



**CITY COUNCIL PLANNING RETREAT
SUMMARY MINUTES
FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 2025
9:00 A.M.**

Mayor & City Council

Mayor Anthony S. Ford
Mayor Pro Tem LaKeisha Gantt – Dist. 1
Councilmember Alphonso Thomas – Dist. 2
Councilmember Kyle D. Berry, Sr. – Dist. 3
Councilmember Yolanda Barber – Dist. 4
Councilmember Elton Alexander – Dist. 5

Administration

Vacant, City Manager
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk
Frank Milazi, City Treasurer/CFO
Quinton Washington, City Attorney

Mission: Is to provide visionary leadership and superior municipal services that enhance the quality of life for citizens while creating a welcoming business atmosphere focused on sustainability and expansion of tourism and cultural events.

Staff Present: Decius Aaron, Public Works Director, Ryan Anderson, Community Development Director, Demeatrius Ivey, Information Technology Director, Rosalynd Rawls, Executive Assistant to Mayor & Council, Gerald Sanders, Economic Development Director, Shana Thornton, Public Information Officer, Frank Trammer, Police Chief, and Renee Wheeler, Human Resources Manager

Day 3 Retreat Planning Session – Facilitated by: Mayor Ford (Acting City Manager)
The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ford at 11:45 a.m.

All members were present except Councilmember Berry and Councilmember Thomas.

Finances – Presented by: Frank Milazi, Treasurer/CFO and Ed Wall, Financial Advisor
Mr. Wall noted the city received raw growth numbers; however, he cannot give an official rollback rate at this time and recommends 3.77 for the millage rate.

Councilmember Alexander noted exemptions are included in the 3.77 millage.

Mr. Milazi noted the city has a \$2billion dollar 2025 Tax Digest.

Councilmember Berry joined the meeting at 12:19 p.m.

Councilmember Barber noted it is difficult to consider the millage rate when the city's financials are unknown.

M. Milazi noted the city's Fund Balance of \$3million dollars cash is confirmed as of December 31, 2024.

Mr. Wall recommends the city advertise the same millage rate published last year and completed the PT-32 based on that.

Mr. Milazi noted 3.77 would be the cap.

Mr. Wall noted the city's Fair Market Value (FMV) went up \$250 Million dollars last year, and as stated at the Homestead Town Hall, 62% is residential, and the city needs to empower the Economic Development Director to bring economic development, specifically commercial.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt noted there needs to be rooftops to support the commercial businesses with disposable income.

Councilmember referenced the growth and success of South Point, noting Dave & Busters locating to south metro after numerous requests, and investors believing the business would thrive south of Atlanta.

Mr. Sanders noted the data can be built in biases, and that some companies just favor being on the north side of Atlanta.

Mr. Wall noted warehouses and data centers are trending.

Councilmember Barber inquired about the city annexing the area north of Valley Hill Rd. along Hwy. 42 up to Clayton County and will work with the Community Development staff in this area of District 4.

Mr. Wall stated the City needs to focus on increasing its Fund Balance, emphasizing the need for savings for the city in the event of an emergency, natural disaster, etc.

Mr. Milazi noted the City has adopted policies and procedures with a 2–3-year plan, that with Council support, will increase Fund Balance.

The Mayor & Council directed Mr. Milazi and Mr. Wall to move forward with the 2-3-year plan, noting full support and recommendations from the City Treasurer and Financial Advisor

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt noted the budget should be streamlined based on revenue, and not bleed the city dry, and suggested an audit of alcohol vendors.

Chief Trammer noted there are eleven (11) grant positions in PD that will expire in 2025.

Mr. Wall noted the Police Department expenses have increased from \$6.4 million dollars to over \$9 million dollars, noting the city's Fund Balance in 2023 was \$14 million dollars; and noted the City Hall Bond matures 02/01/2031; Trails Bond matures on 12/31/2025; The Amphitheater Bond matures on 12/31/2025 and the Cultural Arts Center Bond matures on 12/31/2036.

Mr. Milazi reviewed the request to organize the Finance Department.

Motion to approve the revised Organizational Chart and Budget Amendment to realign the Grants/Writer Administrator position from Executive to Finance was made by Councilmember Barber; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gantt. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Mr. Milazi reviewed the request to approve a Resolution to amend authorized staff regarding ARPA Funding access.

Motion to approve a Resolution to add the City Treasurer/CFO as Authorized Staff to access ARPA was made by Councilmember Barber; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gantt. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Prioritizing Projects

The Mayor & Council reviewed a list of projects and completed an exercise to prioritize the top five (5) projects as follows:

1. Community Center
2. T-SPLOST Projects
3. Downtown Development
4. Wayfinding
5. City Municipal Buildings

Councilmember Berry exited the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Mayor Ford thanked everyone for their participation in the 2025 Planning Retreat for the City, and thanked Department Head staff for being in attendance as well over the last three days and looks forward to the continued progress and implementation of the city's vision.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 p.m. was made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Gantt. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Respectfully submitted by:

Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk

Anthony S. Ford, Mayor