



CITY OF  
**FORESTPARK**

**CITY OF FOREST PARK  
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**

Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 6:00 PM  
Forest Park City Hall | Council Chambers  
745 Forest Parkway, Forest Park, GA 30297

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The Honorable Mayor Gwendolyn W. Ellison  
The Honorable Kimberly James  
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez  
The Honorable Allan Mears  
The Honorable Delores A. Gunn  
The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells  
Latosha Clemons, Interim City Manager  
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk  
Danielle Matricardi, City Attorney  
T. Orlando Pearson, City Attorney

## MINUTES

Transcribed by: Otter.ai with minor name corrections by the City Clerk  
Council Meetings will be live-streamed and available on [Forest Park's YouTube Channel](#)

- I. **CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME** – Mayor Ellison at 6:00 p.m.  
**PRAYER/INVOCATION** – Pastor Lou Golson
- II. **ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK** – All members were present.
- III. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS**  
Motion to adopt the agenda as presented was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded.
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS**
  - 1 **Appeal Hearing – Police Chief Brandon Criss, represented by Attorney Nathan Wade**

Mayor Ellison read the following statement:

Good evening. I now call this appeal hearing to order. As mayor, I will be presiding over tonight's proceedings. Issues a notice of termination that the record is immediately placed on suspension with pay, including all benefits and this hearing is being held to review the termination. Before we begin, I want to note that the city council has issued a notice, notice of appeal, and notice of appeal hearing. This prior review is intended to ensure that each party has the opportunity to proceed, so that all parties understand the order and expectations. The parties will have 30 minutes each to present their case in the record. Next, the police chief or his representative will then present. During these presentations, both parties will be heard to the basis for the termination. The rules of evidence does not apply, and no cross examinations will be permitted. Testimony offered, or any matter relative and relevant to our review of the city manager's decision. Once proceedings are closed. We will then move into the deliberations. The city code does not require that the decision be made by a majority affirmative votes of the city council. If the council upholds the termination, that termination becomes effective.

meeting, this is an administrative personnel appeal, and no public comment is permitted. Our goal tonight procedures as outlined. With that, we will begin. I now invite the City Manager, or her representative to pre

Interim City Manager, Latosha Clemons, was represented by Attorney T. Orlando Pearson, who presented Mayor Council, on behalf of the Office of the City Manager, we thank you for the opportunity to appear at t investigation with regard to the investigation after certain allegations were made concerning Mr. Criss, the met with individuals with personal knowledge concerning the allegations, as well as reviewed transcripts t publicly. However, the office believes. That the record before the mayor and council speaks for itself and s absences and the failure to account for work time, misrepresentation and manipulation of records, failure t controls and audit integrity, violation of administrative orders during an active investigation, as well as sec and based upon a finding of multiple violations of the city charter, the manual policies and procedures, as the office stands by the record before the mayor and council. As such, Mr. Criss may proceed with the pre agreement with Mr. Criss, the city may terminate without cause pursuant to the agreement. Thank you for

Brandon Criss was represented by Attorney Nathan Wade who presented the following case: So, good ev proceedings. And thank you again for hearing us. I won't belabor the point, but I'd like to say a few things . I've done this for almost 30 years, and several times I've had the opportunity to represent different Chiefs

Mayor Ellison: How long of an extension are you speaking of?

Attorney Wade: I just would hate for the expiration of that 30-minute time period to come upon us, and the

Mayor Ellison: Once we get close to that, we will determine it.

Attorney Wade: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

Attorney Matricardi: Mayor you would just need a vote to extend the time.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: So are you saying we have to vote on the time because it's not in the Charter

Councilmember Gutierrez: Is that standard practice that can be open to interpretation, or a new thing for u

Attorney Matricardi: It is similar to extending time for public comments or any type of hearing, a vote is rec

Councilmember Akins-Wells: So, for a point of clarity, during our council meetings, if a resident is speaking

Attorney Matricardi: When voting on Ordinances and Resolutions extended time would require a vote of th

Mayor Ellison: Is there a motion to grant additional time, possibly at least 10 additional minutes?

Councilmember Akins-Wells: I make a motion that grants 20 extra minutes, as everybody has heard her s

Councilmember Gutierrez: Second.

Mayor Ellison: All in favor?

Councilmember Gutierrez: Aye

Councilmember Akins-Wells: Aye

Councilmember James: No

Councilmember Gunn: Can we amend to giving an additional 20 minutes to give an additional 10

Attorney Matricardi: There is a motion on the floor.

Councilmember Gunn: I'm sorry.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: If you're going to be fair, we're going to be fair, and I want to do this in December we want to be transparent. Well, if we are here to know what happened. You just had your paper. He just

Councilmember James: Point of Order Madam Mayor. If we can take the vote, then we can go to another

Mayor Ellison: That motion passes. We are going to go to another motion

Councilmember James: Yes, ma'am. I'll just make a motion that we wait until his presentation to determine

Councilmember Gunn: Second.

Mayor Ellison: All in favor. (James/Gunn/Gutierrez/Mears)

Mayor Ellison: Opposed?

Councilmember Wells: No.

Mayor Ellison: The ayes carried, the motion passes.

Attorney Wade: Certainly, it wasn't our, I guess, intent to upset the apple cart. As you can see, the confusion is not normal protocol, because I was unable to find anything that could dictate the order of the day, you know, in order to present additional pieces of evidence, and we would contend that we're presenting nothing additional to be orderly investigation. I think that there are better ways to do this. Now, now, now. Interestingly enough, this is a political action, as opposed to public safety action, because, because this was not initiated, at least I don't know where the allegations, and where did they come from? It is apparent to me that the allegations have not come from a presentation, and then address you after the presentation. Is that okay, do

Brandon Criss: Good evening, Madam Mayor, City Council. Trying to stay encouraged. It's just a little hearing. I. I'll be going over transparency, fairness, and due process, and context. You go to the next slide, please. This is the city has brought forward. Next slide. Why this hearing matters. You just heard from my attorney that this is involving the public. I had an interview with the police chiefs, several employees, department directors, and my reputation, my reputation from premature statements that were made, my family, and my years of service.

Mayor Ellison: And that's why we're here today. Please proceed,

Brandon Criss: The administrative leave decision concerns their questions exist regarding whether council operational and legal implications. Question? question, if broader executive coordination did not occur, who was placed on leave. There was no immediate operational or public safety threat identified. I was stripped of all access and calendars were immediately locked and removed. Next slide. If I was truly considered unethical,

30 days. The city gave me one written extension, extended the process through April the 10th, 2026 and no clarification was provided. We did not hear from the city for almost two weeks. I remained in limbo status, no formal inventory and property was room storage process that never happened. I never, and I still haven't gotten procedures not followed as outlined in the agreement? The immediate lockout prevented me from assessing the document stated I had 24 hours to turn those things over, I after being on leave, I was interviewed one time, probably one of the best in the state of Georgia, but I've never had an investigation that I handled where I had issues outside of leave accountability. My questions were the questions that were asked were hypothetical, I asked questions involving whether I was conducting criminal investigations on city council members. This was not and how was it relevant to any type of administrative investigation? The question created concern regarding the as stated by the City Attorney? I submitted open records requests seeking communications and records regarding a contractor for the city. At the conclusion of the interview, I extended my hand as a, as a professional gesture.

Is it truly unbiased if there's, if there is a previous relationship or history with this attorney? A fair investigation of my access and questioning outside of the scope and conclusions reached without full context was a process that was not transparent, and I don't communicate. I see the faces you're making. I hold weekly crime stats, and I post and publish those as well. I've created anonymous employee surveys, so that employees can voice their concerns and be present, so I can address them, and the other reason I do that is to get rid of rumors and gossip. I feel that I have surveys at the public facing windows, that people who were the public come to talk, and they have the opportunity to share their culture leadership philosophy. This is mine. Firm, fair, and consistent. You'll hear me probably say that two years ago was characterized by intimidation, hostility, and suppression of reporting. Well, I didn't know this was coming, but what? What would you say about that? I almost caught on the line. I caught myself in a sentence, and I said I was highly of, but Pastor Tuff, our police chapter assess the morale approximately towards the end of December. My question: if the department was truly toxic or retaliatory, why was morale this high? Unavailable in community meetings, due to calls, me being in the field, operational duties, but that doesn't mean I have abandoned my community, I remained available by phone, text, email, and command staff communications, and I believe every council member is available to the community as well. My number is public, I give it to everybody, and when you call, I answer, but not Attorney Weems stated is that he had a, he presented to me in this investigation my work calendar, and that the things that are in light green and the things that are, that are in dark green. One was added by employee, those things was shot with a copy, I don't add that to my calendar, staff does it, they send me a calendar, let me back up just a second. He wanted me to look at this calendar, my work calendar, and tell him. He said I had access to my cell phone, my personal cell phone, the city cell phone, I might be able to assist you with that, which is not too many at home, and I told him I could not look at this work calendar to tell you about my personal calendar, help you out with these dates. He says no. Now, mind you, I know if I lie inside of this interview, it's immediately caught. Attorney Weems, we're going to go all the way through this thing, and I'm not going to be able to tell you what my response. And my request was denied. One thing I asked to be considered is my telework days, I think that the police department that they're eligible for two days a week for teleworking. We only operated with one, and we had limited resources? But I did an open records request, and I brought this up to the interim city manager, and they said we had a system. We kept it on a calendar. I kept my eyes on a calendar on my desk that tracked the days that I worked on the radio. I see lots of cars start to move instantly when I'm riding through the city at 280 community events, but if something was to hit the fan, guess what, I'm also supervising at that time as well, and after our open records request, Councilwoman Gunn, and Councilwoman Wells, when I had to meet with the news, and I think if you all remember, you'll hear this city. I don't just work in the city of Forest Park as a police chief. I bring my, my kid, she plays soccer, she's exempt, and that's the thing that I stated on as I was working, I'm an exempt employee. Exempt employee, is that a workday for an exempt police chief? And I say full workday because that is what the city referenced throughout the interview, nights and the weekends. Next slide, please. Can you pause the clock for me, I. Okay, you go to the next slide, the manager, by the City Attorney, or by Attorney Weems, that's in that investigative report, and I encourage you to see the records were, like I said, immediately removed. Despite limited access, I still identify telework days, holiday days on there that the city was closed due to inclement weather, but I was charged for not being here. Chief Criss had a mask on. I'm in photographs, but Chief Criss wasn't here, Chief Clemons, he brought the girls to Ca

office, but those dates were not recognized. They stated they were chief. We don't know if you worked a full time position, but it's going to be very important when it comes to my professional services agreement, and I believe I'm the only one who does this rise to the level of termination with calls as outlined in the professional services agreement. I was working and leaving meetings for medical issues involving my family, and the date key reference, I remember wearing a uniform and I remember it clear as day I would come to work sick, handle the task at hand, and if needed I would work on weekends, next page, he also stated that I misrepresented allegations. I never instructed staff to deceive anyone, he had to do was ask me why, but he stated he missed, he misstated something in that report, saying I play in the grave when the head is away, the children will play. What does that mean? I didn't share my calendar because I wanted to keep my life private, what have you, but what he stated was, I play in the grave. No, I said, when the head is away, the children will play. I'm in charge who broke down command failure. Majority of this of my tenure here at the Forest Park Police Department was for 18 months, but I had two majors who were responsible for managing their own divisions, and those are the two people I'm talking about it, but it's inside of that investigative report. Next, please. And then my signature stamp allegation - that was not accurate. The question he asked me is the response he got. Chief Criss, do you know? Do you currently work for the City of Atlanta, half weeks, but I can't tell you where it's supposed to be. It's supposed to be with my assistant, Miss Dawn Johnson, Initiative. Councilwoman Gunn, we're both guilty of this one. First and foremost, he accused me of stealing money from the City of Atlanta, was on open to a gov, there was no concealment, no fraud, no personal gain. I was accused whenever I had a purchase, it was a split payment, you're absolutely right, because the police department funded half of the purchase, and I was accused of a reaper allegation. I'm not the grim reaper. My philosophy again was fair and consistent. Law enforcement is the backbone of the Forest Park Police Department. I never belittled anyone, I never insulted anyone, and I never used vulgar language. Chief, we heard you was called the Grim Reaper, and unfortunately, that was the nickname that I was given. I remember the time you saw me walking down the hall, it wasn't to bring good news, it was to bring bad news, so they label me as the Grim Reaper.

Attorney Weems also stated in his investigative report that there were inner circles. Well, there's only two people who know that when I had opened it up last year. I wanted to see the interested parties to see, so I could start to address the issues, styles, operational efficiency, and the person that I've known for 1819 years, I didn't select him as my deputy because of the reason why I selected him into the position, and after that position I then started to make some adjustments, but that wasn't made by me. It was after conferring with Deputy Chief Smith, and then he made mention about our investigative report, he said there was no wrongdoing time, he said it's what's perceived. Should I be terminated? I can't tell me tell you what happened. We have a dispatcher who lost her entire support system. I think she lost three months of work. She wanted to bring her child to the job who can't read or understand CCIC. Two agents were terminated. One hour of work, findings, and Miss Johnson would have been here today to, to let, to let the people know that I did not violate any laws. Attorney Weems, who practices law, stated that it was a violation, but outside of that, should I be terminated? I can't tell you our leave agreement prohibited discussions of this matter, the investigation with other employees. It did not violate any laws. And that was the extent of the conversation. And he asked me, Chief Criss, you think that's appropriate? I can't tell you. I stated that that's the reason why it was important to have the City Attorney involved early on, but should I be terminated? I can't tell you in reference to clan clandestine and reporting, and I don't even know what the other two are. Chain of command is a meaningful opportunity to explain or respond to the interpretation of those ordinances, and I would love to have that, but I just keep portions of the summaries and investigative conclusions, and my question is, has anyone had any input? I'm moving forward with dismissal, and this was a little concerning to me. I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but I didn't get any input. I got 10, oh, I'm sorry, not 10, several productions arrived minutes apart from each other, so I received an email and I've responded to those saying, hey, this is not what I requested, or it's incomplete, and I don't have the time to do that until shortly before this, I was really debating moving forward with the hearing, because after employees of the City of Atlanta work his way to the door to be confronted by a camera in his face. My wife and children have been embarrassed and painful. You go to the next slide, I It no organization or executive leader is perfect. Administrative procedures are not perfect. I have no performance improvement plans. I have no corrective actions, no progressive discipline, no meaningful consequences. That's a question that's a very high standard, or are these administrative disagreements and policy interpretations being pursued. Next slide. And this is my ask for council and mayor. I respectfully ask council to consider the total cost of this should be provided as stated in our public, my professional services agreement. I'm not asking for special treatment, and here is some of the things that I wanted to highlight, the time reporting, if you. I'm not for sure if you can

exempt employees - they're two totally different classifications - will receive the total, what is it, that their n  
a police chief? Next page, please. Over time, and then, if you see here in the definitions, it talks about non  
these are text messages, and if you zoom in a little bit. This is regarding the telework agreement. Hey, Ch  
walking them over. But in the investigative findings. There is not one that exists. Next page, please. Flex le  
Saturday for Officer Memorial. Be mind if that happens? She said, Sure, we're closing early anyway. I said  
marked absent, and she was thanking me for that. The message also shows where I left a council meeting  
The council meeting is at 7o'clock. Next slide, please. And this is messages pertaining to my stamp. If you  
use this such and such? said you said okay. Next slide is the same thing. Next slide is the same thing, and  
Clark. Some of these days, like I stated, the city was closed some of these days. The city I was at some o  
face, that just shows that I came to work even when I was sick, not feeling well. And then, in addition to th

Attorney Wade: Mayor and Council. Thank you for your time. We, what we attempted to do was address e  
put to Chief Criss and myself during the course of the investigation, and in fact, in fact, the legal, the legal  
during the course of the investigation, and I have a copy of the actual one that was given. Well, within it, C  
you. The purpose of the interview, here, there's supposed to be the allegations. What's set out? Why are v

So, to Chief Criss' knowledge, the reason he was being interviewed was for an investigative report. Now, p  
of Chief Criss during the course of the investigation, and he was told that these are the dates that were on

Councilmember James: So, can we limit this to one minute, please? Because we're over time.

Attorney Wade: I'll pass the Garrity rights and waiver advisory form up just for your review, so we can see  
and the interim city manager is not here, but in her absence.

Councilmembers noted Interim City Manager Clemons is in attendance.

Attorney Wade: I'm sorry, so here we go, let me say this. If, in fact Chief Criss has done something that is  
given him a reason, and I would just urge the council to focus on the reasons that were given, and pay att  
they've been responded to satisfactorily, and this is the first opportunity that he's seen, first opportunity tha  
PowerPoint, not mine. I am, I am an outsider. It is not my career or my job, it is his. So, it was important fo  
thank you for your consideration, and I just ask that you reconsider your determination.

Interim City Manager Clemons: Greetings, I don't really have a statement. I just want the audience to know

Attorney Matricardi: The city council or mayor can ask questions. If you want to clarifying questions to Chi

Councilmember James: So, thank you, Chief Criss, for being here. Unfortunately, I'm sorry, it's under the  
attention and ask you if you recall receiving a well, actually, let me ask it like this. We began this conversa

Brandon Criss: Yes, ma'am.

Councilmember James: Okay, so my question to you is, when we, when we ask for a, okay, let's see if we

Brandon Criss: I gave you the dates of the leave request that was submitted that you guys that I can locate

Councilmember James: Right. Okay, so just for the audience, I want everybody to understand that this wh  
so essentially it would be the seat paying twice, pretty much, because those are dates that you submitted

Brandon Criss: That's not accurate.

Councilmember James: Wait, let me finish. So, you wanted to be compensated for that time that you, that

Brandon Criss: No. Okay. So, this professional services agreement, this was done by the City of Forest P

Councilmember James: Yes, I understand,

Brandon Criss: And from my understanding, Councilwoman James, you first questioned the validity of this she, I sent that to her with the minutes showing that this contract was reviewed and approved by city coun

Councilmember James: Yes, sir.

Brandon Criss: Respectfully. And so, after reading the agreement, I found out that first thing was me asking just learn that I'm eligible for all of these other things to include a payout for any type of leave.

Councilmember James: Yes.

Brandon Criss: Yes, ma'am. And so I said, I asked Attorney Matricardi, what should I do? She said, Hey, C

Councilmember James: Okay.

Brandon Criss: And I followed that direction.

Councilmember James: So the answer is, you, you did put in for additional, to get paid for time that you di

Brandon Criss: No, that's not accurate. I did not use those times.

Councilmember James: I'm going to move on to the next thing. So, basically, that's how this whole thing k

Brandon Criss: That's not accurate.

Councilmember James; Well, in my eyes, this is how it snowballed. Okay, trying to pay the time, and then I don't know if it came from anybody else on the dialysis, but it didn't come from. I don't think.. well, I think transition with our City Clerk and all of that, not to allow HR to do the investigation to do a outside investig I'm not going to read the whole thing, but it says allegations concerning compliance with city policies, lead on in February. You remember you getting that right?

Brandon Criss: Yes ma'am.

Councilmember James: So, as a part of this, there are certain things that we're outlining here: one is confi

Brandon Criss: Council you read that for me please so that I can have full context of what you're referring

Councilmember James: Yes, so in the in the notice there is a confidentiality and nondisclosure statement, outlined as a guideline for why you are on administrative leave, right. So my question to you is, when you outlined while you were being investigated. Um, did you not get, because you said you didn't have a chan

Brandon Criss: Yes, ma'am. And let me answer your question, yes, that is the form they gave me, but it w leave, and then Attorney Matricardi, or it came, it was forwarded to me, I think it says I got the email here.

employees, they're elected officials, and my point for reaching out to the individuals to this body was to ap first lead, because, like I said, the city did not reach out to me after the expiration of the second extension.

Councilmember James: Okay.

Brandon Criss: And so this agreement, in my opinion, was null and void during that time, because they we but it did not happen on the second one.

Councilmember James: Okay. So, just a few more questions, and I'll be done.

Brandon Criss: Yes, ma'am.

Councilmember James: In the investigative finding, I just want to note that there were factual records, lega administrative records, financial documentation, and operational practices. Also, as an executive summary, deception, including directing staff to misrepresent the chief's whereabouts. Now I heard this, your nice pr about the workplace. The workplace was characterized by intimidation, hostility, and suppression of repor gathered during the investigation reflects consistent and credible concerns among employees regarding th investigation process, and then I'll also make one final comment before I pass it on to my colleagues. Is it something that is a good practice within a police department.

Brandon Criss: Well, I'm not for sure what you would consider a good practice, but what I can tell you is th of me today.

Councilmember Gunn: Good afternoon, everybody. Good afternoon, good afternoon, good afternoon, goo requested for your time of leave, it leaves all those hours you were asking, that was up to eighty hours to l asking for that.

Brandon Criss: Yes, ma'am.

Councilmember Gunn: Okay. And, and once it was received, what we saw in black and white was there w mean, you didn't, you never took sick leave. It was never recorded, and that is the aspects of what we, tha

Brandon Criss: That's not accurate, ma'am. I took personal holidays.

Councilmember Gunn: I understand you took personal holidays, but it was not. It was not in black and whi

Brandon Criss: If I can respond, so I have documented leave requests, personal leave requests that are th

Councilmember Gunn: Chief Criss. We just allowed to, because I don't want a commentary with this attorn dollars to add it up to 1000s of dollars to pay you out for eighty hours, we, you did you give that to us? Did

Brandon Criss: So, if I can answer that question, and please just let me get it out. Yes, you did request th

Councilmember Gunn: I only want to stay on.

Brandon Criss: I'm trying to give you an answer.

Councilmember Gunn: No vehicles, no. Let's not talk about.

Chief Criss: Well, at the time of the request, that request came along with 20 other requests. We want to k deadline to get that into the city manager, which was by the end of the day, and I submitted all of the inform

Councilmember Gunn: Did you not submit the whole aspect of why we are here today, and it was about it colleagues, were statements that showed that he had not taken one day of sick leave, and that's what we there was another, there was another aspect that you begin to say, well, I don't understand, I didn't have p don't have policies, that's what we are elected to do to implement policies here. Here is a statement, it's ca and one of those aspects of you signing off on came from the 11th month, the 20-second day in the year c

Attorney Matricardi: Councilmember Gunn, could you get to the question.

Councilmember Gunn: And again, the information that was requested from us, do you recall seeing a zero

Attorney Wade: Respectfully, Madam Councilwoman Gunn, it just appears as though the Council is intere what the answers are, and he's constantly being interrupted; I would just ask that he be allowed to give his

Councilmember Gunn: Did you give us accurate information to accumulate the hours to pay you out when

Brandon Criss: I was requested one time, along with all of those other things; the issue is what I had broug conference with my wife while in Jamaica and was on a conference call on a holiday, on a conference call telework days, there is no need to use flex days because I'm here. I'm here sick. I'm here limping. I'm here

Councilmember Gunn: That you presented all the hours? I digress. Chief Criss, I want to ask you a questi

Attorney Matricardi: No. So, that was not included as relevant in the Comprehensive Report. It needs to be

Councilmember Gunn:

Chief Criss, the 911...

Attorney Wade: Point of Order: I think that there is an allegation of violation of GCIC.

Attorney Matricardi: There's not an allegation that it was violated as being potential, there was no specific

Attorney Wade: But it's in the Comprehensive Report.

Attorney Matricardi: You can point it to me, but there was not a finding that it was violated.

Attorney Wade: How are we biased just be giving a definition of GCIC?

Attorney Matricardi: Because it's not relevant to the proceeding. But if you want to have that question aske

Councilmember Gunn: City Attorney, should I step off that question? Thank you City Attorney.

Attorney Wade: But if it's going to assist the City Council to determine...

Councilmember Gunn: Thank you Attorney, I appreciate you.

Attorney Wade: You're welcome.

Councilmember Gunn: So, Chief Criss, does 911 operating room, where there are crucial calls that are co

Brandon Criss: So the only other child that we could be referring to is the birth of a newborn, and she brou  
was allowed.

Councilmember Gunn: Okay, so in a 911 operating room, a mother can have that, and I am a mother of th  
a mother is attentive to calls that come in to, to make sure that we are clear, as she, so let me, let me finis  
hour of discretion for them to be in that room, that's what I remember you, you saying now with a mother b  
children do to have that child in that space, because that is 911 for America is emergency, emergency, em  
y'all. Come on now, I'm asking questions now. Let me ask a question.

Brandon Criss: Councilwoman Gunn, I will gladly answer your question. So the first thing is Councilwoma  
it is something that that keeps that the parent needs to step away from she can definitely do so, but I can  
one was hurt or injured. We continue business, but the city of Forest Park, we state that we care about ou

Councilmember Gunn: So now my question is, because you just stated there was nobody hurt, no injuries  
are in a 911 setting, that means nobody was hurt, but the child was injured, and the.. and understand, I'm  
is, that could have been a liability on the, on, on the city. I understand it was not, but we, we need to make  
there was a child, the only child that was in there, they got. Hurt in that role, is that true? Yes or no.

Brandon Criss: So, Councilwoman Gunn, the child stuck his hand in his mother's purse, and did the child  
temporary parameters, and once that was once I was, once that was brought to my attention, it ended im  
responsible leader, I took action when I saw that the original parameters had been violated.

Councilmember Gunn: I just feel child should have never been in there or put in that position. Attorney Ma

Brandon Criss: I totally get your, I get what you're saying, Councilwoman Gunn, but in addition to that, I cl

Councilmember Gunn: Do you have it in writing. Did they sign off on it so that we could see it?

Brandon Criss: I'm sorry. The previous mayor, but in addition to that, Councilmember Gunn, I don't have t

Councilmember Gunn: I understand, but you just stated that the previous manager and the previous mayo

Brandon Criss: No, ma'am, but a phone call that could have been made by Attorney Weems to the mayor

Councilmember Gunn: You didn't keep it?

Councilmember Gutierrez: Chief Criss you're looking sharp.

Brandon Criss: Council Member Gutierrez, you're looking good up there yourself.

Councilmember Gutierrez: So, yeah, I think you know the point was made before you authorized this in th

Brandon Criss: That is correct.

Councilmember Gutierrez: I want to formally apologize to you just for all the words I in the city to create a measuring the department culture?

Brandon Criss: Yes, Chaplain Tuck did that at the end of December.

Councilmember Gutierrez: And what was the number? You said 89%?

Brandon Criss: Yes, 89% out of 100 almost 90% and that's way above average, and that is a department council that report that he completed, but that was way before this investigation was launched.

Councilmember Gutierrez: You mentioned that the investigation, you mentioned that you're an investigator

Attorney Matricardi: Your questions have to be relevant to the termination.

Councilmember Gutierrez: Do you think that he uncovered items related to the termination?

Brandon Criss: I can, I think the best person to answer that question would be my Counsel, because he would be the one person say the other? I don't know. So, if those were some of the questions. Hey, Chief, who would be the one to ask a question that would be seven questions in one, and would totally lose me through the through presents the facts whichever way they may fall. And if I had pointed out to him that there was this report, that should have been supplied into this report, but if you look at this report, there's this category categoric. I'm not sure and there was nothing direct. Question, Chief Criss, where are you at work on October the first, January the first, said, Attorney Weems, can I please see what you're reading? It's your policy. Can I see it? Can you provide it? Attorney Weems was asking, and to show the unprofessional portion of it is, if I get up and say, Attorney Weems, I'm not in that setting. So I would say, no, sir.

Councilmember Gutierrez: Thank you. I had to sit through that, and I have seen a lot of presentations, and I want to know, in by a certain time. I think that's what he said, and then it was proven that it wasn't. I want to know, Chief, when you present to us the dates that were being asked? Like, what? So, you, I know there was a whole bunch of questions

Brandon Criss: Yes, sir. So that request came to me, but in my opinion, that should have, that should have been a request how many vehicles they wanted the total mileage for every officer that has a take-home vehicle in their possession. Information. What should I do? And Chief Clemons, can you attest to that?

Interim City Manager Clemons: I can attest that the request was made by Council Member Wells, not just me.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: And I still don't have it.

Interim City Manager Clemons: You received it.

Brandon Criss: So, so I did not have a, like I said, the request for that information should have come from Council Member Wells.

Councilmember Gutierrez: While you were acting Chief?

Brandon Criss: And so yes, sir, and I did not have enough time to present all of that. But now, once the data was collected because I still was denied the access to those devices.

Councilmember Gutierrez: Alright Chief. I think that's it for me. I just want to thank you again, and for always being open. I take accountability for that in us for not getting you a stable form of government and giving you clarity. I know

Brandon Criss: Thank you, Councilman Gutierrez.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: I piggyback off of the sentiments of Councilman Gutierrez. Chief, I think I told you. You bridged the gap. You bridged the gap when it comes to community and police, and I appreciate you to me. I said, this was the worst investigation I've ever had to say through in my life. And I'll turn back to Attorney Matricardi.

Attorney Matricardi: Please don't talk about any of our attorney-client privilege communications that we have.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: So, this is outside of executive session, okay? If okay? It's, right?

Attorney Matricardi: Any communications that we have is attorney-client privileged.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: So, again, the, we knew from the jump that it was bogus, okay? So, we knew that y'all were scrambling, you see, like you just gotta listen to yourself. If I made a decision and I'm not staying with the Chief, when this election thing, we had Officer Thomas, who used to work for the city, and I wish you can't speak to that at one point. Can you speak to that? Like, can't you?

Attorney Matricardi: It's going to have to be relevant to the grounds for termination.

Councilmember Wells: Again, that goes up with me. What I'm saying is political. Um, and then there was a meeting sitting up here. I said last night at council meeting, and I said we were talking about the time, and I said, Chief,

Interim City Manager Clemons: I'm going to clarify it though.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: So, when he explained that example, you said it last night, you know. I specified that I was fired for doing the same thing you do. How are you firing him for doing the same thing as our Interim City Manager?

Interim City Manager Clemons: So, to clarify what you stated last night, is that we are held at different standards last night,

Councilmember Akins-Wells: So, again, there was this long list of days that y'all said that Chief Chris was fired. I don't know if you have physical paperwork. I just would like to see that. If you don't mind,

Brandon Criss: Baby (Mrs. Criss), can you please show that picture of me being in the office?

Councilmember Akins-Wells: And can we put the list of dates back up there? If y'all don't imagine, so we can see it.

Attorney Matricardi: So, the evidentiary portion is closed. Any additional evidence should have been presented before.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: But he talked about it, this is just the physical information.

Attorney Wade: But there are no rules governing it.

Attorney Matricardi: Okay, I mean, I'll defer to the mayor on how she wants to proceed, as outlined, the evidentiary portion is closed.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: Okay, disregard it. Again, it's political. Where is the recording? Chief Criss says it's not there.

Attorney Wade: Recordings were mentioned by Councilwoman James as she outlined the comprehensive because we were told that they exist during the course of the interview. Now that begs the question, when

Councilmember Akins-Wells: Can anybody answer the questions. Councilmember James did you hear it?

Councilmember James: I didn't say I had the recordings, but I do know that the investigative report, I can't find a recording, from what I understand, by Mr. Weems. After getting the investigative findings report that we

Attorney Wade: I would please ask that you do.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: And ask him where the recording is for this bogus investigation. Where's the 63% in six years, that has the fullest staff department. But y'all don't have the information to make a decision like he has a heart. And politics is not my life. When you brought, when you said that you brought that child to serve. So I appreciate you for that. I don't have any more questions. My questions are to the city, we gotta know you're part of the investigation, or because he's going to hire somebody that's amazing to this community

Councilmember Mears: Well, I say this being at the end of the line, we've labored very long about specific things, I understand why we have not had a one to one with him to bring all this out. I've been in labor all my life, and

Brandon Criss: Thank you Councilman Mears.

Mayor Ellison: Is there a motion to move into Executive Session to recess from this special meeting.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: So moved.

Attorney Matricardi: Mayor, I know there's a motion on the floor, but as a part of the proceedings, he's allowed

Brandon Criss: I need a restroom break, so I won't be long. It's just real quick.

First and foremost, regardless of decision made tonight, each and one of each and every one of you on this opportunity, regardless of what the decision is, decision that is made tonight, and the community. I think that's But it's been a pleasure. I came to Forest Park three years ago, may 1, and truth be told, I didn't know what you did for me, y'all took me under your wing, and, and you all helped me change this department, change the city, a police enforcement, but I would like to say sincerely, I thank each and every one of you all for allowing me to serve

Mayor Ellison: The motion is on the table. Do we have a second to exit?

Councilmember Gutierrez: Second.

Councilmember James: And why are we going into Executive Session?

Mayor Ellison: The motion is to discuss personnel, all in favor say aye. Okay, motion passes. We will convene

Mayor Ellison: Is there a motion to exit executive session and reconvene for the Special Called meeting?

Councilmember Gunn: Motion.

Councilmember James: Second

Mayor Ellison: All in favor. Motion passes.

Councilmember James: I'll make a motion to affirm the city manager's recommendation to terminate Bran

Councilmember Gunn: Second.

Mayor Ellison: All in favor.

Mayor Ellison: Roll call, please.

Clerk Holiday: Council Member James

Councilmember James: Yay.

Clerk Holiday: Council Member Gunn

Councilmember Gunn: Yes.

Clerk Holiday: Councilmember Gutierrez

Councilmember Gutierrez: Nay.

Clerk Holiday: Councilmember Akins-Wells

Councilmember Akins-Wells: No.

Clerk Holiday: Councilmember Mears

Councilmember Mears: Yes.

Mayor Ellison: The motion carries.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: Attorney Matricardi I have a question, point of order. Being that the precedence and again the precedence has already been set with our old fire chief, the mayor vetoed his termination w

Councilmember James: This not a resolution, so it's not vetoable.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: Precedence is already there. It's been done before.

Attorney Matricardi: So, based off of the Charter, it's a vote, and so only veto only applies to resolutions ar

Councilmember Akins-Wells: So, the precedence being that this being done before this

Attorney Matricardi: I wasn't here but based off of your charter and the charter provisions that apply to this

Councilmember Gutierrez: Could we request, like, outside counsel for this?

Attorney Matricardi: Yes, of course. I'm happy to, you know,

Councilmember Akins-Wells: No one that you would recommend.

Attorney Matricardi: No, of course, if you want to proceed, this is a legal opinion, and you're happy to get i

Councilmember Akins-Wells: I think we should do that.

Councilmember James: Madam Mayor, I would like to make a statement.

Councilmember Akins-Wells: We don't have closing comments.

Councilmember James: Oh, can't make a closing comment.

Mayor Ellison: No, we don't have closing comments.

Mayor Ellison: Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Councilmember Gunn: So moved.

Councilmember James: Second.

Mayor Ellison: Meeting adjourned.

The meeting ended at 8:33 p.m.

Meeting transcribed by: Otter.ai. with name corrections by the City Clerk

Submitted by:

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Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk

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Gwendolyn Ellison, Mayor