

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 2, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., with the following members present:

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

A quorum was present.

Also present were: Assistant City Manager Rick Beasley, Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller, City Attorney John W. Crone, III, Deputy City Attorney Arnita Dula, Deputy City Clerk Crystal B. Mundy and City Clerk Debbie D. Miller

- I. Mayor Guess called the meeting to order. All Council members were present.
- II. Invocation by Mayor Guess
- III. Pledge of Allegiance
- IV. Special Presentations
- V. Persons Requesting to Be Heard
- VI. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Special Meeting of January 19, 2021
Alderman Zagaroli moved, seconded by Alderwoman Patton that the Special Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
 - B. Regular Meeting of January 19, 2021
Alderman Seaver moved, seconded by Alderwoman Patton that the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2021 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
 - C. Special Meeting of January 20, 2021
Alderwoman Patton moved, seconded by Alderwoman Williams that the Special Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2021 be approved. The motion carried unanimously.
- VII. Reaffirmation and Ratification of Second Readings. Votes recorded on first reading will be reaffirmed and ratified on second reading unless Council Members change their votes and so indicate on second reading.

Alderwoman Patton moved, seconded by Alderman Zagaroli that the following be reaffirmed and ratified on second reading. The motion carried unanimously.
 - A. Budget Revision Number 13. (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.

Alderwoman Patton moved, seconded by Alderwoman Williams approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.
 - A. Approved on First Reading Budget Revision Number 14.

ORDINANCE NO. 21-04
BUDGET REVISION NUMBER 14

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, 2021 and for the duration of the Project Ordinance noted herein.

SECTION 1. To amend the Water and Sewer Fund within the FY 2020-21 Budget Ordinance, the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Other Financing Uses	33,000	-
TOTAL	33,000	-

To provide funding for the above, the Water and Sewer Fund revenues will be amended as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Other Financing Sources	33,000	-
TOTAL	33,000	-

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SECTION 2. To amend the Solid Waste Fund within the FY 2020-21 Budget Ordinance the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Environmental Protection	30,000	-
TOTAL	30,000	-

To provide funding for the above, the Solid Waste revenues will be amended as follows:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Sales and Services	30,000	-
TOTAL	30,000	-

SECTION 3. To amend the Short Road Sewer Project Capital Project Ordinance (#803304) within the Water and Sewer Capital Projects Fund, the expenditures shall be changed as follows.

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Water and Sewer Capital Projects	33,000	-
TOTAL	33,000	-

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

FUNCTIONAL AREA	INCREASE	DECREASE
Other Financing Sources	33,000	-
TOTAL	33,000	-

SECTION 4. 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.

- B. Approved a Resolution to submit FEMA Grant Applications for Flood Mitigation Projects at Snow Creek Pump Station and the Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Staff has identified opportunities to seek Federal funding to assist in making improvements to provide resiliency to critical infrastructure. The Federal Government provides funding through the FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. The BRIC grant program requires a 25 percent local match and provides funding to mitigate risks to infrastructure to better protect public investment and the environment. The projects will include the relocation of the Snow Creek Pump Station to a location out of the 500-year flood plain as well as hardening the facility against future flood events and stream bank restoration and influent pump station flood hardening at the Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility. These projects have a speculated cost of \$4,775,315 and \$7,255,903 respectively. A contract with KCI Technologies to prepare grant applications was approved on November 10, 2020. The City was required to submit a grant application to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety and was approved on January 25, 2021. Staff requests Council's approval of Resolution to submit FEMA grant applications for flood mitigation projects at Snow Creek pump station and the Northeast Wastewater Treatment Facility.

RESOLUTION NO. 21-07
RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF HICKORY

WHEREAS, The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the U. S. Department of Homeland Security is offering a program known as Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)Program; and

WHEREAS, the BRIC Program aims to shift the federal focus away from reactive disaster spending and toward research-supported, proactive investment in community resilience; and

WHEREAS, FEMA anticipates BRIC funding projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to partnerships, such as shared funding mechanisms, and/or project design; and

WHEREAS, the BRIC Program's funding is tied to Presidential disaster declarations with a 6 percent set-aside from disaster grants; and

WHEREAS, the City of Hickory carefully considers grant programs that assist the City in achieving projects and programs that are priorities for the community; and

WHEREAS, actions taken through this Program may result in lower flood insurance premiums through the Community Rating System, increase ratables and improved resiliency; and

WHEREAS, this program is available to certain municipalities in the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, this grant program requires a 25 percent local match from the municipality.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HICKORY:

That the City of Hickory, the Applicant, formally approves a grant application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for the FY 2021 FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program and authorizes submission of the grant application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

That the City Manager Warren Wood, the Authorized Official, and their successors so titled, are hereby authorized to execute and file an application on behalf of the Applicant for a loan and/or grant to aid in the project described above.

That the Authorized Official, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State or Federal agency may request in connection with such application or the project: to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required in connection with the application.

That the Applicant has substantially complied or will substantially comply with all Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances applicable to the project and to Federal and State grants and loans pertaining thereto.

- C. Called for a Public Hearing for Consideration of Amending Chapter 6, Section 6-3 of the Hickory City Code of Ordinances, the Proposed Ordinance will Amend the Current Downtown Fire Limits. (Authorized Public Hearing for February 16, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Julian G. Whitener Municipal Building)

IX. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None

X. Informational Item

XI. New Business:

A. Public Hearings

- 1. Hickory Regional Planning Commission Cancelled their Meeting due to a Lack of a Quorum for the Consideration of Rezoning Petition Number 20-06.

23 Storage, LLC has filed a petition to rezone a portion of a larger property to provide additional area for non-residential development. The subject property is currently split zoned; with the western ~5.8 acres zoned CC-2, and the eastern ~3.7 acres zoned R-4. The requested action would rezone ~1.2 acres of the center part of the property from R-4 to CC-2. Should this be successful; the western commercially zoned (CC-2) part of the property would increase to ~7 acres, while the residentially zoned (R-4) part of the property would decrease to ~2.5 acres. The general area is predominately classified High and Medium Density Residential by the Hickory by Choice 2030 Comprehensive Plan. This classification is intended to provide areas for higher intensity residential development. With the range of density at 12 to 20 units per acre. The western portion of the property, closest to NC 127 is zoned Corridor Commercial (CC-2), while the eastern portion of the property is zoned High Density Residential. If the property were to be rezoned as requested, the approximately 7 acres of commercial property could be developed to accommodate up to 37,000 square feet of non-residential floor area or up to 140 apartments. The approximately 2.5 acres remaining High Density Residential (R-4) could be developed for up to 50 apartments. The development intensities outlined above are absolute maximums and are likely to decrease due to infrastructure needs and other relevant items. The Hickory Regional Planning Commission did not have a quorum and were unable to conduct the public hearing on January 27, 2021 to consider the petition. Therefore, City Council cannot conduct their public hearing regarding this petition.

This public hearing was advertised in a newspaper having general circulation in the Hickory area on January 22, and January 29, 2021.

Mayor Guess advised the Hickory Regional Planning Commission did not have a quorum and were unable to conduct the public hearing on January 27, 2021 to consider rezoning petition number 20-06. Therefore, City Council would not be conducting the public hearing tonight, it would be held at a later date.

B. Departmental Reports:

1. Hickory Police Department Presentation on LEAD – Presented by Deputy Chief Reed Baer

Mayor Guess asked Deputy Chief Reed Baer to the podium to discuss LEAD.

Deputy Chief Reed Baer presented a PowerPoint presentation. He discussed an update on the LEAD Program, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion. He thought most of City Council were present for the first LEAD presentation just over a year ago. He discussed new numbers and some of the things they had seen and also some exciting news that took place this year with regards to their program. He advised he would give a quick review for those that were not present and also just to give them a reminder of what LEAD was. It was a prearrest diversion program and it utilizes Police Officer discretion to divert low level drug offenders from the traditional criminal justice system and into treatment instead of incarceration. The link was the service operates under what was called a harm reduction framework and included intensive case management with those individuals that were in the program. The harm reduction framework, very simply put, was when they utilize evidence that was feasible and cost effective to prevent and reduce harm. In this case it would reduce harm to the community and the community members.

Deputy Chief Baer explained LEAD Catawba. He referred to the PowerPoint and advised it was a Countywide program, and that program consisted of the law enforcement agencies: Hickory, Newton, Conover, Maiden, Claremont, and the Catawba County Sheriff's Department, as well as local service providers such as Partners Behavioral Health and Catawba Valley Behavioral Health that provide the services to their LEAD clients. The other partner they have in this program was the District Attorney's office. It was a very important piece of this program because as they are diverting out of the criminal justice system, they have to have the folks involved that actually make decisions on what gets prosecuted and what does not. When they went to LEAD, they had to find out what the problem was they were trying to solve. When they went to LEAD in May of 2018, they had seen, just like the rest of the country, a large number of overdose calls increasing. They realized that according to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics around 77 percent of drug offenders were rearrested for drug offenses. History had proven you can't arrest your way out of a drug addiction issue. At the Police Department they try to be problem solvers. They try to utilize community policing philosophy to create partnerships with the community in order to solve these problems.

Deputy Chief Baer explained there was a two-pronged approach to this. You have drug addicts or people suffering from a substance abuse disorder, and they have those individuals selling drugs or drug dealers. LEAD was not a program for folks profiting from selling drugs in the community. They still use the traditional law enforcement tool, arrest, and prosecution, for those individuals that are selling drugs and actually profiting from those sales in the community and harming the community. However, they had to recognize that drug addicts were a different story, someone suffering from an actual disorder. How do they help these individuals become people in the community again who can participate and be well? There were two ways to get into their program and that was a charge diversion or a social referral. He explained the process. Patrol officers make the primary decision on whether or not they can divert a person into LEAD. That was set forth by a series of decisions based on policy and based on the criteria that allows a person to go into LEAD. That included everything from previous interactions or criminal history and what the policy eligibility criteria was. He explained a charge diversion giving a synopsis, they respond to a call for example, maybe shoplifting. A low-level drug offender has perhaps committed larceny in order to support a drug habit. The officer finds out what's going on. This individual was perhaps committing this minor criminal act in order to support a drug habit and may offer them LEAD at that point instead of charging them with the shoplifting offense they would actually divert them into treatment. That individual has 14-days if they choose to, and that was the key with this program. The individuals have to choose and want the assistance. Obviously, they can't force someone into treatment. They offer it to the individuals, and whether or not

they want to try to take advantage of that it was up to them. Officers try to convince them to go down this path instead of continuing a path of being rearrested and rearrested, like they saw earlier in the statistics where 77 percent of folks were getting rearrested for minor drug offenses. They are trying to convince folks that maybe they can help them better their lives. If they fail to complete an assessment within that 14-day period, then that original charge was brought before a magistrate and issued against that individual. If they don't follow through with what they have to do, then they are charged. If they do follow through, then they were put into the LEAD Catawba program. The other way they put people in the program was they divert them socially. With the community policing philosophy, they obviously get to know people in the communities that they serve. Officers are permanently assigned to areas in the City, different neighborhoods. They get to know the residents and the community leaders. They may hear that Mr. Wood has got some drug issues, but he hasn't reached that level where he's committed a crime that would not make him eligible to receive some help through their program. Officers can approach Mr. Wood and talk about the program and try to divert him into the program that way. Obviously, there was not a charge hanging over Mr. Wood's head, however, he still has to get that assessment in 14-days and follow the path that they set for everyone else, which was a warm handoff they call it, to a case manager who actually does intensive case management with that individual and holds their hand through the whole process. The decision to try to offer someone LEAD depends on a whole lot of factors which he displayed on the PowerPoint. Most of it surrounds who they can put in the program because they are diverting individuals to a civilian case manager. This was not a Police Officer. This was a clinician. This was someone who was trained in case management and services such as drug addiction, anger management, all kinds of different kind of services they can offer someone. They have to be careful of who they put in there. If they have someone with a violent criminal history, for example, they can't put them in the program, things like that. Some of the other ineligibility was if someone was selling large amounts of narcotics, if they were under 18, they have some difficulty because they have to have permission to do certain things and they can't follow them if they were a minor. They have a very clear policy of who was eligible, who was not. The officers were trained on that. They get regular updates and they get regular new training whenever something may change. There was a policy committee that decides and evaluates what needs to be changed if anything.

Deputy Chief Baer advised there was a case manager and that case manager provides individual intake and clinical assessments to determine factors contributing to this individual's engagement in substance abuse. They create an individualized, comprehensive treatment plan for these individuals, and then they refer them to services. As he had mentioned before, they actually hold their hand through the process, and they literally hold their hand through the process. Their case manager would drive to the individuals house and knock on the door and say, Mr. Wood, we got a class to get to. Why aren't you up? Why aren't you here? They would get them to that class. He noted the heavy lifting in this program was done by the case manager and their partners in Partner Behavioral Health and Catawba Valley Behavior Health. They do the heavy lifting in this program and really help these individuals suffering from substance abuse disorder. This case manager, every two weeks, meets with the Case Review Committee. That Case Review Committee was made up of individuals from every one of those agencies he had shown earlier. Their case manager literally goes through every single name, of every person in the program, to give an update of what was going on with that individual. That was why it was important to have everyone at the table because they may find that they need to make an adjustment in order to help this person succeed. Or they may find that someone has perhaps, fallen off the wagon and they can't find them. They need to help find these individual and try to reconnect them to the services or something like that. That was a very important piece of this. Every two weeks they were talking about all the cases and getting updates and trying to make decisions to help the case manager get done what they need to get done.

Deputy Chief Baer advised they also provide peer support. Someone who was suffering from addiction relates better to someone who had been there before. He thought that was a given. Any of us that had been through anything were going to relate to someone who has been through something that we had been through or were going through right now. They provide access to services, overdose prevention. They try to also not only have the case manager in there, taking them to classes, getting them the help they need, but also someone right beside them that had been there that could encourage them and basically say, "I've been there and I've gotten through it, you can do it", that encouragement piece. He mentioned the oversight was the Case Review Committee, made up of the members of each agency which he referred to on the PowerPoint. They

meet bi-monthly and the case management goes through and finds out what was going on.

Deputy Chief Baer advised that one of the other benefits to the program was the cost. He had said earlier, you can't arrest your way out of this problem. This was his 25th year in policing. When he started in the 90s, it was not uncommon to deal with an individual who had a substance abuse issue that was committing low level offenses, and to be rearrested and rearrested and rearrested. It drove him crazy because he was like, "How can I help this person?". Back in the 90s with the privatization of mental health services and other things, there really wasn't a whole lot they could divert people to other than arresting them or writing them a ticket and putting it in the system, and that just wasn't where they needed to be. By having something now like this, it gives their officers a tool. They tell their officers they don't look at themselves as law enforcement officers they look at themselves as Police Officers. Law enforcement was a tool of policing. Sometimes you need to use that tool. But sometimes you need another tool. If you try to build a house with just a hammer, you're going to have a very sorry house. But if you have a lot of tools at your disposal, you could build something sustainable and that was what they were trying to do here for these individuals.

Deputy Chief Baer continued with the costs. He referred to the PowerPoint and advised according to North Carolina Public Safety the average daily cost per inmate for 2019 for incarceration was \$103.32 a day, or just under \$38,000 a year. The costs of LEAD, once they get into the program was about \$29 a day, and then once they get the individuals into services, that reduced to about \$17 a day. In costs to the community just in dollars, it was also much more beneficial.

Deputy Chief Baer discussed other benefits. Diverse individuals immediately into wraparound services, which include treatment, emergency housing, food, medication and treatment, vocational training, etc. Over the course of the last year since he last spoke to Council, they had added a few elements to their program. They now have a Community Navigator Casey McCall. They also have Charles Mackie with Success Essentials for the Save Communities program. Both of these individuals were brought onto their committee so that they also are plugged in with their LEAD clients. They may find that they have a LEAD client who was doing well in the addiction arena but was having trouble finding a job because of a criminal history. Mr. Mackie can try to connect that individual with employment. They are trying to spread their web so that they are not just addiction services and providing mental health services, but they can actually connect them to a job, job training, things of that nature or housing, because they do have a few LEAD clients who were homeless, and so they try to connect them to housing through that. It also saves time when officers respond. To get tied up on an arrest with the paperwork and the process and going before a Magistrate, you're tying up a police resource from anywhere from an hour to a couple of hours, depending on what's going on. When they have someone accept LEAD, they could hand them directly and connect them to their case manager. It frees up that officer to be able to go out and do what he or she needs to be doing from a police standpoint. It also reduces drug related injuries to include overdose, death, and spread of communicable disease, because you don't have as many people out there using, perhaps sharing needles, or overdosing on whatever narcotics it was that they were taking.

Deputy Chief Baer discussed their status. As of December 31, 2020, they had referred 94 individuals to LEAD. A referral was basically when an officer says, I think you're a good candidate and he would offer them to these services and asked if they were interested. And they say yes, so that was a referral. There was a process that happens after that. Out of those 94 referrals, 59 were social referrals and 35 were charge diversions. Out of that 94 they only had 35 that were actually charge situations, which was not a really big surprise when you consider the community policing model that they have so many social referrals. It was because their officers tend to get to know the people in their communities, and they may know that there was a family member or someone struggling and now that they have this program they had been very proactive and tried to offer it to individuals they know. He advised 24 of those 94 were not eligible due to their residency. He mentioned that Hickory was a hub, so they get a lot of individuals that don't live here, an unfortunately they can't follow them if they don't live here. It was just impossible because their resources were in Catawba County. He gave as an example, they had a young lady from Cleveland County, and she just happened to be here, found her way here through her substance abuse. They were able to connect her to Phoenix Services in Cleveland County. They don't have a LEAD program, but they were able to make a connection for her to their services, and hopefully she was able to get some help. They just don't leave them and say good luck, goodbye. They try to do the right thing if services are available. Out of that 94 they had 28 people failed to complete that clinical

assessment. As he had said earlier, they have 14-days to complete it. If they don't complete it then they were not accepted into LEAD. That was what happened if they don't. Right now, 42 were actually placed into LEAD and 17 of those 42 had been recharged or charged with additional offenses since starting the program. Which meant that basically 60 percent of their clients did not reenter the criminal justice system. When they first started this they really didn't know. They knew their goal was to get as many as they could. If he could stand before Council and say that well over half of the people, they were referring to this program don't reenter the program, he thought that was a success.

Deputy Chief Baer discussed how that compared with other programs. The biggest program in this Country was in Seattle, Washington. It was the first program and had been around the longest. When they started, they had 60 percent of their folks less likely to have criminal justice involvement in the first six months, and within two-years that rate was 58 percent. In the first six months, 80 percent of their clients did not reenter the criminal justice system. Now, within two-years, they were at 60. COVID had a very dramatic impact on their program. He was not going to stand here in front of them and say the only reason they were not higher than 60 was because of COVID. He advised that he had seen with his own eyes that when COVID hit and the access to face to face services dropped off for those many months they had a lot of clients that were on the fence of doing okay and unfortunately they fell off the fence. That was the importance of that face to face treatment. They are hoping as things hopefully normalized; they would see those numbers increase closer to that first set of numbers they were pulling back in the beginning of the program. That was what they were hoping for.

Deputy Chief Baer mentioned another thing that had happened over the last year. They were contacted by Duke University in July of 2019. They had heard about their program and they had been studying prearrest diversion. Apparently, they were told that they were the fastest growing program in the State and that they had also had the most success of any program in the State. They wanted them to participate with three other programs in the study. They were currently involved in the study with Duke University. Their goal was reducing recidivism which he had talked about. They were trying to get folks to quit going in and out of jail. Hopefully, help them with their substance abuse disorder. Improving the quality of life for their LEAD participants, which lined right up with what their goal was, and reducing criminal justice and public health costs associated with substance abuse disorders, which was something else he had talked about. When they heard about this research project, they realized that their goals were the same as their goals and they absolutely wanted to participate, because at the end they were also looking at evaluating challenges and successes in the program's implementation of sustainment, which they were very interested in. Although they consider themselves fairly bright, he would much rather have some folks from Duke University tell him how it was going because they were much smarter than he was. They would hopefully have those results at some point this year, and he would be happy to share them with Council and tell them what they found out or what they said about their program, as well as the three other programs that they had in their study. If Council was interested, on April 1, 2021, on Duke Law School's event page, they were actually hosting a prearrest diversion summit. He advised he was going to be one of the panelists. It was going to be virtual. They could go to the Duke Law Events page and register. He thought they would be able to log in and watch if they were interested. He encouraged Council to do that. It should be a really good piece of information and exploration of how LEAD was moving on. This was going to continue. North Carolina prearrest diversion was something they had been involved in for two-years now. It continues to build and continues to build, and they hope to continue to build on the program and continue success.

Deputy Chief Baer referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a map. He explained the map showed programs that have popped up around the Country since he last spoke to Council. The different colors represented what stages they were in. It was kind of spread out all over the Country and continues to grow. They get calls every month from different places in the Country asking if they could get their policies, asking if they could come and watch one of their case staff meetings, which actually, what COVID had done was with virtual they had actually been able to accommodate more of these folks who were interested. He advised it was a list of the actual locations. That was where they were today. He asked Council for any questions.

Alderwoman Patton commented when Mr. Casey McCall spoke with Council several months ago, he said he has to be there when they're ready. It sounded very similar to what Deputy Chief Baer was saying. They have that decision making, 14-days, but they also have to have the want to, to make a change, and

it seems to be working. What they were doing, and Mr. McCall was doing seemed to be dovetailing.

Deputy Chief Baer advised they recognized that within that first year, and they saw all of these pieces that they thought could fit together nicely. They call it meeting people where they are. It was the expectation that if they are ready, they want to try to offer them help. Like Alderwoman Patton said, if you're not ready and you don't want it, they can't force you. They had a lot of great success stories, and he hoped maybe he could come back some time to share some. He would like to bring one of their clients in, if they could get someone who would like to come and talk about it.

Alderwoman Patton commended them on doing a great job.

Alderman Zagaroli asked for the date of the Duke event.

Deputy Chief Baer advised April 1st.

Alderwoman Williams asked if Deputy Chief Baer could send Council the information for the 1st.

Deputy Chief Baer confirmed he would.

Alderman Wood asked what the capacity of the program was right now. How many clients could they serve at this point?

Deputy Chief Baer replied that was an unknown. They continue to build it. They are currently serving the numbers that he showed. They rely heavily on Catawba County Behavioral Health to do that estimation. The Police Department could refer people indefinitely. When they handoff folks to the case manager for help, then it was on those organizations. They had been building. They had gotten some grant funding and had been adding positions. They had been planning on being able to expand, that was their plan.

Alderman Wood asked the average length of stay of a client in the program.

Deputy Chief Baer advised with their criteria; you never graduate. There were no congratulations. The services are there for them as long as they need. They do have folks that have been in the process. They have gotten to a point where they are doing much better. They've gained employment, and the case manager checks in with them every once in a while. They're not active per se, but that would be the closest to what Alderman Wood was asking.

Alderman Seaver commented those folks may become good counselors in the program themselves.

Deputy Chief Baer commented that was what they look for, to try to get some of them to consider peer support for new clients that are coming in that needs some assistance.

Alderman Seaver questioned Deputy Chief Baer regarding what he had said about it was for the drug abuser and the one that was addicted, but not for the dealer. He asked what about the guy that kind of was in the middle that he deals drugs to support his habit or something. He was sure there were a lot of those.

Deputy Chief Baer advised the policy was very broken down. It had to do with criminal convictions, of what kind of convictions this individual had. Was there a history here of selling? They have individuals who say they want help and they don't. They say it at that moment, because they do believe that it was a way to get out of a charge. And then they find out obviously, that was not the case. They have a mechanism that they use to try to deal with that as well.

Alderman Seaver commented at least they had their chance.

Deputy Chief Baer responded absolutely. It was about trying to meet folks where they are and trying to solve a problem and help people. They try to look for things, even if it was not proven, if they think it's a good idea, they were going to try it.

Alderman Seaver commented it may be a personal problem they have causing their addiction or whatever that they may not even be aware of.

Deputy Chief Baer advised the experts from their partners, Catawba Valley Behavioral Health (CVBH) do a fantastic job. They work very hard, but they do the heavy lifting, they really do. Theirs was more of a mindset and a culture.

Alderman Seaver commented he was sure in the long run that it made their job easier. With the paperwork and all that they had to do for an arrest. You got people there, that are coming in to help them and they could go on and work on the things that do need their attention.

Deputy Chief Baer commented contrary to what a lot of folks believe their goal was not to arrest people. They don't want to go arrest as many people as they can. Their goal was to try to protect the community and help the community.

Alderman Williams thanked Deputy Chief Baer for what they were doing for the community. This is a great program and he was sure they were helping a lot of individuals. He asked the average age and social, economic, and racial demographic of the people that they were helping. He referred to Mr. Mackie and the call-in program. He didn't know if these individuals were in the call-in program to counsel them. He didn't know if they implemented that into what they were doing currently. He asked if they did something kind of similar to that. He didn't know if anyone was familiar with the call-in program that they do with individuals that are struggling with different crimes and whatnot.

Deputy Chief Baer advised the call-in was Safe Communities. It was designed for violent offenders, so it was a different area. Although, yes, drugs and violence definitely correlate from time to time. Those individuals that come to the call-in were specifically for violent offenses. You see domestics and weapons type charges. They brought Mr. Mackie in to do just what Alderman Williams was saying. Let him be a part of this and figure out how they tie this in even more. And right now, as far as they had gotten was a lot of their LEAD clients are in need of employment, and he has that employment piece. They plan to build this out as much as they possibly can and see how much they can put those two things together. With regards to the breakdown of demographics. It was all over the place. When they go to do a LEAD referral it was because they had been called. They get called to two million-dollar houses and they get called to homeless camps. It was across the board. Demographics were the same way. Every race was represented. They have some non-English speaking clients that they had tried to get into the program. One thing that they hope that Duke can do was when their looking at certain populations, for example, non-English speaking population, and maybe there was a reluctance to accept help. How can they break through that barrier? That was what they were hoping Duke could look at. That was one of the things that was listed in some of their information. They've got the experts to do it. He was hoping they could tell them, "Hey, we see that there's a weakness here in the program, and maybe this is what you need to address next." Hopefully they would have even more answers as time moves on.

Alderman Williams thanked Deputy Chief Baer again for all the work that they were doing. He greatly appreciated what they were doing for the community.

City Council members thanked Deputy Chief Baer.

Mayor Guess commented keep up the good work.

2. Next Steps Regarding Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Hickory – Presentation by Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller.

Mayor Guess asked Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller to the podium to discuss the next steps regarding racial and ethnic disparities in Hickory.

Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller presented a PowerPoint presentation. He mentioned that there was no heat in this area of City Hall. They tried to get the part, but it wasn't available. They had placed heaters in Council Chambers earlier and had tried to turn them on, but it tripped the breaker and blew the computer, but it was back on now. He advised City Manager Warren Wood sent his regrets he was called away. He thought that he may join them, and if he did, he would hand the presentation over to him. He reminded Council at their last meeting they heard from the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, Taylor Dellinger on a racial disparity report of the makeup of the City of Hickory. They published that report through social media and the media. City Manager Warren Wood wanted to give an update on that and talk about the City's next steps going forward. From a staff perspective, they determined a number of takeaways, major takeaways. Obviously, there was more than what he had listed. The White and African-American populations were aging the fastest in our

community. The Hispanic and Asian populations were growing the fastest. There was a large household income gap between the African-American and Hispanic group and the White and Asian-American group. In addition, there was a large educational achievement gap between the African-American group primarily and all of the other groups. From educational attainment there was a gap between the African-American Hispanics and the White and Asian-American group. Our economy was transitioning to one that will require more advanced skill sets and as a result, will offer more pay to those that are prepared for that type of an economy. They felt that it was vital that the City's residents are prepared for and connected to the employment opportunities that exist today and going forward in the future.

Mr. Miller discussed economic opportunity and opportunity to improve on these disparities that they see in the community. Hickory and Catawba County had been focused on economic development and job growth. Three years ago, the City started the Office of Business Development. They tried to focus on three things as part of Council's goals, population growth, job growth, and tax base growth. He thought they had done a fairly good job with that. It had reflected in many of the areas, but as they saw from the disparity report, they still have work to do. He added, if they would recall from that disparity report, they don't have current numbers. Obviously, they went 2014 through 2018, so they don't have 2019 and 2020 numbers. Hopefully, later this year, when the census numbers come in, they would have a better indicator of what else they still need to do. In addition, Council had a great partnership with Caldwell County with the addition of MDI. That was certainly an economic opportunity and once that gets built, that will provide a number of jobs increase. As well as Burke County. They had discussions and the Mayor and Alderwoman Patton had discussions with Burke County, and they were excited about that partnership that they could have in all three counties that Hickory was part of. The City's economy was growing. Every time he presented the last few quarterly reports, he would note the economic activity that they had. Those opportunities were there. As City Manager Warren Wood mentioned in a prior meeting, they need to add about 500 people a year to the population to keep up with the workforce. Right now, there are employers looking for workers. They need to bring those 500 new people to Hickory each year to fill those jobs. Over the last several years, Catawba County Economic Development Corporation had announced 2,000 new jobs. All of those 2,000 jobs paid an above Catawba County average wage in excess of \$44,000. That was a good thing. That was one positive that they were certainly doing. Additionally, they were told from the Workforce Development Center that there are currently 8,300 vacant jobs in the metro area. How do they connect the City's residents to those jobs? In Hickory they are blessed that they have a number of community assets and investments that already exist, which will help prepare residents for the economy of the future.

Mr. Miller mentioned the citizens should know that the City has its own school system, even though it's not City of Hickory, but Hickory residents vote on school board members. As Alderwoman Williams well knows, of the school board for the residents here in Hickory. That was one outlet that they have as a resident. They vote for those individuals. They need to talk to those individuals and let them know about their concerns and challenges that they're facing in the community in the education work. City of Hickory doesn't do education. Hickory Schools does. Likewise, part of Hickory was in the St. Stephen's or Catawba County School District, so that was also another partner with Catawba County Schools. As a Catawba County resident, they're able to vote for Catawba County school board members. The City of Hickory specifically was one of eight cities across the State that has their own library system. That was primarily a County function. We're blessed to have a library system in Hickory. We're further blessed that we have a main library, Patrick Beaver and we have a branch library in Ridgeview for a number of years. Fortunately, with Council's approval, the Ridgeview Branch Library was currently undergoing an expansion. The main library, Patrick Beaver Library, was situated in the SALT Block. There was a science center, art museum, planetarium, and Western Piedmont Symphony was there. There are a number of entities on that campus which would encourage learning and cultural activities. CVCC (Catawba Valley Community College) was located in Hickory and one of the best Community Colleges, not only in the State but in the United States, He advised they had those statistics and he thought they had been sent to Council as to where they rank compared to other community colleges. The Small Business Center resides at CVCC and its services were free to Catawba County citizens. Council was aware of K64. They started providing Chromebooks to seventh graders a number of years ago. He thought now they were providing that to third graders as well and the high school students. They also provide internet service to those students if they need that. The City of Hickory last year partner with Partnership

for Children, any child in the City limits of Hickory 0 to 5 could get a new book delivered to their home every single month. All they had to do was ask for it.

Alderman Seaver interjected that was the Imagination Library.

Mr. Miller confirmed it was Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The Hickory Trail system that everyone was very familiar with, they were going to add 10 miles of conduit in that trail system, which would enable broadband fiber, high-speed broadband fiber to the community. And finally, but certainly not least, Lenoir-Rhyne University. That was a four-year educational institution that was right here almost in downtown Hickory. There are others, but those were the main ones to try to help those disparities that they saw in the report.

Mr. Miller discussed workforce preparedness and economic advancement. What entities do we have and are those entities fulfilling their respective mission? The City of Hickory, in this particular area, were really, really good at infrastructure and hopefully they had seen over the last few years economic development. They City provides roads, sidewalks, water, sewer, infrastructure that folks need to live and work in the City limits of Hickory. Catawba County as well as Burke and Caldwell, but primarily Catawba County. They, along with the State, provides the funding for education Statewide and more specifically in Catawba County. School funding was provided by the County. They need them at the table. They also do economic development. The City was partnering currently with the Trivium Corporate Center with Catawba County and that had been very successful on economic development fronts. Hickory Public Schools, as he mentioned, their mission was education just like Catawba County public schools. He mentioned the City's residents were benefited in the educational areas with those two entities. K64's mission was to develop a future ready workforce and lifetime learning. They have to also be at the table. CVCC, he mentioned earlier, Workforce Development, and they also have small business assistance at CVCC. The Western Piedmont Council of Governments, who spoke to Council at their last meeting, do workforce development. That was the entity that had the 8,300 jobs that were currently available to the four County area. They also work with job placement. Catawba County Economic Development Corporation was focused on the economic development and adding those well-paying jobs for the residents to be able to go after. Those were the entities that they want to talk to Council about in the next steps. Certainly, some of those. He advised on February 23rd at noon at CVCC, they were planning a special City Council workshop and they had invited these entities: K64, CVCC and the Workforce Solutions complex and the Western Piedmonts Council of Governments Career Center. The goal was to understand what these entities do and what their role and mission were in the community. Determine what work was currently being done to connect disadvantaged communities to those employment opportunities. What work was being done to help those individuals overcome employment obstacles? Was it the need for transportation? Was it the need for education? What was it? And finally identify the gaps that exist in serving Hickory residents and preparing them for success in the future.

Mayor Guess added that would be a public meeting.

Mr. Miller confirmed that was a public meeting and the public was invited. They would certainly have to be social distanced. He asked for questions and comments.

Alderman Seaver thought that it was another step in the right direction. Those things that Mr. Miller listed were things they need to work on. A lot of times there was a job out there and it was available, but they can't get there, transportation. He thought they were working on ways. The Soup Kitchen worked some with getting some homeless people there to take jobs. Get them to work every day. There were things like that, like providing free bus passes to people to get to work. There were ways to get there if you want to get there bad enough.

Mr. Miller referred to the opportunity with the Soup Kitchen and he advised the City had taken advantage of that as well. They had at least two individuals that they hired from that program that the Soup Kitchen was transporting them to work. He knew one of the two was definitely successful, he didn't think the other one stayed, but the City participated in that program, because they didn't have transportation and the Soup Kitchen helped with that.

Mayor Guess commented this was a continuation of the City's ongoing efforts that bring people to the table and have other discussion, and to be able to get a direction on where they need to go. As he had already said, as time goes by, they will continue to be updated with statistical information from Western Piedmont Council of Governments and the census. All of that will factor in. This

was going to be an ongoing discussion. He referred to Deputy Chief Baer's comments regarding the LEAD program, you were not going to say you've been led, its over, we're done. He suspected that this would be something that would continue for some time.

Alderwoman Williams thought sometimes they actually overlook some of the things that they were doing. One of the things that had come out in some of the materials from the community related to housing and affordable housing. That was a whole area of the City that they actually were working on initiatives. But not just the City in conjunction with private developers, Habitat. She thought one of the main points they had to make was government can't do this alone. The community can't do it alone. The private sector, they really have to work together. Some of these initiatives that she was hearing about where they want to bring all these entities together, she thought the NAACP was spearheading that task force. The City needs to be participating too.

Mayor Guess commented obviously they were engaged in this, and they were going to be a partner in this. He thought this was a good beginning to a program that will continue for some time. He asked for any other comments or questions.

Alderman Seaver asked when the census data would come out.

Mr. Miller had not heard. With COVID obviously, that had been extended. His guess was sometime later this summer, but he didn't know for sure.

Mayor Guess thanked Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller for stepping up, he was able to do the presentation where they could actually see the font on the screen, and he accepted that challenge and did a very good job.

Mr. Miller advised all he did was pinch hit.

City Council commended him for a good job.

Mayor Guess reminded everyone that workshop was going to be a public meeting at CVCC on February 23rd at noon. Everyone certainly was invited to attend that workshop as a member of the public.

Alderman Williams commented it was good to see the NAACP present. He commented it was not an overnight solution. This was going to take time. It was going to take all of them as Alderwoman Williams said, it was going to take all of them working together. They were working against so many different things on so many different levels and it was going to take so much for them. There was no solution. It was just going to take them working together and putting forth a lot of effort from all of these entities, including Council, and continuing to do research as the COG had done, which they did a great job. There were some disappointing things in that report and there were some things that needed to be worked on, but again, this was something that was going to take time. They have to be willing. All this time things may have been swept under the rug, or it's like when his wife asked him to fix that doorknob, and he will fix it later, and he kept putting it off. City Manager Warren Wood and everyone took it on head-on. Some things they may not have wanted to do, you may not have wanted to hear, but they put forth the effort to try to start working towards a solution and the NAACP has ideas and the community has ideas and things that they want to do. That's it, they have to keep pressing forward towards that. He liked what they were doing, but they were just scratching the surface, because they were fighting and peeling back hundreds of years of just that mindset and things that are in place. They have to continue to press forward. He thanked staff, Council, and everybody for what they were doing. The state of not just our community, America, the world, there was a lot of work that needs to be done. And again, this was not an overnight fix. Who knows how long it was going to take for them to start catching up some of these gaps? The thing was they were working towards evening up those gaps. He was proud to see that. He was happy to see that, and he was just praying that they could continue to close these gaps. He thanked everybody. They just got to put forth effort, including himself, and all the entities involved.

Alderman Wood commented one of the things that had struck him about this was, it had been an opportunity for him to become more individually aware. You couldn't understate the importance and the power of that, of becoming individually aware of what was going on. He invited people to participate. United Way was doing a 21 Day Equity Challenge. It was online, and it was a chance to read, and it gives you insight into equity issues. It started back in January, but you could catch up and it goes on into February. He encouraged people to go to the United Way website and check that out. It was enlightening. He thought that

was an important part of this process, becoming individually aware because you don't know what you don't know. He encouraged people again to check out United Ways website the 21 Day Equity Challenge, <https://www.unitedwaydm.org/equity-challenge> .

Alderman Williams thanked Alderman Wood for the information.

3. Appointments to Boards and Commissions

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION

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

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT
Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT
Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT
Differently-Abled and is African-American or Other Minority (Council Appoints) VACANT

HICKORY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms With Unlimited Appointments)
(Appointed by City Council)
Brookford (Mayor Appoints with Recommendation from Brookford) VACANT

LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
At-Large (Mayor Appoints) VACANT
(Unexpired Term of Helen Devlin)

PUBLIC ART COMMISSION

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 3-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Ward 4 (D. Williams Appoints) VACANT

PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 5-Year Terms) (Appointed by the Mayor)
Position 3 (Mayor Appoints) VACANT
Position 9 (Mayor Appoints) (Unexpired Term of Rebecca Clements) VACANT

YOUTH COUNCIL

(Terms Expiring 6-30; 1-Year Terms) (Appointed by City Council)
Youth Council Applicant Review Committee Recommends the Following Appointments:

FTF VACANT
HCAM VACANT
HHS VACANT
Homeschool 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. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk