



CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, October 21, 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 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 pm.

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		✓
Vacant	Council Member, Ward 2		✓
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		✓
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

John Wiggins, Finance Director; Jeremi Patterson, Deputy Finance Director; Talisa Adams, Procurement Officer; Shalonda Brown, HR Director; Diane Lewis, Deputy HR Director; James Shelby, Project Manager; Nigel Watley, Interim Public Works Director; Latosha Clemons, Fire Chief; David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief; David Hickson, IT; Derry Walker, Code Enforcement; Marsellas Williams, Economic Director; Dorothy Roper-Jackson, Court Director; Nicole Dozier, PCD Director; Pauline Warrior, Chief of Staff; Tarik Maxwell, Recreation and Leisure Director; Michelle Hood, Deputy City Clerk; and Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney.

ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to adopt the consent agenda as printed.

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

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion passed.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was moved to amend the agenda to remove item #7-Council Discussion on the City of Forest Park Financial Policies.

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

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA: There was no discussion on these items.

1. **Council Discussion for Vehicle Exhaust Removal System for Fire Stations 1 & 2 - Fire & EMS Department**

Background/History:

In January 2022, City Council approved the Forest Park Fire Department to accept an awarded grant for the purchase of a Vehicle Exhaust Removal System for 2 of our Fire Stations in the amount of \$173,871.81 with the City's match being 10% equaling \$17,387.19. The total amount of the system was quoted by SafeAir Corporation at \$191,259 in 2023. However, upon completion of the work the cost increased to a total cost of \$202,097. This increased the City's obligation by \$10,838.00.

Once the city receives the AFG grant funds, we will amend the budget to transfer \$173,871.81 to general funds and pay it using budget line item 100-61-3510-53-1106. The remaining balance, \$10,838.00, will also be paid using budget line item 100-61-3510-53-1106.

2. **Council Discussion on the Renaming of the Trade Specialist Position to Building Maintenance Technician– Public Works/ Human Resources**

Background/History:

The Building Maintenance Division within the Public Works Department handles the maintenance of systems and infrastructure across City buildings. Their work includes tasks such as:

- Carpentry: Fabricating, repairing, and installing items like shelves, doors, and windows.
- Plumbing: Repairing or replacing faucets, valves, sinks, and unblocking drains.
- Painting and Electrical: Performing electrical repairs, painting, and masonry work.

The current job title, "Trade Specialist," does not clearly describe these duties, especially for external applicants. The department proposes renaming the position to "Building Maintenance Technician" to better reflect the responsibilities and attract more qualified applicants. Staff believe this change will provide clarity about the role and help fill vacant positions with a broader and more qualified pool of candidates.

If approved, the department will adopt the title change and update all related documents, signage, and communication materials accordingly.

NEW BUSINESS:

3. **Council Discussion on a Partnership with Clayton State for Continuing & Professional Education** – Executive Offices & Human Resources

Background/History:

The Executive Offices seeks approval for a strategic partnership between the City of Forest Park and Clayton State University's Continuing & Professional Education (CPE) program. This collaboration will provide targeted professional development opportunities for our employees in key areas such as Microsoft Office, business writing, customer service, and professional etiquette. This initiative aligns with the **Operational Efficiency (O)** pillar of the **ONE Forest Park** program, ensuring that our workforce remains skilled, competent, and equipped to serve the citizens of Forest Park effectively.

City Manager Clark - noted that staff is seeking proposed partnership with Clayton State University's Continuing and Professional Education Program which will provide professional development opportunities in key areas such as Microsoft Office, business writing and customer service. Mr. Clark Jr. stated the cost of the program is \$7,500 for 18 hours of training, with space for up to 25 employees.

HR Ms. Brown- emphasized the importance of customer service and the need for ongoing training and skills development.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James-expressed she believes it is greatly needed.

Councilmember Gutierrez-inquired if the elected officials could participate. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that they could if there is enough space in the classroom.

City Manager Clark mentioned that there would be a graduation ceremony held for those who receive certificates from Clayton State University.

4. **Council Discussion on the Presentation from Walking in Authority Teen Council-** Councilwoman Akins-Wells, Ward 4

Background/History:

The **Walking in Authority Teen Council (formerly the Forest Park Teen Council)** was founded in 2008 by Mayor Pro-Tem Sparkle K. Adams with a group of students from Forest Park and became fully active in 2009. It was formed to engage teens ages 13-19 from local schools, with elections held for positions like Teen Mayor, Councilperson, City Manager, and City Attorney. Since then, the council has been involved in various community activities, including clean-ups, mock trials, voter registration drives, and leadership training.

Sparkle Adams is present to provide an overview of the Walking in Authority Teen Council.

Sparkle Adams, WIATC Founder- explained that the Walking in Authority Teen Council was founded by herself, as Mayor Pro Tem in 2008 with a group of students from Forest Park and became fully active

in 2009. Ms. Adams noted that the youth council was formed to engage teens aged 13-19 from local schools, with elections held for positions like teen mayor, council person, city manager, and city attorney. They also have been involved in various community activities over the years, including cleanups, trail walks, voter registration drives, and leadership training. Ms. Adams also included that the youth council currently has a memorandum of agreement (MOU) with the city of Morrow and serves as their youth council but would like to ramp up their presence in the city of Forest Park and serve as the official youth council for Forest Park.

Julie Lee, WIATC Youth Council President and the first vice president, Yarek Pereg- spoke about the council's focus on civic engagement, diversity, and leadership development, and how it has positively impacted their personal growth.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Mayor Butler- expressed her adoration for WIATC; she also mentioned how the youth council has represented Forest Park well and has won some very prestigious awards at conferences out of state. Mayor Butler also mentioned that the youth council has been involved with her own Leadership Clayton group, and how the leadership class ended up using the Walking in Authority council for their projects. Mayor Butler wholeheartedly commended the youth council for all that they have done and for what they instill in the next generation of leaders.

Mayor Butler- asked Ms. Adams to clarify exactly what the youth council was requesting.

Ms. Adams- stated that they are requesting to have a line-item budgeted for \$10,000 for the youth council to help cover expenses for the Nation League of Cities Conference that's attended annually, youth symposiums, apparel, etc.

City Manager Clark noted that his recommendation if the council decides to move forward, is to allow staff to work on creating or endorsing a council under the city. He saw there once was a line-item budget for a youth council, which has since been combined with the events budget for each ward, and inquired with the city attorney on how it would work with a nonprofit organization.

City Attorney, Ms. Matricardi- noted that typically the city would receive some service in return, such as holding meetings and participating in activities like the "Keep Forest Park Beautiful" cleanup or other community events, including volunteering at events like the State of the City. Ms. Matricardi noted that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) could be created to outline the relationship in exchange for the budgetary donation.

City Manager Clark suggested, as a consideration, whether it would be easier if the board formally adopted the group as the Forest Park Youth Council. Doing so could potentially eliminate some of the other barriers. This approach would allow for the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding, recognizing the group as part of the Forest Park City Council's youth government, which is also endorsed by the Georgia Municipal Association.

Ms. Adams- included that the WIATC has an MOU with the City of Morrow.

Councilmember Gutierrez- noted being extremely impressed with the WIATC and stated that he has seen them at various events throughout the city and follows their social media pages. Councilmember Gutierrez also said that seeing the young adults from Forest Park involved in the council fills him with

pride. He mentioned that he would not be opposed to the city officially endorsing the WIATC as the city's youth council. He inquired if they were requesting the city to fund their activities or approve them as the official city youth council.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- mentioned that when she first got into office, the youth council was a big thing, and she has been familiar with their work. She also expressed that she's all about the kids and the future, not just what the kids can do for the city, but also what the city can do for them. Councilmember Akins-Wells stated that some of the students can teach the council how to be better leaders, just by listening to them and thanked the council members for being there and giving the council a clear understanding of what they are asking for.

Councilmember Akins-Wells-inquired about the number of teens normally on the board. Ms. Adams noted that the board currently has 37 kids, and they would like to get at least 10 kids from each school to participate.

City Manager Clark noted that staff will create an MOU.

5. **Council Discussion of the Comprehensive Classification Analysis & Compensation Study- Human Resources**

Background/History:

As part of the strategic objectives established during the FY '23 Budget Cycle, the Governing Body endorsed a contract with Gallagher for an in-depth Comprehensive Classification Analysis and Compensation Study. Our dedicated staff has engaged in close collaboration with the contractor to ensure that our wage and compensation framework is not only equitable but also strategically designed to cultivate a more progressive approach to attracting and retaining exceptional talent within the City of Forest Park. We are now prepared to present the findings of this study for consideration by the Governing Body.

Ms. Beverly Moultrie, a representative from Gallagher- gave a brief overview of the comprehensive classification analysis and comprehensive study. Ms. Moultrie noted that at the time of the study, the city had about 265 employees involved with 78 different job titles across the city. Ms. Moultrie stated that Gallagher's methodology was to review job descriptions and classifications to ensure alignment with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA); they then collected data from various public survey sources to benchmark the city's compensation against the market. She also noted that they used the World at Work compensation guidelines to ensure proper job matching and data aging.

Ms. Moultrie- noted that Gallagher's findings were: Overall, the city's current base salaries are 2.6% above the 50th percentile of the market, indicating they are highly competitive. However, some individual positions were likely or significantly misaligned with the market. Ms. Moultrie noted that the recommendations are to adjust the pay scales for general employees, fire, and police to align with the living wage for Clayton County, which is \$23.46 per hour; Smooth the pay grade progressions and increase the range spreads to allow for better growth; and provide time and position adjustments of 2% per year for employees in their current roles.

Ms. Moultrie- stated that bringing all employees to the minimum of the new pay scales would cost approximately \$1.9 million.; and the additional 2% time and position adjustments would cost around \$387,000 for 999 employees. Ms. Moultrie concluded that Gallagher recommends annual reviews of

market trends to adjust salary structures accordingly and to conduct a comprehensive study every 3-5 years to ensure a continued market alignment.

City Manager Clark noted that for clarity, if the city were to adjust the minimum salary from \$17.00 an hour to \$23.46 an hour, it would be to ensure that everybody moves along on the scale appropriately.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James- stated that she hopes the young adults from WIATC are paying close attention to understand that working in government can start you out with \$23+ an hour and great benefits. She encouraged them to start out in government. She also expressed her excitement for the employees.

Councilmember Gutierrez- thanked the HR department and Mr. Clark Jr. for putting this together, and he is excited for the employees.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- expressed her excitement, noting that it has been a long time coming and that employees deserve to have competitive pay.

City Manager Clark stated that this was first presented at the budget strategic retreat and asked the governing body for directions on whether if they would like to implement the recommendations starting January 1, 2025, or wait until the next budget cycle in July 2025.

Mayor Butler- noted that the on-call pay is inconsistent with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and inquired how it would impact the numbers and bring them in unison with FLSA. Ms. Moultrie noted that it does not affect the numbers; it's more about the policy. She also stated the city should ensure that the policy is aligned moving forward, as the city employs on-call pay. Ms. Moultrie noted this would ensure that the city pays people appropriately based on their FLSA status.

Mayor Butler- inquired about the recommendations from finance.

City Manager Clark noted that Mayor Butler's question focused on the source of funds for implementation. Mr. Clark Jr. explained the city couldn't act tonight and implement it next week as there's still a lot of work to do. He explained that when staff conducted the study, Ms. Brown and himself intentionally ensured it wasn't about individuals but about pay grades and salary numbers. To move forward, they would need to involve the finance department. Mr. Clark Jr. identified that the city could potentially leverage American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which must be obligated by December 31, 2024. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that the \$1 million is an annual figure. He stated that if the governing body approved it and implemented it in January 2025, the city would only pay 50% of that amount for the first year, and it could be even lower due to attrition and employee turnover.

Councilmember Akins Wells- inquired if it could be completed before January due to employees waiting for a long time.

City Manager Clark noted that was his concern and explained that when staff tried to isolate the numbers, primarily related to equity issues in salaries, it became clear that some additions had been made over time without reassessment, particularly in public safety. Mr. Clark Jr. stated that it was difficult to separate those numbers, so staff wanted to ensure things were done reasonably before moving forward. Mr. Clark Jr. included that staff could implement this, but it won't be ready in two weeks due to backend work to complete, like finalizing personal action forms and loading data into the system. Mr. Clark Jr. said December is possible if the board wants, but it's a tight timeline. He mentioned that Ms. Brown and Ms.

Moultrie are still finalizing the numbers, and staff expect to either stay the same or go down. Mr. Clark Jr. inquired with Ms. Moultrie about how much longer it would take until the final numbers by employee are ready. Ms. Moultrie note that it would take two weeks.

City Manager Clark noted that in two weeks, it would be roughly around Thanksgiving, and he is wondering how long it would take staff to get all circulated and into the ADP system.

Councilmember Akins-Wells-stated it would be something the employees could have before the holidays.

Councilmember James- agreed with trying to have it done as soon as possible and recommended the salary increase, implementing the study recommendations, and a Christmas bonus if it's not ready to be implemented before the year is out.

City Manager Clark inquired about the number of employees the city currently has, how long it would take to have everything in the system, and if staff could meet the December 1st deadline. Ms. Brown noted not by December 1st but December 15th, in time for the holidays, and the city has over 280 employees.

Councilmember James- noted that her recommendation was made in lieu of staff needing more time to get it done.

City Manager Clark explained that the Christmas bonus would be a one-time payment in addition to the employees' salaries, and the increase would be over a one-week period. Mr. Clark Jr. noted that the Christmas bonus would be more significant to employees; he stated a \$500 bonus would be \$140,000 and a \$1,000 bonus would be \$280,000. Mr. Clark Jr. recommended that if this is the recommendation of the governing body, staff would need to earmark ARPA funds, which need to be used by December 31st.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- recommended a \$1,000 Christmas bonus for employees.

Mayor Butler- inquired with Ms. Brown about a realistic timeline. Ms. Brown noted that one staffer does payroll, but all hands will be on deck to make sure everything is accurate and entered into ADP correctly.

Councilmember Gutierrez- inquired if January 1st would be better. Ms. Brown noted that it would allow staff more time.

Councilmember James- said that because the holidays are coming up, she thinks the staff is preparing something for the employees, which is a lot for staff.

City Manager Clark noted that if the governing body considers the \$1,000 bonus, it would be more than anybody increase based on implementing this on December 15th for Christmas.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- noted that if the governing body agrees to the January 1st deadline, it will allow staff to start the work now, and if it could be completed before then, that would be good, too.

City Manager Clark inquired with Mr. Wiggins about using ARPA funds and asked about the remaining balance of unobligated ARPA funds. Mr. Wiggins noted that the city currently has about \$2.1 million left to pay. He also stated that staff would need to review our obligations list to confirm if we can allocate funds for a bonus or proceed with half-year adjustments.

City Manager Clark noted that if the governing body considers this, it will need to formally approve a holiday bonus of \$X from ARPA funds. Mr. Clark Jr. pointed out that this would allow staff to review the ARPA budget and allocate funds if \$1,000 is the desired bonus amount. Once Ms. Moultrie provides the final report and job descriptions, staff will ensure we're fully prepared by January 1st. Mr. Clark Jr. stated that employees wouldn't see the first increase until the second week, as the first week covers the final December hours.

Councilmember James- inquired if full-time and part-time employees would receive the same bonus amount and noted she knew they received different amounts in the past. Mr. Clark Jr. recommends establishing two separate bonus amounts, with part-time employees required to be actively employed at the time the bonus is distributed. He also suggested setting an eligibility timeframe, ensuring bonuses are awarded only to employees with the city before a specific date. Mr. Clark Jr. explained this would prevent new employees hired just before the bonus distribution from receiving the same reward as longer-serving employees. For fairness, this date could be set as October 1st or October 21st, providing consistency in benefits for dedicated employees.

City Manager Clark stated that for clarity and consideration, the discussion has been to ratifying action on a \$1,000 Christmas bonus and implementing the wage and compensation study, which includes raising the city's minimum wage to \$23.46. Mr. Clark Jr. noted this would be a historic milestone, making ours the highest minimum wage in the community. He concluded there is a proposal for a 2% annual increase based on time in position, costing approximately \$387,000 and impacting 99 employees.

6. Council Discussion to extend the contractual agreements for On-Call Plumbing Repairs and Maintenance Services – Procurement/Public Works

Background/History:

The Department of Public Works is requesting Council's approval to extend the contractual agreements with the following two plumbing repair and maintenance contractors:

MaxAir Mechanical

The Plumbing Shop Inc., DBA Quick Action Plumbers

These contractors have been providing on-call plumbing repairs and maintenance services to the city, supplementing the Public Works Department's staff. The initial contract term was for three years, and after reviewing the performance of both firms, the Department is recommending a two-year extension to continue utilizing their services.

The extension will allow these contractors to remain on an as-needed, on-call basis to perform specific plumbing-related task orders. The Department of Public Works will maintain the option to rotate the firms or allow them to compete for various projects throughout the City of Forest Park, including services for the City's different boards.

Ms. Adams, Procurement Manager- noted that staff is requesting to extend this contract, which operates on an on-call, as-needed basis and is beneficial for emergencies like plumbing issues. Originally awarded in 2021 for a three-year term, the contract allows for a two-year extension.

Comments/Discussion from Governing Body:

Councilmember James- inquired how much the city has paid the contractors and how frequently they use them. She recommended hiring staff with plumbing experience within the city's maintenance department. Councilmember James noted that the city could handle more work in-house, reducing the need for contracts. She expressed she is not opposed to the contract extension, but I'd like to understand what we're currently paying and whether bringing in a qualified in-house employee would be more efficient.

Mr. Wattlely, Interim Public Works Director- noted that the staff does a lot of plumbing in-house; however, the major work is contracted out.

City Manager Clark inquired if the city has completed this type of work of this magnitude in-house through the building and maintenance department. Mr. Wattlely noted yes, but the issue is the aging infrastructure, which requires more extensive work.

City Manager Clark inquired about a clause in place. Ms. Matricardi noted that, due to state law, it must be a year-to-year contract and can be subject to automatic renewal. However, the governing body could do one (1) year with automatic renewal or approval for one (1) year.

Councilmember Gutierrez- asked how the process works since the city works with two companies. Do they bid on each job at a fixed rate, or does the city alternate between them on a rotational basis? Mr. Wattlely noted that staff take turns back and forth. But if it's a significant contract, staff has them bid against each other.

Councilmember Akins-Wells- asked how much the city has paid the contractors within the last three (3) years. Mr. Wattlely noted that he would provide the governing body with the numbers. Mr. Clark Jr. included that staff would pull the reports and provide them with the numbers before being ratified.

Councilmember Gutierrez- asked if it would be one year, not two years. Ms. Matricardi noted that a motion should say, "a motion to approve for one year subject to an automatic renewal of a one (1) year." Councilmember Gutierrez expressed that he feels better with a one (1) year renewal. Ms. Matricardi noted that it's the will of the governing body, and they can decide not to do an automatic renewal and just a one (1) year renewal.

City Manager Clark suggested ending the work session meeting and hearing the Kimberly Horne presentation during the regular session meeting.

It was moved to move Item #8- Council Discussion on the Presentation by Kimley Horn for Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study Update to the regular session meeting.

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

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion passed.

7. **Council Discussion on the City of Forest Park Financial Policies**-Finance Department-**This item was removed from the agenda**

Background/History:

Financial policies provide written guidance for how the City of Forest Park officials and staff should approach fiscal issues and core financial areas. To continue a healthy financial support to the Citizens of Forest Park for services and infrastructure maintenance, the financial polices ensures accountability, minimize confusion on the direction to follow, protects the City, and helps determine the City's fiscal stability.

8. **Council Discussion on the Presentation by Kimley Horn for Pedestrian Bridge Feasibility Study Update**-Planning and Community Development Department- **This item was heard during the Regular Session Meeting.**

Background/History:

Kimley Horn has been working to complete a feasibility study for the Forest Park Pedestrian Bridge. Per the timeline provided to staff by Kimley Horn, the draft feasibility study report is nearing completion, and they would like to share the progress made through stakeholder interviews, visioning sessions, pop ups, open house and online engagement.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Butler ended the work session meeting at 7:09pm.

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.