

**February 12, 2016**  
**Special Meeting of the City Council**  
**Chamber of Commerce Meeting Room**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**Present:** Mayor Barbara G. Volk, Mayor Pro Tem Ron Stephens and Council Members: Steve Caraker, Jerry Smith and Jeff Miller

**Staff Present:** City Manager John F. Connet, City Clerk Tammie Drake, Planning Director Sue Anderson, Police Chief Herbert Blake, Engineering Director Brent Detwiler, Development Assistance Director Susan Frady, Human Resources Director Jennifer Harrell, Downtown Development Director Lew Holloway, PIO Tara Ledbetter, Assistant to the Manager Brian Pahle, Utilities Director Lee Smith, Fire Chief Joseph Vindigni, Finance Director Lisa White, Public Works Director Tom Wooten

The purpose of the special meeting is to hold a Council/Staff retreat. Other topics may be discussed.

**Call to Order:** Mayor Volk called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established with all five City Council members in attendance.

City Manager John Connet began by introducing the facilitator Warren Miller with Fountainworks. Mr. Miller reviewed the expected outcomes/objectives of the retreat. His report follows.

**City of Hendersonville Council Retreat Summary Report from February 12, 2016**  
**Prepared by Fountainworks, Inc.**

### *Overview*

This report summarizes the results of the 2016 City of Hendersonville Council Retreat. The daylong session was held on February 12, 2016, from 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the Chamber of Commerce Building. Those taking part in this daylong exercise included more than 20 participants representing the City of Hendersonville's City Council and City of Hendersonville staff members.

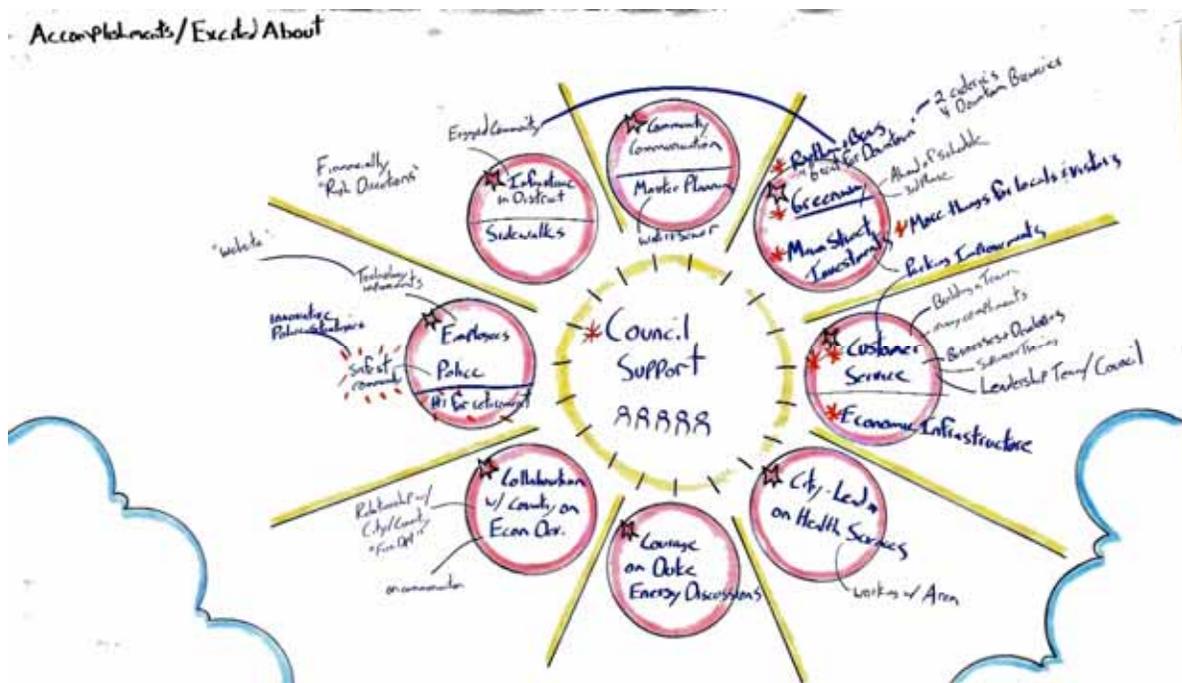
The purpose of the retreat was to develop one-year priorities for the City Council of Hendersonville by considering both current opportunities and future needs. This daylong session was professionally facilitated and included the opportunity for participants to interact in open conversation, to share and build on ideas. Comments were captured as conversation flowed and do not reflect any priority unless otherwise noted. The subsequent sections of the report summarize the workshop agenda and the participants' input.

### *Objectives*

- ✦ Develop a 15-year vision for the City of Hendersonville
- ✦ Establish Council Priorities for 2016-2017
- ✦ Define mission and goals for City water system

### *Accomplishments*

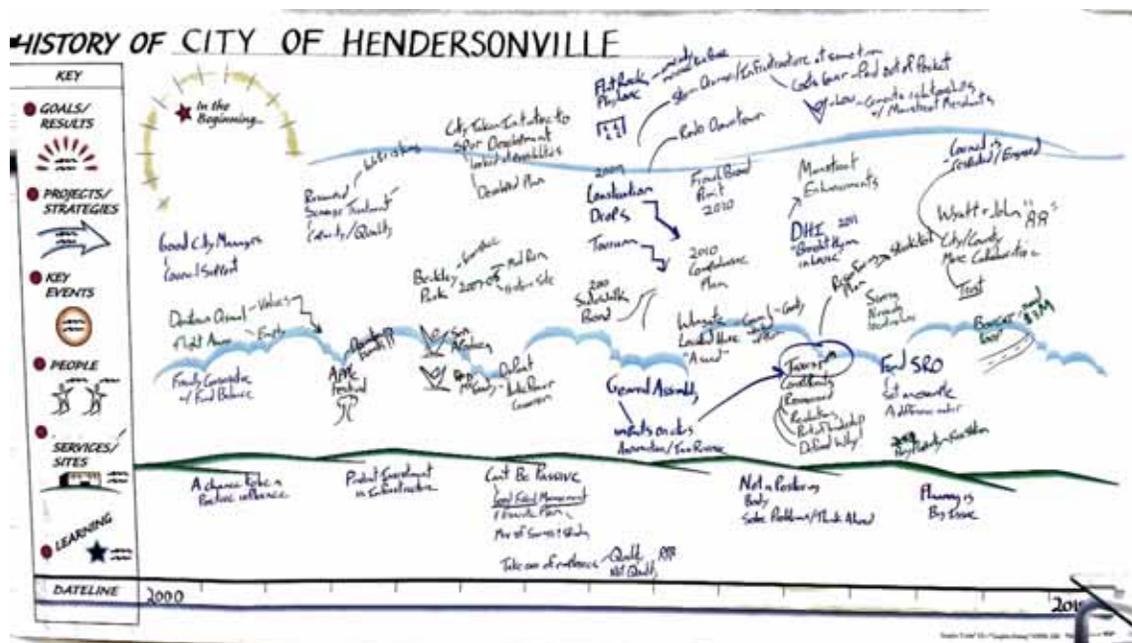
The retreat began with Council members sharing one thing they were proud of over the past year and one thing they are excited about. The following conversation was recorded on the infographic below:



- ❖ Community Communication
- ❖ Master Planning
  - Water & Sewer
- ❖ Rhythm & Brews "Great for Downtown"
  - 2 Cideries
  - 4 Downtown Breweries
- ❖ Greenway
  - Ahead of schedule
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase
- ❖ Main Street Investments
- ❖ More things for locals & visitors
- ❖ Customer Service
  - Parking Improvements
  - Building a Team
  - Many compliments
  - Businesses and Developers
  - Supervisor Training
  - Leadership Team/Council
- ❖ Economic Infrastructure
- ❖ City – Lead on Health Services
- ❖ Courage on Duke Energy Discussions
- ❖ Collaboration with county on Economic Development
  - Relationship with City/County Fire Dept.
  - On communication
- ❖ # 1 for Retirement
- ❖ Police
  - Safest community
  - Innovative Police strategies
- ❖ Employees
  - Technology improvements
  - "Website"
- ❖ Infrastructure in District
  - Engaged community
  - Financially "Right Directions"
- ❖ Sidewalks

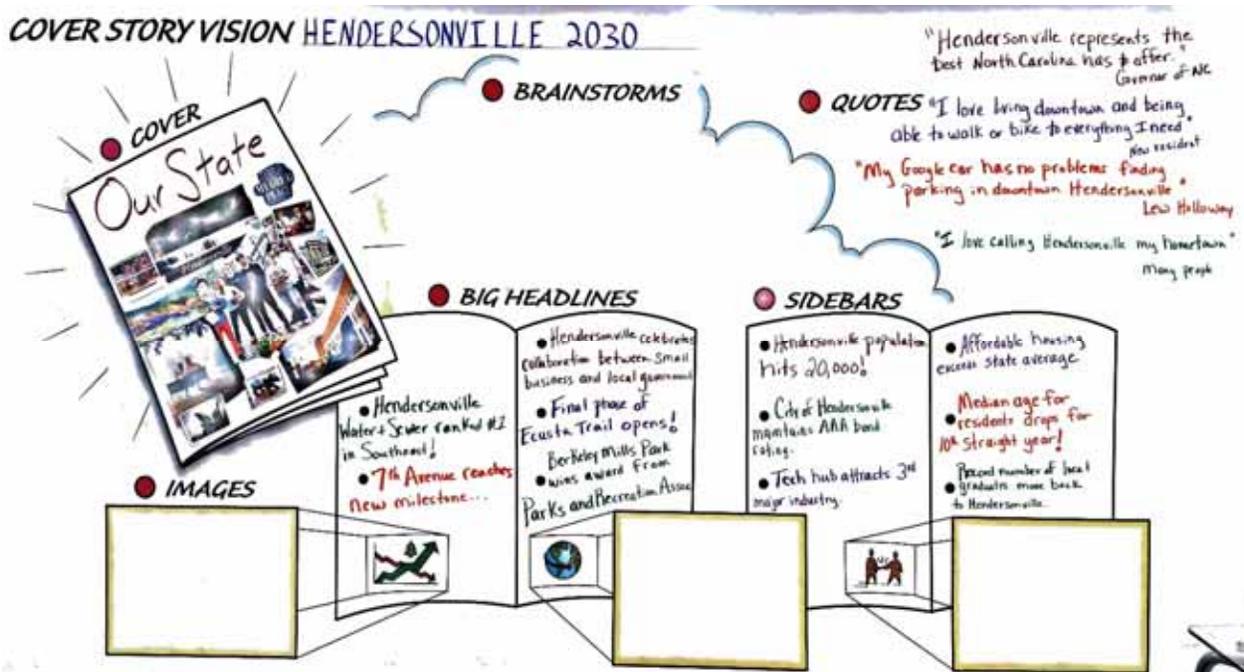
**Major Milestones**

The session then moved onto a facilitated discussion about major milestones and key events in the City over the past 15 years. The "history map" below was created.



Cover Story Vision

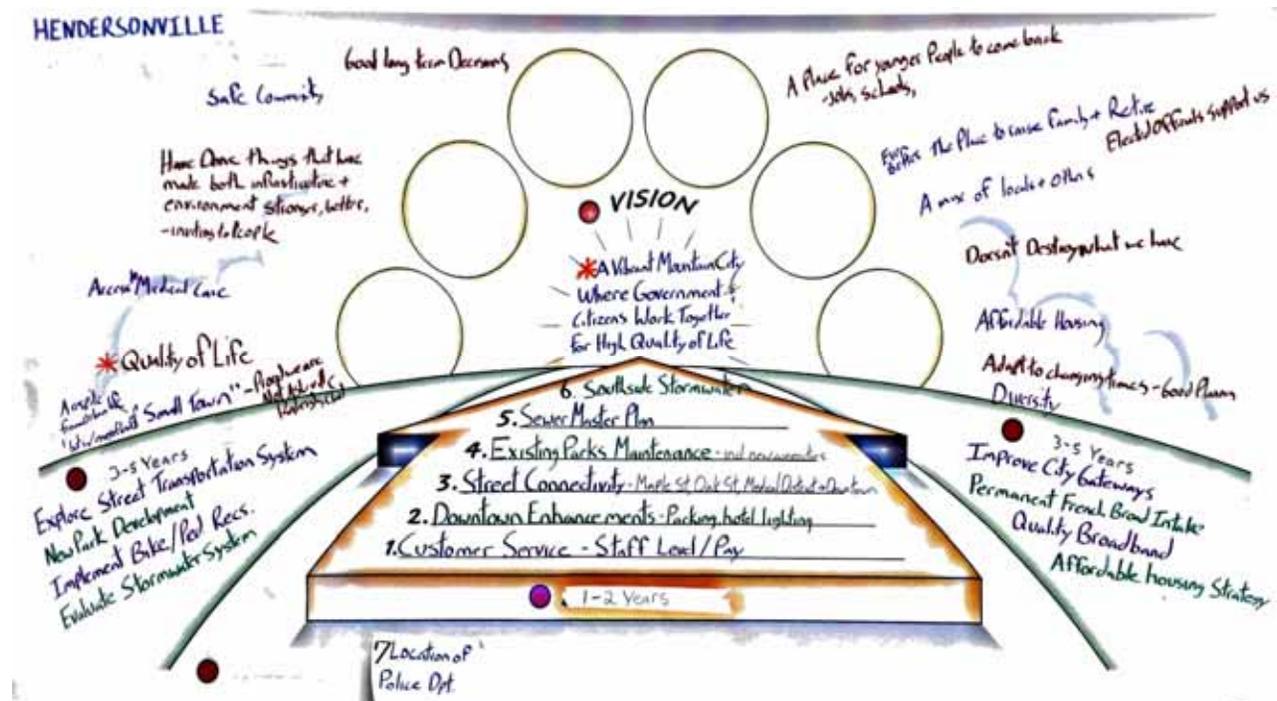
Following the history segment, the group shifted focus to the future. The Council members created a “news cover story vision” for Hendersonville in the year 2030. They were asked to work together to create a single cover story. From here, common themes are identified. Below is a summary of their shared vision and themes.



- Big Headlines
  - ❖ Hendersonville Water & Sewer ranked #1 in Southeast!
  - ❖ 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue reaches new milestone...
  - ❖ Hendersonville celebrates collaboration between small business and local government!
  - ❖ Final phase of Ecusta Trail opens!
  - ❖ Berkeley Mills Park wins award from Park and Recreation Association
- Sidebars
  - ❖ Hendersonville population hits 20,000!
  - ❖ City of Hendersonville maintains AAA bond rating.
  - ❖ Tech hub attracts 3<sup>rd</sup> major industry.
  - ❖ Affordable housing exceeds state average.
  - ❖ Median age for residents drops for 10<sup>th</sup> straight year!
  - ❖ Record number of local graduates move back to Hendersonville.
- Quotes
  - ❖ “Hendersonville represents the best North Carolina has to offer.” Governor of NC
  - ❖ “I love living downtown and being able to walk or bike to everything I need.” New resident
  - ❖ “My Google car has no problems finding parking in downtown Hendersonville.” Lew Holloway
  - ❖ “I love calling Hendersonville my hometown.” Many people

**City Priorities**

After capturing the vision themes from the cover story exercise, the next conversation for the Council centered on near term priorities. The Council members were asked to nominate up to ten ideas for “1-2 year priorities” and “3-5 year priorities”. Below is a summary of their discussion about the vision themes and priorities.

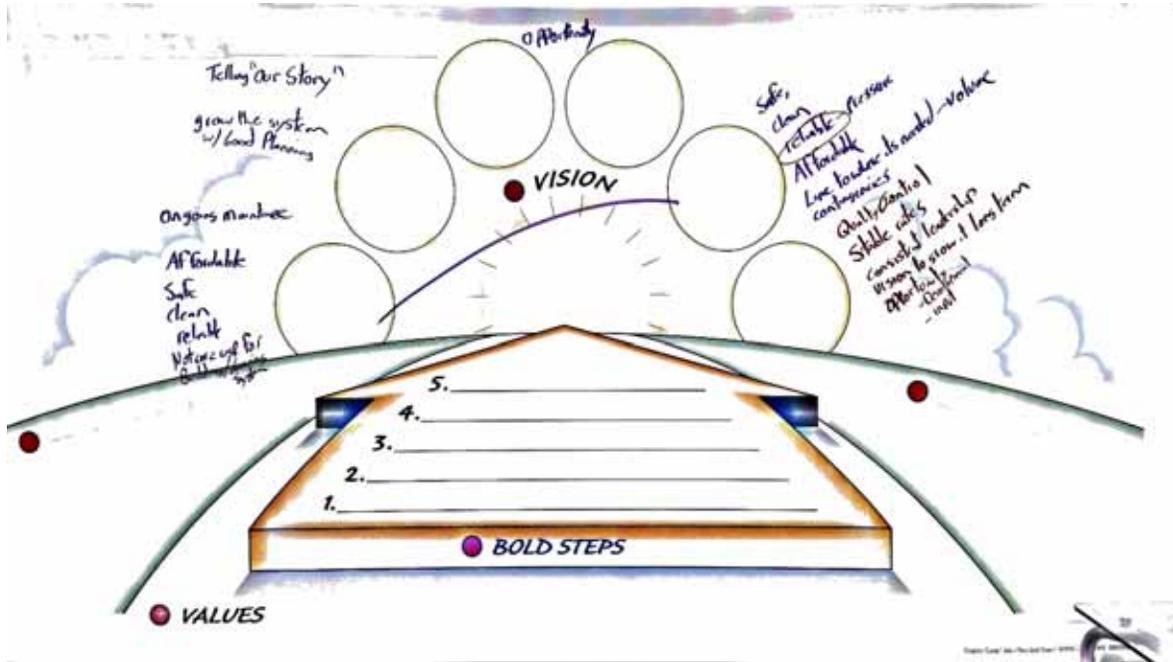


- Vision
  - ❖ A vibrant mountain city where government and citizens work together for high quality of life.
- Vision Themes*
  - ❖ Good long term decisions
  - ❖ Safe community
  - ❖ Have done things that have made both infrastructure and environment stronger, better, inviting to people
  - ❖ Access to Medical Care
  - ❖ A place for younger people to come back – jobs, schools
  - ❖ Even Better - The place to raise family and retire
  - ❖ Elected officials support us
  - ❖ A mix of locals and others
  - ❖ Doesn't destroy what we have
  - ❖ Affordable housing
  - ❖ Adapt to changing times – Good Planning
  - ❖ Diversity
- Clarification of Vision
  - ❖ A respite from urban life but with many benefits of “Small Town”
  - ❖ Proud we are not Asheville, Raleigh, Charlotte
- 1-2 Year Priorities
  - Customer Service – Staff Level/Pay
  - Downtown Enhancements – Parking, hotel, lighting
  - Street connectivity – Maple St, Oak St, Medical District – Downtown
  - Existing Parks Maintenance – including new amenities
  - Sewer Master Plan
  - Southside Storm water
  - Location of Police Department
- 3-5 Year Priorities
  - Explore Street Transportation System
  - New Park Development
  - Implement Bike/Pedestrian Recs.
  - Evaluate Storm Water System
  - Improve City Gateways
  - Permanent French Broad Intake
  - Quality Broadband
  - Affordable housing strategy

**Vision for City's Water System**

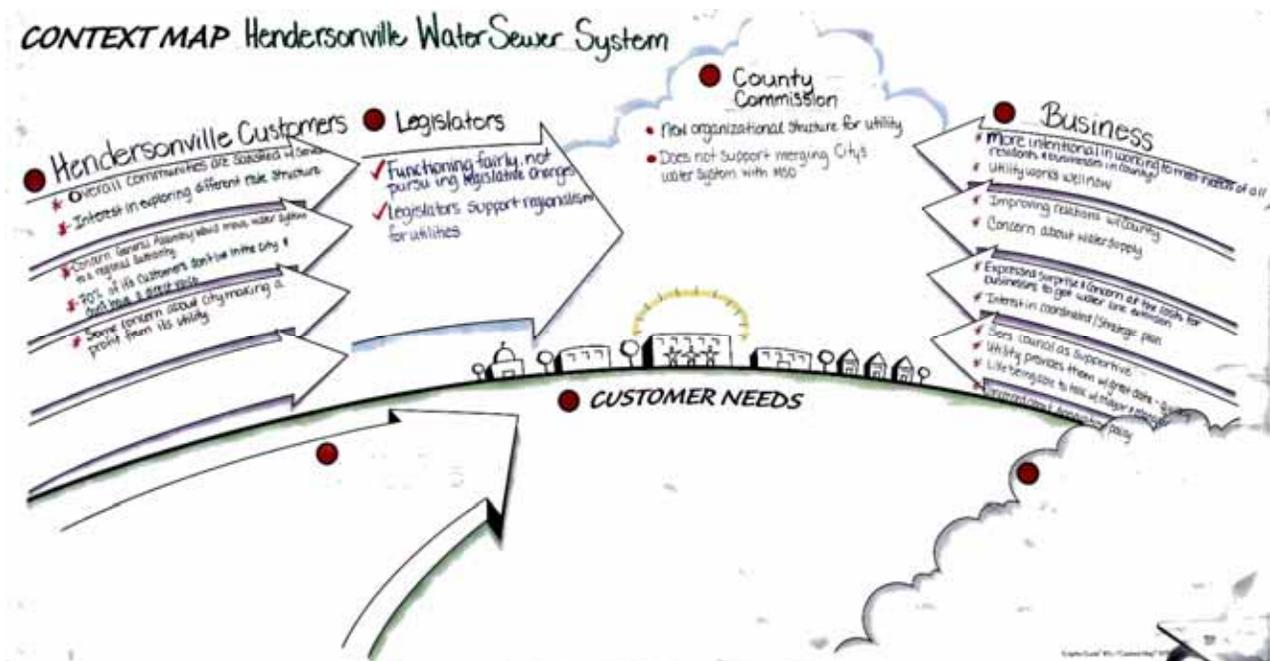
The Council then considered future direction for its water/sewer utility. City Manager John Connet provided a historical perspective of the utility and framed the purpose and outcome of the initiative to gather stakeholder input on the utility.

Mr. Miller presented the Council with the following question. "What does the utility need to provide for Hendersonville's citizens? For the City? For regional customers?" The group then brainstormed the following themes.



- Telling "our story"
- Grown the system w/good planning
- Ongoing maintenance
- Affordable
- Safe
- Clean
- Reliable
- Not core responsible for building/growing system
- ✓ Opportunity
- ❖ Safe
- ❖ Clean
- ❖ Reliable/pressure
- ❖ Affordable
- ❖ Line to where it's needed – volume
- ❖ Contingencies
- ❖ Quality control
- ❖ Stable rates
- ❖ Consistent leadership
- ❖ Vision to slow + long term
- ❖ Opportunity
  - Development
  - input

Next, Mr. Miller reviewed the key findings from the stakeholder interviews conducted with key customers and partners. He led the group through a discussion of commonalities between outside community needs and Hendersonville needs. Below is a summary of findings from the stakeholder interviews.



- Hendersonville Customers
  - ✓ Overall communities are satisfied with service
  - ✓ Interest in exploring different rate structure
  - ✓ Concern General Assembly would move water system to a regional authority
  - ✓ 70% of its customers don't live in the city and don't have a direct voice
  - ✓ Some concern about City making a profit from its utility
- Legislators
  - ✓ Functioning fairly, not pursuing legislative changes
  - ✓ Legislators support regionalism for utilities
- County Commission
  - ✓ New organizational structure for utility
  - ✓ Does not support merging City's water system with MSD
- Business
  - ✓ More intentional in working to meet needs of all residents & business in county
  - ✓ Utility works well now
  - ✓ Improving relations w/county
  - ✓ Concern about water supply
  - ✓ Expressed surprise and concern at the costs for business to get water line extension
  - ✓ Interest in coordinated/strategic plan
  - ✓ Sees council as supportive
  - ✓ Utility provides them w/mayor and manager
  - ✓ Concerned about Annexation policy

*Value Statements for Hendersonville's Water System*

Next, the Council developed a mission and value statements for the utility.

**Mission Statement**

*Operate a great utility for our customers*

**Value statements**

- ❖ Our water utility exists to serve our customers.
- ❖ We are committed to earning and maintaining public trust every day. We will be open, ensure access, encourage involvement and be accountable to our customers.
- ❖ We are cost conscious. We spend public funds responsibly and effectively to ensure the utility's short and long term financial strength.
- ❖ We will have the highest standards for the quality of water and effluent.
- ❖ We are committed to an affordable rate – keep price down and encouraging conservation.
- ❖ We are committed to protecting our environment.
- ❖ We are committed to protecting the water/sewer system from hazards.
- ❖ We will have access to redundancy – contingency plans.
- ❖ We will achieve the best results through effective teamwork, regional partnership and customer participation.
- ❖ We are committed to proactive, comprehensive planning, to guide the future (not just current future, better for current customers) of our utility in response to the needs of our customers.

*Next Steps*

City Manager Connet then reviewed next steps in this initiative including the following:

- External Steps
  - Henderson County Water and Sewer Forum
    - Share Stakeholder Information
    - Water and Sewer needs in Henderson County
    - Discuss creation of technical (staff) review committee
  - Continue to support all economic development activities
  - Willing to discuss partnerships if we are invited
- Internal Steps
  - Water and Sewer Master Planning
  - Construct French Broad River Intake
  - Examine expansion and connection policies to support the goals of the City Council and Utility System.

**Adjournment:** Being no further business, the meeting adjourned upon unanimous assent of the Council at 2:30 p.m.

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Barbara G. Volk, Mayor

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Tammie K. Drake, City Clerk