-Residential Property Owned by The Block 108, LLC Located at 26 1st Avenue SE in the Amount of \$2,500.

City Council created the Landscape Incentive Grant program in 1999 to provide economic incentives for property owners to improve the general appearance of properties located within the City. The Community Appearance Commission reviews applications for the grant program and forwards a recommendation of approval or denial to City Council. The grants are designed as a reimbursement grant in which the City of Hickory will match the applicant on a 50/50 basis. The maximum grant amount from the City of Hickory is \$2,500. The applicant's proposal involves the installation of planting materials adjacent to the existing commercial building. The applicant provided two bids for the work listed which total \$7,100 and \$7,400. The request would qualify for a \$2,500 grant. The current tax value of the property is \$176,000. The value of the grant represents approximately 1.4 percent of the property's tax value. The application was reviewed by the Community Appearance Commission at its January 9, 2017 special called meeting. The Community Appearance Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to recommend funding of the grant application in the amount of \$2,500.

- H. Approved on First Reading Acceptance and Award of the Proposal by Freese and Nichols, Inc. for the West Hickory Elevated Tank and Distribution System Project and Completion of the City's Distribution System Model in the Amount of \$71,220.

The West Hickory Water Tank is a one million gallon elevated water storage tank that serves an active and demand driven portion of the Hickory distribution system. The reason for this evaluation is to determine how best to optimize operation of this storage tank and the surrounding distribution system to ensure acceptable water quantity and quality for the tributary area. This project is intended to evaluate the water distribution infrastructure in this area to maximize the available water in the "West Hickory Water Tank" to improve water quality and ensure optimal effective storage. This area has traditionally experienced low water volumes during high flow events and this project will correct that by creating access to a one million gallon water tank in close proximity. This project will further develop a citywide water model so that the system can be evaluated for other areas that may be experiencing issues and suitability for future customers. Public Utilities staff developed and disseminated a Request for Qualifications package and advertised on the City's website. Four engineering firms responded to the solicitation and two firms were interviewed. The responding firms were: Willis Engineers, Inc.; McGill Associates, Asheville, NC; Freese and Nichols Inc.; and McKim & Creed Engineering. Freese and Nichols, Inc. has been selected as the best qualified firm with vast past experience in modelling and availability. The funds for this project are budgeted in the Public Utilities Capital Budget for FY 16-17. Staff recommends Council's acceptance and award of the proposal by Freese and Nichols, Inc. for the West Hickory Elevated Tank and Distribution

System Project and completion of the City's distribution system model in the amount of \$71,220.

- I. Approved on First Reading Acceptance and Award of the Professional Services Agreement with Hulsey McCormick & Wallace in the Amount of \$91,000 for Completion of the Sodium Hypochlorite Generation Replacement Project.

The City of Hickory Public Utilities Division owns and operates one 32 MGD Water Treatment Facility that was last upgraded in 1992. In 2002, Public Utilities made the decision to remove the one ton chlorine gas cylinder feed system for disinfection and replace with a sodium hypochlorite generation system. These type systems are safer for the coworkers and make a less hazardous atmosphere for the neighboring area. The current system was the first to be installed in North Carolina and has worked well for the facility. In recent years, Public Utilities has spent a substantial amount of resources on maintenance and replacement. Staff has reviewed options and made comparisons for more extensive repairs versus replacement and feel that it is time to replace the system with newer technology. Public Utilities Division staff developed and distributed a Request for Qualifications for development and completion of plans for the Sodium Hypochlorite Replacement System. Request for Qualifications were advertised for this plan on the City's website and qualifications were received on December 13, 2016. One engineering firm responded to the request, Hulsey McCormick & Wallace. Staff reviewed the qualifications package from the firm and has determined that the firm was responsive to the required elements of the RFQ. Hulsey McCormick & Wallace has been selected as the firm to complete this essential project. They were selected based on previous experience with completion of Hypochlorite Generation Systems, project scope and depth of knowledge in the required discipline. This project is included in the FY 16-17 Capital Budget. Staff recommends Council's acceptance and award of this Professional Services Agreement with Hulsey McCormick & Wallace in the amount of \$91,000.

- J. Approved on First Reading Budget Revision Number 18.

ORDINANCE NO. 17-07
BUDGET REVISION NO. 18

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, 2017 and for the duration of the Project Ordinance noted herein.

SECTION 1. To amend the General Fund within the FY 2016-17 Budget Ordinance, the expenditures shall be changed as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Public Safety	439	-
TOTAL	439	-

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

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Miscellaneous Revenues	439	-
TOTAL	439	-

SECTION 2. To amend the Business Park 1764 Capital Project Ordinance (Project #B1B001), the expenditures shall be changed as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
General Capital Projects	671,920	-
TOTAL	671,920	-

To provide funding for the above, the Capital Project fund revenues will be budgeted as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Restricted Intergovernmental Revenue	671,920	-
TOTAL	671,920	-

SECTION 3. 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 on First Reading Consideration of a Vacant Building Revitalization Grant Performance Agreement with The Block 108, LLC for Property Located at 26 1st Avenue SE.

City Council established the Vacant Building Revitalization and Demolition Grant program on September 16, 2008. The program provides grant funding up to \$20,000 for rehabilitation of vacant buildings within the Urban Revitalization Area and targeted industrial buildings in other areas of the City. The Block 108, LLC has applied for a Vacant Building Revitalization Grant in the amount of \$20,000 to assist in the rehabilitation of the former Ferguson Plumbing building at 26 1st Avenue SE. The applicant plans to spend approximately \$200,000 to rehabilitate the building and site. The owner will use the building for a contractor's office. The project would be eligible for a \$20,000 revitalization grant. The Business Development Committee reviewed this proposal at their November 16th meeting and recommends approval. Recent changes to the North Carolina General Statutes require a public hearing prior to approval of the grant. Staff recommends City Council approve the Vacant Building Revitalization Grant with The Block 108, LLC.

This public hearing was advertised in a newspaper having general circulation in the Hickory area on February 10, 2017.

Interim City Manager Andrea Surratt advised City Council for their consideration was a Vacant Building Grant for The Block 108, LLC for property located at 26 1st Avenue SE. This item originally came before City Council, but the property owner had not finalized closing on the property so it was removed from the agenda and now being brought back before Council because the owner had closed on the property and is ready to have the grant be considered. She asked the City's Community Development Manager Dave Leonetti to the podium to present this item to Council.

Community Development Manager Dave Leonetti presented City Council with a PowerPoint presentation. He discussed the Vacant Building Revitalization Grant for property located at 26 1st Avenue SE. He advised it was the old Ferguson Plumbing building on the one way pair headed west just south of the railroad tracks. He discussed the background of the Vacant Building Revitalization Grant program. The City had this program in various iterations, it had been updated a few times since 2008. It currently allows for grants of up to \$20,000 or 15 percent of the eligible project costs for the rehabilitation of vacant buildings. That would be around \$133,000, if you spend more than that then you would be eligible for the \$20,000 grant. Eligible improvements are real property improvements to both the interior and exterior of the building. He advised the project in question, 26 1st Avenue SE, contained approximately 11,000 square feet. It is owned by The Block 108 LLC. It was a former plumbing supply company and before that it was a car dealership, auto repair and a number of other things over the years. The building was built in the 30's or 40's. The applicant plans to spend roughly \$200,000 to renovate the space into office space and some storage space in the rear portion of the building. The project would be eligible for the full \$20,000 grant. The applicant was Alex Harrill and will be used for the office of Alex Harrill Construction. He showed on a map the urban revitalization area and pointed out City Hall, and the subject property just to the south across the street from CCM. He showed current photos of the building. He commented this building looks like it did when he moved to Hickory in 2007 with the exception that they repaired the rear of the building because it had been open for a while when they tore a small part off. This will be a welcomed rehabilitation of the building, it had been vacant for over ten years now. He showed a photo of the existing site, noting the vacant lots, the former A&P which is now a concrete pad. There was vacant lots on both the east and the west of the subject property. He pointed out Robinson Park a little to the east. He showed a photo of the proposed building elevation. Mr. Harrill plans on repainting the building to a gray color, adding some awnings on the front, and a lot of windows as well to open up the building. The delays on getting the property closed were due to some environmental concerns. They were able to get everything cleared up and cleaned up so the purchaser was able to move forward with it. The Business Development Committee reviewed the application at their November meeting and recommended approval.

Alderman Seaver commented they are not demolishing they are just renovating.

Mr. Leonetti confirmed that was correct. They are rehabilitating that building.

Alderwoman Patton commented it would be a huge improvement.

Alderman Seaver thought it was a Chrysler dealership at one time, many moons ago. It would be good to see something happen there.

Mayor Wright 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. No one appeared. He asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the proposal. No one appeared. Mayor Wright closed the public hearing.

Alderman Seaver moved, seconded by Alderman Zagaroli approval of the Vacant Building Revitalization Grant Performance Agreement with The Block 108, LLC for property located at 26 1st Avenue SE. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Wright announced that the motion was made by Alderman Seaver seconded by Alderman Zagaroli and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Departmental Reports:

1. Approved the Acceptance of the North Carolina Industrial Development Grant Funds in the Amount of \$671,920 to Assist in Development of Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure and Entrance Road Development for Park 1764.

Park 1764 is identified as the Business Park recognized in the bond projects to receive money from bond proceeds for development. The City and Catawba County EDC have worked on development of the project to a condition that is receptive to marketing. The City and Catawba County EDC submitted an application for North Carolina Industrial Development Funds and were approved for \$671,920 in grant funds with a matching requirement of 100 percent. The grant proceeds are to be used for sanitary sewer outfall extension to the site in the amount of \$361,900 and entrance road development with landscaping off Startown Road in the amount of \$310,020. The grant has a condition that the recipient will match the investment for a total of at least \$1,343,840. The City of Hickory and Catawba County entered into an agreement previously to equally cover the cost of development previously estimated at \$1,558,562 for this phase of development. This grant has a required equal match in funds prior to disbursement of the entire grant. The grant is a reimbursable grant with 50 percent each request being funded up to a maximum of \$671,920. The grant was approved January 23, 2017. Staff recommends Council's acceptance of the North Carolina Industrial Development Grant Funds for Park 1764 in the amount of \$671,920 to assist in development of sanitary sewer infrastructure and entrance road development.

Interim City Manager Andrea Surratt asked the City's Interim Public Services Director Kevin Greer to the podium to present Council with a grant for the City to receive for the 1764 project.

Interim Public Services Director Kevin Greer presented Council a PowerPoint presentation. He advised that Park 1764 was a commercial business park that the City had been working on. Catawba County has partnered with the City on that project and Mr. Millar with the EDC has worked through part of the process as well and has helped us with trying to acquire some grants. He advised the business park itself contains approximately 170 acres. A couple of different pieces of property, but containing 170 acres together. He showed a photo of a concept plan of what we are looking at. It is a high-end class "A" kind of manufacturing office space development. Park 1764 and the purpose of the grant itself is to help us with the development of that. Right now it is raw property with a couple of houses on it and it is pasture land. The grant itself does have a specific purpose that it is supposed to be used for which is an entrance road, some landscaping and berming, and some offsite sanitary sewer extended to the property. He pointed out on a map the 170 acres. He noted the area in blue was part of what he was talking about for the grant, which was the first portion of property. He pointed out the location for the entrance road, which was just to get them to the property to show them how nice the property really is. He pointed out an area for the offsite sanitary sewer. There is a little bit of an extension that has to happen to actually get it to the property. He pointed out the first pieces of property that are being considered. There was approximately 7.25 acres of property that they are looking at there to try and develop. The main things that happen here are a landscaping berm along Startown Road, some white fencing that happens along to kind of match the Sarstedt property that is below to draw that similar feel. He showed the proposed entrance road location and reiterated just to get them to the property to show them how nice it really is. October of 2016 Council approved the Resolution approving Staff to apply for the grant. The grant requires a 100 percent match.

So for us to get \$671,000 we have to spend \$671,000. The grant does have to be used for the entrance road, landscape berm and sanitary sewer. With 170 acres there are plenty of costs there, this helps towards that. Catawba County approved a Resolution, February 20, 2017 for the money as well, because there is money that had to be set aside between Hickory and Catawba County as the matching money, which was previously done. The entrance road is approximately \$310,000, which is what the projection was in the grant itself. That was when they applied for the money. The offsite sanitary sewer was just over \$361,000. What was approved earlier was \$547,385 a piece between Catawba County and the City of Hickory as that match money, the seed money, to get it started for development. He advised that Staff was requesting City Council's acceptance and approval of the grant itself. There is a contract that comes with it but they have to approve that grant. It is with the North Carolina Industrial Development Fund which is ran through the Commerce Department. Specifically for this project it is \$671,920. He reiterated we have to spend that much at least to match in order to maximize that grant. He asked Council if they had any questions.

Mayor Wright commented once we spend money in that park, we have to take down the first option.

Mr. Greer advised once we spend money in the Park it actually triggers the purchase of the property.

Mayor Wright commented we exercise the first option. We have to purchase the property.

Mr. Greer replied correct.

Mayor Wright responded which is under option. Right.

Mr. Greer stated yes.

Mayor Wright commented the rest of the property is under option, but once we trigger the first it commits us to every other option.

Interim City Manager Andrea Surratt confirmed that was correct. She added the reason that it triggers the purchase of the property is because the grant ask that we put in that infrastructure which requires us to tear down two or three homes there, she referenced the slide that Mr. Greer had shown Council. Taking those homes down requires us to purchase those homes and purchasing exercises the option.

Mayor Wright commented we don't immediately spend the money but we are committed to 2021.

Mr. Greer and Mrs. Surratt confirmed 2021.

Mayor Wright commented we would have had to purchase them all by 2021.

Mr. Greer replied correct.

Mayor Wright advised he was pointing that out for the benefit of all of Council to understand that we are all in once we do this. It really is a multimillion dollar decision and not a \$500,000 decision. He was all in but wanted everyone to understand what that was and of course the County is all in.

Alderman Guess commented this is what Council had be contemplating since the beginning.

Mayor Wright replied oh yeah.

Alderwoman Patton asked how quickly the work would begin.

Mr. Greer advised with acceptance of the grant we have delayed any kind of request for qualifications. We still have to send those out, but we need to accept the grant first so that we don't miss an opportunity for any of that money of course being able to apply. Once we get the RFQ's out, we are saying three to four months for engineering. He is anticipating, if everything kind of goes as planned, by the summer we are actual ready to go out for bids, if Council and the group that has formed, once they are ready, then of course they could go out to hopefully this fall they are under construction.

Alderman Seaver asked how long it took to do that.

Mr. Greer advised for the entrance road and the offsite sewer, three to four months a piece probably, but those could be happening at the same time. Just those two elements of work are not a tremendous effort.

Alderman Seaver asked if the City was committed to building a spec building over there.

Interim City Manager Andrea Surratt replied we have not.

Alderman Seaver didn't think we had but he wanted to make sure. That is something probably in the near future.

Interim City Manager Andrea Surratt advised they think that these improvements make the site marketable, whereas today if you were to drive out there you are pulling into someone's driveway and showing them the backyard and the farm field. That is hard for prospective companies to envision themselves being out there. This entry way shows that it would be an industrial subdivision and it would feel like one more so with the improvements.

Alderman Seaver commented they might get interested right of way and we may not have to build.

Interim City Manager Andrea Surratt advised that Scott Millar was doing a great job to market it.

Mayor Wright commented this had been their vision the whole time for this park. There are people who say let's get some incoming dollars committed before we have outgoing dollars committed. He thought everybody was in, the City, the County. He moved, seconded by Alderman Tarlton that Council embark on this journey, and accept that grant and commit our matching funds. The motion carried unanimously

Mayor Wright announced that he moved seconded by Alderman Tarlton and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

BOND IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 2-1; 3 Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 3 (Seaver Appoints)

VACANT

Ex-Officio Members to Bond Implementation Commission
(Appointed by Boards and Commissions)

Hickory Regional Planning Commission

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 3 (Seaver Appoints)
Ward 4 (Guess Appoints)

VACANT

VACANT

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Other Minority (Council Appoints)
Other Minority (Council Appoints)
Other Minority (Council Appoints)
(Unexpired Term of Nancy Yang (resigned 1-18-17), term expires 6-30-2019)

VACANT

VACANT

VACANT

HICKORY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms With Unlimited Appointments)
(Appointed by City Council)
Burke County (Mayor to Nominate)

VACANT

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

(Appointed by Mayor with the Concurrence of City Council)
(2) Positions

VACANT

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 4 (Guess Appoints)
At-Large (Mayor Appoints)

VACANT

VACANT

Mayor Wright appointed Rick Martin, as an At-Large Representative on the Library Advisory Board.

PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 5-Year Terms) (Appointed by the Mayor)
Position 9

VACANT

RECYCLING ADVISORY BOARD

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)

Ward 3 (Seaver Appoints)

VACANT

Ward 4 (Guess Appoints)

VACANT

At-Large (Council Appoints)

VACANT

YOUTH COUNCIL

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

St. Stephens High School Representatives

1 Position VACANT

At-Large Representatives

1 Position VACANT

Challenger High School Representative

1 Position VACANT

Mayor Wright moved seconded by Alderman Guess approval of the above nomination. 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

Interim City Manager Andrea Surratt reminded City Council and the community there would be a Bond Commission meeting on Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 12:00, at Highland Recreation. This meeting would be open to the public. She advised they would be reviewing City Walk plans, and gateway designs. She informed City Council that in their packets at their seats, Cari Burns had created handouts for City Council to give to recruits to their Board and Commission member(s). On the backside of the handout there was an application.

Mayor Wright mentioned the wayfinding signs continued to grow. He commented they look a lot like Morganton's. He joked when they are in Morganton they are going to think they are still in Hickory. That could only help us, look at the footprint we now would have. He said they looked great. He also liked what they had done on the backs of the signs. The logo was on the back of the signs which cost almost nothing extra.

Alderman Seaver commented in June, Robert F. Smith, his father was a music writer who wrote music for the Field of Dreams movie. Robert F. Smith had embarked upon a journey to throw a pitch in every major and minor league Baseball Park in America. He is going to be in the Carolina area from June 14-24, 2017. The Crawdads have already committed to letting him do that. The local Lions Club(s) will try and have some kind of a program where they can get as many people as possible to the stadium to see this guy and do a fundraiser for local Lion projects.

Alderman Tarlton asked how many ballparks were there.

Alderman Seaver had no idea, a lot.

Mayor Wright commented it had to be 200-300. He thought maybe 28 major league teams. Everyone probably has 10 minor league teams.

Alderman Seaver advised this guy was featured in the Lion's magazine in July/August 2016. They were going to try and get something together for that.

Mayor Wright wanted to give him a key to the City.

Alderman Seaver commented they might could work something out to do it in Council Chambers. He mentioned the Sister's Cities Association has a group heading over to Altenburg, Hickory's sister city in Germany. They will be going the first of August, and more information will be released about that. He advised to check the news. If anybody was interested in going contact him. This year was the 500th Anniversary of the reformation of the church. It is going to coincide with the Altenburg music festival which is renowned throughout Europe. He advised it would be August 9-20, 2017. He and Mayor Wright would be attending.

Alderman Tarlton advised he would like to attend.

Alderman Seaver commented they would get a few other people.

Mayor Wright advised there was no limit on how many could go, there was a limit on funding. They will visit the city which is near Altenburg where Martin Luther nailed the theses on the wall. It was

going to be quite an interesting thing. They had been here several times. He didn't know if they had ever gone.

Alderman Seaver advised they had different groups go over just about every year from all around the unifour area. Western Piedmont Sister Cities covers the four county area. It is not just Hickory.

Mayor Wright mentioned that their area was a good size area too.

Alderman Seaver advised it was about the same size probably in population.

- XIV. Closed Session Per NC General Statutes 143-318.11(a)(1) to consult with the attorneys regarding the following: (Action on these items, if any, will occur in Open Session)

Alderman Zagaroli moved that Council go into closed session to consult with the attorneys to discuss the items below, seconded by Alderman Seaver. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Wright announced that the motion was made by Alderman Zagaroli seconded by Alderman Seaver and the motion carried unanimously.

1. Approval of Closed Session Minutes of November 1, 2016, November 15, 2016 and December 20, 2016 - NCGS §143-318.11(a)(1).

No action was taken upon return to open session.

- XV. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk