June 30, 2026

A Special Joint Meeting of the City Council of the City of Hickory, Catawba County Board of Commissioners and Trivium Corporate Center, Inc. Board of Directors was held at the Catawba Valley Community College, Workforce Solutions Complex, Located at 1980 Startown Road, Hickory, North Carolina, on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., with the following members present:

	Hank Guess	
Tony Wood		Anthony Freeman
Charlotte C. Williams	Aldermen	Arnita M. Dula
Danny Seaver		Jill Patton

A quorum was present.

Also present were: City Manager Warren Wood, Assistant City Manager Steve Miller, City Attorney Timothy Swanson, and City Clerk Debbie D. Miller.

Catawba County Commissioners present were: Chair Randy Isenhower, Austin Allran, Barbara Beatty, and Cole Setzer.

Also present were: Catawba County Manager Mary Furtado, Catawba County Attorney Jodi Stewart, Catawba County Clerk Dale Stiles, Catawba County Economic Development Corporation Vice President Nathan Huret, and Catawba County Economic Development Corporation President Scott Millar

Trivium Corporate Center, Inc. Board of Directors present were: Warren Wood, Randy Isenhower, Mary Furtado, Hank Guess, Scott Millar, Barbara Beatty, Charlotte Williams, and Clerk to Trivium Corporate Center, Inc. Board of Directors Dale Stiles.

I. Welcome

II. Convene Catawba County Board of Commissioners, Confirm Quorum - Chairman C. Randy Isenhower

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower called the meeting to order. All Commissioners were present except for Robert Abernethy. A quorum was present.

III. Convene City of Hickory Council, Confirm Quorum - Mayor Hank Guess

Mayor Guess called the meeting to order. All Councilmembers were present. A quorum was present.

IV. Convene Trivium Corporate Center Inc. Board of Directors - Board Chairman Hank Guess

Trivium Corporate Center Inc. Board Chairman Hank Guess called the meeting to order. All of the board members were present. A quorum was present.

V. Project Goat Overview and Incentives – Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret gave a PowerPoint presentation. He presented background on a project that they believed represented a meaningful moment for this community and asked both governing bodies to consider approving related agreements, economic development agreements alongside a purchase and sale agreement for Lot 5 of Trivium Corporate Center.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret discussed the context of Trivium Corporate Center, the specifics of what they planned to build here, and how the incentive structure was designed. Before they open up for public comment, he would spend a moment addressing a number of concerns and questions they had seen circulated since the public hearing notice appeared. He thought that was important. Obviously, they have a large public gathering present today. He was going to answer and address some of those questions. For instance, one of those he would address at the beginning. This was not related to a data center project. He noted it was referred to as Project Goat, they used this through the entire process, the confidential recruitment process, and the due diligence phase, but today they could actually use the name of the company, Goldhofer Incorporated.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret discussed the history of the company. In 1705, more than the entire country's founding, - 250 years, obviously, this year- 320 years ago, they were starting this discussion. The family name was Goldhofer. After World War II, the 8th generation, Martin, formally established what they now knew as Goldhofer Trailer. They were building agricultural equipment, smaller trailers, good regional work for that part of Germany. But then something happened that changed the trajectory of the business. Goldhofer had a nearby friend. His name was Liebherr. He had been around the construction industry, the crane industry. That was a name they knew well. His shop was about 10 miles down the road, and Liebert had built his first excavator crane, but had no way to formally move it. Mr. Goldhofer designed it. That friendship between two craftspeople, in small towns, more or less, Goldhofer was what it is today, the global leader in moving things that could not be moved any other way, specializing in heavy haul transport, custom trailers for industrial infrastructure projects, and a growing line of airport ground equipment. Aircraft tractor cargo transporters were customized by major airports worldwide. He referred to the photo of a piece of equipment which was at Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. Today, the company employs roughly 1,000 people worldwide and generates roughly $300

million euros a year. Since 2000, the company had actually been operating under a profit foundation ownership, with a portion of any profits going back to charitable work.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret discussed the story of what the business community decided on investment. In 2014, the voters of the City of Hickory approved a bond referendum. Alongside Catawba County, that vote funded the original purchase of the property from the Lutz family. It was a statement of intent that this community wanted to continue a world-class industrial investment and that this community believed in what was working. It was worth betting on. Over the following decades Trivium grew into the region's flagship and advanced manufacturing destination. Company by company, announcement by announcement, some of which had been in this very room, each representing a government body setting not unlike the one they were in today. Goldhofer would become their third international company in Trivium Corporate Center. With their arrival, Trivium Corporate Center would have created more than 850 jobs and generated $600 million in cumulative investments across all those tenants. This signified a pretty big and awesome milestone for the Trivium Corporate Center. There remained one external lot, Lot 9, on Robinwood Road, but this completed the internal makeup of Trivium Corporate Center. Lot 9, the last lot. He referred to the PowerPoint and noted the location of the lot. It was just to the west of the Corning facility and across the street from their other facility that was built a couple of years ago. He advised that Goldhofer had spent 9 months evaluating sites across the County and the United States. This was a serious, professionally managed process. Site consultants, engineering consultants, and architects were brought in. Catawba County and the City of Hickory competed for it using every single argument in their arsenal, really to make the best case for this. That competition was real. One of the final alternatives was a site offering what he described as "flat and free." No land cost, little to no site preparation required. That was a difficult argument to overcome, but they bought it. Arguing about the quality of the workforce, cost of doing business, the quality of life to live here, the infrastructure in Trivium, and the responsibilities of the local governments were easy to see. He thought they clearly saw the sense that this community wanted them here. What they planned to build here was a phased North American campus. Phase 1 was an 80,000-square-foot production facility focused on their air, plus ground transportation equipment. Within 2 to 3 years, they anticipated adding a Hall 2 dedicated to specialized transportation business. Looking further out, potential third phase along with the relocation of the US headquarters and engineering from Florida. Goldhofer's intent was not to simply open a facility here. Their intent was to make Catawba County and the City of Hickory their home.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret advised in terms of jobs, this was what the agreement was before them today to codify. The minimum commitment was 80 full-time positions with an average annual wage of $63,000. More than 25% of those positions were expected to pay over $100,000. These were engineering positions, technical assembly careers, management, or production. They were talking about the kind of jobs that advance individuals and families more into this community. He referred to the PowerPoint and displayed an initial rendering of what the facility would look like. It would change over time as they look further into the site, but obviously it was a company of quality that he had come to know over the last 9 months. He had come to respect them greatly, and he thought they were going to be a tremendous contributor.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret discussed the incentives, because that was obviously an important part of why they were here for both governing bodies and the public. Using their standard incentive matrix, Goldhofer qualified as a Level 4 incentive, which in typical cases would be 80% over 6 years, the maximum value, at least at the County dollar level, approximately $486,000. However, two factors were suggestive of a more aggressive approach. First, as he already mentioned, Lot 5, as he had shown in the picture, Lot 5 was an ungraded parcel of land. Its site preparation experienced an estimated cost of $2 million to make it suitable. Second, as he mentioned, they were competing against the site, another State offering a significant real estate property. “Flat and free”, if they remembered that term. Staff recommended a structure focusing on reducing upfront cost while maintaining performance accountability. He advised the structure they were recommending, recognizing the property was owned equally by the City of Hickory and Catawba County, 50/50. First, the land would be sold to Goldhofer at $25,000 per acre. This was a reduction from the $55,000 per acre asking price. That translated to a purchase price of approximately $556,000 total, the City and County each receiving $278,000. He recognized the that City, and County, received a substantial number of grant dollars, infrastructure, road, water, and sewer. A lot of those dollars had gone into saving public, State dollars, and grants had gone into the ground there. There were a lot of grant dollars that helped make Trivium possible. Second, both the City and the County would make 3 annual payments, $90,000, up to $270,000 per jurisdiction. The City and the County would each receive $278,000 for the sale, and each would then grant $270,000 over 3 years upon verified performance. In essence, self-funding incentive. Importantly, all this information and their performance was verified. Everything in the agreement before them was tied to documented results, 22.5% median job, the average wage, all of it confirmed, all of it by the end of 2030. If those were not met, or some endorsement, if they had not completed, or the US headquarters had not relocated, any of the factors that he detailed previously, there were provisions within this prior payment, penalties, or even repurchase right, should they suspend it, not even complete or finish construction. He acknowledged that previous Trivium related land transactions were not the same. This had actually been a fairly common transaction form, meaning reduced land price or a grant or both. This was consistent with how they had structured a number of private agreements in the park, and these government bodies had reviewed and approved of similar structures before. Likewise, the structure also suggested the following: that 321-year-old company was going to be paying taxes for the next 321 years to the City of Hickory and Catawba County.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret addressed a number of concerns, valid concerns and inherent concerns. He thought everybody that was gathered in this room right now loved this community, that everyone wanted to see this community improve. They

want better schools, they want better parks, they want better amenities, they want a better place to live. That was why they were here. That was made possible really through something like this. He thought someone from the outside wants to invest in their community, have diverse opportunity alongside the investment. That tax base allowed for those services to improve. He would answer questions before or after the public comment period from Council or the Board of Commissioners, or even from the public. He advised the grant payments funded by the City of Hickory and Catawba County land sale; the governments received 100 percent of property taxes from day 1. Undepreciated net receipts over 10 years for City of Hickory estimated $860,000 and Catawba County $750,000, again helping support the services and the growth and the betterment of the community that they all desired. When the City of Hickory voters approved the bond referendum in 2014, they made a statement. They said they believed in what the City, community, and County would become. Today, 12 years later, they were seeing fulfillment of that statement. Trivium Corporate Center lot by lot, company by company, was built on that token. He asked the governing bodies to conduct the public hearings and when appropriate, consider the approval of the economic development agreements, the purchase and sale agreement of Lot 5, and authorization of those related documents. He was happy to answer questions before and after the public comment.

VI. Questions by Elected Bodies

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower asked if there were any questions. There were none.

City of Hickory Mayor Guess asked if there were any questions from Council.

Alderwoman Williams asked about the timeline for actual construction on the project.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret advised their original intent was to be under construction by this July. They were behind. This process played out a little bit longer than they anticipated. He anticipated that potentially early fall, mid-fall, that they would start construction. He thought that 2028 was a very realistic goal.

Alderman Wood asked about the job requirement. Could it be mixed between aerospace, transport, engineering and headquarters, or were those going to be discrete units across time? The development of these?

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret advised within the 80 jobs, it was really a production based environment. On the headquarters side, there would be an engineering component if they were moving that forward. But then it was really a lot of electromechanical assembly. A lot of what they were going to do was going to be going out and building business products. It would look a lot like the 100 plus manufacturers in terms of production that are here now.

Alderwoman Dula thought one of the points here was highly likely a majority of the jobs would be filled by locals. She asked was that anticipated to be the jobs making around $63,000 or lower, or were they talking about the executive positions?

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret thought that was all positions. There was always a concern that there was going to be a lot of movement, they have an existing operation in Florida. He thought there would be some. The CEO, for instance, was going to relocate. He had a small family. He was going to relocate here. But as he understands it, of those 80 jobs, they were talking 70 of those 80 jobs were easily going to be open to the open market. That could be filled locally, that could be filled by someone in the region, or someone that moves here. That was a concern always, if they were bringing something in they would not have that diversity of opportunity here. He had not seen anything that would suggest otherwise.

Alderwoman Dula commented based on the nature of the industry, did he believe that they have individuals or people in the community who were ready to go? They have the skill set or ability to be trained by a facility like the Workforce Solutions Center where there was training in all kinds of fields, or would they require additional training, or would it be in-house training?

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret commented that was a huge part of every argument they had ever known. The very first meeting they had was at the Dale Earnhardt Regional Workforce Innovation Complex. The second meeting with their parent company CEO and the US-based CEO were here on Saturday. The idea, what they always effectively sell, was they have a baseline. They have a very large contingency of manufacturers here that raise that dynamic. A lot of workforces here. His argument here was slightly different. It was a diverse industry that they do not have present in the region. That does not mean that there were a lot of transferable skills that they needed for that. Yes, training would be involved. The Community College, CVCC, was a great one in their backyard. They were fortunate for that. That helped to make the argument, that they saw if they were willing to put the dollars and energy to facilitate this, there was obviously going to be energy efforts to help them build a pipeline. He thought it was going to be some in-house training, obviously, because it was unique to them, but it was going to fall on outside partners as well.

Alderman Wood asked Mr. Huret to touch upon any support that this project received from the State and the financials.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret advised they went through a process, and it actually came out this morning. The Governor's office approved the North Carolina grant. That was a competitive grant program, meaning without the support of the State, without

support of locals, this would not happen. It fulfills that requirement, but it allowed them, as they grew, they could have 25% increments, meaning hiring, investment, they could actually request, he thought they received a $200,000 grant, but those dollars actually trickled out. They received that in asking for help by the Community Colleges to provide training dollars, but that would go directly to this community.

Mayor Guess asked for any other questions. There were none.

VII. Public Hearing – Project Goat

A. Catawba County Board of Commissioners
B. Hickory City Council
C. Trivium Corporate Center Board of Directors

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower advised at this time they would open the public hearings for Catawba County, the City of Hickory and Trivium Corporate Board. The public hearings would run concurrently for all the boards. Comments would be limited to this project, Project Goat, with Goldhofer. He asked if anyone wished to make any comments with regard to this project, to please come forward and give their name and they would be glad to hear from them.

Mr. Josh Nixon, lived in the St. Stephens community and was a local educator. He was speaking up for the residents and workers to talk about Catawba County's need for more transparency. It was honestly difficult to prepare comments for today because information leading up to this hearing was so vague. He was very media literate. He was one of just a few residents that showed up for the original hearing that Ms. Furtado proposed, the one with more money for local education. He had trouble finding out what today was actually about. And if it was difficult for him, that meant that it was literally invisible to most of their residents. And paired with the hearing being held at a time of day when most residents were at work. Because he was a teacher he was able to be present. That threw a shadow of obfuscation over today's hearing. They were getting the impression that this hearing clearly was not meant for working people like them. They see a proposal that clearly had been discussed and understood beforehand by local governments and a corporation without their knowledge and input. They had been told promises about economic impacts and jobs, but what they knew was that today's promises were not tomorrow's guarantees, and that time and again corporations show them that they were only one market adjustment, one legal battle, one regulatory change, or one shift in public sentiment away from making changes that would generate profits for them at their expense. The Vice President stated, this was not about data centers, but they do not know what was down the road. They knew that Generative AI and data centers were inextricably linked to all corporate development today. They may be trading a few jobs now for fewer jobs and a more polluted community later. He thought perhaps after the merger, the Board of Commissioners would have learned a lesson about transparency from the beginning to the end of a project, but apparently that was not the case. He asked if they would halt any further movement on this project without their knowledge and input from the residents. Thank you.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower asked if there were other comments with regard to this?

Mr. Michael Dean was present to speak on behalf of the people who seemed to be left out of the political process of their Commissioners, the working class. They were here at 2:00 p.m. on a Tuesday holding a public hearing while the average citizens at work were unable to offer their comments. He thought they all knew why. This body does not seem to be paying attention. They purposely left out any details of this project until it was too far ahead. The Commissioners and Hank Guess were more interested in handing out publicly owned lands and taxpayer money to companies like Corning, a company that just laid off 123 workers in February of this year. The same company that took taxpayer money from them only to leave them for more tax incentives in Charlotte and Columbia. They had already been burned once. This project offered no guarantee of long-term local sustainable jobs or airport business. They were being asked to put forward support and millions in tax incentives for Corning, in October 2025, only for them to close another facility in North Carolina in February of 2026, a couple months later. The people deserved a real chance to be heard where they have a fair chance to research this company and not have the details of the building from them until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday.

Ms. Page Inglefield, a resident of Hickory, advised she was going to say some of what had already been said. She thought this served as a great reminder that as leaders, it was their responsibility to keep people informed about what was coming out. She did not think it was very fair to offer a public hearing when the information the hearing was supposed to be about was not provided until the last minute. There were a lot of people here who care, who wanted to be involved. They needed to be provided with the correct information ahead of time. Releasing the details while they were at the meeting, they were kind of getting a bigger picture of what this deal was about. And it was a little late. She felt like she was kind of crashing the party, not really at a public hearing right now. She thought for a lot of them here, that makes this feel like a done deal and that this public hearing was more of a formality than a real attempt to listen and gain perspective from residents. There was already a real lack of trust from their residents about these deals and the incentives provided to them. As was mentioned before, they really have amazing industry here in their furniture industry. They struggle to retain talent. A couple of the questions she had just from learning this was how were they going to make sure that they were not poaching the workers from their furniture industries when they were struggling to retain talent? Again, with the training, where was the training going to come from? She also did not think they should be incentivizing a mega corporation that already seemed to be very successful, it was going to invest in them. She did not understand why they had to pop off their coffers in order to do that. They do not do that for their local industries.

She preferred her taxpayer dollars to go to incentivize and support their local historic industries. She encouraged everyone to strive for the level of transparency as the public deserved from them. That meant releasing full details of these deals in advance of public hearings, making feedback accessible for working people at a time that they could attend and having time between these public hearings and the decision to truly integrate and consider the feedback they receive. She hoped they would pause and think about this and be clearer, because they were not saying this was awful and doom and gloom. They were saying people were scared, they do not feel like they could trust the leadership, and this was a great opportunity for them to step up, clarify some things, and also really truly provide a time for working people to come give their input, not to a forum. She had never seen refreshments out for a meeting like this, so it kind of felt like this was for them to celebrate. She really hoped that in the future these public hearings would be about hearing the public. Thank you.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower asked for other comments.

A citizen advised that he thought this was going to be about data centers. It was not. They did not know anything about what this was about until they got here. He lived here all his life. His family settled in Catawba County in the 1700s. The land this school sits on was at one time Bollinger land. He cared a lot about this community. It was his home. Like everybody said on Tuesday at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, they did not know what this was about. He did not even need to be present. He thought it was about data centers. Thank you.

A citizen advised she lived in Hickory and had a couple questions. What tax rate would they pay? What will this corporation pay?

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower advised they would pay the County tax rate.

The citizen confirmed they were not getting a reduced tax rate for building here?

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower advised there were some rebates, but they were based on, again, the tax rate.

The citizen asked what do rebates include. She asked would that be part of transparency? She asked if she missed the tax rate in the slides?

A citizen spoke out of turn, stating that she was a 100% right. If it was in the slideshow, they all missed it.

The citizen continued that she would not be asking if it was, it said they would pay taxes, but it did not say what rate. She heard nothing about rebates was in there. She had a couple more questions. She would like to get the answers one at a time.

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret advised the rates itself were not in the presentation. They were paying full rate, the City of Hickory rate plus Catawba County rate for all commercial buildings and equipment. He referred to the PowerPoint and advised irrespective of the tax rates, there was an annual grant, a $90,000 annual grant from both the City of Hickory and Catawba County for a 3-year period up to $270,000. That would be the City of Hickory, and Catawba County as a grant match for the amount.

Citizens jointly made comments that they give them that every year. They were going to receive $90,000.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower allowed this citizen to finish her comments.

The citizen asked about the rebates. She wanted an answer. Can her question be answered first? What are the rebates, sir?

Catawba County Economic Development Vice President Nathan Huret advised $90,000 for three years.

The citizen confirmed that was the rebate. She thought they deserved more transparency. When they were here for 20 years, they were still paying both, full taxes. How will they handle…

Alderman Freeman interrupted and asked before she moved on if that answered her question?

The citizen commented sort of, but not really. In fact, she did not feel that either of these boards could be trusted based on past history.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower advised the citizen she could make a comment about the project.

The citizen commented that she was answering his question.

Alderman Freeman advised the question was, was her question answered.

The citizen advised her response was that she got some figures. Do I trust them? No. Thank you. She asked had the company partnered? Have they agreed to partner with CVCC in training their local citizens to be hired for those same jobs? She did not think or she just did not understand why

they go to these businesses and give them everything and do not require anything from them. Not anything as simple as partnering with our Community College to hire their citizens. Have they agreed to that? Have they made a commitment other than building here to make their community better? She commented that she did not know that this was the Randy Isenhower hour. Will the company be bringing in their own construction teams and site prep teams, or would the companies in the community have a chance to bid on that work that has to be done, the site prep and the building? Or will they be bringing in people from Charlotte? Okay, thank you so much for this extremely educational response. That does not surprise her at all. Does not surprise her at all.

Citizen Hannah Rose commented that she was a resident who had been here her whole life too. She never had been to one of these things. She was usually a quiet consumer online of the news and what was happening, and she kept her bubble small. She did not come to these things, but she woke up and saw something about a data center, and she was like, you know what, not in my town. And she got here like the rest of them, and they found out it was not about a data center at all. It was actually about a full company that on another day she might be interested in learning more about. She was shaking. She was so angry and anxious at this moment. But the lack of clarity that she saw from them, she did not even know who they were and she had been voting since 2008, okay? And again, she consumes things, she read things, But she did not even know who they were. They were supposed to represent her and the people that live in this community, and they were supposed to be bringing in good things for them, but they could not even answer a question about who was going to get hired for this company, or who was going to do site preparation, or how much the tax rate really was, or do they just have to keep going back to this and pulling up $90,000 and $270,000, and could they talk about the $90,000 grant and the $270,000? That was coming from taxpayer money, right? Those rebates come from them, and they could not clarify that on paper? And they just sit there looking at her dumbfounded like they had never seen a person speak to them. She was embarrassed.

A citizen advised she had been here for 20 years. She and her relative came here and she researched. She commented that it stated that the potential annual yield was 4.75 million in the region. How do they translate that? Do they have that number? Do they know how much the impact of payroll would be for the people there? Because just doing simple math, 20%, $100,000 was $2 million, and 50 employees at $63,000, and they come up with $5.7 million. They do the research and all that. Do they have guarantees? The potential was perfect. Her point was, like them, they have their goals. She knew that a lot of people here worked for them and they were trying to do the community there, but really did the research, she felt like, because they all felt like, they were out, they have no impact on them, they do not care about them she guessed.

Mr. Jesse Alden, candidate for County Commissioner made a few statements on the presentation. These slides mention nonprofit support for the causes of this company in Germany. What does that mean for them here? Why were they going to let them here, take their profits, and then back overseas? There was a comment made that if not, but when this was approved. None of them knew what this was about. And making comments like that really showed that this was already a done deal without giving a second thought to what anybody was saying here today. He based that on other issues as well, but they would not go into the other situation at this public hearing. An 80,000-square foot production facility for aerospace mobility division aviation ground equipment. Hickory's airport was not that big to justify having an Aerospace Mobility Division built here. Paying taxes in Catawba County for the next 320 years. Property taxes, after the rebates. What does that look like by 2030 when corporate income tax was 0% in North Carolina? What does that look like when property depreciates over time and those numbers go down? What does that look like for wage growth when the companies are not paying taxes Statewide or Federally? As time goes on, are these wages going to increase to keep up with the profits they make, or is that additional money going to be sent overseas as well? Water and sewer needs were going to be local. If this was going to be in Hickory, what does that look like with the current wastewater spill in Hickory? What does that look like when Charlotte was requesting an additional 33 million gallons of water a day from our basin and gets approved. What does that look like here? Current climate crisis, we are in a drought. This was an agricultural area as well, and they have farmers and gardeners that cannot grow what they need to grow affordably. He had lived here for over 30 years. He had small businesses. Why were they not investing and growing from within their communities? They have amazing residents, they have amazing local businesses, they have an amazing Chamber of Commerce. He had called them and worked with them on multiple occasions in the past. Why were they not investing in their schools and education to be able to fill these jobs that were going to pay these people this kind of money? They do not have the funding for their education. They have low graduation rates, low competency rates, but they expect these people to work these $100,000 jobs with no answer on where these workers were coming from. Guys, it was very clear from their actions that they really do not want to be transparent with the people that put them in these seats, and that was unacceptable. He knew some may not give too much to him because they were not running for reelection, but he knew people in front of him were on the Corporate Board of Directors for Trivium. What does that look like when they were no longer in office? Do they start caring more about what was going on for that corporation and less for the people they represent now? What does that look like? All they wanted was answers and honesty from them, and they had been doing a really poor job of it.

A citizen questioned the former tax rate in 2030 was going to 0% in North Carolina. They combined tax rate for property, $0.85 per $100 value. He thought they said that they were reducing the asking price per acre. Does that reduce the value per acre that they were going to be bargaining this?

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower advised they would try to answer some questions.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower closed the Public Hearing for Catawba County Board of Commissioners, Hickory City Council and the Trivium Corporate Center Board of Directors.

VIII. Consideration and Action Steps

A. Catawba County Board of Commissioners
B. Hickory City Council
C. Trivium Corporate Center Board of Directors

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower clarified they were not talking about State income tax; they were talking about property tax. He had heard that. It was totally independent of that. They would pay taxes for how many years they were here. Hopefully a long time at the County and City property tax rate. That would increase the base of the tax rate for the County and City. That would help fund schools. That would help fund their Sheriff's Department. That would help fund other City and County services, and that helped to keep the tax rate low. Catawba County has the 10th lowest tax rate in the State. Hickory has a low tax rate. These were reasons they asked companies to look at Catawba County. They provide jobs, $63,000 a year is a pretty good salary. He thought the County average was about $46,000. They were above the average County rate. They already had the infrastructure in place for that. It was not going to hurt their infrastructure. He advised they would not get rebates unless they were here to pay the taxes. This is not free money. They were investing and they were paying for that, and they were getting some incentives, as they had done for decades, as many local governments have done for decades. Talk about assurances, as Mr. Huret mentioned, there were claw backs in this. If they do not meet the requirements, there are consequences. It was a contract. It was a contract between them, the City of Hickory, and Catawba County. They have been successful. He was going to save this for the end, but in 2014, they went on this venture of Trivium. It was a chance. It really was. Those of them who had been here and seen through that and seen through the vision their Economic Development Corporation (EDC) had, Mr. Millar, had seen great fruition. It was pretty well built out. They could see the economic investment for the County, for their citizens, to provide services and the jobs. While he appreciated everybody's thoughts and concerns, he had not heard one person say it was a bad deal. He had not heard one person say it.

A citizen let out an outburst of profanity.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower advised that the public hearing was complete. He commented that things were confidential until they were not. They could not talk about the project until the State of North Carolina approved that. Once they approved it, then they could get into the details, and that was why they were here, and that was why they worked through this process. The process was going to look different than what they had done or any other local government had done.

Mayor Guess commented that the State and the companies regulate, and they have rules pertaining to them and when they could divulge and when they could release an announcement. The State made the announcement about 2 hours prior to this meeting, and they were prohibited by law from discussing this in public until that was done or until they had this public hearing. This was not any different than any other municipality in the State of North Carolina that conducts this type of business. Also, past companies, this was an economic development proposition, and these companies were competing, as you heard from Nathan Huret, for other sites, other cities, and other counties to take their business to. They also will exclude them from that process if they divulge ahead of their timeline when these announcements were going to be made. It was not that they were making up these rules to specifically keep the public uninformed. That was the way it was done throughout the State of North Carolina and the rules applied to the cities and counties equally. He hoped that helped to clarify some of the reasons why it was done the way it was done because they have to do it this way. This was the way it was done across the State. He hoped that the people understood that, they did not have to like that, but that was the rules that they played by. He closed with this: they elected the folks that were present to represent them, and that was what they were doing. They were representing them with the facts that they have as they have them when they were allowed to be able to do this. Thank you.

A citizen outburst again.

Mayor Guess advised that the public hearing was over.

The citizen commented that she could speak freely. She had the right. They did not like what she had to say. She identified herself as Hannah Rose.

Ms. Rose was escorted from the meeting.

Catawba County Commissioner Chair Randy Isenhower moved that the Catawba County Board of Commissioners approve the economic development agreement as presented by Mr. Huret, between the County and Goldhofer, and any related Resolutions, and authorize the Chairman to execute any and all documents necessary to complete the substance of the Resolutions and the transactions that would be included but limited to the economic development agreement.

Catawba County Attorney Jodi Stewart noted there had been two revisions made to the economic development agreement.

Catawba County Commissioners voted. The motion carried unanimously.

Alderman Freeman moved, seconded by Alderwoman Dula approval of the Economic Development Agreement, as presented by Mr. Huret, between the City of Hickory, and Goldhofer, along with any related Resolutions, and that the Board authorize the Mayor to execute any and all documents necessary to complete the substance of the Resolutions and the underlying transaction including but not limited to the economic development agreement.

Mayor Guess asked for any further discussion.

Alderman Freeman advised he would not dare let them get to the end of this motion without him expressing, first of all, thanks and gratitude for the citizens of Hickory and Catawba County. He did not ever want them to think that, (he could only speak for himself, he as an elected official), that he did not hear what they were saying, and it does not touch his heart. He knew, being an elected official, sometimes they had to have rocks thrown at them and they took it. He knew because of the political climate of that grid that government represents, people were cynical, thinking that the government was always up to something, hiding things, lacking transparency. Let him just tell them his heart personally. They had one resident who left out of here saying that this was about a data center. Another resident came and said they were thinking it was about a data center. Now, at what time had they heard from the City of Hickory that this meeting was about a data center. Go back, trace your steps from social media. Trace your steps to social media and see where they see the first time it was mentioned, data center. Want to know why? This world was now built on misinformation. Government had a problem with people, people had problems with government, and they got nothing done. Now, this was a unique situation because usually City Council was their own, they were nonpartisan. County Commissioners, they knew they were partisan. They knew who was Republican and Democrat. He was neither because he wanted to be able to get something done. He heard and appreciated everybody that came and spoke. The reason why he was making this vote was because he did not see Goldhofer coming in and taking away from them. If he saw it he would stay against it. He did not see it. One resident came and said, “well, I don't think this is a bad thing. It's just that we are just asking for transparency”. Well, it was mentioned that they were still in line with the same order of when it came down to them. This was him speaking, he wanted what was best for Hickory. Why? Because he lives here. But do not let people put out misinformation. Because you know why? Because he was tired of everybody. But he was going to speak for himself. Still not one person in here could say they heard from the City Council that this was about the data center. Trace it back and they would find out where it came from.

Mayor Guess asked for any further discussion from City Council. He noted there was a motion and a second. The vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 26-37
Resolution Authorizing Economic Development Incentives for
Goldhofer Inc.

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute §158-7.1 authorizes a county or city to make appropriations for economic development purposes which the county or city determines will increase the population, taxable property, agricultural industries, employment, industrial output, or business prospects of the county or city. The permitted economic development activities specifically include the ability to acquire, assemble, and hold for resale property that is suitable for industrial or commercial use; and

WHEREAS, Catawba County (the “County”) and City of Hickory (the “City”) have assembled property for resale that is suitable for industrial or commercial use and are holding such property in Trivium Corporate Center, Inc., a North Carolina non-profit corporation (“Trivium”); and

WHEREAS, Goldhofer Inc., (“Company”) is engaged in manufacturing products for aviation and truck transportation industries. The Company now desires to locate its manufacturing facilities and operations and construct new real property improvements and install or cause to be installed additional machinery, equipment, and trade fixtures on Lot 5 of the Trivium Corporate Center Business Park; and

WHEREAS, the Company requested incentives to cause a minimum investment of $22,500,000.00 for the improvement of real property and installation of capital equipment and trade fixtures on Lot 5 of Trivium (Parcel ID #372117124395), by December 31, 2030, and to create and maintain a minimum of eighty (80) new jobs by December 31, 2030. These jobs must be maintained for a minimum of three (3) years and as further detailed in the Economic Development Agreements (“EDA’s”) with Catawba County and the City of Hickory; and

WHEREAS, City and Company have engaged in negotiations to induce the City to enter into an EDA and appropriate and expend monies for payment of certain economic development incentive grants; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Catawba County and the City Council of City of Hickory, have held public hearings to consider the EDA’s and whether to approve said agreements and the conveyance of real property to the Company, and the Board of Directors of Trivium Corporate Center, Inc. has held a public hearing to consider whether to approve the conveyance of real property to the Company.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of City of Hickory, North Carolina, as follows:

1) The recitals set forth above are incorporated herein by reference as if fully restated.

2) City Council approves appropriating and spending from the City's general fund amounts to make incentive payments as more specifically described in the EDA and authorizes the conveyance of Lot 5, owned by Trivium Corporate Center Inc., a non-profit jointly developed and funded by Catawba County and the City of Hickory, to the Company, conditioned on the company's required minimum investment and maintenance of new jobs, which will pay above the median average hourly wage in the County, as described in the attached EDA. The facility will generate property tax revenues over the next 10 years in an amount at least sufficient to return to the County the fair market value of the property in excess of the revenue from the conveyance. The agreements have performance requirements and claw back provisions approved by the respective entities sufficient to recover for the failure of the Company to perform and to comply with criteria as required by the City and County Incentive Policies and the North Carolina General Statutes.

3) City Council hereby ratifies and approves the EDA substantially in the form attached hereto as Exhibit A and authorizes the Mayor to take all actions necessary to implement the actions and grants required by that agreement.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower commented that Catawba County did not say that this was about a data center. Their city and local governments work very well together. This was a great example of two governments working well together. He was totally convinced, whether they agreed with them or not, partisan or not, he was truly convinced that every elected official in every local government does it for what they think was the best interest of their citizens. Of what they may not agree, may not agree with what they do. But nobody was in this room, believe him, nobody was sacrificing all, sacrificing community. He truly believed that they all do it for what they thought was the best interest of their citizenry.

As a members of the Trivium Board, Randy Isenhower moved, seconded by Hank Guess, that the Board of Directors for Trivium adopt a 5th amendment to the Restrictive Covenants of Trivium Corporate Center in the conveyance of Lot 5 as presented by Mr. Huret and as described in economic development agreements between Hickory, Catawba County, and Goldhofer and authorizing the President of Trivium to execute any and all documents necessary to complete the substance of the Resolution and underlying transaction. The motion carried unanimously.

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Randy Isenhower advised that completed the action. He asked Mr. Huret if he wanted to make any closing remarks.

Catawba County Economic Development Corporation Vice President Nathan Huret referred to the PowerPoint and displayed a quote from the company. They have a US base in Florida, Matt Dillon was actually on vacation and back home in Germany, where he was originally from. They were excited to come here. They had worked with hundreds of companies over time, and a lot of people they told no out of the gate. He did not think people realized they say no a lot more than they ever say yes. Because they always were looking for the best. When they come across a situation like this, a company that has establishment, family ties, manufacturing, something that has good, good occupation for their citizens here that lines up well with their community and their identity, they chase it. They go hard after it. This was one they fought very hard for. Because they saw how good they could be. They were going to be a shining star in this community, 5 years, 10 years, he referenced, 321 years. None of them were going to be here then, but they would be here. They would have good opportunities for the citizens here, and they were excited. They had been ready to get going. They had just been doing the State side of things and the contracts that would safeguard the community in the event something happens. They were ready to go. Look back and say they were going to be a good company and good community citizens for all of us. He thanked everyone for coming. Thank you to the public. Thank you to the Council. Thank you to the Commissioners for being present.

IX. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

_____
Mayor

_____
City Clerk