MINUTES OF SHELBY CITY COUNCIL

Special Meeting – Annual Planning Retreat **February 21, 2026**
City Hall Annex Conference Room **Saturday, 8:30 a.m.**

Present: Mayor O. Stanhope Anthony III, presiding; Council Members Violet Arth, Charles Webber, Andrew Hopper, Sr., Emilie Bullock and David W. White, City Manager Justin S. Merritt, Assistant City Manager Ben Yarboro, City Attorney Jason Lunsford, City Clerk Carol Williams, Director of Human Resources Deborah C. (Deb) Jolly, Police Chief Brad Fraser, Director of Planning and Development Brian Burgess, Senior Planner Audrey Godfrey (arrived at 9:45 a.m.),

Mayor Anthony called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m. and welcomed all who were in attendance.

A. Approval of agenda:

1) Motion to adopt the proposed agenda

No action items may be added to the agenda as this is a special meeting called for the general purpose of City Council to hear reports, discuss topics of interest and identify possible new goals, objectives and action items. Council may alter the agenda to add discussion topics as it sees fit.

ACTION TAKEN: Upon a motion from Ms. Arth, City Council voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

City Manager Justin Merritt welcomed everyone and began the meeting with these comments:

- **The first part of the meeting today will consist of three presentations with informal conversation to answer any questions as we go through these presentations:**
    - **Mr. Yarboro's presentation is an update on the recently completed projects and our upcoming projects. The City has done a lot of work building new infrastructure, but now we'd like our focus to be on our ability to provide services needed. We want to refocus on maintaining our assets (parks, trails, sidewalks) to make them more useable and grow our tourism aspect. The Rail Trail and Depot Park are still priority projects, but we also want to focus on what we already have and make improvements as needed.**
    - **Mr. Burgess' presentation is an update on the Comprehensive Land**

Use Plan incorporating the feedback provided by Council and staff that was given at the December 8th special meeting.

- **Mr. Merritt's presentation will update the Strategic Goals that Council adopted last year and show what progress we've made. We need more time to accomplish some goals, and we can discuss the next steps and what it's going to take to see those goals completed.**

- **After the presentations, there will be time for open dialog to discuss, refine, and set priorities as we move into developing the budget for this year.**

B. Project Updates – Ben Yarboro, Assistant City Manager

Mr. Yarboro gave a brief update on the following completed, in-progress, and upcoming city projects:

1. **Fiscal Year 2026 Completed City Projects:**
   - **Dog Park**
   - **Suspension Bridge replacement over First Broad River**
   - **Boat Access at First Broad River Trail**
   - **TAMP Phase 2 Resurfacing, approximately 18 miles of street**
   - **Update of the Traffic Calming Policy – streamlined the process which is much easier for citizens to request a traffic calming study, and easier for staff to manage; in 2025 McGowan Street and Crawford Street did qualify through are ranking system**
   - **Council Chambers remodel**

   - **Electric Substation #11 –Transmission Increase from 12MW to 25MW. Duke has approved substation load to increase from 14MW in 2025 to 25 MW by 2037.**
   - **Subdivision Electric Installations: Willow Estates, Willowbrook, Fincastle Glen**

   - **Subdivision Natural Gas Installations: Eaves Rd. (Cleveland Hill), Willowbrook**
   - **Natural Gas System Modeling - if there's a request for an increase in natural gas or if a new industry wants to see how we can provide for their needs this modeling shows what natural gas load we can handle and how it impacts other areas of our system**

   - **Morgan St./Market St. Water and Sewer Replacement**
   - **Sumter St./Springdale St. Sewer Replacement**
   - **Clegg St./Miles Rd. Sewer Replacement**

2. **Fiscal Year 2026 In-Progress City Projects:**

- **Carolina Harmony Trail - Phase II, from Marion Street to DeKalb Street, 2.32 miles, well underway**
- **Depot Park – T.C. Strickland is the contractor, starting on March 2nd, 2026 with a completion date of January, 2027**
- **Planning Building Demo & Parking Lot Construction – will add 10-11 parking spaces, improved curbing, resurfacing after the roof repair of the Annex building, and have the same level of quality as the Fallen Heroes Memorial park**
- **TAMP Phase 3 ADA Ramps – have to comply with an ADA transition plan at the state level; if you pave a road that has pedestrian facilities it must be brought up to ADA compliance. In TAMP Phase 3 there are 102 ADA ramps that have to be improved before paving**
- **Fiber Installation for new 911 Center**
- **City-Wide Stormwater System Modeling ($330k AIA Grant) – can show where flooding can occur by simulating a topo model of the city**
- **US74 Bypass Utility Service Feasibility Study – this is in the final draft phase that will look at the interchanges on US 74 Bypass to see what utility improvements make sense due to growth in those areas**
- **Cleveland County Justice Center Electric Installation**
- **Cambridge Commons Electric Installation**
- **Substation #8 Reconductoring**
- **24" Water Transmission Line (Morgan, Graham, Washington)**
- **First Broad Sewer Outfall Improvement Project – Design – about $12 million appropriation, 75% design complete. It replaces 8,000 feet of pipe, carries about 1/3 of the city's sewer flow**

3. **Fiscal Year 2026 Upcoming City Projects:**
    - **TAMP Phase 3 – Resurfacing (Final phase of $10M GO Bond), should start in about 30 days, will pave 18.6 miles, once completed a total of 55.29 miles of streets will have been resurfaced of our approximately 125 miles of street (45%) since 2021**
    - **TAMP Phase 3 – ADA and Sidewalk Improvements**
    - **Foothills Commerce Center Sidewalk Construction Project**
    - **Graham St. 3-lane conversion (Design & Bid) – from Morgan Street to DeKalb Street , some section is NCDOT and some is city, mill road, restripe, parking on both sides of the street**
    - **Carolina Harmony Trail – Dekalb St. Crossing Study by NCDOT**
    - **Randolph Rd. Site Grading (by PPG on City parcel)**
    - **Graham St./Lafayette St./Morgan St. Underground Electric (for Rail Trail)**
    - **Market St. Underground Electric Relocation (for Depot Park)- converted to underground electric with streetlights put in, like a continuation of Uptown**

- **Circuit 11-2 from W. Grover St. to PPG on Randolph Rd. - new electric circuit from Substation #11 to PPG Aerospace Coatings plant located on Randolph Rd. (Shell Building 4), construction starts in Summer 2026**
- **Cherryville Rd./Mimosa Dr. 12" water line connector**
- **S. Lafayette St. Water Line Replacement – from the bridge on S. Lafayette Street to Morton Street will replace a 6" pipe that was installed in the early 1900s. This project was moved up due to NCDOT scheduling the stretch of road being resurfaced, want to do the work before paving**
- **Pursuing funding opportunities for 1.5 MGD WWTP Expansion**
- **Airport Project Fast Economic Development Project – 7 new jobs, $2.16 million grant funded**
- **Airport Project Compass Economic Development Project – 27 new jobs, $3.00 million grant funded, 0% local match**
- **Airport Parallel Taxiway Overlay and Direct Access Project - $4.1 million state grant, required NCDOT project**

Mr. Yarboro updated City Council on the residential development projects that the city is working on.

1. Fiscal Year 2026 Subdivision completed update:

		Planning & Construction Status	# of Units	Anticipated Start Date	Building Permits Issued	Electric	Natural Gas	Water	Sewer
Completed	South Ridge	Completed	11	N/A	11	Not Serving	Not Serving	Served	Served
	Lithia Springs	Completed	4	N/A	4	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
	Pinnacle Estates	Completed	92	N/A	92	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
	Palisades	Completed	312	N/A	312	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
	JDSI- Lake George Dr	Completed	38	N/A	38	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
			457		457	446	0	457	457

2. Fiscal Year 2026 Subdivisions under construction:

		Planning & Construction Status	# of Units	Anticipated Start Date	Building Permits Issued	Electric	Natural Gas	Water	Sewer
Vertical Construction	Seattle Crossing	Under Construction	78	9/20/2023	70	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
	Gilliat St. Single Family (Peeler Property)	Under Construction	5	6/1/2024	4	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
	Cleveland Hill (Eaves Rd.)	Under Construction	195	9/3/2024	25	Not Serving	Served	Served	Served
	Fincastle Glen (Melrose - East)	Under Construction	51	1/15/2025	9	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
	Cambridge Commons	Under Construction	98	10/14/2024	21	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
	Villas of Kings View - Single Family	Under Construction	49	10/30/2023	8	Served	Not Serving	Served	Served
	Arboretum Way Development (The Arboretum)	Under Construction	18	10/1/2023	6	Not Serving	Served	Not Serving	Not Serving
	Edgewater Development (The Pines)	Under Construction	11	1/1/2024	4	Not Serving	Served	Not Serving	Not Serving
	Edgewater Development (The Preserve)	Under Construction	18	1/1/2024	0	Not Serving	Served	Not Serving	Not Serving
			523		147	281	242	476	476

3. Fiscal Year 2026 Subdivision site construction:

		Planning & Construction Status	# of Units	Anticipated Start Date	Building Permits Issued	Electric	Natural Gas	Water	Sewer
Site Construction	Willow Estates	Under Construction	246	11/25/2023	10	Will Serve	Not Serving	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Willowbrook (Magnolia Expansion)	Under Construction	139	8/15/2024	6	Served	Served	Served	Served
	Monarch Ridge (Thrift Rd/Nancy Dr Subdivision)	Under Construction	213	9/1/2025	N/A	Not Serving	Not Serving	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Fincastle Glen (Lafayette St. - West)	Under Construction	86	3/1/2026	0	Not Serving	Not Serving	Will Serve	Will Serve
			684		16	385	139	684	684

4. Subdivisions likely to start in 2026:

		Planning & Construction Status	# of Units	Anticipated Start Date	Building Permits Issued	Electric	Natural Gas	Water	Sewer
ighly Like y	Aurora Village	Site Plan Approved & Waiting on Construction	51	TBD	N/A	Not Serving	Not Serving	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Rhoda Springs (Toms St/Wyke Rd.)	Site Plan Review	117	9/1/2026	N/A	Will Serve	Not Serving	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Marion St./Borders Rd.	Zoning Disapproved & Waiting on Resubmittal	174	10/1/2026	N/A	Not Serving	Not Serving	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Gardner Springs (Gardner-Webb Townhomes)	Site Plan Review	21	11/15/2026	N/A	Not Serving	Not Serving	Will Serve	Will Serve
	River Walk	Zoning Approved & Waiting on Site Plan Submittal	144	TBD	N/A	Will Serve	Will Serve	Will Serve	Will Serve
			507		0	261	144	507	507

5. Subdivisions in the Conceptual, Planning and Zoning phases:

		Planning & Construction Status	# of Units	Anticipated Start Date	Building Permits Issued	Electric	Natural Gas	Water	Sewer
Early Pl inning Stages	Blanton Farm - NW Parcel	Zoning Approved & Waiting on Site Plan Submittal	977	TBD	N/A	Not Serving	TBD	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Blanton Farm - NE Parcel	Zoning Approved & Waiting on Site Plan Submittal	63	TBD	N/A	Not Serving	TBD	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Blanton Farm - SE Parcel	Zoning Approved & Waiting on Site Plan Submittal	606	TBD	N/A	Not Serving	TBD	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Blanton Farm - SW Parcel (Industrial Lots)	Zoning Approved & Waiting on Site Plan Submittal	5	TBD	N/A	Not Serving	TBD	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Royster St. Townhome Phase 1	Site Plan Approved & Pending Construction	12	TBD	N/A	Will Serve	Not Serving	Will Serve	Will Serve
	Earl Rd./Industry Dr. Subdivision - Phase 1	Site Plan Reviw	166	TBD	N/A	Will Serve	TBD	Will Serve	Will Serve
			1829		0	178	#REF!	1829	1829

Mr. Merritt stated that with the residential growth, there will be the need for additional trash trucks and Public Works staff. Mr. Yarboro showed a graphic of the Customer Account History showing that the number of customer accounts has grown in all utilities (water, electric, sewer, stormwater, and natural gas) and sanitation. With the number of subdivisions still being developed, those customer account numbers will continue to rise.

Mr. Yarboro continued by giving an update on storm, emergency and outage management:

- **Continue developing, reviewing, and modifying policies, procedures, equipment, etc.**
- **Implement new DataVoice Outage Management text system**
- **Continue investing in system improvements and maintenance, such as:**
    - **Electric Reclosers, additional fuses**
    - **GIS & OMS programs**
    - **Tree trimming, vegetation management**

- **Provide redundancy where practical**
- **Staff Training**
- **Review of successes and failures of other agencies**

Mr. Yarboro continued his presentation by stating the need for electric substation and generator parts (breakers) and the need to purchase a 500kw portable generator which can back up the 41 permanent generators that can power city facilities and infrastructure during outages based on need and highest demand/priority. Other items such as a digital message board and automated flagger device would be useful during construction projects.

Mr. Yarboro concluded his presentation by stating the following:

- **The need for modeling to show any demand increase that is needed in the future utility and infrastructure demands due to our continued growth.**

- **The 1.5 MGD expansion at our Wastewater Treatment Plant is a $45 million project split between two phases (a $15 million and a $30 million); the city has applied for EDA grants on the $15 million project and a $5 million principal forgiveness opportunity so that would leave $10 million. We are also applying for an EDA funding up to $20 million for the $30 million project. We are at 80% of flow at the Waste Water Treatment plant; it's required to expand when it gets 90%. We're trying to be proactive and get as much funding as possible. This will be a major project in the future.**

- **Revising the Traffic Impact Analysis policy in the UDO rewrite**

- **Monitoring the Natural Gas system and contract volume due to industry expansion and other future projects**

Currently, the Utilities Department is without a Director of Engineering and a Director of Electric, both have been vacant for years. Advertising for the Director of Electric should be in the next week or so, then a couple of weeks later advertise for the Director of Engineering. Mr. Yarboro commends his staff for the diligent work they've accomplished while shorthanded.

C. Comprehensive Land Use Plan update – Brian Burgess, Director of Planning and Development, and Senior Planner Audrey Godfrey

Mr. Burgess began his presentation by stating the Comprehensive Plan is a document that needs to be looked at and updated regularly, not something that sits on the shelf collecting dust for 20 years. After receiving feedback from City Council at the December 8th Special meeting, Mr. Burgess and his staff have made the following changes to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Comp Plan):

Broad changes to the plan include:

- **Adding "Continue to" throughout the plan to reflect where the City has a history of efforts and/or where efforts are underway – a few examples:**
  - **Continue to support the recruitment of new businesses, industry, and high-wage jobs.**
  - **Continue to support the vitality of Uptown Shelby**
  - **Continue to support the expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities along the First Broad River.**
  - **Continue construction of the Carolina Harmony Trail**
  - **Continue to pursue grants and other funding for infrastructure improvements and site development activities.**
- **Remove references to Uptown Shelby Association because of MSD contract concerns**
- **Realign some tactics/strategies to more closely align objectives -**
  - **For example, Goal 5.5.5 (A) "develop public engagement programs…" from Volunteerism strategy to Public Engagement strategy**

Specific changes to the plan include some of the following:

- **Continue to grow & maintain parks system**
- **In gateway overlay districts – Add signage standards**
- **Strengthen business & workforce development – expand the focus beyond Uptown Shelby**
- **Encourage a mix of housing types and price points in new development. (delete and price points)**
- **Clarify that "Uptown" actually means the larger Center City area**
- **Changes to 4.2.3 re: "incentives to encourage new residential development"**
- **Transportation infrastructure revisions or clarifications –**
  - **Align with current City policies (e.g., road maintenance based on condition-based assessment; traffic calming policy updated fall 2025)**
  - **ADA Assessment & Transition Plan - Remove and depend on existing policies to address**
  - **Deletion of Objective 6.2.5(F) "Coordinate with Police Dept…"**
  - **Objective 6.2.9 revise to "Encourage the expansion of the current transit program (TACC) and/or the creation of a micro-transit system."**

- Objective 6.3.2 revise from "City Park" to "city parks"
- Objective 6.4.1. How will parking study data be utilized?

- Neighborhoods revisions or clarifications
  - Shift language from "revitalization" to "engagement"
  - Clarify 7.1.5 "strengthen enforcement of minimum housing code and City nuisance code"
  - Objective 7.2: reword as "Strive to foster a resilient, equitable community."
  - Delete Objective 7.2.1 (creating a document & communicating the services to people in need) – replace with "Encourage Cleveland County government's effort to maintain and disseminate the Cleveland County Resource Guide to those who would most benefit from accessing those services."
  - Move Objective 7.2.2 (neighborhood planning) to 7.1 "Encourage neighborhood improvements & revitalization/engagement"
  - Delete Objective 7.2.3 (housing/homelessness) – replace with "Consider the use of existing available funds to develop a self-sufficient housing construction program."
  - Delete Objective 7.2.4 (engage with Cleveland County – veterans, Health Dept, DSS) – replace with "Support Cleveland County's leadership and the County veteran's department and consolidated human services agency in their efforts to meet the community's needs."
  - Add: "Investigate the City's role in serving vulnerable populations."
- Retain, recruit, develop high-performing workforce
  Need to add strategies that are related to retention and recruitment
  - Add conduct annual or semi-annual assessments of how recruitment and retainment strategies could be adjusted to remain competitive with other local governments in the State.

Next Steps in finalizing the Comp Plan:

- There are still some items that need to be adjusted:
  - Staff will be meeting soon to discuss in detail how we would like to approach some of the utility/infrastructure language
  - There are some items in the chapters preceding the recommendations that need to be updated or corrected
- Planning Staff will be editing the plan from top to bottom once details are ironed out
- Council should expect a revised plan to review between late March-Early April
- Item will be presented to Council for consideration of adoption at Manager's direction

Mr. Burgess thanked Mrs. Godfrey for all her work on getting this plan to this stage. By consensus, City Council and Mr. Merritt appreciated all the work involved in revising and editing this plan and incorporating the feedback that was

received.

D. Council Strategic Goals Update – Justin Merritt, City Manager

Mr. Merritt began by stating he hopes this presentation will lead to conversations from Council on what goals they would like staff to pursue. This is not a comprehensive list of what staff have accomplished: department directors provided Mr. Merritt with a list of specific actions that have addressed these goals.

Mr. Merritt provided the following presentation with *specific actions* that have occurred in the past year:

- **Strategic Priority #1: Foster a thriving, attractive, and affordable community of high- quality neighborhoods.**
  - **Goal 1: Work to improve the variety, availability and options for quality housing that is affordable to a wide range of income levels.**
    - **Action Item 1: Review and evaluate policies and ordinances to encourage quality low, medium, and high-density housing in appropriate areas throughout the City.**

Planning and Development Services: Priority 1, Goal 1 Action Item 1 – Planning and Development staff have been working to revise the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This will provide vision and recommendations to address housing types and densities throughout the City. Additionally, revision of the Unified Development Ordinance will provide further opportunity to address housing and development needs.

    - **Action Item 2: Engage in a collaborative effort to attract private sector developers to build a variety of high-quality neighborhoods. Identify impediments that may discourage this type of development. *Mrs. Godfrey stated this is being addressed during the UDO rewrite process.***

- **Strategic Priority #2: Plan for and develop an efficient, accessible, sustainable and comprehensive transportation network with reliable, safe and affordable City utility infrastructure.**
  - **Goal 1: Continue improvements to roads, sidewalks, and trails in an effort to provide a safe and accessible transportation network for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicular traffic in the community.**
    - **Action Item 1: Complete the sale of the remaining $4,000,000 in voter authorized transportation bonds to provide funding to identified projects.**

Engineering Services Department: Priority 2, Goal 1, Action Item 1 –City staff have completed the sale of the remaining $4,000,000 in bonds for transportation improvements and contracts have been awarded.

- **Action Item 2**: Review City policies and ordinances to identify impediments or new ways to achieve this goal.
- **Action Item 3**: Review and update the Unified Development Ordinance to require, if possible, that developers make roadway, sidewalk and trail improvements when appropriate.
- **Action Item 4**: Engage in a regular dialog and periodic meeting schedule with NCDOT senior staff.

Fire and Rescue Department: Priority 2, Goal 1, Action Item 4 –Worked with Impact Design and NCDOT to upfit major travel corridor intersections with Emergency Vehicle Priority (EVP) systems. The remaining intersections for upfitting are along Marion and Lafayette streets. NCDOT installed the EVP equipment as part of the Cherryville Rd/Marion/Peach Street intersection improvement. As part of the Carolina Harmony Trail project, traffic signal improvements at Marion & Morgan Street and Lafayette & Morgan Street intersections will include EVP systems.

- **Action Item 5**: Review current traffic calming policy to make it easier for implementation in areas where conditions and data provide justification.

- **Action Item 6**: Develop a process for City Council to annually set local transportation priorities for both the City and NCDOT systems.

- **Goal 2**: Continue improvements to the City's utility infrastructure systems to better serve existing customers and foster an environment that supports economic growth.

    - **Action Item 1**: Explore ways to lessen the development burden on City utilities by studying the implementation of "development fees" as permitted by the NC General Statutes.

Water and Sewer Department: Priority 2, Goal 2, Action Item 1 –City Staff worked with Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. to develop and implement System Development Fees, as allowed under NC General Statute 162A.

Regarding the System Development Fees, Mr. Yarboro stated to date Sewer has generated $67,000, Water has generated $72,000, and Electric has generated $143,000. We've had no issue or pushback from contractors on implementing these fees. The City plans to increase these fees in the next couple of years, as allowed by statute. Existing city residents should not bear these costs; it should be placed on the new residential development customers.

        - **Action Item 2**: Review policies and ordinances regarding the cost sharing percentages for the installation of natural gas and electric systems within new developments to lessen the financial burden on the City.

        - **Action Item 3**: Evaluate and maintain existing capital plans for each of the City's utilities that account for the needs of the current systems while also supporting future growth and development.

- **Strategic Priority #3:** Cultivate and develop an environment for diverse economic growth, quality job creation, and cultural vitality.
    - **Goal 1**: Develop strategies for retaining existing businesses and attracting a variety of new businesses and industries.

        - **Action Item 1**: Evaluate the current "Job Ready Shell Building" and industrial land acquisition programs.

        - **Action Item 2**: Engage in discussions with the current and past partners of CCEDP to reestablish an active and engaged level of partnership in economic development.

        - **Action Item 3**: Initiate a new effort to develop a detailed Uptown Shelby Master Plan focusing on strategies that will expand the footprint of uptown, enhance aesthetics and increase the number of businesses.

    - **Goal 2:** Develop strategies to improve the overall perception of the City's appearance.
        - **Action Item 1**: Review and possibly redesign the wayfinding signage system.
        - **Action Item 2:** Revisit the implementation of a City gateway project to possibly include signage and public art.
        - **Action Item 3**: Explore ways to enhance the aesthetics of the uptown area throughout the year.

No specific actions taken; however, Mr. Merritt has had preliminary discussions with the County Manager regarding the Shell Building Program and will discuss the future of CCEDP with him as well.

Mr. Yarboro stated there are two construction projects (the Rail Trail and Market Street) that are relevant to Goal 2. Mr. Burgess stated regarding Goal 2, Action Items 2 and 3, his staff has made clear to the UDO consultants that we want an overlay district when approaching Uptown so that the corridor coming in gets enhanced as development takes place. Mr. Burgess also stated that his personal goal is to see the Dixon Blvd. completely overhauled by the time he retires as well

as Lafayette Street into Uptown.

Mr. Merritt explained that the County Manager stated they are interested in reengaging in the Shell Building Program, but it will be after the Justice Center project; their resources are committed to that at this time. The County hopes to be in their facility by this Fall, 2026.

Mr. Merritt says it may be a challenge to reactivate the CCEDP; our focus needs to be on Economic Development, and we will continue to explore our options.

- **Strategic Priority #4:** Achieve organizational excellence.
  - **Goal 1**: Retain, recruit and develop a high performing workforce that reflects the community.
    - **Action Item 1**: Continue to implement a system of pay and benefits that makes the City highly competitive within the workforce market. Do this by regularly updating market studies and providing cost of living increases using verified labor statistics.

Mr. Merritt stated that employees want to feel like they matter, their opinions and ideas matter, and that they are important to the organization.

Human Resources: Priority 4, Goal 1 Action Item 1 –The City continues to complete market studies on 3-year cycles and works to implement the results of these studies to maintain market competitiveness for employee compensation. We are working on an update to this process and will be making recommendations to City Council as we work through the details.

Mr. Merritt and staff are looking into this 3-year cycle and seeing if it is still working, or do we need to look at it every year or every other year to keep competitive; these discussions are ongoing.

According to Mrs. Jolly, the 2025 North Carolina Labor statistics show that there is not even one person to fill a vacancy; when she came to the City in 2008 the statistic was 8.7 unemployed people for one job opening, now it's 0.8. Also, 35% of our city staff have less than 3 years' experience, which means we're training employees and then they're leaving. What's happening is our good employees are seen on job sites and getting phone calls from other agencies recruiting them to come work for them, creating vacancies and making retention harder; our turnover rate is 12.6%. Mrs. Jolly stated we do get behind in the market study comparisons with other cities our size because we are in a 3-year cycle; it might be better to give smaller raises more often than waiting every 3 years. Mrs. Jolly states that our benefits are great, but most people look at the hourly rate more than benefits.

Fire and Rescue Department: Priority 4, Goal 1, Action Item 1 –After a national search, the City appointed Chelsey Martin to the vacant Assistant Fire Chief position. Chelsey has a master's degree in public administration from Gardner Webb University and an undergraduate degree in intelligence studies from American Military University. Chelsey is currently enrolled in the Executive Fire Officer curriculum at the National Fire Academy. She has been with the Fire & Rescue Department for over 10 years and has an extensive background in organizational management. The Fire & Rescue Department worked with the Human Resources Department to streamline its recruitment process, enabling it to hire qualified candidates for open positions quickly.

- **Action Item 2**: Reemphasize a culture of continuous improvement where employees provide excellent customer service and feel engaged and involved in the goals of the organization.

Human Resources Department - Action Item 2 - We strive to be a caring and listening employer that encourages employees to provide feedback and suggestions for continuous improvement. This is done through leadership training, exit interviews, committee participation, and various employee activities that encourage community among departments. We promote the continuous improvement concept at employee orientations and encourage employees to share their ideas to improve operations with their supervisor.

Fire and Rescue Department - Action Item 2 -The department continues its emphasis on continuous individual and organizational improvement. Seven staff members (including all Fire Marshal's Office personnel) were certified for the state's new Fire Investigator Technician credential. Eight staff members completed and were credentialed as FAA Part 107 Drone Pilots. Several staff members achieved initial or higher credentialing as state fire code officials. Staff members attained initial certifications and/or maintained continuing education hours.

- **Strategic Priority #5:** Create a safe, healthy and engaged community.
  - **Goal 1:** Utilize proactive public engagement strategies to better reflect community priorities.
    - **Action Item 1**: Develop public engagement programs that inform and educate citizens of City services and seek feedback on ways to improve.
  - **Goal 2**: Provide high quality public safety services that meet the needs, values and concerns held by the community.
    - **Action Item 1**: Use the citizen engagement process to revitalize the community watch program.

Police Department: Priority 5, Goal 2 Action Item 1—In 2025, the Shelby Police Department held quarterly 'community meetings' at local Churches and at Police Headquarters (for the Uptown area). During these meetings we discussed community concerns, introduced staff, and held positive Question/Answer sessions. Included in these meetings were discussions about community watch partnerships. We plan to continue this into 2026. We also conducted numerous 'Coffee with a COP' events focusing primarily on our senior residential communities around the city.

- **Action Item 2**: Continue participation in public safety international accreditation processes.

Action Item 2—In late 2024, the Shelby Police Department held our site-based assessments as part of our CALEA Law Enforcement and Communications Accreditation programs. These weeklong assessments are part of a four-year continuous process in maintaining accredited status with the commission. In 2025, the final reports drafted during these assessments were reviewed by the commission and subsequently we were awarded reaccredited status. Accreditation is good for four years, during which time we will be subject to annual remote reviews. Our first annual remote review is next month. We are currently working on obtaining the new State Accreditation in 2026.

Fire and Rescue Department: Priority 5, Goal 2, Action Item 2 -The Fire & Rescue Department submitted its annual compliance report for the 2024-29 accreditation cycle for the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) to maintain its status as an accredited agency. The Fire & Rescue Department has been an accredited agency since 2014.

- **Action Item 3**: Improve efforts to educate the public on the actual public safety statistics to include the crime rate.

Police Department: Priority 5, Goal2, Action Item 3—We have begun publishing a quarterly written crime report to Council

- **Action Item 4**: Initiate steps toward the design and eventual funding and construction of Fire Station 4.

Fire Department: Priority 5, Goal 2, Action Item 4 - Collaborated with city staff to work out an arrangement with PPG and their building contractor to utilize the proposed site of Fire Station 4 on Randolph Rd as a laydown lot during the construction and upfitting of PPG's new facility at the job ready shell building in exchange for grading the property to the city's specifications as a building lot. The next phase will be to engage an architectural firm to design the fire station building while the site is used for PPG's construction project.

Regarding Fire Station #4, Mr. Merritt stated that probably in FY 2028 is when we'll

start the architectural design phase of that facility, so we will be ready for construction as soon as PPG is done with their construction project.

- **Goal 3**: Improve the quality of life by continuing aggressive enforcement of the minimum housing code and city nuisance code.
  - **Action Item 1**: Develop a comprehensive strategy for identifying violating properties and timely enforcement of city codes.
  - **Action Item 2**: Reinstitute neighborhood action planning process.

- **Goal 4**: Create a process that will facilitate a conversation about homelessness.
  - **Action Item** 1: Establish a multi-jurisdictional task force to discuss community homelessness concerns.

Mr. Merritt stated minimum housing and nuisance violations go hand in hand. We should be acting as a catalyst to make sure that those things don't exist in our neighborhoods. We need to look out for the neighbor that is subjected to the nuisance next door.

Mr. Burgess stated that he's proud of the number of cases Code Enforcement completed with one less staff member this year. Also, in the last year there were more minimum housing cases (demolitions) than in the past five years. Still work to do and catching up from years of inactivity, but he appreciates the support from Council and management.

Mr. Merritt and Mr. Burgess have talked about restructuring the Code Enforcement department to becoming more proactive in addressing the minimum housing and nuisance issues.

E. City Council Discussion and Feedback

Discussion continued regarding nuisances, such as, high grass, mattresses, junked cars, leaves never picked up, etc. Also, the city needs to address the landlords (or heirs) that are not maintaining their properties. By consensus, compliance is preferred instead of going through enforcement and the lien process.

Discussion regarding Keep Shelby Beautiful committee took place, with Mr. Burgess stating that he'd like to recommend it being more of a code enforcement board with representation around the city. Board members can keep an eye on things, report problems across the entire city, not just Uptown area. Mr. Merritt stated we could also use this committee as a way to go into neighborhoods and do a workday or clean up areas; not just focusing on who has the pretty yard.

F. Lunch and Continued Discussion

Mayor Anthony stated at Rotary recently there was a presentation from the Catawba Nation regarding grants in the range of $5.5 - $7.5 million each year. The presenter mentioned giving a grant to the Carolina Thread Trail, through either to the Carolina Harmony Trail or the Gateway Trail in Kings Mountain. Mayor Anthony wants us to reach out and steer them towards the Carolina Harmony Trail.

Dr. Webber asked about the new hotel going up near the State Employee's Credit Union. Nothing there yet except the elevator shafts. Mr. Burgess stated the developer has changed the plans a couple of times.

Mayor Anthony discussed the new developments all over Shelby and would like our UDO to limit the number of cul-de-sac neighborhoods. He'd like to see sidewalk connectivity for pedestrians to go from one neighborhood to another. Mr. Burgess stated that he's asked for a more robust access management chapter in our revised UDO.

Mayor Anthony stated that pedestrian access to Holly Oak Park is difficult. Mr. Merritt stated there could be trails to Shelby High School and then across DeKalb Street to the Carolina Harmony Trail, but there is a culvert that has to be considered, especially during any flooding.

Discussion continued about Cleveland Community College and what a great asset it is to the City and the amount of growth happening at the College.

Mr. Merritt stated he had a conversation with the donor that gave a private donation towards the Depot Park and that individual is ready to move forward. Mr. Merritt will schedule meetings with Council to discuss naming rights in recognition of the donation, which should be in this family's name.

Mayor Anthony inquired about the Webbley project, Mr. Lunsford stated the bid was readvertised and bids are due next Tuesday.

Mr. White mentioned that Eddie Holbrook has requested additional money towards the American Legion World Series to replace the baseball field with an astroturf field. Mr. Merritt stated he met with Mr. Holbrook earlier this week and directed him to submit a formal request. Mr. Merritt reminded Mr. Holbrook that in addition to the Travel and Tourism grant money the ALWS receives from the City, we also provide security and sanitation services that are not included in the grant money. Mr. Hopper serves on the ALWS Executive Board and hears the request for additional money as well.

Mayor Anthony asked Mr. Merritt if Council has given staff enough direction to continue working on the goals. Mr. Merritt stated that there are a lot of goals to still work on this year and we will move forward with achieving these goals. The

types of projects may shift in a direction where our projects are more engaged with the community. Mr. Merritt concluded by stating that the staff is what gets the work done, and he appreciates the work that gets accomplished each day.

The agenda and presentations, including staff reports from the 2026 Shelby City Council Planning Retreat are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these Minutes.

G. Adjournment:

a. Motion to adjourn

ACTION TAKEN: Upon a motion made by Mr. White, City Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Williams
City Clerk

O. Stanhope Anthony, III
Mayor