

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL
Wednesday, May 21, 2025 - 4:00 PM
Municipal Office Building
211 S. Hamilton Street
High Point, NC 27260

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jefferson called the Special Meeting of the High Point City Council to order at 4:00 PM and stated the following members were present:

Present: Mayor Cyril Jefferson, Mayor Pro Tempore Britt Moore, At-Large, Council Member Amanda Cook, At-Large, Council Member Vickie McKiver, Ward 1, Council Member Monica Peters, Ward 3, Council Member Patrick Harman, Ward 4, and Council Member Michael Holmes, Ward 6.

Absent: Council Member Tyrone Johnson, Ward 2, Council Member Tim Andrew, Ward 5

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Council Member Holmes made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Moore, to adopt the agenda as presented.

The motion passed with following vote:

Aye: Mayor Jefferson, Mayor Pro Tempore Moore, Council Member Cook, Council Member McKiver, Council Member Peters, Council Member Harman, and Council Member Holmes

Nay: None

Absent: Council Member Johnson, Council Member Andrew

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS

2025-204 **Presentation of Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget - Downtown High Point, Inc.**

Staff from Downtown High Point, Inc. will present information on the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget.

Rebekah McGee, CEO and President of Downtown High Point, presented the item and spoke on the successes of the organization. She outlined some new events and features and pointed out that the Social Saturdays event had experienced a 58 percent increase in foot traffic over the past fiscal year. She spoke on the quarterly mixers and monthly merchant meetings where local businesses can network with other businesses and the organization to share ideas and form partnerships. She spoke on the Showplace West Development and said it was the first multi-tenant building to receive historic designation. She talked about the rebranding of Forward High Point to

Downtown High Point and said there would be a new website coming soon.

She went over the budget for Downtown High Point and said they hoped to increase the budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

She highlighted some 2025-2026 projects and goals including Cinema Saturday, Urban Threadscares, and the Downtown High Point Dollars program to help merchants drive sales and foot traffic. She went over some of the future project ideas, like expansion of Cinema Saturday, downtown Family & Fun Markets, seasonal banners, and the addition of a third employee.

In response to Mayor Pro Tempore Moore, Ms. McGee said that the High Point Dollars program can be open to any business, but does not include service businesses.

Council Member Peters emphasized the importance of a strong downtown area for economic development.

In response to Council Member Holmes, Ms. McGee said that the staff of Downtown High Point did not look to a specific city for ideas, but discussed what works best for High Point. She said that with the expansion of the budget, the money would go directly to projects and that although they could use an extra person, the current staff have the ability to execute the current events and projects.

Mayor Jefferson thanked Ms. McGee for the presentation and said he was excited about the large increase in foot traffic downtown and said he feels like we are making the reality happen of building a downtown where citizens want to work, live, and play. He emphasized the need to work on the aspect of downtown living and said that, driven by citizen input, the City was working on making that a reality.

In response to Council Member Peters, Ms. McGee spoke on the possibility of a Municipal Service District (MSD).

2025-205 **Presentation of Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget - Visit High Point**
Staff from Visit High Point will present information on the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget.

Melody Burnette, President of Visit High Point, provided a PowerPoint presentation. She spoke on the visitor economy in High Point and provided an overview of the occupancy tax revenue, noting the 7% increase over the projected amount in the FY 2024-2025 budget. She provided the revenues for Visit High Point, noting most of the funding comes from the occupancy tax.

She gave an overview of the Visit High Point organizational chart and explained there was always room for growth. She spoke about the 5% increase in salaries based on the recently completed 2-year compensation study. She provided an overview of the Visit High Point budget and said that operational expenses will increase by less than

1%, making up 18% of the budget. She explained that the organization had cut office supplies and paper usage in half over the past year. She noted that tourism promotion expenses had increased by 7%, and explained those expenses included a new website and other promotional tools. She went over some of the promotion strategies, including print, digital and in-person tools to increase visibility as well as sustained partnerships with High Point Market Authority and other entities.

She talked about the activation of a Winter Fest Experience at Truist Point Stadium utilizing \$200,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. She spoke on aligning investment through community grants and showed a breakdown of grant investment funds for arts and design, sports, events and experience, and certified autism centers. She shared a graphic illustrating the budget allocation and mentioned the organization was still paying themselves back from the move and continuing to put those funds in their reserves.

A thorough discussion ensued regarding partnerships, promotional events and materials, the certified autism designation, the need for other accessibility services, and the details of the holiday event.

2025-206 **Fiscal Year 2025-26 Proposed Budget - City of High Point**
To continue discussion on the City of High Point proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget.

Tasha Logan Ford, City Manager, stated the budget session was for staff to answer questions and concerns addressed by the City Council, and introduced Stephen Hawryluk, Budget and Performance Director.

Mr. Hawryluk explained there would be no formal presentation, but rather responses to questions and requests for information from the last budget work sessions. He spoke about the Gallimore Dairy Road and Johnson Street/Sandy Ridge Road widening project timelines, the Electric Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards (REPS) charge, and the salaries and other costs of the proposed civilian investigator positions.

Mr. Hawryluk provided additional information on the Tenant Education Advocacy Mediation (TEAM) program and pointed out that the rental assistance submitted through the Americans Friends Service Committee was a separate request.

He provided a thorough overview of the City's debt service strategy and spoke on the benefits of debt-funded capital.

Mayor Pro Tempore Moore pointed out that the budget was not static, but an estimate of projected revenues and expenses, and applauded the City for doing a great job of managing a budget in a growing city while providing high-level services to the population.

A discussion ensued regarding the organizations excluded from the budget and the

details of establishing an MSD. Mayor Jefferson pointed out that Council would not be voting on whether to establish an MSD, but rather to direct staff to gather information and prepare a report.

Mayor Jefferson made a motion, seconded by Council Member Cook, to authorize staff to move forward in preparing information and a report regarding establishing a Municipal Service District.

The motion passed with the following vote:

Aye: Mayor Jefferson, Mayor Pro Tempore Moore, Council Member Cook, Council Member McKiver, Council Member Peters, Council Member Harman, and Council Member Holmes

Nay: None

Absent: Council Member Johnson, Council Member Andrew

Before continuing the discussion on possible non-profit funding, Mayor Jefferson indicated he would need to recuse himself from the discussion involving the Guilford Education Alliance (High Point Schools Partnership) due to a conflict of interest.

Mayor Jefferson made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Moore, to recuse Mayor Jefferson from the discussion involving Guilford Education Alliance (High Point Schools Partnership).

The motion passed with the following vote:

Aye: Mayor Jefferson, Mayor Pro Tempore Moore, Council Member Cook, Council Member McKiver, Council Member Peters, Council Member Harman, and Council Member Holmes

Nay: None

Absent: Council Member Johnson, Council Member Andrew

Council Member Cook proposed allotting \$75,000 to the Guilford Education Alliance (High Point Schools Partnership) instead of the requested \$150,000, explaining that she had spoken to the organization and \$75,000 would allow them to keep the enrichment coordinator position in place for another year. A discussion ensued on potential funding strategies and the positive effect of the position and organization on the youth of High Point and the long-term effect of the initial ARPA fund roll out.

After some discussion, by general consensus, it was decided that the nonprofit funding for the three entities would be discussed at the upcoming Finance Committee meeting on May 29th. City Manager Ford said the item could be added to the Finance

Committee agenda for discussion.

Mayor Jefferson rejoined the discussion and stated for the record that he recused himself from the discussion about Guilford Education Alliance (High Point Schools Partnership) because his wife works for the organization and reiterated that none of the nonprofit funding goes to his wife. A thorough conversation ensued about the TEAM program, homelessness, eviction rights, and the effect of funding cuts at the federal level.

In response to Council Member Peters regarding cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant money and water testing in the Southwest area of the city, City Manager Ford said they have had discussions about Richland Creek and water on the south side of town. She mentioned the presentation at the recent Manager's Briefing where a report was shared showing the safety of the water. Assistant Manager Damon Dequenne said he understood the need for transparency for the citizens and said he could work on an estimate on testing the sewer lines in that area.

By general consensus, the City Council decided there would not be a need for an optional budget session the following week.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m

Respectfully Submitted,

Cyril Jefferson, Mayor

Attest:

Alison Glynn, Deputy City Clerk