



**CITY OF FOREST PARK MAYOR & COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION**

Monday, June 21, 2021, at 7:00 PM
Council Chambers

Website: www.forestparkga.gov
Phone Number: (404) 366.1555

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

MINUTES

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells
The Honorable Allan Mears

Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager
S. Diane White, City Clerk
Mike Williams, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: The meeting was called to order at 7:18pm by Mayor Butler.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE: Invocation and Pledge was given by Pastor Clinksdale.

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established.

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

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Darquita Williams, Interim Finance Director; Bruce Abraham, Director Economic Development, Bobby Jinks, Director Public Works, Tarik Maxwell, Director of Parks and Recreation, Nathaniel Clark, Police Chief, and David Halcome, Deputy Fire Chief

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Councilmember Gutierrez would like to present a proclamation recognizing June as LGBTQ Month

Councilmember Gutierrez read the proclamation recognizing June as LGBTQ month.

PUBLIC HEARING:

2. Council Approval of Second Reading and Adoption of FY22 Fiscal Budget Ordinance - Interim Finance Director Darquita Williams

It was motioned to open the Public Hearing for the FY22 Budget

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

There were two (2) speakers for the Budget Hearing:

Lawanda Folami – I am here on behalf of the concerned citizens who could not be here for the budget and to talk about the meeting not being live streamed for all citizens to hear about the budget.

Felicia Davis – I do not fully understand the budget and think that you should give the citizens more time to review the budget and ask their questions.

It was motioned to close the Public Hearing for the FY22 Budget

Motion made by Councilmember Akins-Wells, Seconded by Councilmember James.

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

Comments by the governing body:

Councilmember Gutierrez – On Page 4, the Legislative Budget what is the line item ‘Men’s Business Event’?

Mayor Butler – Started in 2019, I have had an women’s event called Woman of Worth (W.O.W.), the genesis of the event was to recognize all the women in Forest Park that have been doing phenomenal things in and outside the city but had been recognized everywhere except in the city. COVID interrupted the 2020 women’s event and almost interrupted the 2021 event, until a series events that happened in April, so I was moved to have this event. It was like a confirmation to have it and then I found out that April was “Sexual Assault” month, so the theme for this year’s event was “From Victim to Survivor to Thriver”. I assembled a panel of women to speak on not just trauma but emphasize also healing. That event was dynamic, and it was so impactful that the conversation came up that we need to have one for men and that they too suffer from trauma, need to be supported and know they can be empowered and have a safe space to speak freely on these conversations. So that where the Men’s Event came from, and I want to

have a part 3 event where we bring together men and women together to have a holistic conversation about other facets for our lives that impact the family unit. Everyone knows that I am a daddy's girl and I know how important the male is to our families, so if there is anything we can do to impact and empower them, is something I felt compelled to do because of the success of the women's event. The budget is high because I am aiming for 100 men to attend, so other men can pour into them, women have an abundance of resources, but you do not see a lot for men.

Councilmember James – Also on page 4, in the future, what I would like to be provided with the revenues and expenses for each event Council has, especially when it comes to the general fund. So, there are three (3) new items added to the Legislative Budget, Men's event, Food Truck Friday, and Wellness with Wells. I would like to know where the money will be spent, why are the budget at that figure, what is the expected cost for each event and I do not agree with naming the event in the name of a councilmember, so I would like to remove the name of "Wellness with Wells" and replace it with something else. Can each councilmember and mayor speak on their event.

Mayor Butler – The Men's Event cost was based on what was spent on the Women's event. I have done well in getting donations, and Rumors has donated \$1,000 for the Men's event. Food is the biggest cost, there is décor, giveaways, and awards. I want to have the same amount of detail and attention that I gave to the women's event is equally given to the men.

Councilmember Gutierrez – For my Food Truck Friday, I recently secured a porta potty and a hand sanitizing station which cost \$250 each month; the DJ has been covered through Parks & Leisure, but that will be moved from Parks & Leisure, which is \$200 per month.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I will speak to the name of Wellness with Wells, the name can be change, I do not have a problem it. The event will still be called Wellness with Wells because that is what it is. As for my events, Wellness with Wells event is free to the public as all the events are. The only expense is the instructor. Fun Friday event, we pay for DJs, entertainment, sound production, bounce houses, the money that comes from vendors (this has been in the news media), and the VIP tables go back into the Fun Friday event, so the event is helping with the funds going back into the event. I do have a question, Attorney Williams, about the name, again I will ask, is it unethical to have a council person's name attached with an event?

Attorney Williams – It is not, there is no rule in the charter or ordinances that say you cannot do it but is a decision of the council.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Thank you, that is all I wanted to know. The events that I and the city do, benefits the entire city, it is not saying it is for this group and not this group of people, it is for the entire community, and it is a city sponsored event. I think when we are asking questions about what elected officials are doing as for as events, we need to consider that. Is it open to the public, how is the citizens of Forest Park benefiting from it, instead of one person benefiting from it? I was not aware of the Women of Worth thing was going on, not aware to the Men's Business event, they are great ideas, but how do they benefit the entire community. We should be trying to bring the entire community together and have events that bring the community together and not just events that may us look good.

Mayor Butler – They are opened to the public and are posted on the city's website like all other events.

Councilmember James – So that I am clear, the \$7,000 is for the cost for the instructor for the year?

Councilmember Wells – yes

Councilmember Gutierrez – I want to add Asian Heritage Month in May, I do not know what this would like, but we have a big Asian community here where we could reach out to them and host a celebration. Also adding the Panther's in Action Teen Committee and to add a Senior Committee, to get the input of public. My idea was they would meet quarterly to get more public involvement, where these committees would be the voice of the Teens and Seniors. Because of our Teen Council, we have some projects that was accomplished this year. Each elected officials dominate someone their community would go a long way in linking us to the public.

Councilmember James – We can always amend the budget to add items, I think it will task staff to redo the numbers. I would recommend that we consider making changes to the budget as it is right now to try to get approved and then amend it to add additional items, so we can meet the required deadline.

Councilmember Gutierrez – So, we would approve today and....

Councilmember James – We will not be approved today, because we will have another meeting.

Councilmember Wells – I would like to go back to the instructor for Wellness with Wells being paid \$7,000, I want to correct my statement. We provide water, Gatorade, healthy snacks for the event, so that is included as well.

Councilmember Wells – The proposed positions for Executive Offices and Police Departments, with a city of 19,000, and this conversation came up before, we do not need a Deputy City Manager, we have a City Manager that we pay \$127K, so the city is not big enough to have a Deputy. Just like it is not big enough to have a Public Safety Director. And on the organizational chart, they are listed on the same level, how can you have everyone on the same level? The City Manager proposed Deputy City Manager and Public Information Officer all on the same level, that is unheard of. (Mayor Butler, it is saying they report to the City Manager) Okay, so again, that's \$200K in salaries, that money can go somewhere else. There are so many other things we could be doing with \$200k, I do not think those positions are needed. In the Police Department, they are asking for CALEA accreditation coordinator, we just celebrated that and talked about what was done, we did not have a coordinator so, I do not know why we need one now, that is \$120K that can be saved; also asking for a grant administrator, well we have Mrs. Gardiner that is the grant writer for the city. Chief Clark can answer why you need your own grant writer for your department when we have one already. I want you to be considerate of the people's money and if we do not need the positions, we should not be budgeting for them. Again, the city has 19,000 residents, and we do not need a deputy in every department, we have directors that should be doing their jobs, no need for a deputy in every single department for a city this small.

City Manager – Thank you, I would like to respond to the two proposed positions in the Executive offices. When a position is proposed does not mean it will be filled. The Deputy City Manager does exist, and I am asking the city to fund it (CM Wells, yes, I am talking about getting rid of the position, we do not need one) (Mayor Butler, let him finish, please). If do not fill the position, the money can always be reallocated too somewhere else. At this point in time, do I feel that we need a Deputy City Manager, no; but I am asking the city to fund the position as we move forward, because we are talking about massive expansion of the city. CM Wells has mentioned to me about Parks and Recreation expanding, we are talking about the Courts expansion next year, we are talking about some major things going on next year and depending on the operation of the city, the span of control of one person over an entire city can get convoluted and a person can lose focus. My goal is to ensure that we have the proper funding in case the position comes up and we needed. It does not say I am that filling the Deputy City Manager's position. With the Public Information Officer's (PIO) position, is proposed due to all the growth and phenomenal things going on. In the City of Forest Park, we need someone that will be able to tell the City's story, to make sure that all the City's

information is being disseminated correctly, not just individual Ward information, but all the city's information. With all the growth, the things at Ft. Gillem, and the positive things happening in the city, we need a PIO to put that information out and manage it over all platforms, social media, Instagram, and tweeter. We do not have someone in-house that can manage these things appropriately, because we still have state law, public information and all these things that must be maintained as well. So, that is why I am proposing these two positions.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Since the duties of yourself and the Deputy City Manager, if that position gets filled; first of all if it is needed, we can bring it up when it is needed, if it is not needed, we do not have to budget for it; secondly, I am all about the city's funds, just like others, so since the job duties will be split, will the salaries be split, are you going to give some of your money back to help fund that position, because we do not need two people, basically doing the same thing and getting paid \$100k plus.

Chief Clark – I would like to thank CM Wells for that question. Let us address the accreditation manager, first, back in March we overcame a major milestone. We were granted, for the first time in this city's history, a four-year award accreditation, the most prestigious award for our city. The CALEA award is an on-going process and cannot be done overnight. When I took over as chief, we were a little lacking; worked around the clock, realigned personnel for about seven (7) months to make this happen. We must continue daily to ensure that all the supporting documents are downloaded to receive our next CALEA process in four years, so position is greatly needed if we want to keep the process intact. Regarding the grant writer, Mrs. Gardiner is doing an excellent job, but she is only one person. The grant process especially for law enforcement, starts in March and ends in September. So, we want someone that is designated to public safety to research and apply for grants and ensure that we are meeting the standards, state and federal to continue to receive grants.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Your salary is about \$120k, so with the accreditation manager will they come in making the same amount as the chief?

Chief Clark – The salary for the accreditation manager is not \$120k, that figure is for both the accreditation manager and the grants coordinator.

Councilmember James – I want to say to the public, we did have a budget meeting where we heard from each department heads on their wish list for the budget. I do not want you to think this is new for us looking at this. We did approve the Deputy City Manager, but not funded, this is not a new item, just new to be included in this budget. We are not using the city's money frivolously, just making sure everything line-up correctly.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I want to go back to Personnel's organization chart; I know that this was spoken about when Mrs. Lewis and when we had the budget retreat. But this goes back to what I was saying about the Executive Office, and I know Chief Clark has spoken on this too in the past as far as being top heavy. We are not a city big enough to be top heavy, so, in this department, I love Ms. Lewis, I think she does an amazing job, but why is a Deputy Director needed in HR? We have a director, who is Ms. Brown, currently Ms. Lewis deals with the benefits. So, we are going to bump her up to Deputy Director of HR, we have Kim Trawick who is the HR Generalist, then there are three (3) entry level positions, for a total of six (6) employees. Why do we need a Director and a Deputy Director to supervise three entry level employees, I do not understand and maybe someone can explain it? It is the same as the Executive Office, they have a few more employees, and I do not feel there needs to be a Deputy City Manager. I am trying to understand why we need to be so top heavy, if anything we need to be hiring more entry level staff to help with the workload, if there is one. I just do not understand with a city this size having all these Deputy

Directors in these small departments. (CM Gutierrez – is it a salary adjustment or just a name change?) Even if it is a name change, why? It is not needed.

Shalonda Brown, HR Director – Thank you for the question. The reason I am asking for an Assistant Director in HR, according to the information from Mauldin & Jenkins as far as what we are not doing and things we need to do, is why we need the position. Yes, we have three (3) HR assistants and according with my meetings with the auditor there are a lot of things HR has not been doing in years pass and we are going to be doing them now. We do need more help as far as administering the supervision of that, and I can only do so much. So, yes if the position is approved, Ms. Lewis will get a pay increase, and the position is needed. When you are talking about employee recognition, other initiatives for employees it will take more than myself to oversee the department. HR is the only department that does not have a deputy director.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Can you explain to the citizens what the HR Generalist do?

Ms. Brown – Yes, I can. Let me start at the bottom. HR Assistant had been frozen for years; this position was unfrozen by the previous City Manager. At the bottom, we have archives that we have to deal with, we have scanning the files and the department has never been in compliance, so we are doing things that we never had to do in the past. The HR Generalist position that I ask to be approved last year, that position also keeps us in compliance. So that what that job does, even with Ms. Lewis being Deputy Director, she will still be over benefits; Ms. Trawick does FMLA, Worker's Comp and other areas; I do employee hearings with Department of Labor, attend court for employee hearings, so a deputy director is greatly needed in HR.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – With Ms. Trawick doing what she does, do the others due the same job or different duties assigned?

Ms. Brown – Being that the department was not in compliance, and I am having to re-access the department, so now the HR assistants are doing the same thing. Marquis is handling the recruitment (CivicHR) piece, which is a platform in bought in last year; the other two are working on scanning documents. But according to the auditor, there are a lot of things that we are still lacking, so, I am going to specific the different duties that the HR assistants will be doing. The organizational chart, that Ms. Lewis presented, is simply to show that she would be the Deputy Director, all employees report to me.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Ms. Brown, would you say that you need more help?

Ms. Brown – No, I do not.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – Mr. Jinks, in the past your department needed a lot of help, and positions were not being filled, what is the status in Public Works?

Bobby Jinks, Public Works Director – We have mailed out letters to all the courts to let them know we are accepting community service workers; all the positions that were vacant are still vacant, all the ones we added are still vacant, we have only filled two positions and they have left for other jobs. We are working as fast and as hard as we can and we are in the same position as last year, but we are pushing forward at 100%.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I just want to ask, because I know some want to add to your plate and I want to make sure you had the staff for the added things. Do you have a system for hiring, I know it is on the website, but do you have designated to focus on hiring/recruiting?

Mr. Jinks – It all goes through HR, where they post it in different locations and it comes to me via email to review the applications, where I distribute to the divisions for review of applications, set interviews with a panel of three, results given to me and HR.

Councilmember James – Director Jinks, when we had the budget retreat, we spoke about possibility having those entry level positions for grass cutting etc., have you considered that?

Mr. Jinks – Supervisors are reviewing, and we only have one entry level position opened. We have revised our organizational chart from last year and I removed several operators, putting in more entry level positions, but I cannot afford removing any more skilled help.

Mayor Butler – Mr. Jinks, do you have an apprenticeship program?

Mr. Jinks – No, we do not.

Mayor Butler – Dr. Cooper, I know a lot of the budget is focusing on additional staffing needed for the departments, but what if there are positions that they do not need? Are they allowed to cut?

Dr. Cooper – If there are positions that are not needed definitely. Historically, if the City of Forest Park has operated very lean and with the number of items that we are taking on, we are trying to find efficiencies by looking at computer technology and bringing on different things like payroll, we are still doing it manually. So, we are looking at efficiencies that we be able to open employees' time, open the positions where they can do other things, but right now a lot of positions are bogged down with antiquated systems and process.

Dr. Cooper – When do you want to have the next budget meeting?

Mayor Butler – It has been agreed that the next special called budget meeting to include public comments will be Fri., June 25th at 5:00pm.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes) There were six (6) speakers:

Dianne Lunsford – I would like to say does Clark have a city vehicle where he can drive to and from work? if so, why does he think he is more important than our city employees who are on call 24/7 that is a thorn in my side. Speaking of Clark, I truly believe he is solely responsible for the toxic environment that has left our police department and fire department understaffed. He is dead weight I agree with you Ms. Wells that he costs this city money. And as I said before our city is not big enough for public safety officer nor a public safety building. We have other things that we can spend our money on better and speaking of CALEA, I know you spoke to me the other day about the four years but this big historical event we have received CALEA every time that we applied for it, so you did not do such a great thing. I am sorry and Officer Ray Cochran was the one that did the CALEA stuff before and he kept it up to date. I do not see why we would have to have someone, a special person to have to do that CALEA as well because Ray Cochran did it all. City Councilmen, I do not see why she cannot take on other duties without getting a raise. I also wanted to piggyback on Miss James' signage thing, I did not know she was going to speak on it, Ms. Wells, but I had been approached by 4 different people wondering if you had changed wards because they felt like you had. I am sorry it was a campaign sign, but I am happy to know that you will be working on that and hopefully will work for a peaceful resolution. As far as the budget, I pray that Clark is not getting a raise, I pray that he would be at zero and I hope you have a cap on Mr. Williams' salary too, 15 thousand dollars a month is quite a good salary and I think it needs to be capped.

Clifford Pellegrini – This is my first time back returning to a meeting so hello! on that note, I am disappointed that the live feeds will no longer be happening. I believe stopping the live feeds is a mistake because Covid has not ended,

people are still dying. Georgia has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the nation, so I think people with compromised immunity issues are not returning to normal in public spaces yet also, I think the city spent a considerable amount of money to enhance their technology from a year ago to where we are now. and that is a good thing, you all made some great improvements but why would you stop now or ever? preferably there would be a live stream for every meeting and that meeting saved to a platform like YouTube for people to view at any time. I ask the council to facilitate the community continuance to receive this valuable resource. Item Two: I want to say how much the community has enjoyed events sponsored by some council members. I have heard nothing but positive feedback from anyone who has attended. I have attended and had great times at many of these events. So, I was shocked to see anonymous criticism from a local news source. is discouraging seeing our most active council members having to defend themselves based on anonymous allegations. do we not have systems in place or people in charge of overseeing appropriate guidelines? It is a problem when the voice of a few is Amplified over the voices of the majority. I hope the city will continue hosting events that continue to lift our community in a positive and joyful light that reflects the soul of the city of Forest Park. I also want to add that these signs have been placed at the Same locations for as long as I can remember the Christmas parade, Fall Festival signs, the Spring into Spring signs, at the same right of ways so it makes me think hmmm. Lastly, I am wondering about the dismissal the fire chief occurred and I am wondering where we at are now. Is there another search under way? Thank you.

Lawanda Folami – I am just going to be honest; this is ridiculous. It comes a time you just got to hit the gadget, this is just too long I am going to verbally say it because people behind me are saying that, when are you going to hit the target and call the meeting. I am looking at because you went over the budget and thank you all for giving us the opportunity to review the budget. So, I am going to say that I also got a lot of texts about the zoom not being available since we have opened for the public but some of the older people, who you may have called cannot come because of their immune system and they would like to see it on Zoom. I do not know if you all have realized that when you enter the doors you still have people who is no longer a part of this Administration on the door. I was on your website, and I noticed that whomever the clerk was copied from another state exactly what on our website with their phone number. so, Mr. coop if you have some time get with your clerk and please check the website. So, I am going to yield my time because this is the first time, I can say I am tired. This has been a hell of a meeting. God bless you.

Zack Parker – It has been a long meeting like Dr. Folami said, I do not tend to agree with Cliff or Dr. Folami, but this continues to be quite a circus. I write things down because I tend to get distracted or anxious speaking about it. I do not think I am going to read what I wrote, I read it last time. I just do not think anything is ever going to be done about it and its concerning. I do not expect the council or mayor to fully commit to wrong doings but let us show compassion. be really worried about the issue and do not say you are worried about the issue after I have spoken about it several times. Send me an email three weeks later saying you really concerned about it why was the email three weeks late? I have had a police officer outside of my house in the middle of the night shining a spotlight into my cul de sac getting out his vehicle in front of my home doing the same thing, shining the spotlight and there has been no call placed to the police about my home or my area. Should not have been there. I could have been within my full rights to walk out of my house with my AR15 and ask him what he was doing. why would I do that, he is there, he is a city official, and he has a badge and a gun & is outside of my house for no reason. This is not the first time that something like this has happened to me. something else happened to me right outside those doors there. I believe that that police officer was called there to intimidate me and keep me from speaking and to keep me from asking questions. it continues to happen; nothing is done about it. I continue to feel violated and harassed by the police officers here and its real to me. Just because you all do not want to believe it does not make it go away for me. That police officer pulled into my cul de sac three hours before this meeting when I have not seen a police officer in my neighborhood for weeks. Is it related? maybe, maybe not but I worry about these things consistently due to what has been done with me here in this city, in this building and I still come back. because I should not have to feel like this in the city that I own a house and I would like to be involved in the community but when I am treated like this and ignored, it is crazy. and this here tonight was completely ridiculous. We have a meeting that should take a while and well, I do not know. Something must be done. This city is broken, I have no confidence in this city. Thank you.

Felicia Davis – I love the city, I have plenty of confidence and I think we are getting better, slowly but we are. Love the events, without the signs I would miss them all. the signs help me know that their happening and I am only around the corner from the park. I want to suggest two things I have suggested previously. once, a forest park drill team. I am good reporting we have a micro drill team, one in 4 people went into the military after quite a bit of tutoring. Over the years, no young people who participate have gone to get criminal records or have children out of wedlock, at least before 21. It did take a lot of tutoring past high school. So that is one. Two sister cities, forest park has two sister cities. A resolution previously that included a city in Ghana and one in Senegal. Morehouse provided 15 thousand to our city in Ghana and another 35 hundred to Senegal. But the cities never got a letter saying they are a sister city, so I mention that. Then on the items I think no to the deputy, we do not need to budget it. Yes, to the public information officer, yes to the police brands writer. there is a lot of money out there, so we do need more grants writing capacity. I still have a minute, I can sing, not I am not going to do that. The accreditation manager is iffy but I kind of lean that way in combining them into one.

Lois Wright – I first signed up to commend Dr. Wells for the event that was Friday. everybody was glad to be out we have been locked in with a pandemic then we have a good concert which brought the whole city together. And I would not say community because we got Ward's one through five, residents from all those Wards were in attendance and everybody really enjoyed themselves. So that that is what I come to really commend you on for putting these projects, putting these events together because we do need a time that we can let her hair down and enjoy ourselves and fellowship with one another. And then on the sign is that is so crazy Councilwoman James really? Okay, so you all have an issue on signage, what about during elections? You keep signs out the two three four months nobody says nothing about that that so when you go change your signage remember you got an election coming up and you going, are you going to change the signage for 'you can't put out signs because each one of you elected officials have your big signs and then your yard signs. So why you can talk about signage in all those campaign signs Bill Morton 21 days 30 days. They will be up 3-4 months which that is a part of campaigning. So that little pettiness about signs. People would not even know if we did not see the sign, I mean I know a lot of people come because they see the signs, they coming to the events. Because the event is every month, you keep the sign up because it is telling you every third Friday of the month which let everybody know what is going on. So alright, take it down for 21 day and put it back up for a day and take it down for to 21 more days is that is that a solution? If that is not a solution, fix it so it includes everything, including your campaign signs. because right now you are just hitting everyone on their personal issues and it is personal, I am sure of this signage thing. Ms. Lunsford, Chief Hobbs had a car for many years 24/7 so you are going to say something about Chief Clark having a vehicle, so you did not say anything about Chief Hobbs having a vehicle. So that is all I am going to say about that. Everyone let us start trying to get together in unity, this is not about signs, it is about us as a city, as a whole city. We finally got the council to start looking like our city for the most part. so, let us just come together in unity. We got this.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was motioned to adopt the agenda as printed.

Motion made by Councilmember Gutierrez, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 3. Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from June 7, 2021 - S.**
Diane White, Interim City Clerk

It was motioned to adopt the minutes from June 7, 2021.

Motion made by Councilmember Gutierrez, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

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

OLD BUSINESS:

4. Withdraw Fire Scene Investigation Unit from Donation to Sister City - Deputy Fire Chief Clemons

It was motioned to Withdraw Fire Scene Investigation Unit from Donation to Sister City

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

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

5. Council Approval of Fire Squad Vehicle for Donation to Sister City - Deputy Fire Chief Clemons

It was motioned to approve the Fire Squad Vehicle for Donation to Sister City

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

6. Council Approval to Surplus Vehicle/Equipment for Auction on Public Surplus – Public Works Director, Bobby Jinks

It was motioned to approve the Surplus Vehicles and Equipment.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

7. Council Approval to give Support for the Restoring Neighborhoods and Strengthening Communities Act - Dr. Cooper, City Manager

It was motioned to give Support for the Restoring Neighborhoods and Strengthening Communities Act

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

8. Council Approval to Apply for GEMA Grants - Fire & EMA Departments

It was motioned to approve to apply for GEMA Grants.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

9. Council Approval of Resolution 2021-19 for Bulletproof Vests Partnership Program - Police Department and Grants Management

It was motioned to approve a Resolution 2021-19 for Bulletproof Vests Partnership Program

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

Councilmember James – The June Neighborhood Meeting that I host once a month on the 3rd Thursday will soon be available online, the information shared includes...

- Director Jink updates on grass and special shout out to the Forest Park Ministers Association cleanup of Northside
- EMA Coordinator Armstrong from Fire gave some fire safety tips and things to prepare as we go into hurricane season
- Sgt Zachery from the Police Community Affairs department, gave updates on some important arrest and missing persons
- Economic Development's Ms. Bundridge highlighted the completion of some remodeling and upcoming projects
- Code Enforcement Supervisor, Mr. Fleming shared violation status and the ongoing Education that is given to the public. I would also like to highlight Ken, Yvonne & Martina, I was able to do a drive through Ward1 with these Code Enforcement staff and I was impressed by these ladies that are assigned to Ward 1. They are doing an outstanding job of identifying violations and getting it corrected. So big shout out to Ms. Bivens, Ms. Miller, and Mr. Fleming.
- Director Maxwell shared upcoming events
- Ms. Diane Lewis from the HR Department highlighted the available positions within the city and how to navigate on the website to apply, this was a nice addition to the neighborhood meeting.
- Deputy Finance Director, Ms. Williams gave update of the full operational hours of the city which is 8am to 5pm

I invite you to join on July's meeting which I have not decided on how the hybrid version will be but stay tuned in.

Many of you have heard me say this before and I will continue to say it, is important that we speak our truth and share our opinions as elected officials, it is also true that we accept the will of the governing body whether it be by majority vote or Veto with supporting council. We must move on. In recent meetings it has been expressed over and repeatedly about the Public Safety Director position. As you all may recall, I was opposed to this position by some of the reasons that I have heard from the public comments. I spoke my truth and shared my opinions, and the governing body went in a different direction. I was able to move on and I am asking the public to do the same. I would ask that you would allow our very capable City Manager, who we obtained by doing a nationwide search, interview panel and governing body interviews, allow him to do his job and not continue to attack the decision that this council has made because what you are really doing is attacking an individual. Many of you know and can go back and read the minutes of my concern for the police department, you should also note that my concern was largely due to the very highly qualified and experience police chief in which we also obtained through a nationwide search and interview process. He was being pulled away from the duties in which he was hired to fulfill to do the duties of an interim city manager. At that time, I was concerned with why officers were leaving, and you can go back if you choose to hear some of the comments. I felt then and I feel now that leadership needs to address the concerns of the staff. I am confident that this is what is happening now. I do not believe in making excuses so even though things are happening around the

country, I am more concerned with what is happening in Forest Park. The truth is we are growing in more ways than one within our Police Department. Our staff are becoming more well-rounded and cross training, learning the customers service again and not being stuck in doing the same thing for years on in. Yes, we have had staff leave PD, some for other opportunities to grow, closer commute and even moving. Yes, we have also had staff leave PD for leadership reasons and that is being address as well but overwhelmingly, we are moving in the right direction. When we have had staff that was used to quotas, targeting, and other standards to now must correct those actions, it is a process, and it is a process that we should be willing to take. (We have had members of Council that were targeted and sued the city as a result) Yes we need officers that will slow down traffic on Jonesboro Road, Forest Parkway, Conley Road because I have seen traffic lights being run because they are traveling too fast to stop, in fact on 2 different occasions if I did not take my time to go when my light had turned green, I would have been in an accident. Please allow our team to work things out without continuing to speak of the past, let us see how we can move forward. The leadership we have in place now is addressing staff concerns in the proper way. We cannot change the poor decisions that were made in the past, but we can move forward and correct the issues that will affect our future.

I am disappointed that we had to cancel our first Juneteenth event because of the weather over the weekend but am looking forward to other events brought to us from our Recreation and Leisure Department.

I was able to come out to the Fun Friday in the Park event on Friday night and it was a full lawn in the park. The Something for the Soul band was excellent. Congratulations to Council woman Wells for having the idea of Fun Fridays that started over 3 years ago. I believe the event was a success, I know I sent a message out to those in Ward1 to come out for the weekend events but unfortunately the rain halted some of the festivities.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 9th. This will kick off our 2nd Annual Homecoming week partnership with Forest Park High School to have a Homecoming Parade. As some of you may recall we had a very successful Homecoming Parade in 2019 and due to the pandemic, we did not have it in 2020 but we are resuming for 2021. We are Pre-Planning now, so your thoughts and ideas are welcomed. We will have the parade starting at 9am and an alumni Flag Football game at Kiwanis stadium is the plan. Please tell every graduate of Forest Park High School to participate with their Class. The Theme will soon follow.

I would like to address some of the public comments – please stop the personal attacks toward our Police Chief, it is uncalled for and unnecessary. We have moved on; the council has decided about the public safety director's position, and we have a city manager that is highly qualified and educated and he can assess what we need for our city. As for as the live-feed for the meetings, I agree with you, as a council we will decide to continue that live-feed, if it is deemed necessary. As for as the signs being in the same location, you are correct, as I stated before, according to our charter, not to me, these are temporary signs. All the signs you have seen in the past have been temporary not permanent and according to our charter it is a violation to keep those signs up. This is not anything personal, I have been approached by individuals, publicly, about the signs several months ago, and I never mentioned it, because it is okay, it is advertising the event, but at some point, we must follow the charter. The gentlemen that spoke on the police presence outside his home, I suggest you call Dr. Cooper and have him listen to your grievances and I am sure he can resolve that. The reference about the signs and election coming up, signs do not vote, so, I am not concerned about that. There is a provision in the charter for campaign signage, and they are different in our ordinance from what the City, the law has been established. Thanks to State Representative Neal and Schofield for attending the meeting and thanks to the citizen for coming out.

Councilmember Antoine – Thanks everyone for coming out. I had a medical procedure done today is the reason I am not present. Thanks to all the city's department for the work you are providing the council and city. GA Community Affairs is still having their renters' program for COVID related issues. Thanks to mayor and council for approving the old fire equipment being donated to Haiti.

Councilmember Gutierrez – Thank you for coming and giving the public comments and happy we are back in the building. GM Gutierrez gave his number out 470-622-9270, I would love to hear your comments, because you are limited to three (3) minutes. Thanks to those who donated to the last Food Truck Friday event basket giveaways, KFC, Navy Surplus, Firestone, Hope All Occasions, Event Services, Campbells Lawn & Equipment, Food Depot, Omni Day Spa, Forest Recreation & Leisure Department, Jackie's Tacos, Cosmo Beauty Supply, and Forest Park's PB&Z Department. The median income for a family in Forest Park is about \$20,000, which comes to about \$398 per week, it is very important to me that we have these events accessible to the community. It takes from the city and taxpayers' money, but it is accessible for residents to attend them, here in the city, they do not have to travel outside Forest Park to listen to a live band, etc. It may be new and something that did not happen in the past, but let us be opened minded about them, it is all about residents. Does not matter who is hosting it, just make it accessible to all. Upcoming events – June 30th will be an open conversation on what is like to be a member of the LGBTQ plus community, thanks to the Panthers in Action Council for bringing this to me; July 1st Game Night for the Teens; July 2nd Food Truck Friday with a patriotic theme and July 3rd Monthly Clean-up. Thanks to Public Works for putting out the planters and we will have them painted and will be installing two little libraries in Ward 3.

Councilmember Adkin Wells – First, I think we should put a limit on our council's closing comments. Here is my response to some of the comments; I heard Mrs. Lunsford mention Chief Clark driving a city vehicle, I am not against that, I think that some Department Heads should drive city vehicles if they must come to the city for emergencies. What I do have a problem with is employees who do not live in the city, but a higher up and get to drive a city vehicle, when employees in public works cannot drive a vehicle home, that live in the city, for an hour lunch break, is a problem with me. Hopefully, Mr. Jinks, you will change that, but it is not fair. No, I did not change Wards, I put signage in everyone's Ward because it is a community event, not just for Ward 4, it is a city-wide event and I want everyone to know the event is occurring. The live stream is very important for the elderly and sick and shut-in that do not come to the meetings and to take it away is disappointing to the residents. Fun Friday was a huge success and is open to everyone, not just to Forest Park, we have patrons from all over the metropolitan area. One of the contributors is Rumor and it was questioned by the media as to why was Rumors sponsoring an event? They have sponsored events for everyone on council; they contributed to the turkey, school bags and Christmas giveaways, there is nothing unethical about it. Rhqtel Party Bus, my little brother, he sponsored Fun Friday, there is nothing unethical about it, he bought wine for the VIP tables, for which the people for the tables and the money from the tables goes back to Fun Friday, there is nothing unethical. So, the unanimous tips that being put out, I am not doing anything unethical. Thanks to Rumors, Rhqtel Party Bus, Something for the Soul Band, DJ Rampage, Public Works Department, as well as two officers, whose names I do not have. The Fun Fridays is for everyone, and everyone is invited to attend, not one time has all of council been there to enjoyment of those attending. Forest Park Day is 3rd Saturday in August, please come out and support the events. Thank everyone for coming out and Mr. Williams maybe we can look into changing our comments to three (3) minutes as well.

Councilmember Mears – I would like to apologize to everyone sounds like you had a real good meeting. Happy Father's Day to all fathers, I think men should play a better role in their families than we do. I am away enjoying my family and will see you at the next meeting.

Mayor Butler – The mobile unit on Hinds Worth Pass has received their first batch of vaccine, and with that we will be having the vaccine at Starr Park and with the mobile unit, there will be some sort of rotating schedule where they can go throughout the entire city on certain days and so we can get as many vaccinated as possible. The Public Safety complex, there has been several conversations on both the conditions of both the fire department and police department and just like many of the other buildings in the city which are a bit antiquated and patched up over the years and so building one building was cost effective than have two built. Although the Public Safety complex, is what it is called will also house the new city hall. And the conditions of those two respective entities are in dire need and this was the remedy to it. I am often asked, why I do not speak out on certain things, and I tend not to, for I know how people have lied on me, from the day I won there were allegations that I was buying alcohol for votes and the

media was called to spread that lie. So, when people tell me things, I like to consider the source, but I do not want to come forth with allegations. Not sure what we can do as a city, if there are complaints coming in if we can launch investigations into these matters, because as some point we need to have these suspension confirmed or denied, so we can truly move the city forward. I get tired on the constant back and forth, just because I may have a certain sentiment towards a member of the governing does not mean I am going to veto everything that they say, does not mean I am going to use the gavel every time they display a sentiment that is unsavory, but when I do try to call it in, it is stopped. So, it gets really frustrating and to know me as a person is to know how I operate. I do not have to yell to get a point across, that is what the veto is for. So, there is other ways we can do things, but if we have all these issues, I have received a lot of complaints and comments about Fun Friday and other events going on, but can we have a mechanism to where these items can be looked into and the rumors can stopped being circulated and nip it all in the bud so we can move forward city, this is really holding us back. We have so many other things going on, but people still chose to focus on minutia of it all. What can we do as a city? Do we need a complaint line? I think we have a tip line; do we need the governing body to say look into these matters, cause quite frankly, I am tired of it all.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – It is some of the governing body that is putting these unanimous tips out there. There is no way we can come together as a city when things like that are going on. I have been doing these events for three years and I never heard or had one complaint. I think we need to look at ourselves, and I am not excluding me, because I know that I respond to things that I should not and the citizens did not elect me to deal with mess, they elected me to be a voice for them, to do the things that benefit the city, the elected all of us to do that. If we focus on what the needs of the city are and stop focusing on each other personally, then we can do a lot more in this community; I think that is what the people wants, but it starts with us.

Mayor Butler – It does, so can we say it starts with us and really do something about it. Again, if we have these complaints how can we move forward and address them?

Attorney Williams – (his entire comments were inaudible, he did not speak into the microphone)

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

Motion to recess into Executive Session at 9:33pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

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

Motion to reconvene into Regular meeting at 10:03pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells. Not Present: Councilmember Antoine and Councilmember Mears

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn into Regular meeting at 10:04pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells. Not Present: Councilmember Antoine and Councilmember Mears