Stockbridge
Where Community Connects

CITY OF STOCKBRIDGE
CITY COUNCIL BUDGET RETREAT
Summary Minutes
Thursday, September 25, 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
Shawn Edmondson, City Manager
Frank Milazi, City Treasurer/CFO
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk
Quinton Washington, City Attorney
Megan McCullough, Staff 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, Lisa Fareed, Downtown Manager, Najaa Hammonds, Human Resources Generalist, Demeatrius Ivey, Information Technology Director, Tranita Jones, Ex. Assistant to City Manager, Rosalynd Rawls, Executive Assistant to Mayor & Council, Gerald Sanders, Economic Development Director, Genea Stanley, Court Administrator, Shana Thornton, Public Information Officer, Frank Trammer, Police Chief, Charisma Webster, Conference Center & Events Manager

Day 2 Budget Retreat

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ford at 9:06 a.m.

Invocation by Councilmember Alexander

Pledge of Allegiance recited by all members in attendance.

Roll Call: All members were present except Mayor Pro Tem Gantt and Councilmember Thomas.

Motion to amend the Agenda to switch the IT Department Budget Presentation and Municipal Court Presentation was made by Councilmember Barber; seconded by Councilmember Berry. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Motion to adopt the Agenda as amended was made by Councilmember Barber; seconded by Councilmember Berry. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Mayor Ford noted this is a public meeting, however there are no public comments.

Councilmember Alexander referenced his attendance along with Mayor Ford, at the ROSCI Regenerative Center as they celebrated their 10th anniversary in the city's former DDA building, sold to them through utilizing the Henry County Development Authority as the conduit, noting the building now houses a surgical center and is an integral part of the city's healthcare district; and noted their request to change the signage at the entrance of the driveway.

Mr. Milazi recapped Day 1 with a video regarding numbers adding up/or not; noted most local governments have limited resources, and noted the city is fortunate to have multiple resources that can be used to include SPLOST, TSPLOST, ARPA, CDBG, RedSpeed and others, that will take the burden off the city's General Fund; and asked that everyone make good decisions and prioritize to serve the citizens of Stockbridge.

<u>Department Budget Presentations</u>

<u>Information Technology Department Budget – Presented by Demetrius Ivey, IT Director</u>

Mr. Ivey noted the IT Department will incorporate software that is currently housed in other department budgets, and you will see those changes throughout the department budgets and see the increase in the IT Budget; noted there will be no changes to the number of personnel; noted there is a request for an increase in the budget to address infrastructure and technology upgrades.

Councilmember Barber asked about the budget increase for the Phone System line item.

Mr. Ivey noted that line item includes the city's network phone system, and city issued cell phones, noting the contract has been renegotiated.

Councilmember Barber asked if the department could operate with half of what is being requested.

Mr. Ivey's response was that it would be difficult.

Councilmember Alexander asked about specific software needs, improvements to the council chamber and the city's website, stating it looks too busy and is difficult to navigate.

Mr. Ivey responded that staff is currently working on updates for streaming improvements and merging software platforms throughout the city that are currently in silos and moving them under one umbrella and asked that concerns be made known to the City Manager.

Mr. Edmondson noted he met with the city's webmaster, along with the PIO, noting changes were recently made to change the appearance of the website, and is looking to revamp the platform to simply, noting the intent is to be more seamless; and noted each department is responsible for their webpage and needs to take ownership of their respective department pages; and noted the point of the city's webpage is that information should be easy to find, and a one stop shop.

Councilmember Alexander referenced departments having individual websites, referencing Community Development website, and suggested Economic Development having their own website, and Main Street.

Mr. Edmondson noted he does not want silos, but rather have the system be interconnected.

Councilmember Berry asked what the difference is between the Telecommunications line item and the IT Phone System line item; and asked about upgrades to cybersecurity, and chamber streaming improvements.

Mr. Ivey noted the backup and broadband are included in the telecommunications, and the IT Phone System is the city's phone network, and that cybersecurity upgrades are part of the proposed budget, and noted staff is working on chamber streaming upgrades right now.

Councilmember Berry asked about an IPAD. Mr. Ivey stated he has one available for him.

Mr. Edmondson noted he has met with a vendor regarding tv monitors and realignment of cameras in the chamber.

Councilmember Barber asked about electronic monitoring device that would notify the presiding officer to address the next speaker.

Mr. Ivey noted he has met with the City Clerk regarding chamber and dais upgrades.

Ms. Holiday noted the city does not currently have that module included in the proposed FY2026 budget for Agenda software and noted the funding would need to increase for that line item to account for purchasing and installation of that particular module.

Councilmember Alexander asked what the city's fiber speeds are.

Mr. Ivey stated the city is on AT&T Fiber using Meraki, with specific firewalls and access for employees, contractors, and the public, with 1 gig at city hall and the police department, and 500 gigs at the conference center; noted the public has access to wi-fi; and noted the department is continuously seeking grant funding.

Councilmember Alexander asked about use of the Henry County Public Access Channel and asked if the city can access the channel with rights under the public access network.

Ms. Thornton noted the county has its own network, and it is controlled with county funding.

Mr. Edmondson noted the city need real-time software to keep up with patches and updates with the ultimate goal being able to consolidate software and strengthen the network against attacks.

Councilmember Barber stated the full Governing Body should be made aware of all cybersecurity threats and issues.

Mayor Ford noted Cybersecurity is to be discussed during executive session.

<u>Governing Body Department Budget – Presented by Rosalynd Rawls, Executive Assistant to Mayor & Council</u>

Ms. Rawls referenced the section of the budget controlled by HR, the City Manager and City Treasurer for salaries, benefits and insurance; and noted the proposed changes included moving Copier Rental to the IT Budget; and the following budget increases: Travel for Admin. Staff to $3,000, Office Supplies to $3,000, Misc. Expenses to $3,000, Hospitality to $10,000 and Civic Events to $10,000.

Ms. Holiday referenced the Official/Administrative line item noting it is only for retreat expenses, and that if the Governing Body plans to travel offsite in 2026, there needs to be an increase in the budget.

Councilmember Alexander expressed that his preference would be to return to offsite venues for the winter retreat, noting the Governing Body benefited from those tours and information from other municipalities, noting the increase in funding required.

Councilmember Barber requested details of the Council Initiative expenses for District 4, noting she pays for much of her initiatives out of pocket; and asked what was included in the Miscellaneous expenses.

Ms. Rawls stated the Canva software was paid from miscellaneous and the duplication of keys for Administration vehicles.

Ms. Rawls reviewed some of the Civic Events that will include Ferst Readers, State of the County Address, South Metro Development Outlook Conference, and Henry County Chamber Events.

Councilmember Alexander asked how old the Administration were.

Ms. Holiday noted vehicles 114 and 118 were purchased in 2013, and vehicles 153, 154 and 155 were purchased in 2019.

Councilmember Alexander tasked staff with an assessment of the Administration vehicle fleet and also look at replacing the older SUV's and incorporate an EV into the fleet; and noted there also needs to be at least one large vehicle (Tahoe) for carrying multiple passengers, and noted the city needs a fleet plan that will automatically rotate vehicles out.

Mr. Edmondson noted he is reviewing a long-term management plan for a fleet program citywide.

<u>Clerk's Office Department Budget – Presented by Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk</u>

<u>Youth Council Budget – Presented by Sharika Zellars, Youth Council Advisory</u>

Ms. Holiday noted there were no personnel changes being requested at this time; and just a few changes, noting increases to the Codification line item, as the Community Development Director has advised of changes coming forward with UDC updates that will require codification and there is an increase to funds to cover those changes; Dues/Membership Fees have increased as we have member of the Clerk's Office team who is enrolled in a number of mandated training programs for certification, and membership is required; the annual HCMA Municipal Dinner is increasing to $10,000 in anticipation of food and beverage costs; and JustFOIA, the city's Open Records Request Platform, which is split with the Police Department and the Clerk's portion increasing to $6,000.00 and represents a $500.00 dollar increase.

Ms. Holiday noted the Youth Council is requesting an increase of $10,000 in the FY2026 budget, and that Ms. Sharika Zellars, a member of the Youth Council Advisory Committee, is here to present.

Ms. Zellars noted her tenure of six years with the Youth Council, and the budget has remained the same for all six years; noted the increase in funding is to accommodate increases in meal costs, an additional five students added to the program, and security, noting the Youth Council is capped at fifteen students, and there were students who were turned away, and they want to give the opportunity to all who want to participate; also, the Youth Council wants to attend the National League of Cities Youth Conference in Nashville, TN in 2026, increase funding is requested to pay for security for events, as a recommendation by Mayor Ford.

Councilmember Barber asked why Security is added as a line item in the Youth Council Budget.

Mayor Ford noted he made suggestions to the committee when he noticed during one of their events, and they are mostly women, they had no security present and is needed.

Councilmember Barber as Chief Trammer to weigh in.

Chief Trammer stated security for Youth Council events could be added to the Police Department overtime line item in the PD budget to provide security.

Councilmember Barber noted the funding needs to be used for other services for the Youth Council, not for security.

Councilmember Alexander noted the Youth Council needs to have public safety when the Youth Council is picking up litter; and asked Ms. Zellars if the Youth Council is reaching out for sponsorship opportunities.

Ms. Zellars noted the Youth Council just attended a Symposium in Savannah, and that was a key topic, and they were given great ideas and suggestions and noted the Youth Council plans to seek sponsors from local businesses here in Stockbridge, and work in partnership with the city.

Councilmember Barber asked Ms. Zellars to explain the transportation line item.

Ms. Zellars noted the Youth Council must rent passenger vans when the group travels to and from events.

Councilmember Barber asked if the city has a passenger van in its fleet.

Ms. Holiday responded no and also noted the cost averages $500 per rental.

Councilmember Berry stated the city needs to invest in a passenger van as part of its fleet.

Ms. Zellars noted the Youth Council would like to host another Symposium in 2027 as was done in 2016 and noted having a passenger van would be essential.

Mr. Edmondson noted that if we are serious about Youth and Seniors, the city should support them, noting there are not a lot of programs for either group, noting the purchase of a van needs to be reflected in the budget.

Councilmember Alexander noted the Administration vehicles were discussed earlier and agrees a passenger van is also needed and makes sense.

Ms. Zellars noted the Youth Council has a group of kids who are excited and want to see what other students are doing in their cities.

Councilmember Barber noted the Amphitheater could be used for talent shows and used in other ways to recruit the youth and help them to sponsor their ideas.

Mr. Edmondson noted that he spoke with the Youth Council as they were preparing for their trip to Savannah, and they were excited, and agrees that whatever the Council is agreeable to, it must be reflected in the budget.

Councilmember Alexander noted he supports adding an additional five students and wants to see more representation of the Youth Council citywide, having four students from each district.

Ms. Zellars acknowledged that the current makeup of the Youth Council is heavily Dutchtown, it was noted that the applications were distributed to all schools, and noted they have an active member who is recruiting at Dutchtown; and noted there will be an emphasis on reaching out to all high schools citywide and will be more intentional with recruiting.

Ms. Holiday noted the Youth Council schools are Union Grove, Dutchtown, Stockbridge, Eagles Landing, and Woodland, along with private schools attended by city resident students; and noted for changes to the number of students, the next step is for the Youth Council to amend their Bylaws and present them to the City Council for approval.

<u>Economic Development Department Budget – Presented by Gerald Sanders, Economic Development Director</u>

Mr. Sanders gave a presentation that did not include a specific line-item budget but will include a request for funding of projects; noted the Topics of Discussion for the Economic Development presentation would cover Department Priorities & Vision, Program and Initiatives and a Funding Wish List.

Mr. Sanders noted highlighted the drivers for the Stockbridge economy, and parts of Henry County as well are Retail, Hospitality, Transportation and Logistics, Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare with Piedmont Henry hospital anchored here and is vital to the community.

Mr. Sanders noted at the top of Economic Development's list is downtown development, noting the Alleyway project is the number one project, and noted it is high on the priority for the Governing Body as well, and with the City Manager's assistance, hopes to turn dirt on the Alleyway project by the end of the year; noted the Main Street Program has been working on electrical lighting, façade grants, and noted a formal presentation is coming forward in October regarding a container district; noted there will be a request for a downtown landscaping plan in partnership with the DDA who will contribute financially, and stressed the importance of the aesthetics and appearance of the downtown when inviting developers and investors; noted the TAD (Tax Allocation District), has moved slower than it should, and that the school board has not been willing to sign on to the project with approval, noting there have been several phone calls made by him, and the Mayor; and noted Attorney Washington has indicated there may be another option.

Attorney Washington stated outside Counsel has been working on a Revenue Sharing Agreement of 50/50 who has worked with the City of Atlanta with a similar agreement, noting school boards have been hesitant with signing on to TAD's because it freezes the property taxes and values, and they can only get revenue from those frozen amounts and nothing above, and when approached about the 50/50 Revenue Sharing Agreement, and has been recently approached stating the Henry County School Board is showing some interest, and has reached out to the School Board Attorney to see if they can get the structured document set and agree on a split on the tab, and will provide an update to the Mayor & Council in the upcoming weeks.

Mr. Edmondson noted this is important, and a big deal, noting it is rare because school boards are not typically interested in revenue sharing, and would be a game changer.

Mr. Sanders review the projected TAD review and projected revenue.

Mr. Edmondson noted he is not tracking these numbers and does not have a digest.

Councilmember Alexander stated the County approved of the TAD and noted the city should be collecting revenue.

Mr. Edmondson noted that he is unclear if the Tax Commissioner's office has received and completed the necessary to close the matter.

Mr. Sanders noted that number two on the list is the Small Business Development Program, where they are working with Clayton State University working with 15 entrepreneurs; referenced the BRICS Stockbridge approved for the Economic and working with 15 businesses for $10,000 grants; noted an upcoming meeting with the CVB to discuss marketing; noted the Patrick Henry Parkway Plan is ready to proceed, and referenced discussions with Mayor Ford and Councilman Alexander about a proposed data center.

Mr. Sanders reviewed the list of Funding Requests: Alleyway Project $800,000 - $1milion dollars as projected by Falcon Engineering; BRICS Business Grant Program $150,000; Main Street District Beautification and Enhancements $75,000 for tree lights and plants, sprinkler system; Wayfinding Project Digital Signage $300,000 cost was included in the city's Wayfinding contract, noting DeNyse stated each location is estimated at $150,000 each with locations at Eagles Landing Pkwy and East Atlanta Rd; and noted there was conversation about VyStar and a digital sign near the Amphitheater, and the need for two signs may go away, noting the City Attorney has reviewed the VyStar contract which includes the installation of a digital sign.

Attorney Washington stated that there was a level of approval by the City Manager to install VyStar signage.

Mayor Ford stated that he recalled signing for approval of the extension of the mural.

Councilmember Alexander stated there is specific language in the VyStar contract for the city to install a digital sign by December 31 on the street front with 50% rotation.

Attorney Washington stated there was an invoice that came in right at the $50,000 City Manager's limit, and it was his understanding that it was not for the extension of the mural, but for the digital sign that Councilmember Alexander is referencing.

Mayor Ford stated parties will get clarification regarding the signage and the agreement.

Mr. Sanders noted he brought it to everyone's attention specifically for clarification as it relates to Wayfinding; and referenced the Patrick Henry Blvd. Development Traffic Study $45,000.

Councilmember Alexander stated the developer should pay for the traffic study, noting it is a $350 million dollar project.

Mr. Sanders noted the Container District presentation is coming to the City Council in October and gave a visual of a container outside of the ED bldg. and under the bridge.

Councilmember Alexander noted the containers work best where there is limited space, and the proposed locations seem more appropriate; and understanding that the containers should not be placed where there are empty brick and mortar buildings; and referenced the containers in McDonough with outdoor seating, and a built-in covering already there by the bridge.

Mr. Sanders noted the proposed containers are mobile and different models have kitchens and are all along the beltline.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt joined the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Ms. Fareed noted the Main Street Program introduced a proposal for a container district years ago, stating that the original architect did the containers along the Atlanta Beltline; and noted the proposed containers would be for small scale eateries, such as ice cream shops, pop ups like t-shirt stands, or folding chair rental shops are needed in the downtown area, something eclectic, and this is a great opportunity.

Councilmember Barber stated the area under the bring is perfect, and thanked Ms. Fareed and Mr. Sanders for the presentation; and stated the proposed container district is located in city council District 4 where she was duly elected to represent, noting the downtown area expands beyond Love Street and M L King Sr. Heritage Trail, not that those streets don't need assistance, stating the Main Street Program can assist in that area; and noted there are other areas of the downtown that the city should focus on that are also in the downtown including East Atlanta Rd. and N. Henry Blvd. and wants to make sure the city is utilizing all of its resources to help improve the aesthetics of all of the businesses in the district and the entire downtown area; and noted she keeps hearing the DDA or at least the DDA Council Liaison keeps focusing on M L King Sr. Heritage Trail, noting there are other businesses who need help along East Atlanta Rd. and N. Henry Blvd. where some businesses are struggling, and asked Mr. Sanders and Ms. Fareed to reach out to those businesses who could also benefit from the services, programs, and grants the city has to offer, and not just focusing on one small area of the downtown.

Councilmember Alexander noted several business have come into the downtown during his tenure on the DDA Board, and stated the map has been expanded to include Arch Dental, and the city is about to bring in a mixed-use development across from city hall; and stated he has talked with developers and investors, and referenced a property currently available in the downtown, mentioning that to them daily about investing or developing in the downtown area; noted he has brought businesses into the downtown, an area that he does ot represent, but everyone does; and suggested expanding the DDA downtown map to the Sherwin Williams plaza to Flippen Rd. and to acquiring property and noted when he joined the DDA Board, there was no interest in the downtown, and now there is lots of interest and activity, and referenced the Kickback event and BridgeFest coming this weekend where thousands of people will come in to the downtown area.

Councilmember Barber stated that was correct, and that the businesses that Councilmember Alexander has brought in have been his friends, or your connections, , and takes issue with your special interests; stating she is here for the people, and stated the 3-acre lot across from city hall, wanting to push personal interest there too, but it won't happen without a fight, noting there are plenty of other potential investors interested in the spaces in our downtown, and noted that every business prospect that she has brought to the city has been blocked, and is glad Mr. Edmondson is here and is open to listening to all of the potential investors that she has brought to the table and has the proof and receipts of all of them; and reiterated that she is the downtown district representative.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt noted the container district previously proposed was going to place the containers in another location, and loves the idea of them being placed under the bridge, and supports that location; and noted when the idea was originally proposed, all councilmembers were at-large; and noted it takes of consensus of the Council to get anything done, noting the downtown is the number one focus for everyone; and stated that there is nothing wrong with knowing people or having connections who can invest, that's okay; and fully supports the containers in the location presented.

Councilmember Barber recalled when the original proposal for containers was brought to the Council it was rejected because three members of the City Council, Blount, Gantt and Alexander, approved a Purchase and Sell Agreement for their friend that disallowed containers within one mile of the downtown district; and asked the Council to respect the district lines that she was duly elected to represent, noting that she understands.

their interest, and welcomes their suggestions, however, noted the Council will not continue to make decisions withing the district that she was duly elected to represent without hearing from her every time; noting the Council approved nine high density townhome developments in her district, and that six of the nine developments are outside of the downtown district, where it was stated that you needed high density in the downtown district.

Councilmember Barber asked Mayor Pro Tem Gantt to be allow her to continue to speak uninterrupted, noting she did not speak over her when she was speaking; stated she wants input from the residents and businesses who were here before the members of the Council, the CDA, and the DDA; and that the 3-acre lot is a prime location for a gathering spot.

Councilmember Alexander suggested a 30-day plan for the council approved Alleyway project, stating the project needs to start this year, and it needs to be funded; and noted the Alleyway was the intent for the gathering spot.

Mr. Edmondson noted he met with Economic Development and stated that a funding source was identified, and that what was presented years ago was not appealing at that time.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt stated that the 3-acre lot was not a gathering spot as was voted on per the LCI Plan B; noting downtown is the heartbeat for live, work and play and everyone needs to support; and requested a timeline on projects and funding and may have to scale back on projects; noted the Citywide Development Authority hosts a Broker's Open event with investors who watch city meetings, and we should not want to push them away; noted the city needs to be business friendly, and stated her support of the new proposal for the container district; and reiterated that all projects need a timeline.

Mr. Edmondson noted the priority list approved by the Council at the retreat in March was vague, and that he needs to find out which projects have been approved and what the funding source is; noting he needs clarity and guidance to create a list and timeline and is clear on the Community Center.

Councilmember Alexander asked that the TSW renderings be reviewed.

<u>HR Department Budget – Presented by Frank Milazi, City/Treasurer /CFO & Najaa Hammonds, HR Generalist</u>

Mr. Milazi noted the consultant fees for Human Resources have doubled; noted the city's General Liability Insurance has become unstainable noting the increases in premium in 2023 $360,000; 2024 $600,000; 2025 $800,000 and 2026 $900,000, noting there was no justification.

Mr. Edmondson noted the city needs a Fleet Management Program.

Mayor Ford asked that General Liability Insurance be put out for bid.

Mr. Milazi noted increases in Temporary Personnel and Interns both at $50,000.00; and planned to delete the HR Expenses line item.

Ms. Holiday noted this is the line item used to purchase bereavement flowers; and going forward, that will be a duty of the HR department staff.

Mr. Milazi noted the line item will remain.

Councilmember Barber asked for the city's Drug Testing Policy to be provided.

Mr. Milazi noted Decorations would move to the City Events budget; and stated he has not received the projected numbers for Medical/Dental Insurance or Worker's Compensation for FY2026.

Councilmember Alexander questioned staff's attendance at Health & Wellness activities.

Ms. Hammonds stated the events are well received.

Councilmember Berry exited the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

<u>Municipal Court Department Budget – Presented by Genea Stanley, Court Administrator</u>

Ms. Stanley reviewed the department's Mission; reviewed Historical Case Count data since the inception of the police department in 2021 - 2024; reviewed FY2025 citations, noting a clearance rate of 71%; reviewed FY2025 accomplishments including court renovations, improved customer service, internship with Georgia State, implement FTA & warrant fees, and coordinated annual Amnesty program; reviewed FY2026 goals to enhance courtroom technology, improve retention of employees, eliminate overtime and convert to exempt status if applicable, and upgrade software; noted no personnel requests; reviewed statutory surcharges; noted proposed budget increases for salaries, overtime, court appointed attorneys, shredding services, personnel services, postage, utilities, hospitality, and statutory surcharges for a net variance of $2,828.34 compared to FY2025.

Ms. Stanley noted there was no request for additional personnel; and noted the courtroom technology upgrades were paid for with RedSpeed funds.

Mayor Ford stated there may need to be a title change if an employee's status changed from hourly to exempt.

Councilmember Barber asked about the Drivers Education/Training Fund.

Ms. Stanley responded this is mandatory drivers' education course per Joshua's Law.

<u>Main Street Department Budget – Presented by Lisa Fareed, Downtown Manager</u>

Ms. Fareed noted the Main Street program is not an events program, it's an economic arm of the Economic Development Department, and promotes downtown, Main Street, and brings in programs for all ages into the downtown area; noted the Main Street staff was formerly located in City Hall and is now located in the Economic Development Building; noted the Main Street Coordinator position was changed from exempt to non-exempt, resulting in overtime pay, and is requesting additional overtime salaries in the event the position is not changed back to exempt status; noted budget increases for Professional Fees to pay for a facilitator, video and photographer to cover Main Street events, entertainment, movies, bands, etc.; noted budget increases for training and travel to attend two major conferences and is requested an increase for beautification in the downtown Main Street area for year round lights to enhance the district.

Mayor Ford noted there needs to be a conversation with the City Manager and HR to determine the Exempt or Non-Exempt status of staff.

Mr. Edmondson noted there will be a review to make sure the classification is appropriate.

Councilmember Barber asked about the Public Art line item.

Ms. Fareed referenced the painting of utility boxes, Lil Free Library Boxes, and the plans for historic preservation with interpretative signage.

Ms. Fareed noted the Main Street Advisory Board is not an authority, and there is not a separate budget, and is managed by staff.

Councilmember Barber suggested the city consider a Christmas Tree Decorating Contest, where the decorated trees would be highlighted along the green space across from city hall.

Councilmember Alexander noted the DDA and Main Street have funded plantings in the downtown area and stated the DDA will fund the lights and sprinkler system, and the city's landscaping vendor would maintain the area.

Mr. Edmondson stated he needs to sit down with the vendor (Yellowstone Landscaping) to review the maintenance plan and review self-maintenance plantings.

Councilmember Alexander noted funding has been approved in the Yellowstone contract; and referenced the sidewalk area along M L King, Sr. Heritage Trail that needs to be ADA compliant by retrofitting the sidewalks; and stated the DDA and Main Street Boards are doing the same work and may need to be combined.

Mr. Edmondson noted there needs to be a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities, noting the Main Street Advisory Board is tasked with promoting downtown and the DDA is charged with revitalization, retention of businesses, inviting developers, acquiring properties, noting the two boards are distinctly different, noting it appears the lines have been blurred, and that can hinder growth.

Councilmember Alexander noted the Main Street budget has $5,000 for events and needs to be increased to allow more than one event that would focus on the entire district.

Mr. Edmondson noted Main Street Programs are regulated by the DCA (Department of Community Affairs), who have specific guidelines, and make sure the Main Street Program does not cross lines.

Ms. Fareed noted the budget line for training is required and important and gave an analogy whereas the DDA is the dad, who is responsible for funding of the "house," and the Main Street Program is the mom, who is responsible for decorating the "house."

Councilmember Barber noted there needs to be a segregation of the boards, noting Main Street is not set up to put on events.

Mr. Edmondson stated he has met with Department Directors and emphasized the departments are not working in silos, and make sure there is no redundancy.

Public Works Department Budget – Presented by Decius Aaron, Public Works Director

Mr. Aaron noted the Public Works Department has seven budgets (Sanitation, Stormwater, Water, Sewer, Parks, Buildings, and General Maintenance), and would provide a summary presentation.

Mr. Aaron noted the FY2026 budget priorities include conducting an in-dept financial assessment of the infrastructure and develop a master plan for capital projects and maintenance; conduct a facilities assessment of all city buildings; close the transfer station and incorporate into Memorial Park for additional parking; and traffic signals maintenance.

Mr. Aaron noted the department received the Platinum Award for the Water System and the Gold Award for the Wastewater Treatment Facility; and resurfaced seven miles of road.

Mr. Aaron made personnel requests for a new position of Project Manager, and two additional Water Technicians; and the reclassification of the Executive Assistant position to an Administrative Analyst and one of the Water Technician positions to a Water Treatment Plant Operator position; noted the city's current $15/hr. minimum wage is not sufficient to hire and maintain sufficient staffing; noted there has been several vandalism incidents; noted the proposed budget includes a request to purchase additional mowers and tractors.

Councilmember Barber stated District 4 has the largest amount of newly annexed land mass.

Councilmember Alexander stated District 5 accounts for 33% of the city's housing; and referenced the litter and weeds along Hwy. 138 West and requires more frequency with the street sweeper.

Mr. Aaron noted the department's two streetsweeper are eight and four years old.

Councilmember Alexander inquired about the city's Parks Master Plan, stating there is $1.3 million dollars allocated in SPLOST V, $5 million dollars allocated in SPLOST VI, and that there is no shade covering at the Candler Park Dog Park; and inquired about the East Atlanta Rd./Lee Street sidewalk project.

Mr. Aaron noted the Master Park Plan has been completed; and noted there is no official vote to move forward with the East Atlanta Road to Lee Street sidewalk project.

Councilmember Alexander noted the project has been designed by Falcon Design and is appropriate to move forward as part of the Trail Plan.

Councilmember Barber noted the proposed sidewalk project is in City Council District 4, and that she has asked for all tasks orders associated with the PATH Foundation; and asked why Falcon Design was tasked with any design associated with the Master Trail Plan.

Mr. Aaron noted the East Atlanta to Lee Street project is not part of the Master Trail Plan, noting it is a sidewalk project and the task order for the design to widen East Atlanta Rd. to Lee Street from 5' to 10', was signed by the former City Manager, Frederick Gardiner, and was not brought to the City Council for approval, noting it was not part of the Master Trail Plan.

Councilmember Barber requested the Minutes where the sidewalk project was approved, considering the City has approved a Master Trail Plan.

Mr. Aaron stated the project was not presented to the City Council, noting the task order was in the City Manager's signing authority for the design.

Councilmember Barber stated the city has approved a Master Trail Plan and is unclear as to why there is a separate project, specifically in Council District 4, that was not approved by the City Council; and asked where she could see the funding for the Parks Master Plan.

Mr. Aaron noted the Parks Master Plan funding is in SPLOST and is in the city's CIP (Capital Improvement Plan).

Councilmember Barber asked when the Parks Master Plan will roll out and asked for the schedule.

Mr. Aaron noted he would send the proposed schedule out that was prepared by TSW.

Councilmember Alexander stated the East Atlanta Rd./Lee Street sidewalk project preceded the PATH Foundation Plan, noting Falcon Design had already been paid, and there was not a need to then pay the PATH Foundation, stating Mr. Ganther is aware that this portion of N. Henry Blvd. is going to be completed, noting they are experts at what they do, and they support the city's trail plan; noted the idea is to form a complete circle around City Hall for total connection and to close the gap, and to continue working with the PATH Foundation, who he brought to the city, and is a member of one of their boards, and suggested Mr. Aaron and Mr. Edmondson bring the sidewalk project to the City Council 's next meeting for approval with the estimate ready for review at that time; noting former City Manager has paid for the task order, and there is funding in SPLOST V, SPLOST VI, Bonds, for the project and noted there is $20 million dollars for trails; and asked for the status of the Brush Creek Trail project.

Mr. Aaron noted the project is moving along with meetings being held bi-weekly.

Councilmember Alexander referenced the City Council's approval of Assistant Public Works Director position, to have an engineer on board, and the Public Works Director has suggested filling that position in other ways with a request for a Public Works Project Manager, while the City Council was specific when the position was approved, noting the previous person who held the position of Assistant Public Works Director had the engineering qualifications.

Mr. Edmondson stated that if that is the will of the Council, and stated that it is his belief that you should always have a city engineer, while it also depends on the type of engineer; noted a Deputy Public Works Director should be just that, and you may need to revisit the position; hired engineers are clear cut and are usually a stand-alone and, could be under the purview of Public Works.

Councilmember Alexander noted the Council wanted to have a city engineer to be available with their expertise, and also desired to have an Assistant Public Works Director.

Mr. Edmondson stated you should have both positions, noting in Public Works, there is a need for growth and upward mobility, and there is a need for a City Engineer.

Councilmember Alexander noted he supported bringing in the Assistant Public Works Director with the Engineering certifications and would like to see that happen and asked about the suggestion of a Project Manager as presented.

Mr. Edmondson noted he is looking to merging the Management Analyst currently in his department into a Special Project Management position, and since its already on the books, just rewrite the job description by adding that component to capture everything.

Councilmember Alexander stated that he is aligned with that recommendation and noted that there should not be any squeakiness from staff, meaning when the City Council votes and approves items, that item should be carried out by staff based on the votes of the Council; noted the East Atlanta Rd. project should have been presented to the City Council for approval, not understanding why it is just being learned that there was not a vote from the City Council; and noted that anything that needs to brought forward to the Council to please do so.

Mayor Ford referenced the conversation regarding a Project Manager, Asst. PW Director, and engineers, and asked if those could all be combined, and how would that work.

Mr. Edmondson responding stating that you never want to bog the engineer with projects, noting the engineering aspect of the project would be specific; and noted if an in-house engineer were brought on board, the contracted engineers could be narrowed down as a cost savings.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt asked for clarification.

Mr. Edmondson stated that his approach would be to not have the Deputy PW Director and City Engineer be one in the same, noting that is what the Council voted on, however, he would break that out separately, noting both positions are needed.

Mayor Ford confirmed that there are three positions, the Assistant Public Works Director, which is already on the books, a City Engineer, and a Project Manager, and that neither should be combined.

Mr. Edmondson agreed, stating he fully understands the need for all three positions, and noted the Deputy PW Director is definitely needed, understanding Public Works is a large department with seven different budgets; and there needs to be a City Engineer, and Project Manager that he is looking at merging with the current Management Analyst position.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt asked if the City Engineer position would eliminate the city's contracted engineer.

Mr. Aaron stated the city has contracts with Falcon Design & Engineering, and Carter & Sloope for Public Works projects and Whitley Engineering services Community Development projects.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt suggested a different time to brainstorm and discuss the positions, noting it involves personnel.

Councilmember Alexander asked Mr. Aaron for the timeframe to get the data back regarding the East Atlanta Rd./Lee Street sidewalk project.

Mr. Aaron stated he needs to consult with Falcon Design for an appropriate response with a timeline and advise.

Councilmember Barber asked for the status of the Curb & Gutter project in Council Districts 2 and 4.

Mr. Aaron noted Falcon Design gave an update during the March Retreat noting the surveying has been completed; and noted Falcon is in the gathering stages of seeking 50 easements, noting the project is basically re-engineering a neighborhood that was not built to today's standards, noting it is easier to build a new house, than to renovate an old house, and this is what is happening with this particular project; and noted that based on his experience, when you notify the homeowners that their frontage is being reduced from 25' to 10-15', there will be issues and there will need to be negotiations and assign an assessed value, and noted the easement documents are being prepared.

Councilmember Barber noted the project was approved, and the funds are available in TSPLOST, and asked for the percentage of easements that have been presented, noting the project update was presented to the City Council earlier in March of this year.

Mr. Aaron stated Falcon is still working on the easements, and once completed, the information will be brought to the City Council to assign someone to be assigned to negotiate the easements.

Councilmember Barber asked for a timeline.

Mr. Aaron advised he would contact Falcon Design and report back to the Council.

Councilmember Barber stated this is a priority project for Councilman Thomas in District 2 and a priority for the homeowners who live in the Tye Street community, and that there are also homeowners in District 4 along Davis Rd. who don't have curb, and have issues with their yards flooding when it rains and wants to make sure that the approved and funded projects are moving along; and requested that all information regarding the East Atlanta Rd./Lee Street sidewalk project that has been discussed and is located in Council District 4 that she was duly elected to represent, and requested that all information regarding all projects be shared with each Council District representative, specifically, City Council District 4.

Police Department Budget – Presented by: Frank Trammer, Police Chief

Chief Trammer gave a brief overview of the department, noting where we've been, where we are, and where we are going; referenced the 2023 Annexation referendum of nearly 7,000 residents into the city and noted an estimated population for 2025 nearly 36,000 and estimated calls for service of almost 47,000; reviewed the crime data report showing a decrease in violent crime down 16.6 and 25% decrease in property/financial crime; noted staffing needs are 86 to meet service demand and is requesting a Non-Sworn Code Enforcement Manager, 1 additional Code Enforcement Officer and 1 Code Enforcement Clerk; referenced the city's overall budget for FY2025 of $62,188,618 and Police being 14% of the budget; noted additional funding sources are $2.2 million from RedSpeed Cameras, $575,000 pending grant, $375,000 HEAT, and $200,000 Charging Stations; noted the DEA Task Force netted $287,000 in seized funds and there is $71,347 in the Police Foundation; noted these are funding sources that would not impact the city's general fund budget; noted the FY2026 request IS for 15 positions for a total of 2.2 million dollars, noting an increase in part-time officer, and a full-time position for city hall security, and $360,000 in benefits; noted there are currently 68 sworn officers, and the request for FY2026 IS 79 officers with both sworn and un-sworn officers; noted the department received grant funding for an Accreditation Officer; referenced the 2022 Feasibility report for 45-84 officers based on calls for service, and started with 52 sworn officers in 2022 with 6 civilians, and received the COPS Grant for

10 additional positions; and in 2023 the population increased by 7,000 and the department is now responsible for sections of the interstate, noting the City of Stockbridge and the City of Locust Grove are the only Henry County municipalities with interstate coverage; referenced an increase in Code Enforcement; noted the city needs to address and enforce the Alarms Ordinance; and add a Records Clerk, noting the Alarm fines of an estimated $85,000 would cover the cost of the position; and noted the department increase from 2022 – 2026 would be an overall increase of 43%.

Chief Trammer noted the grants have expired, and is recommending an increase to the pay scale, new positions, and benefits, noting the increase in salaries are needed to remain competitive, along with other supplemental benefits; referenced the pay and benefits for DeKalb County Police Department, and requested a salary adjustment of $6,000 from $54,000 to $60,000, across the board annually; and noted the cost to replace a certified office is five to six times greater with backfilling the positions to include equipment, uniforms, training, benefits and overtime.

Chief Trammer noted a request to increase with 11 positions in a dedicated Traffic Unit, referenced the traffic data since 2023; noted there would be 4 authorized officers, noting traffic enforcement is not about generating revenue, but it is about roadway safety such as seat belts, and distracted driving, and that with those fines and fees, the estimated revenue is project to be over $1 million dollars; and noted if authorized, the startup fee would be $782,000.

Chief Trammer noted the Operation Expenses are contained in the report, and will highlight some of the major expenses, noting the vehicles are moving into their fourth year, and Vehicle Maintenance is increasing $145,000 at $2700 per vehicle; noted contract services has increased by $708,000; noted $948,000 for vehicle purchases for 11 new officers; noted the COPS Grant Expiration Coverage of $637,120; Pay Scale Adjustments $429,254.40; New Position Salaries $1,176,188 and Benefits for new positions $360,000.00 and proposed increase for Flock Maintenance of $54,000.

Chief Trammer noted future vendor services included Records Management Systems, a Real-Time Data Center grant of $350,000 with dedicated monitors.

Mayor Ford noted the city is growing, noting the proposed increases in salaries and personnel, and the addition of the satellite station at the Bridges of Jodeco.

Councilmember Alexander stated that he appreciates the support shown by the police department and stands behind the decision to move forward with implementing the police department; and referenced the sub-station at the Bridges of Jodeco, noting the facility needs to be outfitted.

Chief Trammer noted RedSpeed funds were used to furnish the satellite precinct; and noted there are 79 officers currently, and 79 vehicles with $750,000 paid out of RedSpeed; noted the building of a garage and outside storage facility will come from RedSpeed funds; and noted RedSpeed funds cannot be relied on.

Councilmember Alexander asked why the Stockbridge Police Department could not coordinate with the Henry County Police Department for real time monitoring.

Chief Trammer's response was that the Stockbridge Police Department wants to control the monitoring for parks and other operations; and noted the initial cost will be through a public safety grant and will be housed in the current building.

Chief Trammer referenced Code Enforcement, noting the department is in PD currently with four officers, and is requesting additional officers, assigned by district; and noted the department is running behind on being fully operational.

Councilmember Alexander stated 33% of housing is in Council District 5.

Councilmember Barber referenced the timeline of the rollout of the police department in 2022 and adding an additional 7,000 residents in 2023; and stated she wants to see more community policing and additional flock cameras.

Mayor Pro Tem Gantt summarized that the COPS Grant for 10 officers has expired and will now be funded from the police department general fund budget; noted there are 68 officers with a request for 11 more officers; and noted there are currently two grants being used that will expire after 5 years and the city would need to take on the funding.

Councilmember Barber thanked Chief Trammer for the presentation, and acknowledged members who were present from the CPAC Committee.

Mr. Edmondson asked that everyone be reminded that each dollar has an implication and needs to be accounted for; stressed the importance of providing delivery of services for the citizens of Stockbridge; wants to continue to provide excellence in service; and thanked everyone for their hard work, noting this is a serious matter.

Councilmember announced the BridgeFest/HispaniFest event this weekend.

Motion to adjourn at 4:06 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