THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: March 10, 2026

Subject: NC Dept. of Commerce Small Business (SmBIZ) Infrastructure Grant for Enka Commerce Park

Staff Resource(s): Jaime Matthews; Assistant to the City Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution to authorize the City Manager to submit an application to the NC Department of Commerce Small Business (SmBIZ) Infrastructure Grant fund to extend a sewer line in Enka Commerce Park, to accept said grant funds if awarded; and enter into any agreement documents necessary for such acceptance.

Background:

- In Spring of 2025, the NC General Assembly enacted SL 2025-2 known as "The Disaster Recovery Act - Part 1", which included a $55 million funding allocation for infrastructure that supports small businesses impacted by Tropical Storm Helene.
- The subsequent Small Business Infrastructure (SmBIZ) Grant Program is being administered by the NC Department of Commerce Rural and Economic Development Division.
- The purpose of the grant is to provide financial assistance for recovery and resilience to communities specifically impacted by Helene by restoring and repairing critical infrastructure, allowing small businesses to resume function and operations to support economic recovery; and to assist in restoring or expanding small businesses' ability to attract customers to business districts to help retain business, expand access, spur private investment to create stability, and leverage resources to create resiliency and economic growth.
- To restore and provide reliable sanitary sewer service to the park, the sewer line must now be extended approximately 3,000 linear feet along Hominy Creek, exclusively due to the storm-related damage.
- This gravity sewer extension is essential to supporting occupancy of the newly constructed speculative industrial building and enabling current and future small business tenants to operate.
- The sewer infrastructure will serve over 100,000 square feet of existing, completed speculative industrial space that is currently available for lease.
- The extension also unlocks approximately 30 additional acres of industrial land, planned for more than 500,000 square feet of future Class A industrial space designed to accommodate small businesses.
- This investment strengthens the long-term viability of Enka Commerce Park and supports responsible economic development, job creation, and business growth in the surrounding area.

Council Vision 2036 Focus Area(s):

- A Clean, Safe and Healthy Environment
- Fiscally Resilient City

Council Priority Recovery Area(s):

- Infrastructure and Environment

Pro(s):

- Funding will be made available for restoring and repairing critical infrastructure in Enka Commerce Park.

Con(s):

- None.

Fiscal Impact:

- A total project budget is not known at this time. There is no matching funds required for this grant.

Suggested Motion:

- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit an application to the NC Department of Commerce Small Business (SmBIZ) Infrastructure Grant fund to extend a sewer line in Enka Commerce Park, to accept said grant funds if awarded; and enter into any agreement documents necessary for such acceptance.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 26-_____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE NC DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE SMALL BUSINESS (SMBIZ) INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT FUND TO EXTEND A SEWER LINE IN ENKA COMMERCE PARK, TO ACCEPT SAID GRANT FUNDS IF AWARDED; AND ENTER INTO ANY AGREEMENT DOCUMENTS NECESSARY FOR SUCH ACCEPTANCE

WHEREAS, the City has authority pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160a-17.1 to apply for and receive grants from the State and federal governments and to enter into contracts for the administration of said grants; and

WHEREAS, in Spring of 2025, the NC General Assembly enacted SL 2025-2 known as "The Disaster Recovery Act - Part 1", which included a $55 million funding allocation for infrastructure that supports small businesses impacted by Tropical Storm Helene; and

WHEREAS, subsequent to above-referenced Act, The Small Business Infrastructure (SmBIZ) Grant Program was created and is being administered by the NC Department of Commerce Rural and Economic Development Division; and the purpose of the grant is to provide financial assistance for recovery and resilience to communities specifically impacted by Helene by restoring and repairing critical infrastructure and allowing small businesses to resume function and operations to support economic recovery; and

WHEREAS, Hurricane Helene damage washed out the originally planned sanitary sewer line intended to serve Enka Commerce Park, requiring a revised infrastructure approach; and

WHEREAS, to restore and provide reliable sanitary sewer service to the park, the sewer line must now be extended approximately 3,000 linear feet, exclusively due to the storm-related damage; and

WHEREAS, the NC Department Small Business (SmBIZ) Grant funds would aid in restoration and repair of existing infrastructure, as well as economic recovery and development of businesses in Enka Commerce Park and surrounding area; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Manager is hereby authorized to apply for NC Department of Commerce Small Business (SmBIZ) Infrastructure Grant Program funding to restore and repair the sanitary sewer infrastructure in Enka Commerce Park, and the City Manager is further authorized to accept such grant funds if awarded and to enter into any agreements necessary for grant acceptance.

Read, approved and adopted this 10th day of March, 2026.

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City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney