I. The Meeting was called to order in the Council Chamber at City Hall at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Thompson.

II. Public Comment – The Mayor stated the guidelines for public comment and said speakers were to be called in order of sign-up.

• Carl Ferguson resides at 125 Greenbriar Lane. Ferguson described overflowing trash bins in the Greenbriar Lane and Burkemont Avenue area. He stated there was a lot of loose trash along Greenbriar.

No other speakers were signed up, so the Mayor recessed the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

III. Business of the Council – The Mayor reconvened the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

IV. Pledge of Allegiance – Mayor Pro-tem Fleming led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

V. Invocation – The invocation was given by Louis Vinay, City Attorney.

VI. Introduction of Council – The Mayor introduced the Council and staff.

VII. Retiree Resolution – The Mayor read a resolution honoring retiree Sybil S. Burnette. Sybil retired from the Electric Department as Administrative Specialist on April 1, 2018 with 20 years and 8 months’ service.

Upon motion by Councilman Simmons, seconded by Councilman Hawkins, and unanimously carried, the Council approved Resolution # 18-10, honoring retiree Sybil S. Burnette.

Sybil stated she enjoyed working with the Electric Department, the City and employees. She stated she was appreciative of the opportunity to work with the City.
VIII. Service Pin – The Personnel Committee and City staff have decided to recognize long-term employees for years of service at a Council meeting. Councilman Simmons presented a 20 year service pin to Jason Whisnant, Captain in the Public Safety Department.

Whisnant thanked staff and Council for the opportunity of working for the City.

IX. Public Advocacy Issues and Strategies

a. Update: History Museum of Burke County – Jim Brinkley and Waits Gordon, members of the Board of Directors of the museum, presented an update of happenings at the museum.

Mr. Brinkley stated he is co-Vice-Chair of the History Museum Board; he stated it has been an experience working on this Board and he has learned a lot. Mr. Brinkley then introduced Waits Gordon.

Gordon stated the museum is located in downtown Morganton. He stated that what Sharon Jablonski and the City does is very helpful in bringing people into the museum. He stated there is no admission fee to visit, but one must be accompanied by a docent. He stated last year there were 14,000 hours of volunteer hours given to the museum. Gordon stated their plan is to ask for financial help from all municipalities in the County. He stated that the volunteers are aging out and the museum will eventually have to hire a director, curator, etc.

Brinkley stated the total budget is $61,961 for 2018. Total expenses are $59,961. He stated part of the income is coming from a savings account. Senator Daniel obtained a grant for the museum in the amount of $50,000 and that has helped. The museum board is asking for any financial help the City can give.

b. Morganton Works – Kathy Bailey, Chief Executive Officer of Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge presented a slide show and video about this institution.

Bailey stated she is excited to be able to share a bit about the hospital. She stated the hospital has two campuses (Morganton and Valdese) and two nursing home/rehab centers. They employ 1,800 teammates across the system, with 315 acute care beds and 296 long term care beds. They served 54,583 people in the emergency room last year. Eight hundred eighty three babies were born in Burke County at the hospitals. She shared the volume of activity for 2017 included serving 762,169 meals. Bailey stated that financial challenges include billing close to $1 billion in 2017 and collecting $266,000,000 a difference of $692,000,000; much of that is Medicaid differences, uninsured and underinsured. She stated that it costs $717,000 / day to run the healthcare system.

Bailey stated they invest back into the community by providing charity care to patients, activities to help improve life/health of community, and their mission and values state
they give back. She stated they truly believe they are “friends and neighbors taking care of friends and neighbors”.

The hospital’s Sports Medicine Program provides Certified Athletic Trainers at each high school. Bailey stated that every year for the past three years they have found one student with a cardiac anomaly during the free sports physicals the hospital provides. Team members also support the Good Samaritan Clinic, B.U.C.M., and all are working to enhance overall quality of life.

At the end of the PowerPoint presentation, Bailey shared a video of county resident Alan Griffin speaking about having a cardiac arrest while working out at Phifer Wellness and the quick response he received from staff and doctors at Blue Ridge, which saved his life.

c. Lineman Appreciation Day is celebrated this year on April 18, 2018. A video of the history of the lineman was shown. Brooks Kirby, Electric Director, gave a brief overview of linemen in Morganton and shared that the City of Morganton will be hosting the 2018 NCAMES Lineman Rodeo at Catawba Meadows in May.

d. Public Safety Awards of Valor – Chief Ronnie Rector stated Awards of Valor were recently presented to four officers. Following is a copy of the press release Chief Rector shared with Council.

Press Release - On March 21, 2018 Inv. Donny Dellinger, Inv. Kyle Goforth, Inv. Ryan Stotts and PSO Daniel Gabryszewski were recognized for their acts of heroism on June 19, 2017. They received medals during a Morganton Department of Public Safety awards ceremony at CoMMA. Chief Ronnie Rector presented the following awards:

• Meritorious Service Citation and Medal to Inv. Dellinger
• Distinguished Service Citation for Valor and Medal for Valor to Inv. Goforth
• Distinguished Service Citation for Valor and Medal for Valor to Inv. Stotts
• Distinguished Service Citation for Valor and Medal for Valor to PSO Gabryszewski

The Meritorious Service Citation is awarded to a member who performs an extremely laudable or extraordinary act. The Distinguished Service Citation for Valor is awarded to a member who performs an act of heroism in the face of personal injury or risk of life. Following are the details of the acts of heroism performed:

On June 14, 2017, at 11:15 am, Morganton Department of Public Safety (MDPS) officers responded to the Catawba River to a location behind Judges Riverside Restaurant. They arrived to find Julie Pedro, two small children, a stroller and a dog in the middle of the river. The stroller was
washed away and Ms. Pedro was holding the children tightly along with her dog. A third child had been pulled out of the water prior to the officers arriving.

Inv. Goforth, Inv. Stotts and Inv. Dellinger were three of the first to arrive on the scene. Inv. Stotts and Inv. Goforth jumped into the moving water as the river continued to rise (the water rose an additional 3 feet during the rescue). They were able to grab onto Ms. Pedro, the children and the dog. Inv. Dellinger entered the water to assist with the recovery of the children.

As Inv. Stotts began to carry one of the children to dry ground, PSO Gabryszewski entered the water from a position upstream with a safety line moving to the middle of the river to assist with the rescue. Inv. Stotts brought the one-year old child to safety and then proceeded to go back to the middle of the river and retrieved the four-year old child. PSO Gabryszewski held the rescue line in the middle of the river while Inv. Stotts carried the four-year old to safety. At this point, Inv. Goforth assisted Ms. Pedro and the family dog to safety.

e. **Proclamation:** The Mayor read a proclamation celebrating the Chesterfield Ruritan Club’s 60th Anniversary. The proclamation was accepted by Club President Mike Casey. Casey gave a brief overview of the history of the Ruritan organization and the local Ruritan club, especially recognizing the club’s surviving and still active charter member.

f. **Resolution:** Reimagining Broughton – Jerry Davis, CEO of the Burke County Chamber of Commerce presented a resolution in support of the Reimagining Broughton project to the City Council. Kathy Bailey, Chairman of the Chamber Board, was with Davis for the presentation.

Bailey stated that history has shown that when citizens and leaders come together in Burke County we seize great opportunity and great things happen. She stated that in the 1860s citizens rallied to build a train depot in Morganton which made it possible for trains to deliver lumber to build furniture and for companies to employ generations of craftsmen. The citizens came together in 1893 to welcome a group of religious refugees from Europe who settled in Burke County, and this year we are celebrating the 125th anniversary of the founding of Valdese. In 1964 citizens of Burke County voted by a 17-1 margin to approve a community college which set the stage for Western Piedmont Community College. Just two years ago, Bailey stated, citizens overwhelmingly voted for the Connect NC bond referendum and as a result we are awaiting the opening of the North Carolina School of Science and Math and the new National Guard Training Center. Now another historic opportunity has been presented. The Board of Directors of the Chamber believes that implementing the Reimagining Broughton Plan will create benefits that touch every economic sector in the County and community. The presented resolution simply calls on leaders in all sectors to work together and collaboratively with the State to keep the momentum going with the goal of implementing the Reimagining Broughton Plan.
Upon motion by Councilman Hawkins, seconded by Councilman Fleming, and carried unanimously, the Council accepted from the Burke County Chamber of Commerce the resolution of support for the Reimagining Broughton Plan.

g. The Mayor introduced Samantha Woolard who is spending the week shadowing the City Manager. Samantha is a senior at St. Mary's in Raleigh and plans to attend the University of Texas, Austin, majoring in government and international relations and global studies. The Mayor then announced the following upcoming events at CoMMA: *On Golden Pond*, April 7; *Malpass Brothers*, April 12; and *Rent*, April 24. He also announced there would be a ribbon cutting at Morganton General Store on April 6. The Mayor announced the Rotary Distinguished Person of the Year Award Dinner honoring Councilman Emeritus John Cantrell would be held on April 19 at the Morganton Community House. Little League Opening Day will be April 23 at the Catawba Meadows Ballfields.

X. **North Carolina Municipal Power Agency Number 1 Update** – There were no updates.

XI. **Consent Agenda** – The City Manager presented the consent agenda and asked if any items should be removed from the Consent Agenda. No request was made.

Upon motion by Councilman Hawkins, seconded by Councilwoman Cato, and unanimously carried, the consent agenda was approved and each individual item adopted as stated, those being as follows:

A. Approved Minutes for a Regular Meeting held on March 5, 2018 and Council Workshop held February 23, 2018.

B. Approved tax releases in the amount of $9,596.93.

C. Approved a budget amendment (Ord. #18-16) in the amount of $20,785 to appropriate funds received from insurance for repairs of a Public Safety vehicle and Engine 1.

D. Approved for the Main Street Program to apply for grant funds from the NC Arts Councils SmART Initiative Program; and to endorse the application because it is understood the arts is an economic driver that Morganton should be seizing.

XII. **Items Removed from Consent Agenda** – There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

XIII. **New Business**
1. Consideration of Award of Contract for Construction of the Downtown Greenway Trailhead

The City Manager stated that in an effort to improve safety and enhance the Greenway network in Morganton, as well as to provide adequate emergency ingress and egress on the lower end of Jefferson Street, the City has designed and wishes to construct a trailhead for the Greenway at the dead end of Jefferson Street. Through CDBG funding, a small parking area will be constructed for Greenway users along with a service road connector for emergency vehicles entering Jefferson Street to be able to exit to North Green Street, thereby precluding backing all the way up Jefferson Street to its intersection with Caldwell Street. This service connector road will only be available to emergency vehicles. Gates at Jefferson Street and North Green Street will control access to this service road connector. The project will also solve some existing drainage issues associated with this area of Jefferson Street and the ravine. In addition, City Posts™, impact-resistant channelizer posts with easy-spin installation™, will be installed as part of this project in the center of the Greenway on either side of each of the driveways and at the two intersecting streets, to deter vehicles from driving and/or parking on the existing Greenway along North Green Street. Ten bids were received by the City Engineer for the project on March 27, 2018. Jeffco Grading of Lenoir, N.C. was the lowest responsive, responsible bidder for the project in the amount of $100,687.35. The City Manager stated the funds for this are in the current CDBG Entitlement budget.

Upon motion by Councilman Simmons, seconded by Councilman Fleming, and carried unanimously, the Council authorized and awarded a contract with Jeffco Grading of Lenoir, N.C. in the amount of $100,687.35 to construct the Downtown Greenway Trailhead near Downtown Morganton, North Carolina.

2. Consideration of a Resolution of Intent and Calling for a Public Hearing for Closing of an Alley

The City Attorney stated the Downtown Parking Committee met Tuesday, March 20, 2018 to discuss changes to parking on North Green Street between Union and Collett Streets. Items included:

- Requests from businesses for additional handicap parking spaces
- The creation of eleven (11) additional parking spaces
- Changing 2-hour parking to all-day free-parking
- Closing the alley between Carolina Real Living and Wells Fargo Advisors in order to create two (2) of the three (3) handicap parking spaces proposed.

After discussion, the parking committee would like to make the following recommendations:
• Add three (3) new handicap parking spaces. Two would be at the end of the current alley on to N. Green and one would be placed at the curb cut near the grassy lot.

• In order to add the two (2) handicap spaces at the alley, where there is already a curb cut for easy sidewalk access, the alley would need to be closed. This does not stop access to the back of the buildings (aka Benjamin’s, Gregory Jewelers, and Art Space). They all have access through the city-owned gravel lot off North Green Street.

• Change the on-street parking between East Union and Collett Street from 2-hour parking to all-day free-parking. This would apply to both sides, except for the first 6 spaces in front of Bank of America which will remain 2 hours to accommodate bank traffic.

• On the City’s grassy lot, they recommended removing the Leyland trees, and then creating parking on the back side of the lot with access from the alley off Avery Avenue. The exit would be through the gravel lot or alley.

• Parallel parking in the alley would no longer be allowed.

• The space right off Avery Avenue would be left to allow farmers access to the mini-market for set up on Wednesdays. Set up would happen closer to the sidewalk.

The property owners on either side of the alley off North Green Street, namely Rudy Bell and Jim Belote, whose property lines go to the center of the alley, have both been spoken with and agree that the alley should be closed. With the construction of the outdoor decks, the alley has virtually become impassable, but both agree the real issue is safety caused by the currently allowed access of vehicles on to North Green from the alley. Drivers exiting the alley have no line of sight until well out into the road and vehicles emerging blindly from the alley is extremely dangerous and adverse to pedestrian traffic on the sidewalk, which continues to increase.

Upon motion by Councilman Hawkins, seconded by Councilman Simmons, and carried unanimously, the Council called for a Public Hearing on May 7, 2018 to consider closing the alley off North Green Street between Carolina Real Living and Wells Fargo Advisors per the attached map.

Upon motion by Councilwoman Cato, seconded by Councilman Fleming, and carried unanimously, the Council approved a Resolution of Intent to close an unnamed alley off North Green Street (Res. #18-11).

3. 30-Day Notice of Vacancy on Boards and Commissions – The City Manager stated that due to upcoming expiration of terms, vacancies will exist on the Human Relations Commission. This is a Mayor’s Commission; appointments will be made at the May City Council meeting.

XIV. Other Items from City Manager and City Council Not on Agenda – There were no other items.
XV. Reports – Reports were distributed to Council.

XVI. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Preparation of Minutes. These minutes were prepared by Mikela D. Russell, Assistant City Clerk. Copies of all resolutions, ordinances and orders referenced in these minutes are intended to be incorporated into these minutes as if fully set forth herein. Prior to including them into the official minute book, the minutes have been read and approved by the City Manager and the City Attorney, then distributed to each member of the City Council for further review and final approval, at a subsequent Council Meeting.

_________________________________________  _______________________________________
Mayor                                               Assistant City Clerk