CITY OF FOREST PARK
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2026, at 6:00 PM
Forest Park City Hall | Council Chambers
745 Forest Parkway, Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Gwendolyn Ellison

The Honorable Kimberly James	**The Honorable Delores A. Gunn**
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez	**The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells**
The Honorable Allan Mears	

Latosha Clemons, Interim City Manager
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk
Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney

SUMMARY MINUTES

VIRTUAL MEETING NOTICE
Council Meetings will be live-streamed and available on Forest Park's YouTube Channel

I. **CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME -** The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ellison at 6:00 PM.

II. **ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK –** All members were present.

III. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS –** Motion to approve was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

IV. **ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS**
Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Councilmember Gunn; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Councilmember James motioned to remove Item 1, “Discussion of 2nd Annual Renewal for Sound Equipment Services with Digital World Live,” from the Consent Agenda, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Councilmember Gutierrez expressed concerns regarding items on the Consent Agenda.

The City Clerk noted, and Legal Counsel confirmed that any member of the Governing Body can request any or all items be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Motion to remove all items from the Consent Agenda and move to New Business was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

V. CONSENT AGENDA – Items Moved to New Business

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Council Discussion of 2nd Annual Renewal for Sound Equipment Services with Digital World Live - Recreation and Leisure**
   Presented by: Parks and Recreation Director Tarik Maxwell, and Procurement Manager, Ms. Talisa Adams
   Background/History: The Recreation and Leisure Services Department requests to execute its 2nd and final annual renewal option for the sound equipment services contract with Digital World Live under the same prices, terms, and conditions.
   This vendor will continue to provide sound equipment and technician services for 15 city events. These events include (4 Fun Fridays, Forest Park Day, Hispanic Heritage Celebration, 3 Ultimate Tailgate Experiences, Fall Festival, Summer Soul Fest, and any other festival that are planned by the Recreation and Leisure Services Department).
   Annual Total: $77,850.00 – General Operation Fund: 100-41-6190-53-1118

   Ms. Adams, Procurement Manager, an overview of the background and history of the 2nd Annual Renewal for Sound Equipment Services with Digital World Live.

   Councilmember Gunn expressed concerns regarding the company's performance during a recent event, stating that the vendor arrived late and the equipment was not properly set up; noting vendors should provide quality service and does not support paying additional funds to the company.

   Councilmember Gutierrez asked what the process would be if the contract were not renewed.

   Director Maxwell responded that the service would be put back out for bid.

2. **Council Discussion of 1st Annual Renewal for On-Call Electrical Services and Repair with Mr. Dee's Electric Service, LLC, Shalom Visionary Strategies, and Capital City Electrical Services, LLC - Public Works - Presented by: Procurement Manager, Ms. Talisa Adams**
   Background/History: The Public Works Department is looking to execute its 1st annual renewal option with three (3) electrical firms for an as-needed electrical services and repairs for City-owned facilities. The specific scope of work will be negotiated and assigned by Task Order(s) amongst the following contractors: Dee's Electric Service, LLC; Shalom Visionary Strategies; and Capital City Electrical Services, LLC

3. **Purchase New LifePak & Lucas and Renew Annual Maintenance Services Contract with Stryker - Fire/EMS - Procurement Manager, Ms. Talisa Adams**
   Background/History: The Forest Park Fire & EMS Department relies on LifePak cardiac monitors and LUCAS mechanical chest compression devices as critical; lifesaving

equipment used in emergency medical responses. These devices require regular inspection, maintenance, software updates, battery replacement, and access to manufacturer-approved parts to ensure reliability, accuracy, and compliance with applicable safety standards.

The City currently maintains an annual maintenance and service agreement with Stryker, the sole authorized manufacturer and service provider for LifePak and LUCAS equipment. Stryker offers this agreement through the Sourcewell cooperative contract #041823-STY, which provides comprehensive coverage, including parts and labor, annual preventative inspections, battery replacement, equipment servicing, and replacement of worn or failed components.

Renewal of the annual service contract ensures uninterrupted maintenance support, extends the useful life of the equipment, minimizes operational downtime, and supports the Fire & EMS Department's ability to deliver timely and effective emergency medical services to the community. Staff recommend approval to purchase new LifePak & Lucas equipment and renew the annual maintenance services contract with Stryker to ensure continued operational readiness and patient safety for up to five (5) annual terms totaling $370,193.43.

4. Council Discussion of Special Facility Usage Request - Kiwanis Stadium - Recreation and Leisure – Presented by: Director Tarik Maxwell

Background/History: The Georgia Mass Band has rented the football stadium every Thursday and Friday from 5:30pm-8:30pm between the months of May and July since 2024. The Georgia Mass Band was founded in 2016.

Director Maxwell gave an overview of the history of the Special Facility Usage Request, noting, due to concerns raised last year, he requested that a representative appear before the Council to explain the organization's community benefits and relationship with the city before approving another rental.

President, Elijah Thompson gave the history of the band organization, including its goals and activities, noting the 501c3 was founded in 2016, and is comprised of former band members of Riverdale HS, and other Clayton County High Schools; and noted this is the band's 10th year anniversary.

Mr. Thompson noted there are over 400 members who have support from HBCU Band Directors and noted over the years, members have received more than $250 million dollars in scholarships.

Councilmember Gunn stated she does not support the request due to noise concerns, particularly the impact on senior citizens in her Ward. She noted that Ward 2 residents have been affected negatively and have made their complaints known to her with band members still on site at 10:30 – 11:00 p.m.; and asked her colleagues to consider the quality of life for Ward 2 residents and not approve the request this year or in the future.

Councilmember Gutierrez acknowledged the organization as a positive outlet for youth and stated that he personally does not reside in the affected area. He expressed support for the request while asking for clarification on how local youth benefit and whether opportunities are extended to them, specifically, Forest Park High School students, and encouraged greater involvement of youth from the community and suggested considering earlier end times to minimize the impact on nearby residents, and perhaps supporting by providing resources such as water.

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated she agrees with her colleague's concerns, asking for the number of Forest Park students who participated. She also noted that while she can hear the band from her home, it is more impactful for residents closer to the area. She asked how many participants are from Clayton County and whether the program directly benefits local youth. She suggested exploring alternative locations, such as working with the County to use Tara Stadium. Councilmember Akins-Wells expressed support for the program, emphasizing the need to consider resident concerns, noting she was also made aware of prior complaints. Councilmember Akins-Wells offered to support the program.

Mr. Thompson stated the cost associated with renting Tara Stadium is $5,000, and they simply cannot afford the rental fee there; acknowledged receiving noise complaints from residents, and has relayed the information to the band members, noting this has put the practice location in jeopardy. Mr. Thompson stated that the organization has attempted to end practices earlier, but some delays occur while students wait for transportation. He added that they are aware of the concerns and are working to address them.

Interim City Manager Clemons asked whether the request involved a fee waiver.

Director Maxwell clarified that no fees are being waived and noted all fees for past rentals have been paid timely, in full and in advance, reiterating that this item was brought before the Council due to noise concerns that were raised; and stated the gates are locked by staff promptly at 9:00 p.m.

Mr. Thompson apologized regarding the noise activity by band members past 8:30 a.m. and assured the Council the matter would be addressed.

Mayor Ellison noted that FIFA activities are planned for June or July and asked whether there would be any scheduling conflicts.

Director Maxwell responded that the request would not interfere with scheduled activities in the stadium or baseball fields.

After further discussion, Councilmember Akins-Wells suggested Tabling the item and conducting a community survey.

Councilmember Gutierrez agreed, noting he is hopeful there will be a resolution as he would much rather see 400 students to be practicing in the band that doing something else.

5. **Council Discussion of Special Facility Usage Request - Recreation Center Gymnasium - Recreation and Leisure – Presented by: Director Maxwell**
Background/History: The United Way of Greater Atlanta is looking to host a Maternal Health Expo that will feature diverse types of educational vendors. This event is free to participate and free to attend. This expo will serve as a vital community hub where families

can access resources and a supportive network dedicated to ensuring every mother and birthing person thrives.

Director Maxwell gave an overview of the background and history of the Special Facility Usage Request for the Recreation Center Gymnasium.

Councilmember Akins-Wells noted her support of the event.

Interim City Manager Clemons asked whether the request involved a fee waiver.

Director Maxwell confirmed the request does include waving the fee, noting the scheduled time includes both set-up and clean-up.

Councilmember James expressed support for United Way and its initiatives and confirmed that this is not the organization's first time using the facility.

Councilmember Gutierrez suggested that Director Maxwell consider partnering with a nearby business across from the church.

6. **Council Discussion of Special Facility Usage Request - 696 Main Street (Leonard Hartsfield Senior Community Center) - Recreation and Leisure – Presented by: Director Maxwell**

Background/History: District 1 Commissioner Ms. Reaves has requested use of the 696 Main Street facility to host a district meeting. Some of Forest Park residences are within Clayton County District 1 and District 3. This meeting will be held on April 2, 2026 from 5:30pm-8:00pm.

Director Maxwell gave an overview of the background and history of the Special Facility Usage Request for 696 Main Street (Leonard Hartsfield Sr. Community Center), made by Clayton County District 1 Commissioner Reaves.

Councilmember Akins-Wells expressed concern that, with the upcoming election season, approval of the request could be perceived as the City supporting a specific candidate and asked if Commissioner Reaves has hosted events throughout the year in the city.

Councilmember Gutierrez stated that while the requester is the current County Commissioner, who is a candidate, it should be clearly communicated that the City of Forest Park is not endorsing any candidate and is acting in good faith as a community partner.

Director Maxwell noted there have been previous events by Commissioner Reaves, and noted that he is not familiar with the election calendar, and that the request included several different dates, and the date in the package is the only date where the facility is available, and noted parts of city of Forest Park falls within the Commissioner's District.

Mayor Ellison asked whether the fee would be waived.

Director Maxwell confirmed that the fee is being waived.

Councilmember James asked Attorney Matricardi whether a policy could be created to restrict facility use by candidates during election years or election cycles.

Attorney Matricardi stated that such a policy could be drafted for Council approval.

7. **Council Discussion and Approval to enter into a new contract for Ambulance EMS Billing Collections Services with Trinity EMS Consultants - Fire/EMS – Presented by: Ms. Talisa Adams, Procurement Manager**

Background/History:
Since 2022, The Fire and EMS Department has partnered with Trinity EMS Consultants (TEMS) to provide patient billing collection services. This is a revenue-generating contract, and TEMS receives 6% monthly fee of total collections. They will continue to offer a customer-based service that is easy to work with for our patients and carry out our billing for ambulance transport. Additionally, they provide training to our crews and administration on how to maximize the information gathered for ease of billing. We have had a higher return in billing collections and overall customer satisfaction with TEMS. This will be an annual contract with four (4) annual renewal options.

Ms. Adams gave an overview of the background and history of entering into a new contract for Ambulance EMS Billing and Collection Services with Trinity EMS Consultants for the Fire and EMS Departments.

Councilmember Gunn commended Ms. Adams on her presentation and noted several aspects of the proposal she found impressive. She also asked for clarification on the billing process for the service.

Councilmember Mears stated that the city has utilized this service for some time and expressed that if the current system is working effectively, it should remain in place.

8. **Council Discussion and Approval of a contract with Carahsoft Technology Corp for the OpenGov System. – Finance. Presented by: Ms. Talisa Adams, Procurement Manager**

Background/History: The City of Forest Park utilizes the OpenGov system to support the centralized management of key financial, procurement, and operational functions. These functions include citywide budgeting, procurement e-solicitations, contract administration, and records management for goods, services, and project requests.

The OpenGov platform also supports public-facing services, including business license and property tax processing, and provides asset management capabilities used daily by multiple departments. The system helps ensure fiscal accountability, operational efficiency, and compliance with applicable policies and reporting requirements.

Continued access to system maintenance, technical support, and software updates is essential to support the operations of the Finance Department, the Procurement Division, and all user departments that rely on the platform for daily activities.

The Finance Department is requesting approval to piggyback on NASPO Cooperative Contract No. AR2472 with Carahsoft Technology Corp. This contract was competitively solicited and awarded in accordance with procurement standards. Approval of this item will allow the City to continue these services without disruption to the collection of business licenses, property taxes, and other critical financial and operational services.

Ms. Adams gave an overview of the background and history of the contract with Carahsoft Technology Corp for the OpenGov system.

Councilmember Akins-Wells raised concerns regarding the system's functionality, noting that certain services are not performing as expected, and requested clarification on the number of services currently being paid for under OpenGov and asked to review existing contracts.

Ms. Adams explained that the procurement system was implemented in 2024 through OpenGov to streamline processes and centralize them. She further clarified that property tax and business license functions are currently managed through the Tyler ERP system, which is also used by Planning and Zoning.

Councilmember Gunn stated that the program appears to address several existing issues and referenced financial projections included in the agenda packet. She expressed support for the system, noting its potential to improve efficiency and reduce manual processes.

Councilmember Gutierrez stated that he believes the city should have implemented OpenGov sooner, referencing its ease of use and widespread adoption by other municipalities. He expressed confidence that the system will improve processes, particularly related to business licensing, and thanked Ms. Adams for her thorough presentation.

9. Council Discussion of FY2025/2026 General Fund Budget Amendment – Finance Presented by: Finance Director, John Wiggins

Background/History: Agenda Item – Budget Amendments (Finance Department)
The Finance Department respectfully submits the following budget amendment for Council consideration. These adjustments are part of the Department's proactive financial management practices and quarterly budget review process, which ensure accurate reporting, compliance with adopted budgetary standards, and alignment of departmental appropriations with actual operational activity.
The proposed amendment reflects responsible financial stewardship and supports the City's continued commitment to maintaining fiscal stability through regular monitoring, forecasting, and timely budget adjustments. Background / Discussion
As part of its ongoing fiscal oversight responsibilities, the Finance Department conducts quarterly reviews of departmental revenues and expenditures. This process ensures financial activity remains consistent with approved appropriations, operational priorities, and established internal controls.
These reviews allow for:

- Timely identification of variances between budgeted and actual activity
- Realignment of appropriations to reflect operational needs
- Compliance with budgetary and accounting standards
- Transparent and accurate financial reporting

The amendment presented is routine in nature and does not increase the overall adopted budget. Rather, it reallocates existing funds to better align with current spending patterns and projected needs through fiscal year-end.

The adjustment is supported by surplus revenue of $437,780 and ensures that departmental budgets remain properly aligned with operational activity while preserving overall fiscal integrity. The change of amendment is $43,825,857 to $44,263,641.

Director Wiggins gave an overview of the FY 2025–2026 General Fund Budget Amendment.

Councilmember James thanked Director Wiggins and requested clarification regarding the reported surplus, asking how the surplus amount was calculated and where it originated.

Director Wiggins reviewed the details with her and confirmed that the combined departmental adjustments, from the Legislative Office through Animal Control, total approximately $437,000.

Councilmember James requested additional clarification on the calculations.

VII. OLD BUSINESS - None

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - Councilmember Akins-Wells motioned to enter executive session to discuss personnel, litigation, and real estate, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The vote was unanimously approved. The Mayor and Council entered executive session at 6:52 pm.

Councilmember James made a motion to exit the executive session and reconvene the regular meeting at 7:03 pm, seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The vote was unanimously approved.

Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate or CyberSecurity: OCGA is §50-14-1

IX. ADJOURN – Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gunn. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at 404-366-4720 at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk CMC	Gwendolyn Ellison, Mayor