

## City Council – Action Request Form

**Date:** August 12, 2025

**To:** Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

**From:** Ben Rowe, Assistant City Manager

### Council Action Requested:

Items Related to North Carolina Major Events, Games, and Attractions Fund:

- a. Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Major Events, Games, and Attractions Fund Grant Agreement for the 2026 Cook Out Clash
- b. Amendment to FY 2025-2026 Project Budget Ordinance

**Strategic Focus Area:** Economic Prosperity

**Strategic Plan Objective:** EP3: Attracting and retaining businesses

### Summary of Information:

In 2023, the North Carolina General Assembly established the Major Events, Games, and Attractions Fund (Major Events Fund) as part of sports betting legislation to enhance the State's ability to attract and retain large-scale events that boost tourism and drive economic development. The North Carolina Department of Commerce administers the grant.

On July 9<sup>th</sup>, NASCAR announced that the Cook Out Clash will return to Bowman Gray Stadium as the opening exhibition event for the 2026 season on February 1, 2026. The City and NASCAR submitted a joint application for a grant through the Major Events Fund to support the 2026 Cook Out Clash at Bowman Gray Stadium. On July 18<sup>th</sup>, State Commerce officials notified NASCAR and City officials that the State had awarded a grant to cover qualifying expenses up to \$1.6 million. The event must have qualifying expenses of no less than \$3.2 million to reach the maximum award amount. Under the grant guidelines, the City is designated as the "local entity" and will pass through the grant funds to NASCAR, which is designated as the "site selection organization" that brought the event to the State. The grant will not require a local match from the City of Winston-Salem.

### Committee Action:

Committee	Finance 8/12/2025	Action	Approval
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For	Unanimous	Against	
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**Remarks:**

To ensure timely reimbursement of the qualifying expenses for the 2026 Cook Out Clash, State Commerce officials have requested that the City expedite the execution of the grant agreement, which is a multiparty agreement between the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the City of Winston-Salem, and NASCAR Event Management, LLC or its affiliates. Because the City and NASCAR are parties to this agreement, no subrecipient agreement is required.

Under the grant agreement, the City, as the local entity, is responsible for ensuring that the site selection organization, NASCAR, complies with the terms and conditions of the agreement, as well as the application, Major Events Fund Statutes, and grant guidelines. In addition, the City must ensure that the major event occurred as it was presented in the application and must provide proof of performance, including a Compliance Audit, as evidence of all qualifying expenses. Examples of qualifying expenses include compensation and wages on which withholding payments are made to the North Carolina Department of Revenue, per diems and stipends for work performed within the state, goods purchased from a business with a physical location in the state, and services provided within the state. City staff will work with NASCAR staff to ensure these grant requirements are met.

The North Carolina Department of Commerce awarded a Major Events Fund Grant of \$2 million for the 2025 Cook Out Clash. NASCAR has retained an accounting firm to conduct the Compliance Audit of qualifying expenses. Once NASCAR and the City have met all the requirements under that grant agreement, the State will disburse the grant funds.

This Council Action includes a resolution authorizing execution of the Major Events Fund Grant agreement, as well as an amendment to the FY 2025-2026 Project Budget Ordinance to appropriate the reimbursement up to the potential maximum amount of \$1.6 million.