A = Approved, A1 = Approved First Reading, A2 = Approved Second Reading, D = Deferred, NA = No Action, PH = Authorized Public Hearing, AD = Approval Denied

ACTION AGENDA

Hickory City Council
76 North Center Street

April 7, 2026
6:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order

II. Invocation by Reverend Amanda Sowards, Chief Executive Officer of Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Special Presentations

NA A. Presentation of a Proclamation for Line Worker Appreciation Day to Duke Energy Representatives. **(Exhibit IV.A.)**

NA B. Presentation of a Proclamation for Fair Housing Month to Catawba Valley Association of Realtors, President Natalie Armstrong and Realtor Tami Fox. **(Exhibit IV.B.)**

NA C. Presentation of a Proclamation for National Public Safety Telecommunications Week to Hickory Police Department Telecommunicators. **(Exhibit IV.C.)**

V. Persons Requesting to Be Heard

A. Mr. Sherrill Watkins, 7018 Tallent Court, Sherrills Ford, discussed the consolidation of the schools, and also the whereabouts of a monument that used to be in Hickory.

B. Ms. Janice Godwin, 50 22nd Avenue NW, Hickory, discussed concerns with her neighboring properties.

C. Mr. Liam Bailey, 1058 25th Avenue Drive NW, Hickory, advocated arts and culture support.

D. Ms. Leanna Bodnar, 2705 North Center Street, Hickory, advocated arts and culture support.

E. Ms. Kimberly Turk, 2436 29th Avenue Court NE, Hickory, discussed concerns with brown water.

F. Mr. Chris McDonald, 1324 6th Street NW, Hickory, had concerns regarding the agenda item for closing of the alley. He was asked to speak during the public hearing portion of the meeting.

G. Mr. Bob Post, 1006 12th Avenue NW, Hickory, discussed the pedestrian/bike plan.

VI. Approval of Minutes

A A. Regular Meeting of March 17, 2026. **(Exhibit VI.A.)**

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.

A2 A. Budget Revision Number 15. **(First Reading Vote: Unanimous)**

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

A A. Approval to Close Both Locations of Hickory Public Library on Friday, May 8, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for Staff Training. **(Exhibit VIII.A.)**

Staff requests to close both locations of Hickory Public Library at 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 8 for staff training. Public library staff regularly interact with the public and, to provide the best possible customer service, it is necessary to periodically provide training opportunities in which all staff participate at the same time. This year staff will receive training in library resources, hear updates from community partner agencies, and prepare for upcoming library programs. Customer service training specifically in each library department will be included. To allow all coworkers to participate, it is necessary to schedule the training during a workday. Staff determined that Friday, May 8 is a date that would create as little disruption as possible in service to the public. Staff recommend the Patrick Beaver Memorial Library and the Ridgeview Branch Library be closed on Friday, May 8, 2026, to allow all library employees to participate in staff training.

A B. Acceptance of the Bid and Approval of the Annual Auditing Contract with Martin Starnes & Associates. **(Exhibit VIII.B.)**

Staff requests acceptance of the bid and approval of awarding the annual contract for auditing services with Martin Starnes & Associates for fiscal year ending June 30, 2026. The City of Hickory has utilized the services of Martin Starnes & Associates for the past fifteen years with excellent results. Since fiscal year 2012, Martin Starnes & Associates has also been contracted to produce the City's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. North Carolina General Statute 159-34 requires each unit of local government and public authority to have its accounts audited each fiscal year and to submit a copy of the audit report to the Secretary of the Local Government Commission (LGC). The Secretary of the Local Government Commission approves all local government contracts and invoices for audit or audit-related work. The LGC requires approval of the auditing contract on an annual basis. Bids were advertised for audit services and received on February 27, 2026. Four bids were received and opened. The annual contract with Martin Starnes & Associates for the year ending June 30, 2026 includes audit fees of $93,290. Fees include annual financial audit fee, financial statement preparation, Annual Financial Information Report (AFIR), and major program testing for 4 programs. This is a 6% increase over the prior year. Staff recommend acceptance of the bid and approval of awarding the annual auditing contract with Martin Starnes & Associates for fiscal year ending June 30, 2026.

A C. Approval of a Community Appearance Grant with Cranford Properties, LLC in the Amount of $7,500 for Property Located at 772 4th Street SW. **(Exhibit VIII.C.)**

The Community Appearance Commission recommends City Council's approval of a Community Appearance Grant for non-residential property owned by Cranford Properties, LLC and occupied by a commercial building, located at 772 4th St SW in the amount of $7,500. City Council created the Community Appearance Grant program 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 $7,500. The grant proposal involves the replacement of the building's awnings, work on building face, window replacement, and

improvements to an entrance door. The property is located within the City's defined Urban Revitalization Area, and as such is eligible for the consideration of a Community Appearance Grant. The applicant provided two estimates, the lowest estimates for the work totals $15,950, with additional possible costs reaching $22,000. If Council moves to approve the proposed grant at the lower of the estimates, the request qualifies for a $7,500 grant. The subject property's current tax value is assessed at $567,300. The requested grant amounts to 2.8% of the property's tax value. The application was reviewed by the Community Appearance Commission. After consideration the Commission unanimously recommends funding of the grant application in the amount of $7,500.

A/PH D. Call for a Public Hearing to Consider the Voluntary Contiguous Annexation of Property Located at 2633 Springs Road NE, Containing Approximately 1.135 Aces, Identified at PIN 3723-10-37-5117, Owned by RO Hickory Property, LLC. (Authorize the Public Hearing for April 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building. **(Exhibit VIII.D.)**

A E. Approval of the Issuance of a Pyrotechnic Display Permit to PyroStar Entertainment for a Fireworks Display at Hickory Motor Speedway. **(Exhibit VIII.E.)**

Staff request approval to issue a pyrotechnic display permit to PyroStar Entertainment for a fireworks display at the Hickory Motor Speedway for May 9, 2026 (Rain Date, October 17, 2026). Kevin Piercy, General Manager of Hickory Motor Speedway, submitted a request to obtain permission to conduct a public fireworks display. The North Carolina Fire Code requires an operational permit for the use and handling of pyrotechnic special effects material. The Hickory Fire Department Fire & Life Safety Division shall review all required documentation for the event, including Alcohol Tobacco and Firearm's (ATF) License, Operator and Assistant Operators Permits from North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal (NCOSFM), Site Plan, and the one-million-dollar liability insurance policy. The Fire & Life Safety Division will also inspect the pyrotechnics display area before the event to ensure compliance with NCOSFM Guidelines, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) NFPA 1123 Code for Fireworks Display, and NFPA 1126 Use of Pyrotechnics Before a Proximate Audience (if applicable). Staff recommend approval of the above pyrotechnics display.

A F. Approval of a Resolution to Apply for the North Carolina Department of Transportation Integrated Mobility Division Multimodal Program Grant to Update the City of Hickory's 2020 Bike and Pedestrian Plan. **(Exhibit VIII.F.)**

Staff request Council's approved of the Resolution for the City to apply for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Integrated Mobility Division Multimodal Program Grant to update the City of Hickory's 2020 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The City developed and adopted a new Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan on December 15, 2020. At that time, several multi-use trails were either under construction or in the design phase. Since the development and adoption of the 2020 Bike and Pedestrian Plan, significant changes have transpired in Hickory. To date, approximately 10 miles of multi-use trails have been completed, with an additional two miles still under construction. The NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division's (IMD) Multimodal Grant Program (MMPG) presents an opportunity to update the City's 2020 Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. The current plan is now over five years old and significant changes have occurred. This presents an ideal opportunity to revise the current Bike and Pedestrian Plan. This revision would assess necessary modifications, taking into consideration the progress achieved thus far. Staff recommend Council's approval of the Resolution for the City to apply for the NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division Multimodal Planning Grant of $52,500 with a 30% local match.

A G. Approval of a Resolution to Apply for the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality State Revolving Fund for UV Disinfection Conversion Projects. **(Exhibit VIII.G.)**

Staff requests Council's approval of a Resolution to apply for the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) State Revolving Fund for UV Disinfection Conversion Projects. The City of Hickory owns and operates the Henry Fork Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and the Northeast WWTP, which both use chlorine gas and sulfur

dioxide gas for disinfection and de-chlorination respectively. The City expressed interest in evaluating alternative disinfection methods due to the costs, supply chain issues, storage, and the need for safer technology. Garver, LLC completed a disinfection alternatives evaluation in March 2023, and based on the results of this evaluation, ultraviolet disinfection was determined to be the recommended disinfection alternative for both the Henry Fork WWTP and the Northeast WWTP. NCDEQ anticipates approximately $90 million available for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Spring 2026 funding. These projects may be funded by low-interest loans or principal forgiveness. The grant application is intended to support the design and construction for the conversion from existing chlorine gas disinfection and sulfur dioxide de-chlorination systems to ultraviolet (UV) disinfection at the Henry Fork WWTP and Northeast WWTP. Staff recommend Council's approval of a Resolution to apply for the NCDEQ State Revolving Fund for UV Disinfection Conversion Projects.

A H. Approval of the Contract with the State of North Carolina for the Great Trail State Program Grant in the Amount of $500,000. **(Exhibit VIII.H.)**

Staff requests Council's approval of the contract with the State of North Carolina for the Great Trail State Program Grant. In November 2024, City Staff applied for a $500,000 grant to reconstruct the elevated boardwalk (also known as the Duck Walk) at Glenn C. Hilton, Jr. Memorial Park. In July 2025, the City was awarded a $500,000 grant for this project. The grant will fund the partial reconstruction of the elevated boardwalk through a tree-shaded wetland area adjacent to the park. Enhancing the City's trail network with an updated elevated boardwalk will offer a safe, accessible, and enjoyable natural setting for residents and visitors alike. Staff recommend Council's approval of the agreement with the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources for the Great Trail State Grant Program in the amount of $500,000 with a local match of $465,059 that has been allocated for this project.

A I. Approval of the Acceptance of the North Carolina Department of Transportation Grant Funds in the Amount of $3,000,000 for Runway 6 Avigation Easement Acquisition. **(Exhibit VIII.I.)**

Staff requests City Council's approval to accept Grant 36244.33.18.2 in the amount of $3,000,000 awarded by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for Runway 6 Avigation Easement Acquisition at Hickory Regional Airport. Airports that accept federal grants are required through grant assurances to keep runway protection zones (RPZ) clear of obstructions for safety of navigation. During an RPZ analysis, obstructions were identified within 3,000 feet of the runway 6 approach corridor. The identified obstructions lie within 83 off-Airport properties. To remove the obstructions, avigation easements must be acquired. An avigation easement is a property right granted by a landowner to allow aircraft to operate over their land at low altitudes. It is also a legal right that allows for the removal of obstructions that hazard aircraft operations. The avigation easement process includes acquiring air rights above the properties by offering a fair and reasonable fee to the landowners which is determined by an appraiser. Additionally, a public hearing will take place to provide affected landowners with amplifying information. The final stage of the project will be obstruction removal which will fall under a separate project and funding. Staff requests City Council's approval to accept Grant 36244.33.18.2 in the amount of $3,000,000 award by NCDOT for Runway 6 Avigation Easement Acquisition at Hickory Regional Airport with a local match of $333,333 using TRDF Interest funds.

A1 J. Budget Revision Number 16. **(Exhibit VIII.J.)**

1. *To appropriate $500,000 in grant revenues towards the reconstruction of the Boardwalk at Glenn Hilton Park. The local match of $465,059 will be funded out of Landscape Services Division's capital budget.*
2. *To appropriate $925 in donation revenues towards library programming.*
3. *To appropriate $13,900 in revenue from the sale of equipment towards software for the Hickory Fire Department.*

4. *To appropriate $3,000,000 in State Aid revenue towards Runway 6 Avigation Easements. The local match of $333,333 will be funded with investment earnings accumulated from State TRDF funds.*

X. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

X. Informational Items

XI. New Business

A. Public Hearings

A 1. Consideration of Closing the Undeveloped Portion of 13th Avenue Place NW Located at the Developed Corner of 13th Avenue Place NW and 7th Street NW – Presentation by Assistant City Manager Steve Miller. **(Exhibit XI.A.1.)**

Staff requests Council's consideration of closing the undeveloped portion of 13th Avenue Place NW located at the developed corner of 13th Avenue Place NW and 7th Street NW, as petitioned by James G. Heisler, III and Janet S. Hambrick. The City Clerk received a petition from James G. Heisler, III and Janet S. Hambrick, owners of the properties abutting an undeveloped portion of 13th Avenue Place NW. The petition requests the City to close the undeveloped portion of 13th Avenue Place NW per NCGS § 160A-299. The undeveloped portion of 13th Avenue Place NW is bound on the north side by Janet S. Hambrick and Educational Endowment Preservation LLC, on the south by James G. Heisler, III, on the west by Educational Endowment Preservation LLC and Mountainhug LLC, and on the east by 7th Street NW. The petition contains the signatures of the Petitioners James G. Heisler, III, and Janet S. Hambrick, as well as the adjacent property owners, Jacob Woodrow Whitener Jr., General Manager of Educational Endowment Preservation, LLC, and Theresa Huggins, Administrative Member of Mountainhug, LLC. The signatures on the petition represent all the owner(s) of the property abutting this portion of the right-of-way. The petition fee of $930 has been paid. A memo was sent to various departments for their input on the street closing. Public Services requested the reservation to maintain existing utilities, if any, located in the area to be closed. Staff recommend Council consider closing the undeveloped portion of 13th Avenue Place NW, located at the corner of the developed portion of 13th Avenue Place NW, and 7th Street NW, as petitioned by James G. Heisler, III, and Janet S. Hambrick.

Notice of the public hearing was advertised in a newspaper having general circulation in the Hickory area on March 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2026.

B. Departmental Reports

A 1. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

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

Caucasian (Council Appoints)	VACANT
Caucasian (Council Appoints)	VACANT
Other Minority (Council Appoints)	VACANT
Other Minority (Council Appoints)	VACANT

HICKORY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

(Term Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms with Unlimited Appointments) (Appointed by City Council)

Burke County Representative (Mayor Appoints with Recommendation from Burke County)	VACANT

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

Ward 6 (Patton Appoints)	VACANT
At-Large (Council Appoints)	VACANT
At-Large (Council Appoints)	VACANT

Alderman Wood Nominated Brian Badders as an At-Large Representative on the Recycling Advisory Board.

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

Homeschool Representative	VACANT

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

XIV. Closed Session Per NC General Statutes 143-318.11(a)(1)(4) to consult with the attorney regarding the following: (Action on these items, if any, will occur in Open Session)

1. *Approval of Closed Session Minutes of November 18, 2025 - NCGS §143-318.11(a)(1)*
2. *Discussion of Potential Economic Development - NCGS §143-318.11(a)(4)*

XV. Adjournment

Hickory City Code Section 2-56. Public Address to Council:

"When conducting public hearings, considering ordinances, and otherwise considering matters wherein the public has a right to be heard, when it appears that there are persons present desiring to be heard, the Mayor shall require those opposing and favoring the proposed action to identify themselves. Each side of the matter shall be given equal time. Those opposing the proposed action shall be allowed 15 minutes for presentation, followed by 15 minutes for those favoring the action, with the opponents then to have five minutes for rebuttal and the proponents to then have five minutes for surrebuttal. Those persons on either side shall have the right to divide their allotted time among them as they may choose. The Council, by majority vote, may extend the time for each side equally. On matters in which the person desiring to address the Council does not have a legal right to speak, the Council shall determine whether it will hear the person. The refusal to hear a person desiring to speak may be based upon grounds that the subject matter is confidential, that its public discussion would be illegal, that it is a matter not within the jurisdiction of the Council or for any other cause deemed sufficient by the Council. Any person allowed to speak who shall depart from the subject under discussion or who shall make personal, impertinent, or slanderous remarks, or who shall become boisterous while addressing the Council shall be declared out of order by the Mayor, or by vote of the Council, and barred from speaking further before the Council unless permission to continue shall be granted by a majority vote of the Council, under such restrictions as the Council may provide."

**The City of Hickory holds all public meetings in accessible rooms.
Special requests for accommodation should be submitted by individuals
with disabilities at least 48 hours before the scheduled meeting.
Phone Services (hearing impaired) – Call 711 or 1-800-735-2962**