



COUNCIL FY2025 BUDGET RETREAT
August 21, 2024
10:00 a.m.
Summary Minutes

Mayor & City Council

Mayor Anthony S. Ford
Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Berry
Councilman Elton Alexander
Councilwoman Yolanda Barber
Councilwoman LaKeisha Gantt
Councilman Alphonso Thomas

Administration

Frederick Gardiner, City Manager
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk
Lakeisha Gaines, Interim City Treasurer
Quinton Washington, City Attorney

Staff in Attendance: Decius Aaron, Ryan Anderson, William Conner, Richard Godfrey, Demeatrius Ivey, Ron Momon, Rosalynd Rawls, Shana Thornton, Frank Trammer, and Renee Wheeler

Mission: 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.

The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m. by Mayor Ford.

Invocation by Mayor Ford

Pledge of Allegiance recited by all in attendance.

The City Clerk was asked to proceed with Roll Call. All the members were present except Councilmember Gantt.

DAY ONE AGENDA

Mr. Gardiner reviewed the Day One Agenda Outline and noted the City is trending significant growth and development and the budget needs to reflect anticipated needs to service the residents and businesses; noted the Henry County and Clayton County Water Authorities serve a large area of the city, with the City of Stockbridge Water only servicing the core residents and businesses, to include the downtown area, noting storm water & downtown development and infrastructure will be priority projects. Mr. Gardiner noted new development brings new value and increases the tax bases; and referenced million-dollar homes are currently under construction in the city; noted the City of Stockbridge has an opportunity to be the Beacon of the Southern Crescent; and noted opportunities are also lost when developers and investors view the city's Council meetings and have conversations with members from GMA. Mr. Gardiner noted the draft general fund budget presented today is \$29,182.11 and represents a 9% increase with no increases to development or impact fees; noted LOST (Local Option Sales Tax) is expected to increase and referenced the Hotel/Motel Tax dollar

revenue and is dictated by the price of the room rate per night, referencing the Red Roof Inn with annual reporting of Hotel/Motel Tax of \$6,000.00.

Councilmember Alexander suggested the city audit the annual hotel reporting; and referenced the Amphitheater payoff in 2025 that will free up funds once paid off.

Mr. Gardiner noted most municipalities carry debt service, and that in addition to the freed-up bond payments for the Amphitheater, a third-party option is recommended for the Amphitheater in 2025 that will also free up funds, and suggests the city be prudent by placing the savings from the Amphitheater payments and production of the concerts be placed in the bank for a rainy day.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Police Department FY2025 Budget Presentation – Presented by Chief Frank Trammer

Chief Trammer referenced the department coming on board in May 2022, and Code Enforcement being added in January 2023; referenced the Council's approval of the funding mechanism for the (4) four new Public Safety Officers (Council Retreat February 2024); noted the COPS Grant will expire in 2026; noted the current year budget is trending over budget and the proposed FY2025 represents a 15-17% increase with overtime cost increase of 64%; presented the FY22 – FY26 Budget Chart and comparisons; noted the department has 67 full-time sworn officers, 19 full-time civilian staff, 6 part-time staff for a total of 86 department staff; presented Historical Calls for Service for 2021-2023; presented Workload Based Calculations; noted 80 employees represent a fully staffed department for effective community policing; noted Key Challenges: Staffing Shortages, Relying on the Henry County Police Department for services; Inability to Respond to Accidents; Recruitment & Retention, ; and Resource Strains from Annexations; noted the Percentage Change in Violent Crime 2021-2023; presented Average Salary Comparisons in the metro area and the city of Dunwoody; noted the Key Opportunities: grant funding; Stockbridge Police Foundation; DEA Task Force Participation – One Officer (funds specifically earmarked); Crime Suppression Unit; Traffic Unit Implementation; and School Speed Detection Cameras; presented Traffic Unit Fines vs. Costs and Red Speed data.

Discussion included: fuel expenses and the city partnering with a local vendor for fuel at a discounted rate, likewise for pursuit rated tires; moving toward Lightning electric vehicles for the department fleet for budgeting and environmental purposes and tax credits, where applicable; meetings are being scheduled with the city's Grant Administrator to apply for new grants to offset expenses where possible; part-time officers being assigned to Municipal Court and City Hall; referenced maintenance agreements with outside vendors, specifically Henry County regarding for services; noted issues remain in the area of Code Enforcement, and more needs to be done regarding the enforcement of violations.

Chief Trammer noted there are currently (3) Code Enforcement Officers. (1) Working Supervisor and (2) Code Enforcement Officers with one officer on leave; and suggested there may need to be (6) Officers – (1) Supervisor, and (5) Officers, one for each District.

Ms. Gaines noted there is \$15,000.00 for Nuisance and Abatement in the Non-Departmental Budget.

Mr. Aaron stated \$15,000 is not enough to remedy the homeless encampments, illegal dumping throughout the city, and disposal costs, and suggests the city outsource the service.

Councilmember Gantt joined the meeting at 11:32 a.m.

Chief Trammer announced recent promotions within the department: Richard Godfrey to Assistant Chief; Paton to Major and Gilbert-Ramsey to Interim Captain, and highlighted department accomplishments.

Further discussion suggested the Code Enforcement department continues to struggle and is headed in the wrong direction and that the department will require someone well versed in Code Enforcement to make the department more of a priority; and noted the Community Development department knows and is familiar with the Code, and the police officers are not.

Mr. Gardiner noted that in regard to Code Enforcement and officers going onto private property, the Georgia Statute states that if you can see the violation from the street, the issue can be addressed and cited and is not trespassing.

Attorney Washington stated the Court would make the final determination, noting the Code allows for the complaint to be issued and a hearing within 10 days.

By consensus, the Council agreed to schedule a follow-up meeting specifically to discuss Code Enforcement and to determine which department is best suited to manage Code Enforcement.

Chief Trammer discussed the needs of the department, noting grant funding has helped a great deal to cover many of the expenses, and the COPS grant will expire in 2026; noted the department will continue to apply, noting the grant only covers new officers, who must remain with the department for three (3) years.

Council discussion: perception of police presence and neighborhood patrol, and not wanting to over police, while remaining safe; and noted with the city's growth, annexations and development, the department must meet those needs and continue to be able to provide police services.

Mr. Gardiner stated he would work with Chief Trammer and the Treasurer to find a way to add the requested positions, if it is the will of the Council.

2. Public Works FY2025 Budget Presentation - Presented by: Decius Aaron

Mr. Aaron reviewed the FY2025 Budget Objects noting the increasing demands of a growing community, improving service levels and working with a constraint on resources and maintaining staffing levels; reviewed the Public Works Budget Principles; FY2025 Budget Priorities: Identify a funding source to renovate the Public Works Maintenance Shop; Conduct an in-depth financial assessment of the infrastructure of the annexed areas and develop a master plan for addressing capital projects and maintenance issues; conduct a facilities assessment of all City buildings; close the transfer station and incorporate the land into Memorial Park for additional parking; and traffic signals maintenance; reviewed highlights of the department, receiving the Platinum Award for the Water System, and a Gold Award for the Wastewater Treatment Facility; resurfaced eight miles of road; completed the East Atlanta Rd/Lee Street improvement project; completed the Mays Crossing lift station rehabilitation project and repaired the Amphitheater retention pond.

Mr. Aaron reviewed the staffing requests for FY2025, requesting the replacement of the Assistant Public Works Director to a Project Manager position; the addition of three (3) Stormwater Technicians; reclassification of the Executive Assistant position to Public Works Administrative Analyst; and the addition of an Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Technician.

Councilmember Alexander noted the Council was intentional with the Assistant Public Works Director having an Engineering Degree.

Councilmember Thomas agreed, noting the City needs to have an Engineer on staff; and stated that when adding new positions to the city, there is a process, and each new proposed position would need to go through the proper procedures.

Mr. Aaron stated should the position be approved; the applicant would be required to have an Engineering Degree.

Mr. Aaron referenced the new 2023 EPA rule for water line replacements, noting lines installed after 1997, there is an assumption of no lead, and the initial survey is due to the EPD on October 15th.

Mr. Aaron noted Enterprise Fleet Management will present at the upcoming Work Session on August 27th to discuss lease/purchase options; and noted the Stormwater Department has incurred a number of major expenses, especially in the newly annexed areas.

Mr. Aaron reviewed the Department Challenges: Department funding; Inability to replace critical vehicles and equipment in a timely manner; providing services in the annexed areas; increasing solid waste collection and disposal costs; changes in the federal lead and copper rules; changes in NPDES permit discharge limits; federal and state stormwater management

mandates; recruitment challenges; aging infrastructure for which replacement costs were underfunded over the years; and homeless encampments; and reviewed the Opportunities: Upgrade infrastructure, parks, and city buildings via SPLOST and TSPLOST funds; implement annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments to ensure that Enterprise Funds remain self-supporting; and improve compensation for Public Works staff to reduce turnover.

Councilmember Thomas noted that he was not aware of the Council denying any requests brought to the Council to fund Public Works projects and replacement of vehicles, and increasing contracts cover the newly annexed areas.

Councilmember Gantt asked where Public Works is using outside contractors for services.

Mr. Aaron noted contractors are providing Right-of-Way services, sanitation, stormwater, sidewalks, and landscaping.

Councilmember Thomas asked what the General Maintenance daily duties consist of.

Mr. Aaron noted the General Maintenance maintains the parks, litter pickup, mowing and bush hog cutting, repairing potholes and chipper services, noting staff cannot encroach upon the Norfolk Southern/Railroad areas.

Mayor Ford noted the city needs a plan on how to increase Public Works salaries, noting the Minimum Wage is \$15/hr.

Councilmember Barber asked if there are any opportunities to bring Landscaping in-house.

Mr. Aaron noted that bringing those contracted services in-house would increase salary and benefits, noting there are fourteen (14) General Maintenance staff who are specifically assigned to mowing, litter control the maintenance of standard mowing of rights-of-way for the most part, and that you have to weigh the pros and cons where contractors have the responsibility of mowing and maintaining the major thoroughfares weekly.

Councilmember Alexander agreed, noting the contractors have saved the city money on salaries, benefits, and equipment.

Councilmember Barber noted the city needs to create opportunities to enter into the Public Works field by bringing in Interns for some of the Administrative positions, and Temporary positions, and cut back on some of the contract work.

Mr. Gardiner noted that the city can look at utilizing community service workers.

Ms. Wheeler noted they would not be covered under the city's Workers Compensation policy.

Attorney Washington stated the City would have liability, and that it would depend on if the work was on a voluntary basis or mandated by the court.

Councilmember Thomas asked staff to research what would be required to use community service workers, especially on the weekend, and to put in the safeguards.

Councilmember Gantt noted a number of steps would be required to oversee community service.

Councilmember Barber noted the city should be looking to minimize the city's expenses, and every employee is potentially a liability, noted the city's population has grown and changed and there are other municipalities who are using community service, and the city of Stockbridge needs to look at how we can do the same.

Mr. Gardiner confirmed staff would look into it.

Councilmember Alexander noted he removed himself from the Keep Stockbridge Beautiful platform, and that the city would provide the service; and noted contractors deliver a high level of service, whereas, as temp worker would deliver a low level of service; and noted the city needs to apply for Keep America Beautiful, if not already done; and noted a salary survey should be routine to make sure the city is keeping in line with comparable salaries in the area.

Ms. Wheeler noted that not all employees and temporary workers are brought in at the \$15 minimum wage level.

Councilmember Alexander asked what the turnover numbers are for the city.

Ms. Wheeler noted the largest turnover is from the Police Department; and that other areas of the city are less than 2% and would provide a breakdown of turnovers.

3. Economic Development – Presented by: Frederick Gardiner

Mr. Gardiner gave an overview of the department, noting three positions, the Director, which is currently vacant, and two positions for Administrative Support and the Economic Development Coordinator, Office of Downtown Development, Office of Economic Vitality and Office of Marketing & Attraction.

Councilmember Alexander asked for the status to fill the vacancy of the Economic Development Director position.

Mr. Gardiner noted a prospect was interviewed yesterday, noting the search is active.

Mr. Gardiner reviewed the proposed FY2025 Department Budget; noted Major Initiatives include the TAD Project; and presented the Patrick Henry Parkway project.

Mr. Gardiner gave an overview of the Main Street Department and proposed FY2025 department budget, noting the department has two staff members, a Downtown Manager, and a Coordinator, and all are housed in the Economic Development offices; referenced the success of the Tiny Tent events taking place on Friday nights to energize the downtown area; referenced a proposed project to re-design the old police department and put in turf with no effect on the Alleyway Project; implement a lighting project in the downtown; and is speaking with the owners of the remaining vacant buildings (neither which has a kitchen).

Councilmember Gantt suggested the city consider a Community Grease Trap as a DDA Project.

Mr. Gardiner noted there have been discussions regarding a pad for two dumpsters and adding parking in the rear; cleaning up the railroad yard to add parking with brick pavers similar to downtown Locust Grove.

Councilmember Barber asked if there have been any discussions with Food Depot.

Mr. Gardiner noted the owner of Food Depot has expressed interest in improvements to the storefront and parking lot.

Councilmember Thomas noted Code Enforcement needs to address the car wash at the corner of N. Henry & Tye Street, and the former jewelry store; and also noted the Harrell Drive apartments were being renovated following a fire in a section of the units.

Councilmember Gantt noted the CDA (Citywide Development Authority) is looking at implementing the Citywide Façade Grant Program.

Mr. Gardiner noted the area under the bridge is considered for murals; and that he is meeting with the County Chair and County Manager to discuss the TAD, followed by a meeting with the Henry County School Board.

4. Community Development – Presented by: Ryan Anderson

Mr. Anderson referenced the Four Business Units for Community Development: Administration, Planning & Zoning (GIS), Building/Fire/Permitting & Inspections, and Business Services, all in support of economic growth; noted the Top Priorities are: Accountability (Taking Ownership), Consistency & Credibility, Efficiency & Expectation, and Statistical Measures (KPIs); reviewed the Department Organizational Chart, noting the request for positions and reclassifications; noting the request for FY2025 increase the number for Building Inspectors

from 1 to 2 personnel; Increase the Senior Planner from 1 to 2 personnel, and defund the Planner 1 position.

Mr. Anderson presented the city's Zoning Map, the Future Land Use Map, Council District Map; noted there are currently 1,325 units under construction in the city, noting the city is growing fast, and presented population forecasts near 50,000 by the year 2030, noting the need for long range, smart planning; and that beginning in 2025, the department will target two corridor studies to start planning for this growth and is requesting to begin partial on-boarding for In-House Building, Permitting Division in FY2025 modernizing the department, implementing new Sages software to replace EnerGov in the amount of \$100,000, and is a savings of \$30,000 annually compared to the current software; and requests to begin the Areas of Study: Hwy. 138, Eagles Landing, North Henry Blvd., East Atlanta Rd., and Rock Quarry Rd. noting most studies are only good for ten years, and is requesting the purchase of (2) two inspections vehicles (approximately \$65,000).

Mr. Anderson noted the proposed FY2025 Department Budget was comparable to FY2024, with a decrease to the overall budget.

Mr. Anderson noted the department will bring a Zoning map to the Council for approval based on the rezonings that have been approved by the City Council, along with a Comprehensive Plan Update; if approved, will move forward with Sages software; noted Veritas is no longer the contractor for the city, and that most positions have already been brought in-house with the exception of the Engineer; noted there is approximately 400 acres along the Western Parallel Connector for commercial development, noting the city is not land-locked.

Councilmember Thomas asked Mr. Anderson to thoroughly review the Comprehensive Plan to see what can be done within the city's Comprehensive Plan to stop all of the amendments from coming before the Council.

Councilmember Barber asked who is responsible for reviewing the city's housing inventory, noting there have been more multifamily developments approved for City Council District 4, and there has been a lack of development proposals for single family detached homes presented to the Council, and that diverse options are needed.

Mr. Anderson stated that developers receive funding based on a feasibility study that they have conducted.

Councilmember Barber asked who determines if the development meets the growth and planning needs of the city.

Mr. Anderson stated developments are market driven.

Mr. Gardiner noted that regarding the development of the City of Stockbridge, single-family detached homes were built first, then townhomes, followed by apartments.

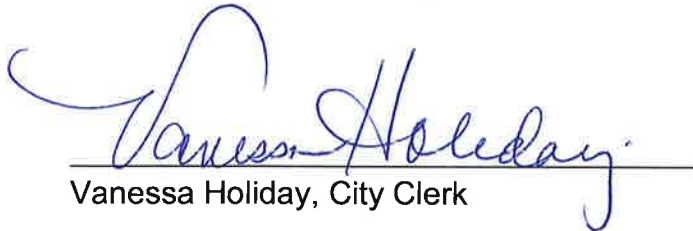
Councilmember Alexander noted townhomes are only 2% of the city's housing inventory, noting townhomes are considered single-family homes without a yard, and single-family detached homes have a yard.

Councilmember Barber as the Council to consider as a Condition for new developments, to set aside a percentage of units for Public Services employees (such as police officers, teachers, medical staff, etc.).

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m. was made by Councilmember Gantt; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Respectfully submitted by:


Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk


Anthony S. Ford, Mayor