



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, February 05, 2024 at 6:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: www.forestparkga.gov
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>
Phone Number: (404) 366.4720

FOREST PARK CITY HALL
745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez
The Honorable Allan Mears

The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells

Ricky L. Clark Jr, City Manager
Randi Rainey, City Clerk
Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

DRAFT MINUTES

VIRTUAL NOTICE

To watch the meeting via YouTube - <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>

The Council Meetings will be live-streamed and available on the City's

YouTube page - "**City of Forest Park GA**"

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: Mayor Butler called The meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Angelyne Butler, MPA	Mayor, At-Large		✓
Kimberly James	Council Member, Ward 1		✓
Dabouze Antoine	Council Member, Ward 2		✓
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		✓
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; John Wiggins; Finance Director; LaShawn Gardiner, Director of Planning & Community Development; Kwame Marshall, Multi-Media Specialist; Shalonda Brown, HR Director; Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Bobby Jinks, Public Works Director; Nigel Watley; Deputy Public Works Director, Bruce

Abrahams, Director of Economic Development; Rochell Dennis, Project Manager; Latosha Clemons; Fire Chief, David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; Tarik Maxwell, Recreation and Leisure Director; Joshua Cox, IT Director; Rodney Virgil, Level 2 Support Engineer; Derry Walker, Code Enforcement Director; Pauline Warrior; Senior Management Analyst, Chief Criss, PD; and Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to approve the agenda as printed.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Council Discussion and Approval on a Black History Program** – Councilwoman James

Background/History:

In an effort to celebrate Black History Month, Councilwoman James has requested a discussion of a potential partnership with Taletha Patton. The proposed production will feature actors, dancers, singers, and visual arts entitled "The Journey."

Councilmember James- noted the City has not had a black history program sponsored by the City, and she would like to sponsor the program by using her homecoming parade funds while having the program either at Paradise Church or the recreational center.

Ms. Patton- expressed wanting to produce a black history program called "The Journey" within the city at Paradise Cultural Center to access the stage, with a set date for the play on Sunday, February 25th.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James- noted wanting to transfer funds allocated to the homecoming parade to be moved into a budget line item for the black history program.

Councilmember Gutierrez- noted that he is happy someone is bringing this to the city and would allocate funding towards the program.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- noted it was a great idea and believed Councilmember James did not need approval. Councilmember James stated for transparency reasons, she wanted to bring it before the council due to a budgeted line item being defined as a certain thing, and with Mr. Clark's direction, she thought it would be appropriate to be fully transparent and bring it before the council. Mr. Clark stated that funds can be moved as long as they are in the council's budget. Mr. Clark also noted changing the approved line-item name to another line item.

Councilmember Mears- inquired about how much funding Councilmember James would need. Councilmember James noted they are still working on obtaining donors; they have a verbal commitment

with Senator Elana Parent and Mr. Baskins and are trying to lessen the burden of the cost the city would incur.

2. **Council Discussion and Approval on GMA Pension Plan – Executive Offices**

Background/History:

As part of the City Manager's city-wide employee evaluation, a large percentage of employees stated that they would like to see a Pension Plan implemented. At current, the city only offers a 457 and 401 plan. A qualified retirement plan can help our organization look more attractive to qualified employees. Finding quality employees can be a challenge today, especially when a job seeker is considering multiple job offers. Offering a retirement plan is a benefit most job seekers consider and ultimately can be a differentiating factor in their decision-making process. The City Manager is now ready to present the first full read of the proposed pension plan for input from the Governing Body. Not only can retirement plans help you attract new employees, but they can also help you retain those most valuable to our City's success. Keeping good employees lowers our turnover cost and helps our business function more efficiently.

City Manager, Ricky Clark Jr.- noted conducting a citywide employee survey last April, and the employees' main interest was participating in a pension plan. Mr. Clark mentioned that the most commonly used plan is through the Georgia Municipal Employee Benefits System (GMEBS). Mr. Clark also mentioned this being the first read with staff seeking input from the governing body to take back to the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) with additional commentary and finalized in July if approved.

Michelle Warner, a Representative of GMA- noted the developed plan has the average retirement age of 65 with five (5) years of service, allowing City Officials to retire at 65 years of age with the option of early retirement at 55 years of age, which is a reduced benefit. Mr. Warner noted that early retirement would be considered an actuarial reduction, in which employees would receive payments for ten (10) additional years. Ms. Warner also stated the benefits formula would include a 2.5% benefit multiplier set by the employer. Ms. Warner stated the formula would be determined by the years of service worked times the final average earnings, which is an average of the five (5) highest-paid consecutive years of service multiplied by the multiplier. Ms. Warner mentioned that vesting would be 100% after five (5) years and that the plan is still being discussed. Ms. Warner stated that the City Manager, Department Heads, and governing body would have immediate vesting and noted that a death benefit was included in the plan; she also stated no cost-of-living increase included with prior services. Ms. Warner said that the plan would need to be developed with two (2) readings before adoption with an Ordinance.

City Manager Ricky Clark Jr.- inquired about the in-service distribution. Ms. Warner noted that it was not a part of the cost study but could be something added. Mr. Clark pointed out the city's current DB plan requires a mandatory 1% match from employees, and the city matches up to 10%. Mr. Clark added that if the plan is chosen, it's recommended not to do both plans. Mr. Clark noted asking the directors to retrieve input from employees and read questions some employees had. Please refer to the City's YouTube page for a more in-depth look at the questions asked.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James- inquired if all employees can participate in the plan, if there is a timeline to allow employees to opt in, if all employees have to participate, and if qualifying is based on length of service or participation. Ms. Warner noted that the employees must work at least 30 hours weekly to be eligible;

employees start accruing on day one (1) with mandatory participation, and qualifying will be based on participation based on how many hours are worked a week.

Ms. Lewis, Deputy HR Director- noted all employees must participate and match at least one (1) %, while the city matches four (4) %.

City Manager Ricky Clark Jr.-- noted that most employees are for the pension plan, especially public safety.

Councilmember Antoine- inquired if the city participates in Social Security. Mr. Clark noted that the city participates.

Councilmember Gutierrez- inquired if the plan changes and if it would affect the prior employees. Ms. Warner noted that nothing that someone has already earned could be taken away.

Councilmember Gutierrez- requested an employee survey from Mr. Clark. Mr. Clark noted that a survey was conducted and presented to the governing body.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- Thanked Mr. Clark for actually acting on putting a pension plan together.

Councilmember Mears- Gave thanks for the presentation and noted it sounds like a good plan.

3. **Council Discussion and Approval of the Comprehensive Classification Analysis & Compensation Study – Executive Offices**

Background/History:

As part of the strategic objectives discussed in the FY 23 Budget Cycle, the Executive Offices have properly bid out and are ready to award a contract for the Comprehensive Classification Analysis & Compensation Study. As we continue to strive to provide exemplary service to the community by being a model for 21st-century government, we recognize the importance of our workforce of dedicated and talented professional staff.

We are seeking approval to move forward with awarding the contract to Gallagher. After a review of the committee and recommendation of our procurement officer, we feel this is the best choice for the City. Gallagher has worked with several communities our size and larger and provided the most responsive document for the RFP. In addition, they have established a timeline that provides for the compensation study to be completed before the budget cycle is done. Staff is asking for approval of an amount not to exceed \$85,000.

City Manager Ricky Clark Jr.- noted the need for a study of all compensations around the city, with staff finding inequities within the salaries and positions. Mr. Clark noted issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) and wanting to move forward with Gallagher for an amount not to exceed \$85,000.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember Akins-Wells- requested to see the information beforehand.

4. **Council Discussion and Approval of Lobbyist Services- Carpri & Clay, Inc.– Executive Offices**

Background/History:

Since 2016, Clayton County Municipalities have engaged with Capri & Clay LLC for lobbyist services to ensure that all entities received a fair share of funding from the lost FAA fuel tax. Staff is seeking approval to continue to participate. The funding for said lobbyist services is shared amongst Clayton County Municipalities, the Clayton County Board of Commissioners & the Clayton County School Board. Our share for the City of Forest Park is 5.86%, which equates monthly to \$205.10.

City Manager Ricky Clark Jr- noted the city's annual appropriation for the continued service is less than \$1000 a year and will help with the continued fight along with the County, Municipalities, and public schools to ensure that all entities receive a fair share of funding from the lost FAA fuel tax which has been going on for the last five (5) years. Mr. Clark noted that formal representative Valencia Stovall worked on this effort, and staff are seeking to continue engagement with the lobbyist, who is paid monthly.

5. **Council Discussion and Approval of the Service Agreement with Georgia Power to install the lighting on the new Welcome Signs** – Executive Offices

Background/History:

The City has completed the construction of the Welcome Signs. The original design for the monument signs did not include lights for the signs. The new Welcome Signs are the first interaction that visitors have with our community, and the first impression visitors will have of our City. The new signs are incredibly impactful on visitors entering our community, and lighting the signs would have a greater impact at night.

Staff is seeking approval to move forward with a Service Agreement with Georgia Power to install and maintain lighting for the new Welcome Signs.

Project Manager Mr. Shelby – noted seeking approval to move forward with a service agreement with Georgia Power to install and maintain the lighting of the four (4) monument signs located at Old Dixie Highway, Jonesboro Rd., and two (2) at Forest Parkway.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember Akins-Well- inquired about the cost. Mr. Shelby noted that the upfront cost is \$12,680, with a monthly cost of \$172 from the 2015 SPLOST.

6. **Council Discussion and Approval of Software with OpenGov/Carahsoft-** Finance Department

Background/History:

In alignment with the ongoing efforts to propel the City of Forest Park forward through the Digitization Strategy presented in the FY23-24 Financial Budget hearing, the Department of Finance seeks Council approval to adopt OpenGov, a robust Financial Reporting and Procurement Solution. The primary objective of this initiative is to leverage OpenGov to enhance collaboration between City departments, improve visibility throughout the budget and procurement processes, and facilitate scalability as the City continues its growth and success.

The adoption of OpenGov represents a significant step forward in the City of Forest Park's commitment to digital transformation. It promises to enhance collaboration, streamline processes, and provide

transparency to both internal and external stakeholders, contributing to the continued growth and success of our community. We look forward to the Council's support in moving this initiative forward.

Finance Director Mr. Wiggins -noted that Open/Gov would provide three (3) benefits to the city: efficiency, transparency, and strategic alignment, and it will help the whole city. Mr. Wiggins also noted being in line with the digitization strategic outline for the budget moving forward.

7. **Council Discussion and Approval on the Use of Drones for the Police Department-** Police Department

Background/History:

Drones have proven to be valuable assets in enhancing police operations and bolstering public safety. Their ability to offer real-time surveillance, collect vital evidence, and access inaccessible areas makes them invaluable tools in combating crime.

Drone as First Responder (DFR) boasts numerous advantages, including decreased response time and heightened safety for law enforcement officers and communities. When a 911 call is received, a trained police officer can deploy a drone to the emergency site while patrol cars are en route, ensuring a swift and efficient response before officers arrive.

The Justice Forfeiture Account will be utilized to cover the annual cost of \$80,000 for the three-year contract.

Chief Criss- noted being the first agency in the County to deploy drones if approved; he also indicated that due to being so close to the airport, there will be guidelines for the Drone as a First Responder (DFR) to comply with the FAA. Chief Criss noted the drones would have less than a one (1) minute response time, which will give officers an overview of what is to come and allow officers to determine if they need to slow their response, which is an added safety to officers. Chief Criss noted that drones could zoom in and read the decals on license plates up to 250 feet in the air.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James- inquired if the city does not own the drones, if a service is being purchased, and if the drones are only deployed during 911 emergencies. Chief Criss responded that the city would not own the drones and noted that the drones would only be deployed during emergencies or for investigative surveillance.

Councilmember Gutierrez- noted attending a class on drones at the GMA convention and expressed how amazing the drone response times were; he also inquired about the city owning its own drones. Chief Criss noted paying for the technology and not the drones themselves.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- noted being in support and stated Mr. Clark answered her question about where the drones would be located. Chief Criss noted placing a drone on top of city hall and the fire department located at Anvil Block or Jonesboro Rd and will sit in its own charging case.

Councilmember Mears- noted being curious about the liability. Attorney Matricardi noted that under the agreement, the company would require that the city indemnify itself; however, that has been negotiated out due to state law stating one cannot agree to indemnify, and the company would be liable and face liability.

8. **Council Discussion and Approval to Purchase two (2) Canines and to Enter into an Agreement between the Owners and the Forest Park Police Department- Police Department**

Background/History:

The Forest Park Police Department operates 24/7, 365 days a year, with four shifts managing service calls. Currently, two Canines are on duty for two of these shifts, performing tasks such as searching and rescuing missing persons, detecting illegal narcotics, and aiding in criminal apprehension. Outside of normal shift work, our current Canines serve as a community-building resource by participating in school educational programs.

The department seeks approval to acquire two more Canines to occupy the two vacant shifts. This will allow us to have a Canine available 24/7, 365 days a year. Officers Deondre Hunt and Jamal Hunter, the handlers, intend to sell their Canines to the department for a symbolic \$1.00. The department will cover all costs related to training, equipment, and healthcare for the Canines, with officers committing to a 2-year commitment for any and all training expenses.

Chief Criss -noted currently having two (2) canines, which are valuable tools. Chief Criss stated this would allow the deployment of a canine to assist with law enforcement. Chief Criss said both officers had purchased the canines to save the city funds; both dogs will be trained to detect narcotics, lost person articles, etc.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James- inquired if the officers could receive more than one (1) dollar. Chief Criss noted a fully trained canine would cost up to \$15,000.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following issues: Personnel, Litigation, or Real Estate)

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved to adjourn the February 5, 2024, Council Work Session at 7:14 pm.

Motion made by Councilmember Antoine, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Wells, and Councilmember Mears

Mayor Butler requested a five (5) minute break.