

**TOWN OF HUNTERSVILLE
TOWN BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

**August 20, 2024
6:00 p.m. – Huntersville Town Hall
101 Huntersville-Concord Road**

PRE-MEETING

None

**REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF HUNTERSVILLE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

The Regular Meeting of the Huntersville Board of Commissioners was held at the Huntersville Town Hall, 101 Huntersville-Concord Road, at 6:00 p.m. on August 20, 2024.

GOVERNING BODY MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Christy Clark; Commissioners Alisia Bergsman, Amanda Dumas, Jennifer Hunt, Edwin Quarles, LaToya Rivers and Nick Walsh.

Mayor Clark called for a moment of silence.

Mayor Clark led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS, REQUESTS, OR PRESENTATIONS

LNTA Check Presentation. The Lake Norman Tennis Association (LNTA) presented a check for \$34,000 to the Parks & Recreation Department to cover over 50 percent of the cost to resurface the tennis complex at North Mecklenburg Park.

HOMES Program. Shakirah Francis, Manager of HOMES Program, updated the Board on the Mecklenburg County HOMES Program. *Refer to PowerPoint attached hereto as Exhibit No. 1.*

Bill Fountain said as a former high school economics teacher I learned to appreciate the wisdom of the famous black economist and social philosopher, Thomas Sowell, who said the problem is Johnny doesn't know what thinking is, he confuses it with feelings.

Over the years thanks to the federal, state and CMS district, our public schools use social-emotional learning to indoctrinate the youth to follow their feelings or their passions and while dispensed away from moral virtues. SEL focuses less on academic content and more on the students' mindsets, their

behavior, those type of things. Now while many of the Huntersville public schools have faired fairly well, most of CMS has not. How can a child learn to read, write and do math if they have problems with reasoning.

A recent behavior and research and therapy study found that after completing an SEL program that more of the students were found they would be more depressed, they were more anxious, they had more difficulty in managing emotions and they had a reportedly worse relationship with their parents. Results of this kind of make sense. Social-emotional learning is cultivating victimhood and thus unhappiness.

Some teachers say they lose the class time because they have to play some dumb SEL games. If we must have SEL why not focus or try to promote virtues such as prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, humility. These will benefit students more than victimhood. Men like Thomas Sowell, Martin Luther King and Frederick Douglas all advocated virtues and virtues go hand-in-hand with character, and I think that's going to help us a lot.

Women's Equality Day Proclamation. Mayor Clark proclaimed August 26, 2024 at Women's Equality Day.

A PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

WHEREAS, on August 26, 1920, after decades of hard-fought advocacy, women won the right to vote, and our Nation moved one step closer to living out our sacred ideal that all people are created equal. On Women's Equality Day, we honor the movement for universal suffrage that led to the 19th Amendment, celebrate the progress of women over the years, and renew our commitment to advancing gender equity and protecting women's rights; and

WHEREAS, with the ratification of the 19th Amendment, millions of women across the country were finally able to make their voices heard in our elections. Yet many women of color who helped lead the universal suffrage movement were effectively denied those rights until the Voting Rights Act passed 45 years later. Women are less likely to have time to vote in-person with increased caregiving demands and a disproportionate share of low-wage, inflexible work. The right to vote and to have that vote counted is essential to the future of our democracy; and

WHEREAS, women and girls have fought for justice and freedom throughout our history. All Americans should have the opportunity to fully participate in society - no one's rights should be denied because of their gender; and

WHEREAS, on Women's Equality Day, we celebrate the trailblazers who fought to deliver a better future for America's daughters. We recognize the work that remains to ensure that everyone can fully participate and make fundamental choices. We strive to uphold our Nation's promise of equality for all people.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Christy Clark, Mayor of Huntersville, do hereby proclaim August 26 as "**WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY**" in Huntersville, North Carolina.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereby set my hand and cause the Seal of the Town to be affixed, this the 20th day of August, 2024.

AGENDA CHANGES

Commissioner Quarles made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Bergsman seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes. Commissioner Walsh made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2024 Regular Town Board Meeting. Commissioner Rivers seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Verhoeff Drive Alignment Project Study. An alignment study update is recommended for the planned and unbuilt portion of Verhoeff Drive. The planned and unbuilt portion

of Verhoeff Drive extends east from NC 115 (Old Statesville Road) to future Prosperity Church Road. The current adopted alignment was approved in 2002. This study would evaluate the alignment for current conditions and constraints for potential adjustments to the alignment. Additionally, an evaluation would be included to add a new section of Verhoeff Drive alignment between Prosperity Church Road and Eastfield Road. Significant changes or additions to the alignment would likely necessitate a public involvement process.

Commissioner Walsh made a motion to approve budget amendment appropriating Fund Balance in the amount of \$125,000 to Contract Services for the Verhoeff Drive alignment study. Commissioner Rivers seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

CRTPO Updated Memorandum of Understanding. The CRTPO Board endorsed an update to its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and authorized staff to circulate the updated document for signatures during the July 17 meeting.

In order for the CRTPO's updated MOU to be considered the current document, signatures must be received from the Chief Elected Official and Clerk from each of the CRTPO's voting jurisdictions. The CRTPO has retained an attorney, Mujeeb Shah-Khan, Esq. to assist with the MOU update process, and Mr. Shah-Khan has recommended that each jurisdiction listed in the MOU place the CRTPO's MOU on an upcoming agenda and take formal action to authorize for signature by the Chief Elected Official. Action by the Huntersville Town Board is not a requirement, but a recommendation from legal counsel. The CRTPO Board leadership has requested that all jurisdictions sign and return the executed documents electronically to the CRTPO Secretary, Neil Burke, via e-mail by September 13, 2024.

Commissioner Walsh made a motion to adopt updated Memorandum of Understanding for Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization. Commissioner Rivers seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Updated Memorandum of Understanding attached hereto as Exhibit No. 2.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

OTHER BUSINESS

Funding External Agencies. Commissioner Dumas said I would love to have a discussion about the process that we are going about with this.

Emily Sloop, Town Attorney, said I just wanted to provide some background information. In 2021 there was a senate bill, it was Senate Bill 473, which was session law 2021-191. It established a new section of Chapter 14 of the North Carolina General Statutes, particularly 14-234.3. That section prohibits local public officials from participating in contracts benefitting non-profits that the public official is associated with as defined by that section. When that law passed a question came up as to how the budget for local government funding of non-profits would work because typically those non-profits must sign a contract in order to receive the funding from local governments and those contracts state that the non-profit will carry out a specific public purpose in exchange for those funds.

Various options were identified as potential procedural processes to budget for the non-profits after this legislative change. The UNC School of Government weighed in, as did various local government attorneys in North Carolina, and the process that the Town of Huntersville currently utilizes is to allow non-profits to submit requests for funding via an application outlining what they plan to do with the funds and then the Town Board considers individual budget amendments related to each request. If the Town Board does decide to approve the budget amendment, the non-profit must enter into a contract with the Town agreeing to use the funds for a particular purpose as notated in their application or as specified in the motion that is used to approve the budget amendment.

The Town Board does have currently, and has for some time, a Non-profit Funding Policy. It would be within the Board's capabilities if they so choose to edit or amend that policy to add annual non-profit funding dollar thresholds or a formula as to how to calculate how much would be appropriated to non-profit funding each year. Again, that's something that could be done at the policy level if the Board so chooses.

Commissioner Dumas said I think one of the things going into this process that I struggled with was it seemingly felt like there was an unlimited pool of money that we were kind of playing with, which of course isn't the case, and I had wondered if we could put it as a line item in our budget which wouldn't fit based on these rules, so what my process was going into this and I'd love to get feedback or thoughts from others, was to look at last year's amount and to determine a slightly higher amount that I was okay with as a pool of money for these non-profits. I'd love to hear from others to see what their process was in approaching this.

Commissioner Walsh said I absolutely agree with Commissioner Dumas. In 2021 we funded about \$69,000 in non-profit requests. This year the original request was almost \$400,000. We've obviously been looking at it over time. I think you're right, during our budget we made a commitment to affordable housing and so we said we're going to put \$150,000 in towards affordable housing.

I think at some point we have to look at the non-profits and come up with a number. I think it's also fair to point out that just the requests tonight aren't the only thing we do. Our biggest non-profit that we contribute to is across the street, which is Discovery Place Kids and they, based on their 2023 tax return, recognized that the Town is basically giving them almost \$240,000. Based on the cost of operating that facility across the street, between the parking deck and the building itself, it costs the Town almost \$700,000. They've got two floors of it and part of the parking deck, so the Town does step up to help non-profits, but I think at some point we have to figure out a way.....you know, going from \$70,000 for a couple of years there were ARPA funds available, which there are no new ARPA funds coming in, so I think at some point we have to look at a number and then make those requests fit within that number.

Commissioner Bergsman said thank you Commissioner Dumas. I didn't know that you were going to bring this up tonight, but I think it is an important discussion that needs to be had. I could see that maybe it's something we bring to the Planning Retreat next year before we get too deep into the budget process unlike this year.

I've felt for a long time, not just this year, but past years, that there are modifications that could be made to make this a more equitable fair process to everyone involved and whether that is looking at setting a threshold along those lines, whether that's looking at tweaking the applications and seeing how we can get better information from all of our applicants, you know it is something important that we should look at.

Commissioner Quarles said I believe putting a cap on non-profits is like saying we all should live in the same type of community. We live in different communities because we have different lifestyles. The different non-profits, they have different needs. Some have a larger customer base. I believe in putting a cap you could discriminate against some organizations based on their needs. I would like to see us increase what we give to non-profits. We are here to serve. The non-profits provide services that the government can't provide.

You mentioned Discovery Place at \$240,000. I don't think you can put a value on education. I truly believe that Discovery Place brings in a lot of value into our community that is a staple to Huntersville. As we look at revitalizing our downtown, I think more businesses will want to move into this area because of Discovery Place, so again, that one there I think that place brings more value than \$240,000 to our revenue.

Commissioner Hunt said first, I agree with Commissioner Bergsman that this should just be part of a larger conversation, but from my perspective this isn't just about how much money we're giving to each organization because this is about demonstrating humanity and compassion for other people. We can't know right now what the investment looks like that we're willing to make in a young person. We don't know what this investment is going to look like for someone who is fighting tooth and nail for some sort of economic mobility in a county that was once ranked dead last for economic mobility. As Commissioner Quarles said, these non-profits are filling in gaps in services that the Town can't provide and providing funds to these groups allows them to help people in ways that we can't.

Commissioner Rivers said I agree with Commissioner Quarles, Commissioner Bergsman as well as Commissioner Hunt. In regards to Commissioner Bergsman, this is a conversation that definitely needs to be had but you can't put a price on resources and the needs for people. Being able to go to government agencies or any type of resources to ask for help is a humbling experience, so these non-profit organizations provide those resources. They offset the cost that the government would have to put in, so no I don't agree with putting a cap or putting any type of cap on the amount that we give, but I do think that we definitely need to have a conversation to come to some type of common ground....just some of the thought processes behind the reasoning why we made the decisions that we made were a bit difficult to swallow because we are all human and I think people forget or become so far removed. Not everybody is privileged so I think we have to keep in mind when these non-profit organizations are coming up here to even ask, it's a humbling experience for them to even have to ask for funding to fund the resources that they are providing for the residents and the communities around us.

Commissioner Walsh said just for clarification, I know Commissioner Quarles mentioned the amount that we spend at Discovery Place Kids. The point was to say the Town is stepping up. Along with what we approve tonight, we do fund Discovery Place Kids, as well as we've made a commitment to affordable housing. I just wanted people to understand what we are doing is a part of the whole entire effort.

Commissioner Dumas said I appreciate everybody's thoughts, thank you. I think I'm talking more about the process and I would welcome a larger and deeper conversation about that, so I appreciate that.

I have something that I was going to say when I make a motion on one of the other non-profits. Do you mind if I have a few minutes now. I'm going to be really, really personal with this. I really went back and forth on whether or not I should do this, but I'm going to and please forgive me, I don't usually read and have notes, but I'm going to at this point.

At the start of the summer of my junior year, my mom and I left my dad, moving to a new state with the idea that we would move my two younger brothers out before the start of the school year. I had just turned 16. She hadn't really worked since before we were born at which point she was a flight attendant, so she got a job at a call center in the airlines and we moved where that job was. She was paid minimum wage and had scheduled jumps in her pay as long as she passed certain exams and training schedules. I lived with some friends for a few weeks while she found a place for us to live. We rented a house with a roommate and her non-verbal brother. I found a job within walking distance and then a second job across the street from that one.

We did move my brothers out, but we didn't have much room, so I slept in an unfinished basement next to a washer our dryer. Our roommate's brother had been starved and abused by his family while he was a child, so when left alone he would rummage in our cabinets and eat anything that we had from flour to raw rice. We often came home to a destroyed kitchen and nothing to eat, even with locks on every cabinet.

A few months into the school year we were shocked to get an eviction notice. Apparently, the roommate had stopped paying her rent several months earlier. By some miracle my mom found us an apartment in a part of town that my classmates were warned to avoid. We had gotten to a point that she was making about \$9 or \$10 an hour and I remember she was worried about taking the next pay increase because we would lose some of the benefits we needed to survive. She worked so hard. I remember watching my mom that year amazed and proud of what she could accomplish, but stressed everyday that something would happen to mess it up and occasionally those things did happen and somehow we figured it out.

I threw myself into school and work. My chorus teacher recruited me to a musical and I found a love for arts. After the show, a school counselor stopped me in the hall and suggested I audition for a performing arts high school, but I avoided her because I knew we couldn't afford it. This counselor kept on me about it and helped me apply for grants and somehow it all worked out and I did my senior year at a new school. This school opened so many doors for me I could now see a path to college and a future. I learned confidence and speaking skills and ultimately feel like theatre taught me my life coping skills that have gotten me to where I am today.

My point with all this, along this difficult path we had help. We had food stamps and took advantage of the free lunch program proudly. Yes, I was proud. It took a lot of bravery for my mom to start fresh and leaving my dad. It was a nearly impossible task, but staying where we were was worse and she knew it. But even with these government programs, it wasn't enough. If it weren't for the organizations that gave us a few groceries here and there, we would have gone hungry and if it weren't for the counselor and arts grants, I wouldn't have seen a future for myself and I wouldn't be sitting in this seat. These grants are an investment in our future and the future of our residents and our children in town and I would give every one of them the amount they've asked for or more if I could.

That being said, we don't have an unlimited bank roll to do that, so that's why I took my approach with increasing last year's amount in order to stay within a certain approach and I would really love to discuss that further at a future meeting.

Mayor Clark said now we will proceed with our order of business and Commissioner Quarles has asked to be recused from Item 10.A which is consider approving Ada Jenkins budget amendment.

Budget Amendment – Ada Jenkins. Commissioner Dumas made a motion to recuse Commissioner Quarles.

Commissioner Bergsman seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Rivers said before I make the motion, I want to give just a little bit of history about our first agenda item which is the Ada Jenkins Center. Originally named the Davidson Colored School, now named the Ada Jenkins Center, has been a staple in the Davidson community, as well as the northern region of Mecklenburg County, for many years. The Ada Jenkins Center serves as a center for the Davidson community, as well as the northern region. The Ada Jenkins Center provides the following services: economic mobility, financial assistance, educational services, food pantry assistance, homeless outreach and volunteer income tax services. The Ada Jenkins Center exists to help people in our community create lasting solutions for economic stability.

I would like to make a motion tonight to award \$35,000 to the Ada Jenkins Center on behalf of the Town of Huntersville to ensure that the services provided by Ada Jenkins Center are able to continue for the residents of the northern region of Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion.

Mayor Clark said as a person who works at an elementary school who sees the benefit of Ada Jenkins, I know this money will be well spent to support our students that are struggling to meet success in academic setting and I have seen many of my students graduate from the program they have there and move on to have success and so I appreciate this motion.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Dumas made a motion to bring Commissioner Quarles back. Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Angels & Sparrows Food Security Program. Commissioner Dumas made a motion to approve Angels & Sparrows Food Security Program for \$20,000 for FY25 budget amendment.

Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion.

Mayor Clark said I can also add to this one as well that their Food Security Program is growing, and the need is growing, and I do see that as well every day at the school where I work and so I appreciate this motion.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Angels & Sparrows Pathway Program. Commissioner Dumas said I'm honored to make the motion to approve \$40,000 for Angels & Sparrows Pathway Program for FY25 budget amendment.

Commissioner Hunt seconded the motion.

Commissioner Hunt said I volunteered with them two years ago and I get their newsletter in my email, it's called The Dish, but I wanted to share a stat from there that they shared about their Pathway Program and it said 93 percent of Pathway youth and teens improved their reading scores and 98 percent improved their math scores. Adult participants are achieving English proficiency, completing high school equivalency requirements and progressing to career training programs, 145 individuals are being helped by this program. It's an amazing program and I am super excited to vote for this.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Arts & Science Council. Commissioner Bergsman said I'd like to make a motion to approve a budget amendment for the Arts & Science Council in the amount of \$15,000 for the purposes stated in their non-profit funding application.

Commissioner Dumas seconded the motion.

Commissioner Bergsman said I do have some things to say about this particular agenda item. Apart from \$5,000 last year, the Town of Huntersville has not funded the Arts & Science Council for many of the years in the past decade. As for its reasoning, it often involved believing that those tax dollars could be utilized by more effectively doing it ourselves, however that plan never materialized, and our community has since felt the gap.

Despite Huntersville's overall lack of direct funding in contrast to many other municipalities, the Arts & Science Council has continued to invest in Huntersville, supporting our local artists and providing services to our residents. In fiscal year 2024 the ASC committed more than \$125,000 in funds for arts and cultural programs created by or for Huntersville residents. The ASC is uniquely positioned to develop effective and beneficial arts and cultural programming, but some may rightfully ask why should local government spend taxpayer money on public art and it's a good question that I do believe deserves an answer.

My professional experience is working with marginalized communities and non-profit organizations that provide trauma informed care. I have seen firsthand how access to public arts programming can positively impact well-being and health. As a past director of the Refugee Claim and Support Center I was intricately involved with the Scattered People's Choir Project, which was funded in part by the city council of the community where I lived at that time. The Scattered People's Choir exemplifies how music and arts can lend witness, lift voices, restore hope and promote healing. Starting as a choir for refugees and allies, Scattered People's went on to produce an award-winning album covering themes of love for one's hometown, the trauma of persecution and war, the difficulties of having to flee your homeland, and the overwhelming desire for peace and acceptance. One of the songs on the album "Labarik Sira Hotu," which means all the children, became a favorite in East Timor after the United Nations and Amnesty International used a song in their voters' rights educational materials.

Public art can and does significantly impact public health and well-being. The evidence is also clear and growing. A landmark 2024 study led by Dr. Tosha Golden of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine established an evidence-based framework highlighting six ways the arts can improve public health. These include promoting physical activity, reducing stress, foster and social cohesion, combatting loneliness, aiding and coping with chronic conditions, and enhancing overall happiness and well-being. These are not just abstract benefits, they are direct and measurable outcomes. The arts can help improve memory and cognition, reduce cardiovascular stress, ease the burden on our healthcare systems and strengthen self-efficacy in social support networks.

Beyond health, arts and cultural initiatives create safe, inclusive and engaging environments. They foster a sense of shared belonging, strengthening and connecting our community. The ASC's programs go far beyond what could just be considered a sculpture or a dance class. They represent a comprehensive regional approach to maximizing the cultural impact across our area. They bring together resources and expertise to achieve outcomes that we as a town might struggle to achieve alone.

While I wholeheartedly wish we could fully meet the ASC's funding request this year, we also have to deal with the reality of our budgetary constraints, so an amount of \$15,000 I believe balances fiscal responsibility and a commitment to the arts and sharing that the ASC can continue to provide essential services while respecting their town's financial limitations.

Mayor Clark called for the vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Bags of Hope. Commissioner Rivers said before the motion is made, I want to give some history about Bags of Hope. Bags of Hope was created in 2012 at the Davidson United Methodist Church. This ministry began as a backpack ministry serving students of five nearby schools with weekend food bags. Then a year later a group at Journey Church created a similar project and in 2017 both ministries combined to create Bags of Hope. Currently Bags of Hope serves 33 schools to help navigate the fight against food insecurities amongst our youth. Not only does Bags of Hope serve the northern Mecklenburg region, but also provides services to Cabarrus and Iredell Counties.

I would like to make a motion to award \$15,000 to Bags of Hope on behalf of the Town of Huntersville to ensure that the services provided by Bags of Hope are able to continue for the residents of the northern region of Mecklenburg County and surrounding areas.

Commissioner Walsh seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Caterpillar Ministries. Commissioner Hunt said before I make the motion, I just wanted to give some history about Caterpillar as well. Caterpillar Ministries is a non-profit based in Huntington Green that directly serves residents in that community. For folks who aren't aware, Huntington Green is a diverse, under served community in Huntersville of approximately 2,200 residents. Many residents live below the federal poverty level and frequently share spaces with multiple family members in one mobile home. Caterpillar was established in 2007 to support the well being of families in the community and they have helped residents accomplish many noteworthy things since their inception. Part of their work includes advocating for residents in negotiating with landlords, rent and utilities assistance, counseling for adults and children, ESL and GED courses and assistance and academic enrichment for children from pre-school age to teens for college and career readiness.

Additionally, their new program Get Well Stay Well promotes physical activity which incurs many benefits including improve mental health, reducing chronic illness and stress and more. Many residents have barriers to affordable healthcare and these preventative measures seek to avert illness before they start. As a result of Caterpillar's work, the Huntington Green community has changed in many positive ways. High school graduation rates among residents have improved significantly and one young woman has just graduated from Davidson College with a Bachelor of Science in public health. Rather than moving away as some young people do, she accepted a position at Caterpillar as the community health director to help others find success just as she has, and this is just one example of how Caterpillar Ministries has walked alongside residents in our community to uplift them and provide personalized services.

I make a motion to approve a budget amendment for Caterpillar Ministries in the amount of \$40,000 for the purposes stated in their application and any attainable housing initiatives as subject to Board approval.

Commissioner Quarles seconded the motion.

Commissioner Bergsman said I volunteered at a lot of the organizations, I'd say probably most of them on this list, and Caterpillar Ministries is one that I've both volunteered in the past and given money to and I support. I do want to mention that I feel this might be one example where the information that is given in the application needs to be more clear and especially when you have an organization of which there's nothing wrong with having faith as a large part of a mission, I do personally have concerns when we are talking about tax dollars especially in thinking about separation of church and state. I do support this. I would next year love to see Caterpillar Ministries put an annual report on their website so we could see it before making this decision and just consider that application on how they want to present that, but that's just my opinion.

Commissioner Rivers said saying that Caterpillar Ministries is faith based whatever, what we know about non-profit organizations is they see people. They don't see what a person has, their race, origin, sexual orientation, any of that, so I'm not quite sure what that is in regards to or what you are saying in regards to separating state and government or state and faith or whatever you were saying, but I find that to be very interesting but also, I don't know, a little bit offensive because it comes across as if it's discriminatory a bit. Are you saying that we should not look at giving them funding because of they are faith based or because they're saying ministry. Could you just kind of expand on that.

Commissioner Bergsman said I can expand on that. No, that's not what I'm saying. I know some of their programs include things like Bible studies and things like that and when there's an application that doesn't specify which programming the funding is going towards, I personally find an issue would it be going towards something like a Bible study or things like that. I've worked for faith based non-profits. I've worked with refugee services, so I absolutely don't have any issues. Most of the non-profits and agencies in our area are faith based and do wonderful things. I just think we need to be careful in being clear how tax dollars are being spent.

Commissioner Dumas said I think I can see what Commissioner Bergsman is saying. When we had them here to speak, I asked a lot about the religious background and if they would serve everybody. That's something that I ran into as a youth is while they didn't discriminate and we were offered help and support, I often felt pressured to attend things like Bible classes and youth groups and I did attend in several instances and while it wasn't said outright that it was a requirement, it felt pressured and so I definitely have some concerns and I think it's worth adding more information I would agree. I asked the

question during the meetings and I felt like their answers were sufficient, but I think it would help in an application.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Hope House. Commissioner Walsh said just by way of background, the Hope House foundation helps women whose lives have been turned upside down by situations that are out of their control. They provide housing and support services for single, unaccompanied women and women with children experiencing situational homelessness in a pleasant and congregate living environment. They encourage transformative life choices and help women from all backgrounds, age groups and walks of life. The Hope House Foundation organization originally started when Dr. Lee Beth Lindquist had a dream to help homeless women and their children in Huntersville who needed a hand-up and not a handout. These women were not victims of abuse and not recovering from drugs or alcohol and were not chronically mentally ill, they were simply situationally homeless because of what life handed them and needed time to get back on their feet. Hope House collaborates with partners including the Ada Jenkins Center to offer case management services, career support, life skills training and affordable housing options.

I'd like to make a motion to approve the budget amendment for Hope House in the amount of \$20,000 for purposes stated in their non-profit funding application.

Commissioner Bergsman seconded the motion.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Pottstown Heritage Group. Commissioner Rivers said before I recuse myself, I want to say this. I know there have been questions and conversations within the Board, as well as outside, about affiliation with me. I want to set the record straight that as of November 8, 2023, I resigned and I'm no longer affiliated directly or indirectly with Pottstown Heritage Group. However, due to my prior affiliation, I would like to recuse myself.

Commissioner Hunt made a motion to recuse Commissioner Rivers.

Commissioner Dumas seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Quarles said the Pottstown Heritage Group is a 501c3 organization that was created by residents within the historic Pottstown community. Pottstown Heritage Group was created to empower the residents of the Pottstown community with viable tools to combat the negative effects of gentrification and displacement through deep awareness collaboration and community advocacy. In the past two years, Pottstown Heritage Group has assisted residents within the Pottstown community with emergency home repairs, community clean-up, estate planning for seniors and community resource expos. Through the work of this organization, they have been able to serve over 50 residents. By gaining the momentum and spotlight with their services, they have been recognized by the United Way

of the Carolinas granting the group \$20,000 and for the past two years also receiving a \$2,500 Neighborhood Grant from Habitat for Humanities. By creating a partnership with these notable organizations, it has helped Pottstown Heritage Group to continue their efforts in revitalizing, restoring and ensuring that residents are able to stay in a place in historic Pottstown Community.

I am pleased to make the motion to approve a budget amendment for Pottstown Heritage Group in the amount of \$10,000 for the purposes stated in their non-profit funding application.

Commissioner Dumas seconded the motion.

Commissioner Walsh said I was wondering if Mr. Quarles would add that about a third of Pottstown is actually not in Huntersville and I would like to see Huntersville taxpayer dollars go to folks who actually live in Huntersville. I'm wondering if you would amend your motion to include those be directed to Huntersville residents.

Commissioner Quarles said I am not willing to amend the motion. My reason for saying that is I could use Angels and Sparrows for example. You may have some workers working on the street and they may want to walk inside of Angels and Sparrows to get a sandwich. They may live in Charlotte. I don't want to do anything that's going to discriminate against one organization versus another, therefore I'm not in a position or willing to change my motion.

Commissioner Bergsman said I just want to make the point on that as well. I'm curious why Angels and Sparrows, Ada Jenkins, Caterpillar.....we have no idea how many of their clients are also in the ETJ but still considered Huntersville. So for me, looking at this it's not whether or not someone is in the ETJ or not, it's whether or not they are a part of the Huntersville community and I see that as two separate things. I did have one thing I wanted to say on this before we voted on it. I believe that truly empowering historically disenfranchised communities means supporting their efforts to organize and make a difference. Community driven change emphasizes the insight, leadership and ownership of the people living and experiencing the issues they are trying to solve. Out of all the external agency applications we received, Pottstown Heritage Group is the only one that could be considered a fully community driven organization. I personally look forward to seeing what they can accomplish when given the resources required to make lasting sustainable impactful change and I wish we would have been able to give them more funding than what is in the motion.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hunt made a motion to bring Commissioner Rivers back from recusal. Commissioner Dumas seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Amendment – Hugh Torance House and Store. Commissioner Bergsman said before I make the motion, I just want to give some background on Hugh Torance House. In recent years the Hugh Torance House and Store I feel has done a wonderful job preserving and sharing the history of the site. They've recently established the Hearts Program which stands for History, Ecology, Arts, Reunion, Trails and Stores. These place-based events explore how nature, history, culture and the built environment work together to make a place unique. Since Rural Hill decided to withdraw their application while they work through some things, Hugh Torance ended up being the only application this year that, correct me if I'm wrong, is being funded through the Tourism fund balance. I feel they've worked hard. Total visitors

increased 45 percent and they've had 23 percent more events in 2022 and have begun to offer school field trip opportunities. I look forward to seeing their continued success.

I'd like to make a motion to approve a budget amendment for the Hugh Torance House and Store in the amount of \$15,000 for the purposes stated in their non-profit funding application.

Commissioner Quarles seconded the motion.

Mayor Clark called for the vote.

Motion carried unanimously.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Commissioner Rivers said tonight as we sat around the dais and talked about non-profit organizations, I think it's important to understand that non-profit organizations were created to provide a benefit to society. Non-profit organizations can receive monies or donations from individuals, corporations, as well as government entities. The thing is with non-profit organizations is the fact that people are out there really doing the hard work and providing resources for those that may not be able to have those things. Again, sometimes we get caught up where we're now in positions to where we come away from having to struggle or ask for help, and we become far removed from what people are going through on a day-to-day basis. I want to say to those non-profit organizations, all of you that came out, gave presentations, thank you. I commend you for your hard work and your efforts. I also want to say that you're out there, you're doing the work, you've laced up your boot straps and it can be taxing and really understanding what people are going through because you have to empathize and sympathize with those people. Again, I commend each and every non-profit organization and I hate that we weren't able to give to every non-profit organization because in reality they all deserved something. I don't care if it was \$5, they deserved something. Again, I commend you all for coming before us, applying, thank you.

Commissioner Quarles said to love this town is to fight for its people, not only for the affluent or only for those less fortunate. Many need support from non-profits because of human rights and social economic and environmental justice because of gentrification, discrimination or other issues that may have caused them to be in need. I love Huntersville. I'll continue to fight for Huntersville. I do think each and every non-profit that submitted the application to us, we're here to serve. I don't believe in putting a cap on serving people. Many of us are blessed that we don't need these non-profit organizations, but because we are I don't ever want us to turn our back on these people because as Commissioner Dumas was saying I really felt her testimony. I've been there before. I've been in need. But I'm in a position now where I can be a blessing to someone else, so again I want to thank the non-profits for submitting their applications and hopefully next year we can do more.

Mayor Clark said I'll just take my own personal privilege to thank the non-profits for coming and presenting to us as well and for putting in the hard work every day. I also want to thank the members of the Board for putting in the hard work and making the tough decisions because we all wanted to support everybody who asked for something and unfortunately we weren't able to but we did this as a group and I appreciate everyone's hard work and commitment.

There being no further business, Commissioner Hunt made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Rivers seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Approved this the 3rd day of September 2024.