



- WHEREAS, Mr. James Ijames, an acclaimed playwright, actor, author, and professor who hails from Bessemer City, North Carolina, has achieved remarkable success and recognition, including the prestigious Pulitzer Prize, honoring his profound contributions to theater and the arts; and,
- WHEREAS, Mr. Ijames discovered his passion for writing and music as a teenager, graduating from Hunter Huss High School before pursuing his artistic ambitions at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and discovered his love for acting. He went on to further his studies at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, obtaining a Master of Fine Arts in Acting, and is currently the Associate Professor of Theatre at Villanova University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and,
- WHEREAS, his exceptional talent has captivated many audiences, most notably through his critically acclaimed Broadway play *Fat Ham*, a contemporary adaptation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which skillfully blends humor and innovative storytelling to deeply resonate with theatergoers; and,
- WHEREAS, *Fat Ham* earned James the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Drama and also garnered five Tony Award nominations, including recognition for *Best Play* and *Best Director of a Play*; and,
- WHEREAS, Mr. Ijames has received numerous prestigious honors, including the F. Otto Haas Award for an Emerging Artist, four Barrymore Awards, the 2015 Terrance McNally New Play Award, the 2017 Whiting Award, the 2019 Kesselring Prize, and the 2020 Steinberg Prize; additionally, he was named a 2015 Pew Fellow for Playwriting, further underscoring his impact and influence in performing arts; and,
- WHEREAS, his achievements are a tremendous source of pride for Bessemer City and Gaston County and reflect the transformative impact that passion and dedication to the creative arts can have on both individuals and society alike.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners hereby commends

James Ijames

in recognition of his extraordinary accomplishments, his unwavering dedication to the craft of storytelling, his enduring contributions to the performing arts, and his inspiring legacy for generations of future artists.

Chad Brown, Chairman

Cathy Cloninger

Kim Johnson

Allen R. Fraley

Tom Keigher

Bob Hovis, Vice-Chairman

Ronald E. Worley

To be Adopted the 12th Day of November 2024