

Town of Taylorsville



## Taylorsville Town Council Retreat

Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Taylorsville Savings Bank, Conference Room

107 Main Ave. Dr. NE Taylorsville, NC 28681

Prepared By: Nicole Mayes

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**Present:** Mayor George Holleman  
Councilmember Eric Bumgarner  
Councilmember Tamara Odom  
Councilmember Jack Simms  
Councilmember Kim Brown

### Open Forum & Formal Action:

There was no public comment forum held during the retreat, and no formal actions were taken by the Council during this session.

### Welcome Remarks and Retreat Objectives

**N. Hester, Town Manager**

Town Manager Nathan Hester opened the retreat by welcoming the Council and staff. After an initial icebreaker exercise, Mr. Hester outlined the primary objectives for the meeting.

The retreat was designed to maintain the momentum established during the FY 2025 budget cycle and provide a forum to review the Town's core vision, mission, and goals. A significant portion of the discussion focused on balancing short-term operational needs with long-term strategic planning, specifically addressing the recent growth and change within the Taylorsville community. The session featured various departmental presentations and collaborative discussions regarding the Town's future direction.

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### Strategic Budget Retreat 2025 Review

**N. Hester, Town Manager**

Town Manager Nathan Hester stated last year the Western Piedmont Council of Government came to help establish a mission statement and establish goals.

### Mission Statement

Town Manager Nathan Hester reviewed the mission statement and strategic goals established in coordination with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments.

*"Building a Stronger Taylorsville: Honoring our Past, Embracing our Future. We are committed to preserving our small-town charm while fostering education, economic growth, and recreational*

*excellence. Through transparent governance and responsible progress, we ensure a high quality of life for all residents, creating a thriving community for generations to come.”*

### **Goal 1: Enhance Downtown Infrastructure and Aesthetics**

The Town continues to prioritize downtown enhancements, specifically regarding parking and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes. Department of Transportation (DOT) has the plans to address these improvements. Additionally, the Town is utilizing the Sign Ordinance and Land Use Plan to establish uniform design guidelines while pursuing a Main Street designation to further revitalization efforts.

### **Goal 2: Strengthen Economic Development and Business Recruitment**

Efforts remain focused on developing a comprehensive marketing strategy to attract diverse businesses and visitors. The Town is working to streamline the permitting process and continues to explore various incentives as tools to recruit new investment and fill vacancies in the downtown area.

### **Goal 3: Improve Community Engagement and Government Transparency**

Significant progress has been made in expanding communication channels to build community trust. Key updates include:

- The launch of a redesigned Town website.
- Active social media engagement via the Town and Police Department Facebook pages.
- The initiation of a monthly newsletter to provide updates on projects and events.

Future objectives include enhancing transparency through public access to financial and project data, as well as establishing citizen advisory groups and regular town hall meetings for residents interested in community growth.

### **Goal 4: Expand Events and Tourism Initiatives**

The Town aims to increase the variety of community programming, using signature events like the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting to highlight Taylorsville’s identity. These efforts are supported by strengthening partnerships with local organizations and businesses, such as the Taylorsville Savings Bank and the Rotary Club.

### **Goal 5: Establish Taylorsville as a Regional Destination**

The Town is focused on creating a brand that leverages local culture and outdoor attractions. By promoting assets such as the Hiddenite Gem Mine, the Hiddenite Center, local wineries, and the Town’s heritage, Taylorsville intends to utilize its infrastructure improvements to position itself as a thriving regional hub.

### **What is Left to Accomplish**

Following the 2025 review, Town Manager Nathan Hester invited the Council to identify outstanding needs and recommendations for the Town’s continued development. The following priorities were identified during the discussion:

#### Marketing and Regional Branding

Councilmember Kim Brown emphasized the need for a marketing and rebranding program focused on the local community and the four surrounding counties. Suggestions included leveraging local apple orchard tourism, creating marketing brochures that link to regional attractions, and implementing decorative wayfinding signage. Mayor George Holleman noted the importance of adding "Historic Downtown Taylorsville" to major road signage to capture regional traffic, while Councilmember Tamara Odom reiterated the goal of establishing the Town as a primary destination.

#### Downtown Infrastructure and Amenities

The Council discussed the necessity of improving the visitor experience downtown. Councilmember Eric Bumgarner recommended adding local lodging options—such as nearby hotels, bed and breakfasts, and vacation rentals—to the Town website. Mr. Hester noted that the Town’s non-profit could spearhead this marketing effort. Additionally,

Councilmember Bumgarner highlighted that adequate parking remains a critical factor for attracting large-scale businesses to the area.

### Ordinances and Property Standards

The Council reached a consensus on the need for stronger local ordinances to maintain the aesthetic and economic health of Main Street:

- **Property Use:** Councilmember Jack Simms raised concerns regarding property owners who purchase buildings on Main Street without investing in their upkeep. Mr. Hester suggested that new ordinances could address this and proposed that the Town's non-profit could take on a building restoration as its inaugural project.
- **Commercial Standards:** Councilmember Brown proposed ordinances to regulate trash can placement and the use of Main Street storefronts being used for storage rather than retail.
- **Parking & Accessibility:** Councilmember Brown also led a discussion on the need to address handicap accessible parking and the issue of long-term parking in front of businesses.

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### **FY 2026-2027 Public Works Department Outlook**

**A. Wike, Public Works Manager**

Public Works Manager Aaron Wike presented the department's current and future requirements. Mr. Wike noted that final rates for Republic Services, insurance, and interest for the upcoming fiscal year are undetermined.

### Cemetery

#### **Current Needs**

- **Infrastructure:** The access road to the new section of the cemetery requires widening to accommodate parking during funeral services, along with fresh gravel. This section is currently ready for plot sales.
- **Equipment:** A new lawnmower is requested for the spring of 2027.
- **Monument Maintenance:** Mr. Wike proposed budgeting for monument leveling and repairs in the cemetery's oldest sections. Mayor Holleman inquired about the budgetary impact; Mr. Wike estimated the cost for the upper section at \$7,500 to \$10,000 and recommended completing this work in phases.
- **Tree Removal:** Three trees in the cemetery require removal to prevent liability from falling limbs. Following a question from Councilmember Brown, Mr. Wike confirmed that the process would include root removal and backfilling.

#### **Future Projects**

Strategic planning for the cemetery includes repairing crumbling internal roadways and expanding grave plot sales, with the most recently completed section expected to provide 10–15 years of inventory. Mr. Wike also suggested a potential partnership with Alexander Central High School to perform GIS mapping of the cemetery plots.

#### **Community Initiatives and Special Projects**

- **Wreaths Across America:** Scheduled for December 19, 2026, this event will coincide with the "America 250" celebration. The Daughters of the American Revolution organize the event, and Mr. Wike expressed a goal of securing a wreath for every veteran's grave (approximately 320 to 360 total). Last year, the event was short by 100 wreaths.
  - Councilmember Brown inquired about the specific cost per wreath and exactly how many the cemetery was short during the previous year's event.
  - Mayor Holleman clarified that the cost per wreath is \$17.00.
  - Mr. Wike emphasized that improved communication and online promotion would be essential to increasing wreath sales and reaching their goal.

- Mausoleum Proposal: Mr. Wike informed the Council that he is exploring options to incorporate a mausoleum for Alexander Funeral Service. One possibility was surveying a portion of the cemetery land for the funeral service to purchase and maintain, contingent upon meeting all Town-mandated specifications. Councilmember Kim Brown expressed her support for the initiative, noting that such a facility is a current need within the community.

## **Park & Recreation**

Public Works Manager Aaron Wike and the Council discussed current infrastructure needs and long-term vision for Matheson Park and Town Park Ballfield focusing on safety, modernization, and land use.

### **Matheson Park: Current Needs & Maintenance**

- Facility Upgrades: Mr. Wike identified the need to upgrade existing bathroom facilities and add new playground equipment. He noted that the Town has already improved the playground's safety and maintenance by replacing sand with rubber mulch.
- Streambank Stabilization: Mr. Wike warned that if current erosion continues, the park's walking path will eventually wash away. He recommended seeking grant funding specifically for streambank stabilization to protect the infrastructure.
- Lighting and Vegetation: The department is evaluating the addition of more lighting versus the removal of overgrown Leyland cypress trees that currently block existing light sources. Mr. Wike noted that while removing the trees would improve visibility and safety, it would also reduce privacy for the current Parkhouse tenant.
- Parkhouse Land Use: Mr. Wike discussed determining a potential future use for the Parkhouse beyond its current rental status. It was noted that while the land can be repurposed for any municipal need, the property cannot be sold.

### **Council Discussion & Strategic Proposals**

The Council held a collaborative discussion regarding the future of the park and the Parkhouse property:

- Comprehensive Overhaul: Councilmember Eric Bumgarner inquired if a new lighting plan would cover the entire park; Mr. Wike confirmed it would. Councilmember Bumgarner suggested exploring solar lighting options and expressed a desire to see a complete overhaul of Matheson Park.
- Alternative Land Use: Councilmember Kim Brown suggested the Town apply for grants to overhaul the park, proposing that the Parkhouse be removed to possibly add pickleball courts and a dog park.
- Grant Funding & Constraints: Town Attorney Monroe Pannell advised that park-specific grants are highly competitive. Mr. Wike informed the Council that staff is currently researching various funding options and potential grants for a Greenway Connection to link the park to other areas of the Town.

### **Town Park Ballfield and Town Hall Grounds**

Public Works Manager Aaron Wike presented the current maintenance needs for the Town Park Ballfield, including repairs to cracking bleachers and the need for infield leveling to mitigate standing water after rainfall. The Council also discussed the following:

- Safety Netting: Councilmember Eric Bumgarner inquired about installing taller netting to allow older children to safely use the ballfield. Mr. Wike estimated the cost at \$5,000 to \$6,000 if the existing poles are utilized.
- Signage: Councilmember Kim Brown suggested installing wooden advertisement signs at the park to serve as a secondary barrier to block stray balls.
- Grant Funding: Councilmember Tamara Odom recommended that the Town continue to pursue grant opportunities specifically for these park improvements.

## **Town Hall Site Improvements**

Mr. Wike proposed decommissioning the small building behind Town Hall that currently houses the town well. He noted that filling in the well would cost approximately \$2,500 and would eliminate the requirement for annual environmental testing. Additionally, Mr. Wike suggested the removal of two obsolete outdoor bathrooms. These combined projects would clean up the area behind Town Hall and significantly increase available parking for the ballfield. Councilmember Kim Brown expressed strong support for this proposal, suggesting the project begin as soon as possible.

## **Street and Sanitation Department**

### **Current Projects and State Funding**

Mr. Wike provided an update on several ongoing infrastructure projects funded by State Directed Funds. These include the sidewalk installation at Food Lion, the 1st Avenue SW street and sidewalk project, and the repaving of Fairway Oaks, Green Meadows, Princeton Forrest Drive, and 1st Avenue Drive SE. Additionally, he noted that the Northwood Culvert project is now complete.

Mr. Wike reported that all contracted projects are scheduled for completion by March 20, 2026. He emphasized that all state funds must be expended by June 30, 2026, to ensure no funds are returned to the state.

The Alexander Central High School (ACHS) welding class will be constructing a Christmas lights trailer equipped with racks for storage and transport.

### **Holiday Lighting and Aesthetics**

The department would like to transition to LED Christmas lights through a multi-year phased replacement. Mr. Wike noted that purchasing lights in March—the off-season—offers the best value. The Council discussed the following additions:

- Winter Themes: Councilmember Kim Brown suggested purchasing snowflake lights that could remain on display through February. Mr. Wike noted he is considering a "Christmas" theme for the downtown area and a broader "Winter" theme for secondary streets.
- Downtown Arches: Councilmember Eric Bumgarner proposed the installation of two decorative holiday arches over Main Street. He suggested involving the high school welding class. Councilmember Brown spoke in favor of the initiative, highlighting the dual benefits of practical experience for students and the long-term satisfaction of seeing their craftsmanship featured in the downtown area.

### **Future Needs and Capital Requests**

Mr. Wike outlined upcoming infrastructure requirements and equipment replacement schedules:

- Infrastructure: Future large-scale projects include the replacement of the 3rd Avenue SW culvert at Matheson Park, various street resurfacing needs, and the continual expansion and repair of the town's sidewalks.
- Equipment: Immediate needs include a bucket truck or tow-behind lift. Looking ahead 5 to 10 years, the department will require a new leaf truck, a street sweeper, and a small dump truck to maintain current service levels.

## **Water & Sewer Department**

### **Water System**

Mr. Wike provided an update on the Town's water infrastructure and long-term supply strategy. Currently there are 130 water meters not reading, so the town has contracted Energy United to help replace old water meters.

The Council and staff discussed the following future water projects and strategic considerations:

- Infrastructure Upgrades: Future goals include moving all meters into the public right-of-way, repairing or replacing hydrants and valves, and installing new waterlines at NC Hwy 16 S, 4th Avenue, 4th Street NE, 3rd Avenue NE, and 1st Street NE.
- Independent System Feasibility: While there have been discussions regarding the Town building its own independent water system, Mr. Wike advised against it, noting an estimated cost of \$600 million, which he deemed not cost-effective. The Town currently uses 320,000–330,000 gallons per day through Energy United. Under the current contract for 500,000 gallons, the Town only pays for actual usage, with the surplus capacity being sold to Troutman.
- Regional Partnerships: Mr. Wike noted ongoing talks with a partnership with Energy United and the Town of Wilkesboro. He explained that the Town of Wilkesboro views a partnership as a necessary safety net to protect their residents from rate increases should their primary revenue source, Tyson Foods (which accounts for 60% of their revenue), ever relocate.
- Legacy Infrastructure: In response to an inquiry from Councilmember Eric Bumgarner regarding the age of the Main Street waterlines, Mr. Wike confirmed they date back to the 1960s.

### **Wastewater System**

Mr. Wike outlined current and future wastewater improvements:

- Current Progress: Work continues on the wastewater collection system and Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) upgrades, the completion of an AIA grant and WPCOG GIS mapping.
- Future Projects: Upcoming priorities include sewer lines for Hwy 90 E and 1st Avenue Drive SE, the relocation of the Matheson Park sewer line, and new lift stations at Hwy 16 N and Fairway Oaks (elevated).

### **Utility Equipment and Capital Needs**

Mr. Wike identified several critical equipment needs to improve departmental efficiency and reduce reliance on outside contractors:

- WWTP Tractor (\$50,000): Necessary for loading and unloading chemicals at the treatment plant, which currently lacks a tractor.
- Pipe Bursting Equipment (\$50,000): Carried over from last year’s Capital Improvement Plan, this equipment allows for the replacement of taps without excavating roadways.
- Boring Machine (\$50,000): This would allow the Town to install or replace lines and conduits underground without disrupting surface infrastructure. The Town currently pays Energy United to perform this work.
- Fleet Management: The department will continue the replacement cycle for service trucks. Mr. Wike noted that existing older DOT trucks have 250,000–275,000 miles. He also confirmed that a new truck budgeted last year has arrived.

### **FEMA Projects**

Mr. Wike provided an update on the status of ongoing FEMA-funded projects, noting the following timelines and requirements:

- Completion Deadlines: All current FEMA projects are mandated for completion by March 28, 2026.
- Extension Request: To ensure all remaining work is finalized according to federal standards, the Town has officially requested an extension through May 2026.

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## **2025 Year in Review & Budget Request for 2026-2027**

**M. Millsaps, Chief of Police**

Chief Michael Millsaps opened his presentation by expressing his gratitude to the Mayor and Council for their ongoing support of the Police Department.

### **2025 Accomplishments**

Chief Millsaps highlighted several key milestones achieved over the past year focused on staffing, departmental structure, and resource management:

- **Staffing and Patrol:** The department is currently at full capacity for patrol operations. There is presently one open position for a School Resource Officer (SRO).
- **Organizational Structure:** The department successfully implemented four internal promotions, including the ranks of Captain, Lieutenant, Detective, and Sergeant. These promotions allowed for the establishment of a formal chain of command and a dedicated, stand-alone Detective position.
- **Operational Standards:** A yearly vehicle replacement cycle has been established to maintain the fleet's reliability.
- **Technical Resources:** The department reactivated its participation in **LinX**, a law enforcement information-sharing network, in partnership with the NCIS.

**Town Events Covered by the Police Department**

Chief Millsaps provided a breakdown of the personnel costs associated with providing security and traffic control for town-sponsored events. He clarified that these figures represent the cost of additional staffing and do not include the salaries of officers already scheduled for regular road patrol during these times.

Event	Personnel Detail	Estimated Cost
Apple Festival	4 Officers (10 hours)	\$1,550.00
Apple Blossom Festival	4 Officers (10 hours)	\$1,550.00
Christmas Parade	14 Officers (3 hours)	\$1,344.99
National Night Out	3 Officers (4 hours)	\$406.52
Hometown Christmas	1 Officer/night (3 nights)	\$437.19
Shop with a Cop	2 Officers (5 hours)	\$315.15
Halloween	2 Officers (4 hours)	\$269.64
<b>Total Event Cost</b>		<b>\$5,873.49</b>

**Police Department: Short-Term Goals and Training**

Chief Millsaps outlined the department’s immediate priorities for enhancing officer safety, professional performance, and specialized training.

Recruitment and Equipment

The department is actively recruiting for additional School Resource Officers (SROs). Chief Millsaps also emphasized the need for new equipment and supplies to better accommodate officer safety and enhance the overall professionalism of the force.

Specialized Training and Compliance

To improve performance and qualify for various funding opportunities, the department is focusing on the following training initiatives:

- **FEMA Compliance:** The agency is working toward being 70% compliant with Incident Command System (ICS) training. Chief Millsaps noted that this certification is a prerequisite for applying for federal grants.
- **Traffic Enforcement (RADAR):** The department aims to have at least one officer certified in RADAR per shift to better enforce speed violations.

- Council Inquiry: In response to a question from Councilmember Kim Brown regarding ticket-writing authority, Chief Millsaps clarified that while any officer can issue speeding citations via "pacing," only one is currently RADAR-certified. Two additional officers are scheduled for training to reach the goal of shift-wide coverage.
- DUI Enforcement: Currently, six officers are certified in Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFST). Two officers are scheduled for Breath Analysis certification in March to further strengthen DUI enforcement.
- Subject Control: The department is also prioritizing advanced "1 and 2 man" subject control training for all officers.

### **Police Department: Proposed New Services**

Chief Millsaps presented several digital services and software platforms designed to modernize investigations and streamline administrative workflows.

- Crime Scene Investigation Software (Notability): At an estimated cost of \$20.00 per year, this application will allow the department's detective to digitally diagram crime scenes and process search warrants directly from the field.
- Investigative Research Suite (CLEAR): Chief Millsaps requested a three-year contract for the CLEAR platform at \$5,000 per year. This service provides reverse phone lookups and person identification tools, which would allow the department to conduct complex investigations "in-house" rather than relying on outside agencies.
- Body Camera Data Management (Axon): The department is seeking a five-year contract for Axon body camera storage at an estimated cost of \$5,844 per year (with discounts applied to the first two years). This service provides necessary data storage, integrates with the department's Taser 7 equipment, and allows for the expedited digital transfer of evidence to the District Attorney's office.
- AI Law Enforcement Assistant (Blue Voice): At an estimated cost of \$3,500 per year, this closed AI platform is exclusive to law enforcement. It provides officers with instant access to North Carolina statutes and Town ordinances to help determine appropriate charges and automatically generate required documentation.

### **Police Department: Long-Term Strategic Goals**

Chief Millsaps outlined several long-term initiatives aimed at improving evidence collection, community engagement, and recruitment over the next three to five years.

- In-Car Camera Systems: The department identifies a future need for vehicle-mounted cameras. These systems are essential for documenting traffic accidents and vehicle pursuits, providing critical video evidence for legal proceedings.
- Law Enforcement Explorer Program: Chief Millsaps proposed establishing a youth Explorer Program to serve as a community outreach and recruitment tool. He noted that the Sheriff's Office currently operates a similar program and that two current TPD officers are graduates of such programs. The School Resource Officer (SRO) has already expressed interest in this initiative for local youth.
- Training Simulator: The department aims to acquire a training simulator to provide officers with ongoing, real-life scenario-based training. The system would include modules tailored for patrol officers, SROs, and the Criminal Investigation Division (CID).
- Vehicle-Mounted License Plate Readers (LPRs): To enhance patrol efficiency, the department plans to equip vehicles with LPR technology. This allows for the continuous scanning of license plates, providing patrol officers with automated support for identifying stolen vehicles or individuals with active warrants.

### **Alternative Funding and Equipment Procurement**

In an effort to modernize the department's equipment while minimizing the impact on the local budget, Chief Millsaps expressed his intention to apply for the Department of Defense 1033 Program. This program authorizes the transfer of excess military equipment to local law enforcement agencies at little to no cost to the Town.

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### **Economic Positioning – From Projects to Positioning**

**N. Hester, Town Manager**

Town Manager Nathan Hester presented a strategic framework designed to align the FY 2026–2027 budget with the Town’s long-term growth. He emphasized that the discussion was not about individual line items, but about alignment—ensuring that every vehicle, officer, and utility line contributes to the Town’s economic positioning.

### **The Five Core Economic Strategies**

Derived from community surveys, these strategies mirror the prior year's goals to maintain consistency in the Town's vision:

1. Position Taylorsville as a premier place to live, work, and visit.
2. Create a dynamic downtown.
3. Invest in recreation, wellness, and cultural tourism.
4. Strengthen infrastructure for long-term growth.
5. Become a North Carolina Main Street Community.

### **Strategy 1: Livability and Housing**

Mr. Hester stated that young families choose to live in communities that prioritize livability. He outlined the following operational requirements to meet this strategy:

- Public Works: Sidewalk expansion and repairs to drive housing demand; LED Christmas lights to improve aesthetics; and cemetery improvements to ensure dignity and long-term land planning.
- Utility & Facilities: Upgrading Matheson Park bathrooms to create a family-friendly environment and expanding broadband with partners to attract remote workers.
- Police Department: Investing in Class A uniforms and body cameras for a professional and transparent image.
- Recruitment & Retention: Mr. Hester noted that the Sheriff’s Department increased starting pay to \$51,000, while the Town Police Department remains at \$41,000. He proposed increasing starting pay and exploring a fully paid YMCA membership for employees to remain competitive.

### **Strategy 2: Dynamic Downtown**

The goal of this strategy is to redevelop for mixed-use and pedestrian enjoyment while supporting a vibrant business mix.

- Infrastructure Requirements: Mr. Hester emphasized that infrastructure must accommodate growth. Key projects include the Matheson Park culvert replacement for flood prevention, street resurfacing, and the replacement of the Main Street water line.
- Operational Readiness: Utilizing GIS mapping for utilities and completing sewer extensions (Hwy 90 E) and lift station upgrades are critical for development readiness.
- Police Support: Utilizing LPR technology and simulator training to mitigate risks in an event-heavy downtown area.

### **Strategy 3: Recreation and Cultural Tourism**

Mr. Hester stated that events are not "extra" expenses; they are revenue generators and brand builders.

- Matheson Park: Priorities include bathroom upgrades, playground additions, streambank stabilization, and sewer line relocation to allow for future expansion.

- Town Park: Priorities include bleacher repairs and infield leveling, while exploring alternative uses for the property.
- Public Safety: Increasing recruitment and equipment modernization to handle event coverage capacity.

Council Comments: Councilmember Eric Bumgarner made the comment, you have to build up Main Street so business will come in and it also shows pride in our downtown. Councilmember Kim Brown stated that "free parking" must be added to the list of necessary improvements.

#### **Strategy 4: Infrastructure and Growth**

This strategy focuses on updating utility infrastructure and expanding broadband to increase the tax base.

- Grant Management: Mr. Hester reported that the Town has been approved for \$15 million in infrastructure grants, though the funds have not yet been formally awarded. The \$1.25 million required for a local match is already within the Town's current capital capacity.
- Long-Term Transformation: Repositioning the Town involves upfitting the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to enable industrial recruitment and using pipe-bursting/boring equipment for faster in-house responses.
- Economic Framing: Mr. Hester clarified that these investments are meant to unlock private investment and increase water/sewer revenue rather than just maintaining the status quo.

#### **Strategy 5: Main Street Readiness**

The final strategy focuses on building local capacity and preparing for the North Carolina Main Street designation.

- Community Support: Mr. Hester noted that Taylorsville has a robust small business community that wants to see the Town grow.
- Sustainability: The Town aims to develop a sustainable Downtown Development Association (DDA) model.
- Core Philosophy: Under this vision, every department in the Town is considered an economic development department.

#### **Funding the Vision**

Mr. Hester presented three primary avenues for funding these strategic goals:

1. Property Tax Adjustment:
  - The current property tax rate is \$0.35 (with \$0.05 dedicated to the Fire Department).
  - Mr. Hester stated that a tax increase is necessary to fund the proposed projects and the Police Department pay increases.
  - Mayor George Holleman expressed a preference for borrowing funds to pay for projects over time. Mr. Hester cautioned that the Town must identify specific budget cuts or revenue streams to service that debt.
  - Councilmember Eric Bumgarner suggested the Town should focus on creating business incentives to attract new investment.
2. Grants: Continued use of state and federal grants, though these often require local matching funds.
3. Occupancy Tax: A proposed tax to fund the TDA. Mr. Hester noted that this tax is paid by visitors, not local property owners.

#### **Three Questions for Council?**

To conclude the presentation, Mr. Hester presented the Council with three critical questions to guide their upcoming budget deliberations:

1. Are we willing to invest now to grow later?

2. Do we want to maintain – or position?
3. What do we want Taylorsville to look like in 10 years?

**Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, the 2026 Budget Retreat was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

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Mayor

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Councilmember

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Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nicole Mayes, Town Clerk