



**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

September 1, 2026
6:00 p.m.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Invocation by Reverend Melissa Sparks, Unitarian Universalist Church of Catawba Valley
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Special Presentations
- V. Persons Requesting to Be Heard
- VI. Approval of Minutes
- A** A. Regular Meeting of August 18, 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 3. **(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 of a Commercial Use Permit and Lease Agreement with Bearonautics, LLC for Space at Hickory Regional Airport. **(Exhibit VIII.A.)**

Staff requests approval of a Commercial Use Permit and Lease Agreement with Bearonautics, LLC for lease of premises within the Commercial Terminal building at Hickory Regional Airport. This lease encompasses approximately 1,121 square feet of office space, with a monthly rental rate of \$1,367 or \$16,404 annually. Bearonautics, LLC plans to establish, operate and conduct an advanced aviation simulation and flight training facility. The term of this agreement shall commence on the commencement date and continue for an initial term of one year, unless earlier terminated in accordance with the agreement. Following the initial term, the agreement shall automatically renew for up to five successive additional one year terms, unless either party provides the other with written notice of its intent to terminate the agreement at least ninety days prior to the expiration of the then-current term. Staff recommend approval by City Council.

Notice of the lease was advertised in a newspaper having general circulation in the Hickory area on July 23, 2026.
- A** B. Acceptance of a North Carolina Department of Transportation Grant (36237.66.11.1) in the Amount of \$230,464 for Airport Terminal Apron Rehab Design. **(Exhibit VIII.B.)**

Staff requests City Council to accept Grant 36237.66.11.1 State Aid Funds awarded by the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in the amount of \$230,464 with the local match of \$12,130 for Terminal Apron Rehab at Hickory Regional Airport. The NCDOT has allocated State Aid Funds via Grant 36237.66.11.1 with the State share of \$230,464 and a local match of \$12,130. The total project cost is \$242,594. The rehabilitation project will include the rehabilitation of asphalt on the apron, fillet widening of the lead-in taxi lane, as well as the installation of new pavement markings to conform with FAA standards. This grant will assist in the continuation of the airfield improvement program as recommended by the Airport's Task Force. Staff recommend acceptance of Grant 36237.66.11.1 in the amount of \$230,464 from the NCDOT. The local share of \$12,130 will be funded by utilizing Airport Capital Funds.

- A C. Acceptance of the North Carolina Department of Transportation Grant (36237.66.11.2) in the Amount of \$615,452 for the West and South Apron Rehabilitation and North Apron Expansion Design. **(Exhibit VIII.C.)**

Staff request City Council's acceptance of Grant (36237.66.11.2) State Aid Funds awarded by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in the amount of \$615,452 with a local match of \$32,393 for the west and south apron rehabilitation and north apron expansion design. By letter dated August 11, 2026, NCDOT allocated State Aid Funds. The total project cost is \$647,845. Due to the pavement condition of this area, this project will include the design phase for rehabilitation of the associated pavements. The project also includes the design phase for expansion of the north apron. The expansion will provide additional apron space to support growing demand, improve aircraft circulation, and enhance safety during peak operations. This grant will assist in the continuation of the airfield improvement program as recommended by the Airport's Task Force. Staff recommend acceptance of the grant in the amount of \$615,452 from NCDOT. The local share of \$32,393 will be funded by utilizing Airport Capital Funds.

- A D. Approval of a Contract with J.T. Russell & Sons, Inc. in the Amount of \$551,975 for the Runway EMAS Schedule II Project. **(Exhibit VIII.D.)**

Staff requests City Council's approval of a construction contract agreement with J.T. Russell & Sons, Inc., for the Runway 24 EMAS "Schedule II" project. The contract, in the amount of \$511,975, will include grading, Engineered Material Arresting System (EMAS) bed prep and 198 feet of shoulder strength pavement at the approach end of Runway 24 as well as demo and removal of existing MALSR associated electrical infrastructure. By installing EMAS the safety area will meet regulatory requirements by having a system in place in the event of an aircraft runway excursion. Staff recommend approval of the contract with J.T. Russell & Sons, Inc. in the amount of \$511,975. This portion of the project will be funded by using remaining funds from the Aviation Walk project.

- A E. Removed from Consent Agenda and Approved under Item XI.B. Approval of a Work Authorization with Talbert, Bright, and Ellington (TBE) in an Amount not to Exceed \$1,461,128.53 for Runway 6 Avigation Easement Acquisition and Obstruction Removal Preliminary Design. **(Exhibit VIII.E.)**

Staff requests approval of a work authorization with Talbert, Bright, and Ellington (TBE) in an amount not to exceed \$1,461,128.53. 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 and beyond 3,000 feet of the runway 6 approach corridor that poses a hazard to air navigation. 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 operation. 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. The final stage of the project will be obstruction removal. Staff recommend approval of the work authorization with TBE in an amount not to exceed \$1,461,128.53. This work authorization

will be funded utilizing a portion of a previously accepted grant in the amount of \$3,000,000 awarded by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

- A** **F.** Acceptance of the 2025 Justice Assistance Grant in the Amount of \$33,457. **(Exhibit VIII.F.)**

Hickory Police Department requests approval to accept the 2025 Justice Assistance Grant in the amount of \$33,457. The JAG Program is a formula-based grant through the Office of Justice Programs/Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) that utilizes Uniform Crime Reporting statistics from all law enforcement agencies to determine eligibility for direct federal grant awards. There is no match required. The Hickory Police Department will utilize grant funds to renew the annual licensing fee for two Grayshift forensic devices in partnership with the Catawba County Sheriff's Office. The Hickory Police Department recommends accepting the JAG grant award and partnering with the Catawba County Sheriff's Office for the 2025 Justice Assistance Grant. The total cost for this project is \$61,395, with the JAG grant award contributing \$33,457. The Hickory Police Department and the Catawba County Sheriff's Office will share the remaining cost of the software.

- A** **G.** Approval of the Amended Interlocal Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding for the 2024 JAG Grant and the 2025 JAG Grant. **(Exhibit VIII.G.)**

Staff requests Council's approval of the Amended Interlocal Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) for the 2024 Justice Assistance Grant and the 2025 Justice Assistance Grant. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) requires compliance and oversight for grants awarded under its jurisdiction, including the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). The City of Hickory has been awarded funding through the 2024 JAG Grant and the 2025 JAG Grant which requires amending the existing Interlocal Agreements and MOU(s) to reflect the distribution of funds accurately. This amendment(s) addresses the terms agreed upon by the City of Hickory and Catawba County for the allocation of grant funds, ensuring that all parties are aligned with the financial and programmatic responsibilities associated with the grant(s). Staff recommend that City Council accept the Amended Interlocal Agreements and MOU(s) for the 2024 JAG Grant and the 2025 JAG Grant.

- A/PH** **H.** Call for a Public Hearing to Consider the Voluntary Non-Contiguous Annexation of Property Located at 964 and 970 Airport Rhodhiss Road, and an Unaddressed Parcel to the East, Identified as Burke County PINs 2783785060, 2783788894, and 2783886713, the Catawba River Environmental Education Center (CREEC), Owned by the City of Hickory. (Authorize the Public Hearing for September 15, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building). **(Exhibit VIII.H.)**

- A** **I.** Approval of the Issuance of Pyrotechnic Display Permits to PyroStar Entertainment for Fireworks Display at Hickory Motor Speedway, and to Pyro Shows Inc. for Fireworks Display at Hickory Crawdads Stadium. **(Exhibit VIII.I.)**

Staff request approval to issue a pyrotechnic display permit to PyroStar Entertainment for a fireworks display at Hickory Motor Speedway on September 19, 2026, (rain date October 17, 2026). Kevin Peirce, General Manager of Hickory Motor Speedway submitted a request to obtain permission to conduct a public fireworks display. Staff also request approval to issue a pyrotechnic display permit to Pyro Shows, Inc., for a fireworks display at Hickory Crawdads Stadium on September 8, 2026, (rain date September 9, 2026). Douglas Locascio, General Manager of the Hickory Crawdads 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(s), 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(s) 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 displays, subject to drought conditions and the Fire Marshal's final approval.

- A** **J.** Approval of a Community Appearance Grant for Non-Residential Property Owned by the Hickory Elk's Lodge, Located at 356 Main Avenue NW, in the Amount of \$10,000. **(Exhibit VIII.J.)**

The Community Appearance Commission recommend City Council's approval of a Community Appearance Grant for non-residential property owned by the Hickory Elks Lodge and occupied by a commercial building, located at 356 Main Avenue NW in the amount of \$10,000. The Community Appearance Grant program by the City of Hickory offers 50/50 matching reimbursements up to \$7,500 for property upgrades in the Urban Revitalization Area. Projects of impact on the community and of architectural merit may be considered for funding in excess of the \$7,500 ceiling. The grant proposal includes enhancement of the landscaping, pavement, and painting of the exterior of the lodge, as well as the area surrounding the Veterans Memorial along the City Walk and Main Avenue NW. The property is located within the City's defined Urban Revitalization Area and is eligible for the consideration of a Community Appearance Grant. The Community Appearance Commission reviewed the application and unanimously recommended funding of the grant application in the amount of \$10,000.

- A1** **K.** Budget Revision Number 4. **(Exhibit VIII.K.)**

1. *To appropriate \$50 in donation revenue for library programming.*
2. *To transfer \$3,333,333 in Airport project funds from the Runway 6 Extension Project to the Runway 6 Avigation Easement Project for accounting purposes.*
3. *To transfer \$511,975 from the Aviation Walk Project to the Airport Runway 24 EMAS Project for a construction contract with J.T. Russell.*
4. *To appropriate a total of \$242,594 for terminal apron renovations at the Hickory Airport. Of this amount, \$230,464 will come from the NCDOT, and the local match of \$12,130 will come from airport capital funds.*
5. *To appropriate a total of \$647,845 for West and South apron rehabilitation and North Ramp expansion. Of this amount, \$615,452 will come from the NCDOT, and the local match of \$32,393 will come from airport capital funds.*

IX. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

Item "E" was removed from the consent agenda, discussed and approved under Item XI.B.1. Departmental Report.

X. Informational Items

XI. New Business

A. Public Hearings

- A** 1. Consideration of the FY2025-2026 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for Submission as Required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development - Presented by Business Development Director, Dave Leonetti. **(Exhibit XI.A.1.)**

Staff requests Council's consideration of the FY 2025-2026 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER). The CAPER evaluates the effectiveness of the use of resources in addressing identified goals and objectives cited in the Annual Action Plan which is prepared before the fiscal year begins. CDBG resources were used for the following: housing rehabilitation - \$110,390.49; ALFA - \$8,000; Exodus Homes - \$7,000; Salvation Army - \$9,000; Hickory Soup Kitchen - \$7,500; Catawba Science Center - \$7,500; Women's Resource Center - \$5,000; GHCCM - \$7,500; public infrastructure improvements - \$329,966.71; fair

housing - \$840; and program administration - \$36,128.90; Total \$528,826.10. In complying with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's requirements the CAPER outlines the City's expenditures from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026. These funds were approved by the Citizen's Advisory Committee as part of the Annual Action planning process.

Notice of the public hearing was advertised in a newspaper having general circulation in the Hickory area on August 15, 2026, and September 1, 2026. A copy of the CAPER has been available on the City's website and at City Hall beginning August 17, 2026.

B. Departmental Reports

- A 1. Update on Airport Projects – Presented by Airport Director, Chad Hunsucker

Approved Item "E" from consent agenda.

- A 2. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) Appointed by City Council
Small Cities Project Area (Council Appoints)

VACANT

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) Appointed by City Council
Ward 2 (Williams Appoints)
At-Large (Council Appoints)

VACANT

VACANT

Alderwoman Patton Nominated Anne Brock as an At-Large Representative on the Community Appearance Commission.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Caucasian (Council Appoints)
Caucasian (Council Appoints)
Caucasian (Council Appoints)
Other Minority (Council Appoints)

VACANT

VACANT

VACANT

VACANT

HICKORY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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

Ward 1 (Wood Appoints)

VACANT

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

VACANT

Alderman Wood Nominated John Andrews as Ward 1 Representative on the Hickory Regional Planning Commission.

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 4 (Freeman Appoints)
Ward 5 (Dula Appoints)
At-Large (1) (Mayor Appoints)
At-Large (2) (Mayor Appoints)

VACANT

VACANT

VACANT

VACANT

PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

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

VACANT

RECYCLING ADVISORY BOARD

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

Ward 3 (Seaver Appoints)	VACANT
Ward 4 (Freeman Appoints)	VACANT
Ward 6 (Patton Appoints)	VACANT
At-Large (Council Appoints)	VACANT
At-Large (Council Appoints)	VACANT

Alderman Seaver Nominated Johnna Flood as Ward 3 Representative on the Recycling Advisory Board.

UNIVERSITY CITY COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 2-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)

At-Large Not Including ETJ (Council Appoints)	VACANT
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YOUTH COUNCIL

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

Homeschool	VACANT
St. Stephens High School	VACANT
Hickory High School	VACANT

Youth Council Applicant Review Committee Recommend the Following Appointment:

Nahla Holmes as a Hickory High School Representative on the Youth Council.

Mayor Guess Nominated Nahla Holmes as a Hickory High School Representative on the Youth Council.

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. 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**