



## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, June 02, 2025 at 6:00 PM  
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

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**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 Delores A. Gunn  
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells  
The Honorable Allan Mears

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

### DRAFT MINUTES

**CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:** Mayor Butler called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK:** A quorum was established.

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

Pauline Warrior, Chief of Staff; Rodney Virgil, Level 2 Support Engineer; Javon Lloyd, PIO; John Wiggins, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; Talisa Adams, Procurement; Shalonda Brown, HR Director; Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; Nicole Dozier, PDC Director; Rochelle Dennis, Interim Economic Development Director; Tarik Maxwell, Director of Rec and Leisure (via zoom); Alton Matthews, Public Works Director; Nigel Whatley, Public Works Deputy Director; David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; Michelle Hood, Deputy City Clerk; Brandon Criss, Police Chief, and Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

### ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to approve the Consent Agenda as printed.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Mears.

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

Councilmember Akins-Wells raised a point of order, requesting to discuss a specific item.

It was moved to withdraw Councilmember James's original motion.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

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

It was moved to move item #2, Council Discussion on the 1st Annual Renewal for Sound Equipment Services with Digital World Live, to New Business.

The motion was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells and seconded by Councilmember James.

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

#### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:**

It was moved to table Item #12, Council Discussion on Case # RZ-2025-01- Rezoning Request for 5116 Sargent Street, per the applicant's request, Add Item #13 Council Discussion on Censuring Mayor Butler for Unprofessional Conduct, and add from the Consent Agenda to New Business Item #2 Council Discussion on the 1st Annual Renewal for Sound Equipment Services with Digital World Live.

The motion was made by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

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

#### **CONSENT AGENDA:** There were no discussions on Items #1 and #3.

1. **Council Discussion on the 1st Annual Renewal for Youth Sports Uniforms (Annual Contract) with Krown Sports** – Procurement/Recreation and Leisure Services Department

##### **Background/History:**

The Recreation and Leisure Services Department is looking to execute its 1st annual renewal option for youth sports uniforms with Krown Sports under the same prices, terms, and conditions. This vendor will continue to provide uniforms for all youth sports (football, baseball, softball, soccer, and any other sports events planned by the Recreation and Leisure Services Department.

ANNUAL AMOUNT \$30,000 – General Operation Fund

2. **Council Discussion on the 1st Annual Renewal for Sound Equipment Services with Digital World Live** – Procurement/Recreation and Leisure Services Department (Moved to New Business)

##### **Background/History:**

The Recreation and Leisure Services Department is looking to execute its 1st annual renewal option for the sound equipment services contract with Digital World Live under the same prices, terms, and conditions. This vendor will continue to provide sound equipment and technician services for 15 city

events. These events include (4 Fun Fridays, Forest Park Day, Hispanic Heritage Celebration, 3 Ultimate Tailgate Experiences, Fall Festival, Summer Soul Fest, and any other festival that is planned by the Recreation and Leisure Services Department).

ANNUAL TOTAL: \$77,850.00 – General Operation Fund

**City Manager, Mr. Clark Jr.**, noted that the agenda item was removed from the consent agenda at the request of Councilmember Akins-Wells, who had expressed interest in rebidding the contract rather than proceeding with the annual renewal options currently outlined in the agreement. Mr. Clark Jr. asked Ms. Adams to provide further clarification regarding the terms of the contract and to explain the necessary steps that would be required to initiate a new bid process.

**Procurement Manager, Ms. Adams**, explained that the current vendor has agreed to renew under the same pricing, terms, and conditions. The requesting department is supporting the renewal. She clarified that if the Council decides not to approve the renewal, the contract would be rebid, and staff would also explore the feasibility and cost implications of the City purchasing its own equipment. However, she noted that additional costs would be associated with installation, breakdown, and ensuring the equipment is of sufficient quality to support the varied events hosted by the City.

**Ms. Adams** informed the Council that the current contract expires at the end of the month. Renewing it now was intended to ensure uninterrupted support for upcoming events, including the Juneteenth Celebration and Fun Friday series. If the contract is not renewed, the City would be required to obtain three (3) individual quotes for each event, likely from the same vendors who previously responded to the bid. She also shared background on the contract's history, noting that the current vendor has been in use since 2020. When she assumed procurement oversight, the process was centralized to allow for better pricing controls and consistent service, rather than relying on informal or unstructured vendor selection. She mentioned that it was unclear whether formal quotes had been obtained in previous years. Finally, Ms. Adams stated that if the Council wishes to rebid the contract, the process will take a minimum of 90 days, including competitive advertisement, vendor response, evaluation, and final award.

#### **Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gunn** inquired why she had previously paid for sound equipment out of her ward budget if the City already had an active contract with the vendor. She sought clarification on why those costs were not covered under the existing agreement and questioned whether the contracted services should have been utilized instead. Ms. Adams clarified that the contract was established specifically for pre-identified City events overseen by the Recreation and Leisure Services Department. Events initiated or hosted by individual Council wards fall outside the scope of that contract. However, she noted that while those ward-sponsored events are not covered under the official contract terms, the vendor has agreed to honor the contracted pricing for those additional events, allowing for consistency in cost.

**Councilmember Gunn** sought clarification on the contract value and its coverage, specifically asking whether the \$77,000 contract amount is a flat rate that covers a set number of events, such as 15, or whether it is intended to cover any number of events (e.g., 15, 20, or 30) within the contracted scope. She requested confirmation on whether any event conducted by the City under this agreement is automatically included in that total cost. Mr. Clark Jr. clarified that in the case of the gospel event, the City began negotiating directly with the vendor once the scope of the event changed. He explained that Councilmember Wells initially secured sponsors to fund the entire event. However, due to a rainout, she rescheduled and proceeded with the event on a different date. As a result, the City absorbed the cost and brought the sound services under the existing vendor contract. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that the original service package did not include certain elements, such as a backline set-up, which created a cost variance.

However, he confirmed that the sound engineers ultimately negotiated the rate to match the standard pricing used for City-sponsored events under the contract.

**Councilmember Gunn** expressed concern about the timing of the contract discussion, pointing out that bringing the item forward with only 30 days remaining before the contract's expiration places the City in a difficult position. She noted that if action is not taken during the meeting, the agreement could be cancelled, requiring the City to negotiate separate contracts for each upcoming event. She emphasized that this would result in the vendor charging individually for each event, potentially affecting costs and complicating planning for scheduled activities such as Fun Fridays and the Juneteenth Celebration. Mrs. Adams clarified that the current pricing under the contract is valid through June 30th. If the contract is not renewed by that date under the same terms and conditions, the City would be required to solicit individual quotes for each event moving forward. Additionally, the service would need to be re-advertised and competitively bid if the City chooses to establish a new contract.

**Councilmember Gunn** asked the City Manager, Mr. Clark Jr. why the contract renewal was brought forward so close to its expiration date. She expressed concern about the timing of the item and questioned why it was not presented to the Council earlier, given the limited time remaining before the current contract ends.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** responded to Councilmember Gunn's question by clarifying that the contract was not brought forward late. He explained that the timing aligns with the contract's original approval cycle and noted that when the contract was adopted last year, the governing body approved it with built-in annual renewal options due to the complexity and length of the procurement process. He further explained that the Procurement Department routinely flags contracts before expiration to allow the Council to decide whether to renew or rebid. In this case, the department brought the renewal forward on time to enable that decision.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** also discussed the potential risks and benefits of putting the contract back out for bid. While rebidding could lead to new pricing options, he cautioned that costs could be significantly higher without the benefit of guaranteed volume. The current contract provides a discount rate based on the City's ability to guarantee approximately 15 events annually. Without that assurance, vendors may charge industry-standard pricing, which is typically around \$7,900 per event. He noted that while the contract can be rebid if the Council desires, doing so without guaranteed volume may result in higher per-event costs and less certainty.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** shared that he felt comfortable with the current sound provider, emphasizing that the company has served the city since around 2000. He highlighted their quality of work, consistency, and specialized experience in this field. While he noted that he would support whatever decision the governing body makes, he cautioned that putting the contract back out for bid could result in a lower cost. Still, it might also lead to lower service quality from a less experienced vendor.

**Mrs. Adams** added that consistency and reliability are key when selecting vendors for city events. She noted that the current vendor has demonstrated a long-standing relationship with the city and understands its expectations. She expressed confidence in their ability to deliver quality service, not just with equipment, but also through dependable staffing and logistical support. She stated that while the cost may vary, the value lies in their experience and the assurance that events will be executed smoothly and professionally.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** expressed concerns about the performance and reliability of the current vendor in providing sound services for city events. She emphasized the importance of professionalism and punctuality, especially when hosting public events that reflect the City's image and are promoted to the community. She shared specific examples of past issues, including microphones failing, equipment

not being ready, and inexperienced staff causing delays during events. In her experience, she stated that event start times have been negatively impacted by such issues, which undermines the quality of service expected, particularly when the vendor is being paid nearly \$80,000 annually.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** asserted that if the City pays for professional, high-quality service, the vendor should consistently deliver at that level. She noted that those who have not worked directly with the vendor may not be aware of the problems she has observed firsthand. While open to continuing with the vendor, she requested that future contract renewals be presented to the Council months in advance, rather than 30 days before expiration. She also recommended that performance standards, such as timeliness and service quality, be outlined in the contract. Additionally, Councilmember Wells advocated for the City to explore purchasing its own sound equipment, investing in internal capabilities rather than relying entirely on outside vendors.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** directed a question to Attorney Matricardi, asking whether, if the governing body chooses to exercise the renewal of the existing contract, some of Councilmember Akins-Wells's concerns could be addressed within the agreement. He specifically inquired whether the city could include clear provisions in the contract regarding concerts and event logistics, such as requiring vendors to be fully set up and operational before a scheduled start time (e.g., being ready prior to a 7:00 p.m. show). He asked if enforceable language could be added to ensure that failure to meet these expectations would constitute a contract default, giving the city recourse should the vendor not comply with the agreed-upon terms.

**Attorney Matricardi** clarified that the current contract contains a scope of work outlining specific events and their associated timeframes. Even though the terms remain the same when the contract is renewed, the statement of work would be updated to reflect any new events and times. She explained that while occasional tardiness may not constitute a material default, such issues could still be formally raised with the vendor. If delays become a recurring issue, they could potentially rise to the level of a contract default, providing grounds for further action.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** stated that if Councilwoman Akins-Wells could further articulate the concerns she referenced, beyond the ones already mentioned, and if the governing body's will is to move forward with the contract renewal, the city could coordinate a meeting with the vendor. Given that Councilwoman Akins-Wells hosts most of the events, he expressed openness to including the city attorney in that discussion to ensure the renewal includes clearly defined terms and conditions that must be upheld. He also inquired whether the current agreement contains a month-to-month provision that could offer flexibility during the review and negotiation process.

**Ms. Adams** added that the City has implemented a supplier rating form distributed to the user departments responsible for managing vendor contracts. Departments are instructed to submit these evaluations quarterly, providing feedback on contractor performance. She emphasized that the Procurement Department considers these ratings when determining whether to renew a contract. However, she also noted that vendors must be given a fair opportunity to correct any deficiencies in service. For that process to begin, Procurement must be formally notified of performance issues, as the department cannot take corrective action without awareness of the concerns.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** acknowledged that performance concerns with the vendor may have originated as early as September, which contributed to issues during the October event, based on information received. He agreed it would be appropriate to obtain a detailed list of those service issues and have a follow-up conversation with the vendor to address them directly. He then suggested extending the contract for a limited three-month period, allowing the City to cover the upcoming summer events while evaluating vendor performance. He noted that this approach would prevent the City from being bound to a full-year commitment, while maintaining continuity of service during a high-activity period.



**Attorney Matricardi** clarified that the City can request a three-month extension from the vendor; however, there is no guarantee that the vendor will agree to extend at the exact pricing, terms, or conditions currently outlined in the contract. She advised that this is an important consideration when evaluating short-term renewal options.

3. **Council Discussion on the 1st Annual Renewal for City-Wide Pest Control Services with Omega Pest Control – Procurement/Public Works**

**Background/History:**

The Department of Public Works is requesting approval to execute its first annual renewal option for city-wide pest control services with Omega Pest Control under the same prices, terms, and conditions. This vendor will continue to provide on-site pest control and rodent removal services as needed, servicing 18 buildings throughout the city.

ANNUAL TOTAL: \$6,360. Each department will appropriate and pay these costs monthly under its Professional Services line-item budget.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

4. **Council Discussion regarding the allocation and use of funds for each line item within the ward, including the establishment of a monthly reporting process, as well as clarification on the accounting and tracking of donations received- Legislative Offices**

**Background/History:**

Councilmember James requested a discussion regarding the use of funds allocated to each line item within each ward. Additionally, she inquired about the process for how donations are received and accounted for within the city's financial system.

**Councilmember James** expressed the need for greater transparency and accountability regarding councilmember funds. She shared that she recently encountered discrepancies when determining her line-item balance and believes it would benefit council members to receive monthly financial reports detailing expenditures. Additionally, she emphasized the importance of tracking donations more clearly.

**Councilmember James** noted that she understands that donations are typically deposited into the general fund, and she recommended having a method for notating when and how contributions are received. She referenced a recent example involving her Teacher of the Year Celebration, where donated funds were intended to cover event expenses. Still, the costs were charged to her line item without reflecting the incoming donations. She requested more transparent processes moving forward to ensure accurate financial tracking.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** inquired how the reports would look and if they would get an individual or group report.

**City Manager Mr. Clark Jr.** shared that earlier in the day, staff met to finalize a monthly reporting template that would be distributed to each council member. Mr. Clark Jr. displayed a draft report for Ward 1 as an example, noting that the format is intended as a starting point and can be refined to meet council members' needs. The report includes four primary budget categories within the legislative department: meetings,

projects, events, and capital. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that it outlines each member's adopted budget, monthly expenditures, year-to-date totals, and remaining available balance.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** also stated that additional details will be provided when purchases are made using the city's P-Card. He mentioned that the Council aides will submit itemized breakdowns to clarify all transactions. He noted that Wards 1 and 4 frequently receive event sponsorships, highlighting the need for improved tracking of those funds. The new monthly report will allow staff and council members to monitor expenditures in real time, ensuring accountability and budget awareness.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** then invited Ms. Nina Robinson, the City's Senior Staff Accountant, to explain how sponsorships and donations will be handled moving forward. Mr. Clark Jr. stated that Ms. Robinson manages the City's journal entries and bank reconciliations and will assist in integrating these funds into the new reporting framework.

**Ms. Robinson, Senior Staff Accountant**, further explained how the new reporting format will reflect expenditures and sponsorships. She noted that amounts entered as debits represent expenditures made from a councilmember's budget. In summary, amounts entered as credits represent donations or sponsorships, increasing that councilmember's budget. She also stated that the Finance Department will work closely with council aides, specifically referencing coordination with Mr. Henry, to assist with understanding and reconciling the figures. She noted that the goal is to ensure that the monthly reports provided to council members are fully aligned with the city's official financial statements. Ms. Robinson also confirmed that any donations or sponsorships received will be recorded correctly in the City's general ledger in accordance with GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles). Where appropriate, budget amendments will be made to reflect those contributions in the councilmember's respective budget lines.

**Councilmember James** acknowledged the financial reporting updates and appreciated the efforts to enhance transparency. In addition, she requested clarification regarding the allowable use of ward funds, specifically concerning a proposed use of those funds for a banquet. She noted that, based on prior guidance, her understanding was that city funds could not be used to support banquets or similar events, and she asked for further clarification to ensure consistency and compliance moving forward. Mr. Clark Jr. responded by stating that he would defer to Attorney Matricardi for a legal interpretation regarding the use of ward funds. He noted that staff had located a document that appears to provide some guidance on the appropriate use of ward funds. However, it remains unclear whether the document was ever formally adopted by the governing body or served as an internal reference created by legal counsel at the time. He requested that Attorney Matricardi speak further on the matter to clarify the proper uses of ward funds.

**Attorney Matricardi** clarified the proper use of ward funds, stating that such funds should only be used for activities directly related to a councilmember's official duties. While ward funds may be used to support events, the event must be city-related. For example, one in which the city is a co-host or direct participant, not merely a private event being sponsored. She emphasized that ward funds may be used for items such as conference travel, installing park benches, or hosting public events that serve a municipal purpose. However, the funds cannot be used for donations to organizations or causes, even if those causes are noble. This restriction exists because public funds must substantially and directly benefit the city or its residents. She further explained that using taxpayer dollars for gifts, donations, or gratuities violates the Georgia State Constitution, and that ward funds may not be used for anything campaign-related. In summary, expenditures must provide a tangible public benefit tied to the councilmember's governmental responsibilities to be considered appropriate.

**Councilmember Akins-Councilmember** contributed to the discussion by referencing a previous instance in which she used her ward funds to support a banquet honoring Dr. Folami and her team. She

stated that she believed the event provided a meaningful benefit to the community, particularly to the children served by the team's efforts. She emphasized that coaches should not have to turn to councilmembers to fund such events, expressing that the Parks and Recreation Department should cover banquet expenses. Councilmember Akins-Wells added that while she had used her funds in the past to help fill this gap, she believed that Councilmember Gutierrez was currently attempting to do the same for an upcoming banquet. She suggested this was part of a larger issue that warrants further discussion regarding how the City funds community-recognition events and the need for a more consistent and supportive funding approach.

**Councilmember Gunn** emphasized the importance of clear guidance regarding the proper use of ward funds, particularly for newly elected councilmembers. She stated it would be helpful to have a detailed breakdown of what is and is not permitted under the four categories assigned to councilmembers' budgets. She referenced a current example where she plans to sponsor a banquet for the Forest Park recreation team, which Dr. Folami coaches. She asked whether this type of sponsorship would raise any compliance concerns. Councilmember Gunn explained that the team is part of the city's recreation program and actively brings families and community members into Forest Park. Given the ongoing discussion around using funds for banquets, she requested clarity on whether this event is considered appropriate for ward fund expenditures under current policy.

**Attorney Matricardi** inquired if it would be a city event. Councilmember Gunn clarified that the event is intended to celebrate the young girls' victory in the Forest Park Recreation Center's volleyball program. She noted that this is an annual event traditionally held to recognize the team's accomplishments and represent the city in recreational athletics.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** mentioned that the event would take place in a city building.

**Attorney Matricardi** noted that it would be permissible, provided it pertains to recreation-related purposes.

**City Manager Mr. Clark Jr.** expressed his understanding that when children participate in recreational sports throughout the city, responsibility for recognition events such as banquets typically falls under the recreation department or the league itself, rather than being handled by elected officials. He referenced his experience paying registration fees, noting that such fees would presumably cover costs related to team celebrations and end-of-season activities.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** stated that while the expectation is for the Recreation Department to fund recognition events, this has not been the case for the past three years. She emphasized that parents and coaches should not be placed in the position of seeking funding from councilmembers for banquets or celebrations, particularly when families pay registration fees and support the city by participating in its programs. She expressed concern that such recognition events, especially for children bringing home championships or representing the city, should not be a matter for council discussion or agenda approval, but rather an automatic part of the recreation program's responsibilities, regardless of the season's outcome. Councilmember Akins-Wells concluded by saying that councilmembers' willingness to support youth and give back to the community should not be seen as problematic, as it aligns with their role to serve the residents of Forest Park.

**Councilmember James** shared her perspective on the issue, noting that while her children have participated in recreational sports, it is essential to understand that Forest Park's recreation leagues include players across Clayton County and surrounding counties. She explained that registration fees paid by participants are traditionally intended to cover expenses like banquets, with parents sometimes



donating additional funds as needed. She expressed concern that using taxpayer dollars to fund banquets at the request of individual coaches could lead to inconsistent and inappropriate use of public funds. While it may be possible to label such events as city-sponsored, Councilmember James stated that doing so "willy-nilly" could blur the lines of fiscal responsibility. She emphasized that such practices should be avoided based on the guidance she received when first taking office. She noted that she seeks private sponsorships for community initiatives rather than using ward funds. She recommended that the Council proceed cautiously in this gray area to maintain accountability and public trust.

**Councilmember Gunn** said that while she understands the concern regarding participants from outside municipalities, many children live in Forest Park and actively use the city's recreational facilities. She emphasized the positive economic impact of recreation events on the community, citing increased traffic to local businesses like gas stations and restaurants during game days. She questioned the characterization of ward-sponsored celebrations for local youth as "inappropriate," asserting that celebrating children who contribute to the vitality of the city's parks and recreation programs should not be viewed negatively. Councilmember Gunn clarified that an actual misuse of funds would be personal spending unrelated to city functions, such as using city-issued cards for personal fuel. However, recognizing and supporting youth participants, in her view, aligns with the spirit of public service and community investment. She invited further clarification if her perspective was incorrect, but maintained her belief that honoring the city's children is appropriate and beneficial.

**Councilmember James** clarified that her concern centers around using taxpayer dollars and what is legally permitted. She acknowledged that attorney Matricardi would be better positioned to provide legal guidance.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** stated that Attorney Matricardi noted it would not be inappropriate.

**Councilmember James** noted that adding the word "City" would not make it inappropriate.

**Councilmember Gunn** noted that in many municipalities, including places like "Roswell", youth banquets are often formally presented as city-sponsored to ensure compliance and legitimacy. She emphasized that when the city's name is attached to an event, particularly one celebrating local youth achievements held at a city-owned facility, it should be recognized as a city function, not a private affair. In her view, this distinction further supports the appropriateness of using public funds, as long as the event promotes community engagement and aligns with the city's mission to help its residents.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** expressed support for using city funds to recognize and celebrate local youth, particularly when events are held in city-owned facilities involving children representing the City of Forest Park. He referenced the legal guideline requiring a "substantial benefit" to the city and argued that investing in youth and acknowledging their accomplishments meets that standard. He emphasized that these children are champions of Forest Park, not any other city, and noted the broader economic and social value in encouraging community engagement through such celebrations. Councilmember Gutierrez acknowledged the importance of establishing clear procedures moving forward, but cautioned against questioning this particular event or creating unnecessary barriers. He stated that with a median household income of around \$30,000 in Forest Park, not all parents can afford to fund banquets, and supporting youth events with modest expenses, well under \$1,000, is reasonable and meaningful. He concluded by expressing concern that the discussion could be interpreted as opposition to the team, the coach, or the children involved.

**Councilmember James** clarified that her concerns were not about celebrating local youth, but about the appropriate use of taxpayer dollars and the governing body's role. She emphasized that Forest Park has

a designated Recreation and Leisure Department that is responsible for organizing and funding events like banquets. While recognizing the value in honoring the city's youth, she stated that it is inappropriate for individual coaches or community members to approach council members to request their allocated ward funds for such purposes. She further noted that council members have fiduciary responsibilities and must ensure city funds are spent according to established guidelines. If there is a desire to expand the Recreation Department's role or resources, the governing body should collectively make that change through formal policy. Her point, she concluded, was not about opposing youth recognition, but about maintaining fiscal integrity and ensuring the proper processes are followed.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** expressed frustration over the ongoing discussion, stating that supporting youth in the community should not be controversial. She questioned the distinction between councilmembers using ward funds to assist with events and city employees participating in school events during work hours, funded by taxpayers. She pointed out that city employees regularly assist with events outside of their traditional duties without issue. She also clarified that it is not a matter of every coach approaching the council for support, but rather when someone does ask, each councilmember has the discretion to say yes or no. Councilmember Akins-Wells emphasized that, according to the City Attorney's interpretation, such expenditures are permissible and lawful. She expressed concern that another councilmember may be attempting to control how others allocate their ward funds, despite each councilmember being independently elected to represent their wards. She concluded by reaffirming her belief that supporting the children and volunteer coaches of Forest Park is both reasonable and appropriate. She stated that the participants invest time and money in the city, and that council support for their recognition is a meaningful way to show appreciation, just as the city supports other events across wards.

**Councilmember Mears** reflected on his 15 years of coaching experience in Forest Park, sharing that players typically received only a pair of pants and a top during his time. The parents paid for additional items such as socks and hats and funded any end-of-season banquet. He expressed mixed feelings about the current discussion, raising questions about whether children today play for free or if registration fees are collected. If payments are being charged, he inquired whether those funds are intended to cover expenses such as uniforms and banquets, or if the city is now covering those costs for all participants.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** respectfully noted that the Deputy Director of Recreation and Leisure was present and could speak directly to the fees associated with youth programs and the revenue generated from those fees. He added that staff were currently working to pull those figures for review.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** added that if the necessary support isn't in place, the governing body has the authority to establish it. She emphasized that the Council could allocate funding to ensure that parents and coaches are not required to come before Council to request support for banquets honoring children whose families are investing in the city.

**Deputy Director Jones** of Recreation and Leisure clarified that registration fees for youth participants typically range from \$70 to \$90, depending on whether the child is a Forest Park resident and whether the fee was paid early or late. She also noted that, in the past, the City did provide banquets for both children and their parents. Deputy Director Jones explained that in the past, the Recreation and Leisure Department did provide some support for team banquets, but the level of support did not always align with what teams or parents expected. As a result, the department has adjusted its approach and now offers access to city facilities to host these events. At the same time, the responsibility for providing food and other banquet-related items has shifted to the parents or teams themselves.

**Councilmember Gunn** agreed with Councilmember Akins-Wells' sentiment and suggested that the city consider allocating specific funds to the Recreation and Leisure Department to host banquets after athletic seasons. She noted that establishing such funding would eliminate the need for parents or council members to cover these expenses and ensure the children are appropriately celebrated.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** acknowledged Deputy Director Jones' remarks, noting that the Recreation and Leisure Department previously hosted banquets, but the events often did not meet the teams' expectations. He suggested that the department revisit the approach by establishing a standardized banquet format funded through the \$70–\$90 participation fees collected from players, as previously mentioned by Deputy Director Jones. Any enhancements beyond the standard offering would then be the responsibility of the individual teams. He confirmed this interpretation with Deputy Director Jones for clarification.

**Councilmember Gunn** emphasized that even if the city establishes a standard banquet with a designated budget, councilmembers should still retain the right to provide additional support if they choose to do so.

**Attorney Matricardi** clarified that any typical service that city funds are permitted to cover may also be funded through ward allocations. It is appropriate to use ward funds for that purpose if it is a standard municipal service.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** stated that her only request is for consistency in decision-making. She noted, without intending to blame City Manager Mr. Clark Jr., that while there are questions raised about providing funds to support a banquet celebrating youth, there have been other instances where city funds were used for different purposes without the same level of scrutiny, such as Mr. Clark Jr.'s two-year celebration.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** addressed the concern by clarifying that the celebration held for his 100th day in office did not utilize city funds. He explained that, within three weeks, he was able to raise \$25,000 in sponsorships to fully fund the event, ensuring that no taxpayer dollars were expended. He acknowledged Councilmember Akins-Wells' broader point about the importance of consistent practices in how funds are used, particularly regarding support for youth celebrations. Mr. Clark Jr. emphasized that he strongly believes in securing sponsorships for city events whenever possible, because the residents of Forest Park deserve meaningful recognition. He added that those who earn income through the city should also give back to support initiatives that celebrate and uplift the community. Mr. Clark Jr. also acknowledged the reference to his second anniversary celebration and clarified that the small gathering, including a cake, was a surprise organized by staff. He noted that, to his understanding, any expenses associated with the event were personally covered by the employees as a gesture of appreciation for his service to the City over the past two years.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** clarified that her earlier comments were meant to serve as an example. She expressed that while she appreciated Mr. Clark raising \$25,000 for his event, she intended to highlight the importance of consistency across all spending, especially when it involves food purchases or events that may not directly benefit the city. She emphasized the need for equitable standards in how city funds are evaluated and used. She also added that if her remarks were taken personally, it was not her intent and offered a courteous acknowledgment.

**Dr. Folami** addressed the council to bring closure to the discussion, emphasizing that a sponsor had already been secured for the event and that the only request being made was for use of the city facility. She pointed out that at least nine volunteer coaches freely give their time to the program. Referring to the Deputy Director's earlier remarks, she acknowledged that in the past, the Recreation and Leisure Department organized a collective banquet for all programs. She explained that she has independently

hosted a banquet specifically for the volleyball participants for the last three years. She recognized the valid points raised by several councilmembers about how such community events stimulate local engagement and support area businesses. However, she expressed disappointment at the tone of the debate, particularly because her name and involvement appeared to be under scrutiny.

**Dr. Folami** reminded the council of her role as a longtime, engaged citizen of Forest Park and her commitment to supporting the community's children and families. She closed by encouraging the council to move forward, affirming that the event was fully sponsored and under control and that if consensus could not be reached, her team would continue to support it independently.

**Mayor Butler** clarified that the item listed on the agenda was not specifically related to the volleyball banquet. She noted that the volleyball event was brought up during the broader discussion, but was not the original focus of the agenda item. Mayor Butler emphasized this point to ensure the public and council understood that the conversation had expanded beyond the intended scope. She concluded by stating that the outcome of the discussion and how the motion would ultimately be framed were still undecided at that time.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** stated that while the discussion was ongoing, she wanted to ensure that the volleyball team's recognition was added to the regular session agenda. She emphasized that the coach should not have to use her public comment time to speak about the children's contributions to the community and accomplishments. Councilmember Akins-Wells requested that a formal item be included on the agenda so that they can be appropriately acknowledged.

**Mayor Butler** inquired about Attorney Matricardi's final answer. Attorney Matricardi clarified that it would be a permissible expenditure because it is essentially a city event involving the city's recreational league. Since it falls within the scope of what city funds are typically used for, it would be considered a legal expenditure by the city. Accordingly, it would also be a legal expenditure for the city council to support.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** suggested that the governing body should, at a minimum, review the documentation currently on record to determine whether it has previously been adopted or seen by the body. He recommended updating the document if necessary. He also noted that council members want clarity. When they request to use ward funds for a specific purpose, they want to ensure it qualifies as a legally justified expense based on the city's guidelines and legal standards.

**Attorney Matricardi** stated she would be happy to update the existing document, initially provided by previous legal counsel, and convert it into a formal ward funds policy. She noted that many other jurisdictions have discretionary funding policies that clearly outline permissible and impermissible uses. However, she emphasized that these matters are often not black and white and are best evaluated on a case-by-case basis. She encouraged council members to reach out to her with questions as they arise and expressed support for developing an official policy that the Council could formally adopt and follow.

**Councilmember Gunn** inquired whether Councilmember James's request was for each Councilmember to receive an individual report or for the report to be shared collectively with the whole governing body. Councilmember James noted that the decision to proceed would be left to the group's discretion. Mr. Clark Jr. clarified that each ward would receive the same financial report simultaneously each month. He emphasized that the report is not generated for a single Councilmember but will be provided to all governing body members individually, ensuring equal access and transparency.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** clarified that the question appears to be whether Councilwoman James will receive one on behalf of everyone, or if she is receiving it solely for herself. Mr. Clark Jr. clarified that

each Councilmember would receive a report pertaining only to their respective ward. He explained that the intention is for every Councilmember to be able to track their expenditures, sponsorships, and remaining budget every month. If any Councilmember wishes to see the reports for all wards, that request can be accommodated, but is not part of the standard distribution process.

5. **Council Discussion on the upcoming SPLOST funding on City Projects-** Councilmember James, Ward 1

**Background/History:**

Councilmember James requested a discussion on the upcoming SPLOST funding for city projects. She inquired whether the city has submitted proposed projects to the county for voter consideration and asked for a breakdown of the remaining SPLOST funds, including the total amount left to spend and how those funds are planned to be allocated.

**Councilmember James** deferred to the City Manager to provide an overview of the capital projects report distributed to the governing body. She inquired whether he would like to present the details at that time.

**City Manager, Mr. Clark Jr.**, explained that the City has capital project records dating back to 2008, the most recent SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) cycle, with detailed itemized project listings. He noted that Clayton County is expected to initiate a new SPLOST later this year and that the City is awaiting final details to begin drafting a new project list. He recommended that future project listings use broader language (e.g., "roads and streets" instead of naming specific ones) to allow for more flexibility as priorities shift. Mr. Clark Jr. shared current fund balances for each SPLOST cycle: approximately \$1.4 million remains from 2008, \$4.7 million from 2015, and \$14.3 million from 2021. He emphasized that many of these funds are already tied to capital projects, as outlined in the report distributed to Council and previously shared during the retreat. Some projects have already been completed, including sidewalk work on Pine Tree, while others are still in progress.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember James** asked for clarification on whether there is a limit on using SPLOST funds.

**Attorney Matricardi** clarified that while SPLOST funds do not expire under Georgia law once collected, using those funds can be governed by contractual obligations, specifically, intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) between the city and the county. She noted that: For the 2021 SPLOST, funds must be used or contractually obligated within five (5) years after the SPLOST collection period ends, which effectively gives a 10-year window. To determine if the same rule applies to the 2008 SPLOST, she would need to review the IGA between the City of Forest Park and Clayton County from that period. Some of the remaining \$1.4 million from the 2008 SPLOST may be tied to projects already under contract but not yet completed, making the funds still valid.

**Councilmember James** requested that Mr. Clark, Jr., provide a breakdown identifying which specific SPLOST funds, such as those from 2008, 2015, or 2021, are being applied to each capital project listed in the current SPLOST project summary sheet. She explained that this level of detail would help the Council better track the use of funds, understand what has already been spent, and assess what is still available for future use.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** reviewed the 2008 SPLOST project list and noted that the document did not assign projects to specific council members. However, he confirmed that several current initiatives, such as the Main



Street streetscape, City Hall expansion, vehicle acquisitions, and general transportation improvements, were included in the original 2008 list.

He further explained that while some projects were listed with specific titles, others used broader terms to provide flexibility. Mr. Clark Jr. offered to provide the council with copies of the full referendum documents for the 2008, 2015, and 2021 SPLOST cycles. This would allow members to correlate active projects with the appropriate funding source and gain clearer insight into how the funds have been allocated over time.

**Councilmember James** expressed the importance of ensuring that SPLOST funds are used as they were originally approved by voters and fully expended within the appropriate timeframe. She referenced a past example where updates were made to Starr Park, including removing the large concrete wall around Kiwanis Stadium, and how former leadership caught and corrected expenditures not allocated adequately to SPLOST. She emphasized the need for precise tracking to avoid carrying unused balances forward unnecessarily and to ensure projects are completed in alignment with the intended purpose of each SPLOST cycle.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** clarified that each year, the city's annual audit includes a detailed schedule showing the SPLOST project lists and budgeted and expended amounts. He noted that while some projects date back as far as 2008, there are plans to utilize funds soon. For instance, the City Center project will deplete a significant portion of the funds once construction begins, although those funds alone will not cover the full cost. He also provided updates on longstanding road projects, highlighting Linda Way as nearly ready to proceed to construction with only 3 to 5 parcels left requiring condemnation. He added that the bidding process for Linda Way has likely already started, along with another long-delayed road project, Walter Drive, which is also moving forward.

**Councilmember Gunn** concluded her remarks by emphasizing the importance of public understanding when the term "SPLOST" is used. She pointed out that many residents may not be familiar with what SPLOST means and encouraged efforts to ensure that the public is better informed about how SPLOST funds work and how they are used. Attorney Matricardi explained that it stands for Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, a penny sales tax visible on receipts, and often marked by signs reading, "Your SPLOST dollars at work." She further explained that based on the information she reviewed, SPLOST funds must be used within 10 years after the expiration of the original SPLOST referendum.

**Councilmember James** inquired about the status of Scott Boulevard Park. She asked whether the City Council would have input in determining the list of projects to be included in the upcoming SPLOST referendum. She also sought clarification on whether the Council would be part of the legislative process guiding what is presented to voters. Mr. Clark Jr. confirmed that the governing body must adopt the project list for the SPLOST referendum. He explained that one advantage of past SPLOSTs, such as the 2008 initiative, was the flexibility in project designation, particularly for infrastructure like roads. This flexibility allows the city to respond to unforeseen issues. He noted that while he is unsure how the process was previously handled, most recently in 2020 for the 2021 SPLOST, the current administration fully intends to gather input from the City Council to help shape the recommended list of projects for the upcoming SPLOST cycle.

**Councilmember Gunn** inquired whether there is an expiration period of up to 10 years, as previously mentioned by the council, and asked what would happen if the funds were not spent within that timeframe. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that the funds must be returned if they are not obligated. However, our position would be that the funds are obligated. Attorney Matricardi included that they must be returned if the funds are not obligated. In that case, the money would be returned to the county and applied to reduce any

outstanding debts. The funds would be transferred to the county's general fund if there are no outstanding debts.

**Mayor Butler** noted that, if she understands correctly, an extension can be requested, and she believes that has already been done in this case.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** asked whether any specific action or direction was being requested from staff, or if the intent was simply for staff to participate in developing the list. He noted that he would defer to those who have previously served on the council for historical context on how this process has been handled in the past.

**Councilmember James** stated that she would like to be involved in determining what items are included on the list. She mentioned receiving a text from someone on the legislative team indicating that discussions were occurring regarding the SPLOST and what would be included in the referendum. She expressed concern, noting that she was unaware those conversations had already begun.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** clarified that, to his knowledge, no official date has been set for when the meetings will be convened. He noted that the timeline will ultimately depend on the county, as it involves a referendum issue. However, he emphasized that the governing body must adopt the SPLOST project list and the required resolution.

#### 6. **Council Discussion on the Boards and Commissions Application-** Legislative Office

##### **Background/History:**

The Mayor and Council of the City of Forest Park are committed to increasing civic engagement and transparency in the appointment process for city boards and commissions. The governing body would like to mimic the City of Snellville's format to enhance the application process and better capture applicants' qualifications and interests.

This updated application includes a brief biography section, allowing applicants to share more about their background, experience, and interest in public service. The information provided will assist the Mayor and Council in identifying qualified, community-minded individuals willing to serve and contribute to the city's growth and development.

Boards and commissions serve as advisory bodies that provide critical recommendations to the governing body on planning, development, parks, zoning, economic growth, and other community needs. Appointments are made based on experience, qualifications, and the city's current priorities.

Applicants must:

- Be residents of the City of Forest Park unless otherwise specified
- Submit a completed application along with a brief biography
- Be willing to attend meetings regularly and participate in board-related activities
- Does not currently hold a position that would present a conflict of interest

We welcome applicants from all backgrounds who are passionate about public service and wish to help shape the future of our city.

**Councilmember Gunn** appreciated the City Attorney's prompt response regarding the URA Board appointments. She noted that the previous application did not provide enough depth to vet candidates for the position. She thanked the City Clerk's Office for compiling a well-written revised application and said

she was pleased with the outcome. Councilmember Gunn also thanked the City Manager, referencing their earlier conversation, and expressed her hope that the new application would be implemented soon.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** asked for clarification, inquiring whether the focus is solely on revising the application itself or if changes are also being made to the requirements or the overall application process.

**Mayor Butler** noted that it was just an update to the application.

**Councilmember James** clarified that the intent is solely to update the application, not to change any requirements. The goal is to request more detailed information from each applicant to understand better the population they represent and their qualifications for the position.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** inquired about conflicts of interest. Attorney Matricardi explained that determining a conflict of interest is handled case-by-case. While anyone may apply, each submission would require a proper review to assess whether a conflict exists. For example, if an applicant has an existing arrangement with the city or is a current vendor, and then is appointed, or enters into such an arrangement afterward, it could present a conflict. However, she emphasized that such determinations depend on the specific circumstances of each case. Councilmember James included that employees are not able to serve. Attorney Matricardi further clarified that certain situations would constitute a conflict of interest, for example, if a city employee also served on the City Council. Additionally, she noted that individuals are generally permitted to serve on only one board at a time. Some boards allow elected officials to serve, while others do not. For instance, a City Councilmember would not be eligible to serve on the Beautification Committee.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** noted that the city's website will reflect the new changes made to the application.

7. **Council Discussion on the Appointment to the Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA)-Executive Offices** Item discussed in Executive Session

**Background/History:**

The Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA) of the City of Forest Park is a public body corporate and politic, established under the provisions of the Georgia Urban Redevelopment Law (O.C.G.A. § 36-61-1 et seq.). The Mayor and City Council created the agency to address blight conditions, stimulate economic development, and promote reinvestment in targeted areas of the city.

The City of Forest Park is currently accepting applications to fill a vacancy on the Urban Redevelopment Agency Board due to Yasmine Julio's resignation. The appointment will serve the remainder of the unexpired term, which ends March 14, 2028. Interested applicants should be committed to community development and economic revitalization and must be willing to attend regular meetings and actively participate in agency matters.

8. **Council Discussion on Task Order No. PPI 2025.01a for Precision Planning Inc. to provide Construction Documents and Permitting Services for the New City Center-Procurement/Executive Office**

**Background/History:**

The City has secured a contract with Carroll Daniel Construction for Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) for construction of the City Center building (City Hall, Municipal Court, Police Headquarters, and Recreation Facility). Precision Planning, Inc. (PPI) is providing Design Development Services and will

coordinate with the CMAR during the preconstruction phase for the new City Center building that will be approximately 200,000 SF, including structured parking. Additionally, PPI will provide construction documents and permitting services and coordinate with the CMAR during the preconstruction phase, per the scope of services outlined in the task order. Once the documents are finalized and a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) is approved, a separate task order proposal will be requested and issued for Construction Contract Administration (CA) services. Total Not to Exceed (N.T.E.) Fees:

Construction Documents and Permitting Services: \$2,209,500.00

Reimbursable Expenses N.T.E.: \$18,000.00

**Total N.T.E. Fees: \$2,227,500.00**

SPLOST 2021 Bonds (326-26-7520-54-1200)

**Procurement Manager, Mrs. Adams**, noted that the new City Center project is in its pre-construction phase. The awarded contractor, PPI, is responsible for providing architectural and engineering services and previously developed the project's design. This task order will authorize PPI to proceed with construction documentation, provide construction advisement, and assist with permitting services once ground is broken.

9. **Council Discussion on the Proposed FY 25-26 Budget- 1st Public Hearing-** Executive Office

**Background/History:**

The Proposed Funded dollar amount of the FY25- 26 Budget is \$43,034,857.00. The budget meticulously allocates resources across various city priorities and programs. These allocations are made with the intent to enhance public safety, improve infrastructure, promote economic development, and provide essential services. From maintaining our parks and recreational facilities to supporting educational programs and ensuring the upkeep of our streets and utilities, the budget is designed to meet the diverse needs of our community. The City Manager will present a complete overview of the proposed budget.

The first Public Hearing will be at tonight's regular session meeting at 7pm.

The second Public Hearing will be held in a Special Called Meeting on June 16, 2025, at 5 p.m.

The third Public Hearing, with the adoption of the budget, will be on June 16, 2025, at 7 p.m. at the regular session meeting.

**City Manager, Mr. Clark Jr.**, provided a formal overview of the proposed FY 2025–2026 budget. He noted that the proposed budget totals approximately \$43 million in projected revenues, up from \$34 million in the previous fiscal year, with an estimated \$35 million expected from property tax revenue due to increased property values. While conservative estimates were applied to licensing, permitting, and service fees, investment income is projected to increase by \$134,000, and intergovernmental revenue by \$226,000. Contributions and donations are budgeted at \$8,400, based on current-year trends.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** emphasized that this budget does not include personnel cuts. Instead, it funds additional positions and incorporates previously adopted priorities such as the new pension plan and the wage and compensation study. A contingency fund of over \$300,000 has also been built to help manage unforeseen needs. He noted that the budget was developed amid global instability, reduced federal funding, and increased insurance costs. Despite substantial internal risk mitigation and claims management, broader

market conditions and industry-standard lookback periods continue to affect premiums. These increases have been factored into the proposed plan. Key investments highlighted include continued upgrades in technology, cybersecurity, and infrastructure modernization. Mr. Clark Jr. publicly acknowledged and thanked IT Director Cox and his team for their leadership in managing cyber threats and preparing for the city's transition to a new municipal center.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** expressed optimism for growth, particularly in the Tri-Cities corridor (East Point to Hapeville), and emphasized the potential for expanding the city's housing portfolio and economic base. Operational efficiency remains a central theme, with continued focus on centralized procurement under the leadership of Ms. Talisa Adams. The budget also supports neighborhood sustainability, citing the lowest crime rates in 5–8 years and a fully staffed police department as significant achievements.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** highlighted the Legacy Residents Program, funded at \$25,000, which provides enhanced services and will include the purchase of a dedicated van for senior transportation. He also noted continued progress in economic development, pointing to a historic \$13 million property acquisition through the Urban Redevelopment Agency, with significant long-term job creation potential.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** emphasized that the City of Forest Park can sustain its operations and growth due to strategic investments and increasing long-term commitments from companies that invest in the community. These investments help propel the success of small businesses, which he described as the foundation of the city's economic framework.

He then highlighted several key areas of investment in the proposed budget:

**Public Safety:**

- Funding is allocated for body-worn and in-car cameras and advanced gunshot detection systems.
- Implementation of a deception detection system is planned to support integrity-based hiring practices.
- A goal has been set to maintain a 95% or higher staffing retention rate in public safety departments.
- Code Enforcement Officers will also be equipped with body cameras to enhance accountability and transparency.
- The city will roll out the Rapid SOS system for improved emergency location tracking under its E-911 services.

**Planning & Community Development:**

- Continued developing the "one-stop concierge model" to streamline services and improve resident and developer engagement.

**Human Resources:**

- The city will implement initiatives per House Bill 451, including support for PTSD-related programs.
- Centralized background check procedures and a renewed focus on citywide professional development are also included.

**Recreation & Leisure**

- New partnerships will support literacy-based enrichment summer camps.
- The Legacy Residents Program will be expanded.
- Additional support is budgeted for citywide public events.



**Municipal Court**

- The budget supports budget-neutral increases for the municipal judge and solicitor.
- Process improvements will reduce docket wait times from 3–4 months to under 30 days.

**Fleet & Fire Services**

- For the first time in over a decade, the Fleet Services facility will undergo much-needed renovations.
- Fire Station One will also receive significant updates, including HVAC replacements, to better accommodate the size and usage of the building.

**Mr. Clark Jr.** affirmed that Forest Park is not merely adjacent to opportunity but is becoming a center of innovation, culture, and strategic growth. The FY 2025–2026 budget reflects a city not only prepared to meet current demands but also ready to shape the future.

He thanked Mayor Butler and the council members for their steadfast leadership and partnership. Also, he expressed his anticipation for continued collaboration in stewarding a budget that supports a future worthy of the residents of Forest Park.

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Mears** said that it was a good report.

**10. Budget Amendment for General Fund and Police Special Funds- Finance Department****Background/History:**

The City of Forest Park's FY24- 25 Operating Budget was unanimously adopted by the city council on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Before adopting the budget, city staff advised that funding and revenues would continuously be monitored for accuracy and reporting. Staff is recommending that the understated funds be added to the operating budget, for General Fund, Special Funds, Capital Funds, City Authorities, and Sanitation yearend closure procedure for the Annual Audit, which will decrease/increase the current revenues to amend the decrease/increase of expenditures. Once the funds have been added to the operating budget, it is also recommended that the City Council approve a budget amendment to accurately reflect the corrected operating revenue budget amount for General Fund - \$43,624,652 for FY24- 25.

**Mr. Wiggins** explained that, as the City approaches the end of its fiscal year, reconciling and cleaning up accounts is necessary to ensure alignment and accuracy. He noted that this amendment is the first of several he will present to support a smooth and compliant fiscal year-end transition.

**11. Council Discussion on the Forest Park Fire & EMS trade/exchange for Fire Engine One Aerial – Fire & EMS Department****Background/History:**

The Forest Park Fire & EMS Department is seeking the Council's approval to trade in our 2015 Rosenbauer Fire Engine to Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus in exchange for parts and labor needed to refurbish our 1998 Engine One 95' Aerial. The council has already approved the inclusion of Rosenbauer on the City's Asset Surplus list.

This trade will provide the Fire Department with a more reliable and modern apparatus for fire suppression and rescue operations until a new vehicle can be purchased. The refurbishment will include:

A full vehicle inspection and necessary repairs

Bodywork, new paint, and updated graphics to match the current fleet

Upgrading all emergency lights to DOT-compliant LED systems

Inspection and any required repairs to the ladder, pump, drivetrain, and suspension systems

Approving this trade will allow the City to maintain a higher confidence level in the vehicle's reliability, ensuring it can effectively serve our citizens and business until it is eventually placed into reserve status.

**Deputy Chief Halcome** noted that the proposal involves trading in the department's 2015 Rosenbauer apparatus in exchange for refurbishing the 1998 E-One 95-foot aerial truck. This transaction would be an even exchange, requiring no monetary expenditure from the City.

**Deputy Chief Halcome** explained that Brindlee Mountain, a company previously engaged with the City, specializes in the refurbishing and resale older fire apparatus. Approximately a year and a half ago, the company offered to replace the pump on the aerial truck, which is now being considered for refurbishment. Under the terms of the agreement, Brindlee Mountain will receive the 2015 Rosenbauer apparatus as a trade-in. The company will refurbish and resell it, typically to smaller or volunteer fire departments at a reduced cost. In return, the City will receive a fully refurbished 1998 aerial unit, which will undergo: A complete inspection and repair of any mechanical or operational deficiencies; Bodywork and repainting to match the City's current fleet design and logos; Upgrades to emergency lighting systems using DOT-compliant LED technology; and Inspections of the ladder, pump, drivetrain, and suspension systems. This strategic refurbishment will result in a modernized, more reliable apparatus, enhancing the Fire Department's ability to respond to emergencies across the City. Deputy Chief Halcome emphasized that while the unit remains a 1998 model, the upgrades will significantly extend its useful life and functionality.

He clarified that the proposal is not intended to replace the need for a new truck but to serve as a cost-effective bridge solution. The refurbished apparatus will provide greater reliability in the short term while allowing time to plan for a new vehicle purchase. Once a new truck is acquired, the refurbished aerial will transition into reserve status, providing backup coverage. Deputy Chief Halcome described the arrangement as a no-cost, mutually beneficial agreement that supports the City's operational readiness and long-term planning goals.

12. **Council Discussion on Case # RZ-2025-01- Rezoning Request for 5116 Sargent Street-** Planning and Community Development Department- **Tabled until the next council meeting of June 16, 2025**

**Background/History:**

The subject property is a residential dwelling at 5116 Sargent Street, at the southeast corner of South Avenue and Sargent Street in Ward 3. The property spans approximately 0.208+/-/- acres and is currently zoned RS (Single-Family Residential District). According to Clayton County property records, the site contains a two-bedroom, one-bath, ranch-style single-family home. However, a visual inspection reveals that the structure now appears to be a two-story home, despite no recorded permits or documentation indicating that a second level was added. Surrounding properties to the north, south, east, and west are also zoned for single-family residential use, and the applicant is requesting to rezone the property to RT (Two-Family Residential District) to permit the use of the home as a two-family dwelling (duplex).

13. **Council Discussion to Censure Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA, for Unprofessional Conduct-**  
Councilmember Gutierrez, Ward 3

**Background/History:**

Mayor Butler read Councilmember Gutierrez's request to censure Mayor Butler for the record.

"There will be a motion for the Forest Park City Council to formally censure Mayor Angeline Butler for conduct that falls short of the standards of professionalism, civility, and accountability required of elected officials. Statement of facts, on May 5, 2025, Mayor Butler issued a veto addressed to the city council and citizens of Forest Park. The document contained the profane phrase "F- - - YOU" directed toward councilmembers and, by extension, the public. Such language in an official government communication is both unprofessional and unprecedented. It compromises the dignity of the mayoral office, and it erodes public confidence in our leadership. When questioned about the statement and at a subsequent public meeting, Mayor Butler affirmed the mark without apology or clarification. Basis for the censure: Mayor Butler's conduct violates core principles of the city's code of ethics, including: preserving the dignity and integrity of the office, demonstrating professionalism and respect toward others, avoiding profane and offensive language in official communications, and acting in a manner that sustains public trust. This behavior sets a poor example for how public officials should conduct themselves in service to our community. Now, the Council action requested by this motion is that the city of Forest Park City Council formally censures Mayor Angeline Butler MPA for her actions on May 5, 2025. Condemns the use of profane and offensive language in municipal communications. Calls on all elected officials to uphold the standards of professionalism, civility, and ethical governance that our community expects. In conclusion, Forest Park residents deserve better leadership grounded in respect and responsibility. This censure affirms our Council's commitment to maintaining the integrity of public office and ensuring that professional conduct remains the standard for all elected officials."

**Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:**

**Councilmember Gutierrez** thanked the Mayor for reading the lengthy statement and acknowledged her strong reading ability. He expressed that he was unaware of the message in the Mayor's veto and had not received any follow-up communication. As a result, he stated that he does not find the situation appropriate and intends to initiate a censure, emphasizing his desire for the matter to be documented publicly and in writing.

While noting that he respects the Mayor's right to stand by the veto, Councilmember Gutierrez voiced concern over the nature of the message and stated that he expected a higher standard of conduct. Specifically, he referenced the Mayor's involvement in programs such as a children's reading club. He expressed that the tone of the veto message was inconsistent with his expectations for the office of Mayor.

**Councilmember Gutierrez** concluded that he wanted his position formally entered into the record.

**Councilmember James** stated that she would not be voting in favor of the proposed censure. She explained that, generally, when a mayor issues a veto, it is directed to the governing body, not the public. The governing body members then can overturn the veto at the second council meeting following its issuance, should they choose to do so. She noted that when she initially read the Mayor's veto, she did not immediately notice the specific comment, describing the language as somewhat cryptic, likening it to solving a crossword puzzle, as Councilwoman Gunn had also observed.

**Councilmember James** acknowledged that while there may be concerns regarding the content of the veto message, she believes other instances involving elected officials were more troubling than the comment. Based on this perspective, she said she would not support the censure.

**Councilmember Gunn** clarified that her support for the proposed censure was not about the Mayor's veto but rather the message's public nature and content. She noted that such matters are typically handled in executive session, but since the comment was made publicly, she felt it was appropriate to address it publicly. She emphasized that this issue was about character, conduct, and integrity as elected officials and stressed the importance of accountability and professionalism when representing the City of Forest Park. Councilmember Gunn stated that, while no one is perfect, public officials must uphold specific standards and expectations. She concluded by reaffirming her stance, encouraging her colleagues to hold each other accountable, and stressing that public service requires behavior that reflects respect, responsibility, and integrity.

**Councilmember Akins-Wells** agreed with the comments made by Councilmember Gunn and Councilmember Gutierrez regarding the importance of accountability and integrity in public office. She emphasized that elected officials represent the people and must uphold standards of conduct, regardless of personal affiliations or positions. She expressed concern that accountability is often expected selectively and stated that such inconsistency reflects poorly on those who excuse inappropriate behavior. Referring to the Mayor's message, she asserted that if any elected official, including the Mayor, uses language such as "FU" in communication to fellow governing body members, it is inappropriate and disrespectful to those they were elected to serve. Councilmember Akins-Wells concluded by reaffirming her support for Councilmember Gutierrez's pursuit of a censure and emphasized that accountability must apply equally to all who hold public office.

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

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Butler adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm.

**In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring meeting accommodation should notify the City Clerk's Office at 404-366-4720 at least 24 hours before the meeting.**