

**HIGH POINT TRANSPARENCY, ENGAGEMENT, & COMMUNICATION
COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, May 21, 2025 - 9:00 AM
Municipal Office Building
211 S. Hamilton Street
High Point, NC 27260**

**Transparency, Engagement, and Communications Committee - Council Member
Michael Holmes, Chair**

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Holmes called the Transparency, Engagement, and Communication Committee to order at 9:00 a.m. and stated all members were present. He noted that Attorney Maguire was participating virtually.

Present: Chair Michael Holmes, Council Member Amanda Cook, Council Member Dr. Patrick Harman, and Mayor Pro Tempore Moore

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS

2025-207 **Advanced Metering Infrastructure Presentation**

Staff will provide a presentation regarding Advanced Metering Infrastructure.

Jeremy Coble, Customer Service Director, began by sharing a vision statement that guides the project's purpose, emphasizing High Point's commitment to quality, innovation, stewardship, and future generations. He explained that AMI is a two-way communication system between utility infrastructure and customers, designed to modernize utility operations and enhance transparency.

Mr. Coble outlined several customer-focused benefits, including access to real-time usage data, improved leak and outage detection, and enhanced customer service interactions. The implementation of AMI will allow for proactive engagement with customers, enabling both the City and utility users to monitor and respond to water and electric consumption in real time. He noted that customers would soon gain access to a new portal where they can track daily and hourly usage, set custom alerts, download reports, and receive timely notifications, including through text messaging, which already serves over 35,000 customers.

In discussing operations, Mr. Coble shared how AMI will also enhance internal efficiency through automated meter readings and remote electric cut-on/cut-off capabilities, reducing the need for field visits and improving safety. He described the pilot phase involving approximately 500 customers, who will help test system reliability before full deployment. He confirmed that while the total project cost is estimated at \$20 to \$22

million, much of that expense falls under the City's existing electric meter replacement schedule.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore inquired about the timeline, cost, and scalability for commercial applications. Mr. Coble confirmed the project has been in progress for over three years, and full deployment is expected to span the next 18 to 20 months beginning in summer 2025. He addressed scenarios involving commercial properties and apartment complexes, explaining how both master meters and individual meters can be integrated into the system and that the City plans to provide customized reports for high-volume users.

Questions were also raised regarding service in Duke and United Energy service areas. Mr. Coble clarified that customers with only water service are currently not receiving outage texts due to infrastructure limitations, though work is underway to include them. He further explained how the system will adapt in cases where customers are beyond standard AMI signal reach, with possible use of cellular-enabled meters for those outliers.

Council Member Cook asked how AMI might integrate with alternative energy sources such as solar panels. Mr. Coble deferred that inquiry to the Electric Department for a more technical response.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the professionalism of the presentation and the foresight behind the project's development.

2025-208 **Lead for North Carolina Fellowship Program Update**

Staff will provide an update regarding the Lead for the North Carolina Fellowship Program.

Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager, introduced Fellow Carla Huggins and stated the City intends to host a second-year fellow in the Customer Service Department.

Ms. Huggins provided a year-in-review presentation to the Committee. She stated the fellowship, coordinated through the UNC School of Government and AmeriCorps, places recent college graduates in local government positions across the state for an 11-month term. Ms. Huggins stated she began her service in August and will conclude her term at the end of June. She explained that the purpose of the program is to support local governments by filling capacity gaps and engaging the next generation of public servants.

During her time in High Point, Ms. Huggins contributed to several significant projects. She led the development of High Point 101, a Citizens Academy scheduled to launch in the fall, and detailed the extensive planning and departmental collaboration required to build out the eight-week program. She also supported the launch of HPTS Go, a supplemental micro-transit service, by conducting research on national and local service

models, participating in policy development, and preparing public-facing materials such as FAQs. Additionally, she was actively involved in the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, where she joined a cross-departmental team focused on advancing the Mayor's goal of expanding year-round economic opportunities tied to the City's furniture and design identity.

Ms. Huggins shared that she had the opportunity to contribute to a wide range of projects—some brief and exploratory, others long-term and deeply involved. She expressed gratitude for the collaborative and welcoming environment provided by High Point staff and noted that her experience gave her a broad understanding of local government operations.

Committee members expressed their appreciation for her contributions and commended her professionalism and enthusiasm. Council Member Cook acknowledged the value she brought during her time in High Point and expressed hope that she might continue to be part of the City's future.

2025-209 **Update on the City of High Point Store**

Staff will provide an update on the City of High Point merchandise store plans.

Jeron Hollis, Managing Director, provided a summary of plans to launch a pilot program for branded merchandise, focusing on apparel and items bearing the new "h." logo, which has seen increasing community interest.

Mr. Hollis explained that staff are finalizing vendor selection and item offerings with a goal to launch an online store in the third quarter of 2025. He stated that while the initial rollout would be virtual, staff are open to evaluating physical retail opportunities in the future.

Council members discussed potential distribution through local businesses and at the Piedmont Triad International Airport, where High Point merchandise is currently underrepresented. Mr. Hollis confirmed that finance and legal departments are involved in finalizing operational details, including how proceeds would be handled.

The Committee recognized the growing community pride behind the City's rebranding efforts and expressed enthusiasm about the project's potential.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Transparency, Engagement, and Communication Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Holmes, Chairman

Attest:

Sandra Keeney, City Clerk