



CITY OF
FORESTPARK

**CITY OF FOREST PARK
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION MEETING**

Monday, July 6, 2026 at 7:00 PM
Forest Park City Hall | Council Chambers
745 Forest Parkway, Forest Park, GA 30297

The Honorable Mayor Gwen W. 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 – Not Present
Pauline Warrior – Chief of Staff
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** – Mayor Ellison called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.
- II. **INVOCATION/PLEDGE** – Dr. Wanda Miller
- III. **ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK** – All members were present.
- IV. **ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS**
Motion to approve items to be placed on the Consent Agenda was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.
- V. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS**
Motion to amend the Agenda moving Item #4 to the end was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.
- VI. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 1. **Council Approval of Work Session Meeting Minutes of June 15, 2026**
Council Approval of Regular Session Meeting Minutes of June 15, 2026
Council Approval of Special Called Meeting of June 25, 2026
Motion to approve the Minutes as presented was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

- VII. **CEREMONIAL** – Proclamation presented to Parks and Recreation Department in celebration of July being recognized Parks and Recreation Month.
- VIII. **CITY CLERK'S REPORT** – Clerk Holiday reviewed voting dates and location information regarding the Special Election for Congressional District 13.
- IX. **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT** – Chief of Staff, Ms. Warrior reported on behalf of the Interim City Manager in her absence, providing an official administrative report regarding the Executive Recruitment Process to hire a permanent City Manager; noted a national search was conducted by the firm Sumter Local Government Consulting; reviewed the timeline and action taken during the process; thanked everyone for their support, specifically, the Executive Leadership Team for their due diligence throughout the process.

Ms. Warrior announced the acceptance of the resignation submitted today by the Public Works Director, Mr. Alton Matthews, saluting and thanking him for his time, treasure and talent that he has contributed to the City of Forest Park, noting he will work with the Deputy Public Works Director, Marvin Hines, to ensure continuity within the department.

X. **PUBLIC COMMENTS (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)**

Dr. Lawanda Folami noted she was saddened to hear of the resignation of the Public Works Director, noting he was the best of the best leading the department; referenced the June 25th Special Called Meeting to discuss the budget close out; noted the administration stated their referenced no new positions; noted a change in the budget amount from \$44,263,641 to \$46,439,729 and questioned where the additional funds came from, noting the General Fund did not increase.

Dr. Folami was granted an extension of time as a personal privilege, stating that following the June 25th meeting, in passing, she was bumped into by city worker, Vanessa Holiday, who asked her how she knew her salary, and was in her personal space; noted residents are entitled to discuss the budget; referenced budget requests for the Planning, Code Enforcement and Police department budgets, and reiterated the importance of citizen engagement and involvement with the budget process and meetings.

Minister Justin Cook presented on behalf of the Forest Park Ministers Association, extending an invitation to the annual revival taking place Thursday, July 23rd and Friday, July 24th at 7:00 p.m. with the theme "It's Time for a Reset" at Living Word Church of God and Christ, here in Forest Park.

Clerk Holiday responded to the comments made by Dr. Folami, noting she has not bumped into any citizen, and certainly did not bump into Dr. Folami, and stated that following the June 25th meeting her comment to Dr. Folami was that it was interesting that she knew her salary, as it has never been published or made known to the public.

XI. **CONSENT AGENDA**

2. **Council Approval of Surplus Items from the Public Works Fleet Department**
Public Works

Background/History: The Public Works Department would like to declare the items listed

in Exhibit A as surplus. The items listed are vehicles that are either broken or non-operable and are occupying space that can be better utilized to secure equipment that is operable. Also to be disposed of are a lot of miscellaneous used equipment that has been removed from surplus vehicles and is no longer compatible with newer vehicles (pictured).

3. **Council Approval of Hardware Refresh Purchase - Information Technology**

Background/History:

Every year, the Informational Technology (IT) department replaces approximately 25 percent of the City Computers as part of our 5-year refresh cycle. This is the purchase for this year's inventory as part of that refresh cycle. The equipment will be purchased from the CDW-G statewide contract #99999-001-SPD0000220-0004.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

4. **Appointment of Carl Geffken as the City Manager for the City of Forest Park effective July 13, 2026 – Legislative**

Motion to appoint Carl Geffken as the City Manager for the City of Forest Park effective July 20, 2026 was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

5. **Council Consideration to enter into a contract with NCB Incorporated for Grant Administration and Management Services: Finance Department – Presented by:**

Latisa Adams, Procurement Manager

Background/History: The City of Forest Park sought proposals from qualified and experienced firms to provide comprehensive grant administration and management services. The selected firm will assist the city in identifying, researching, applying for, administering, and managing grant opportunities from federal, state, local, and private funding sources. These services are intended to enhance the City's ability to secure external funding, maximize available resources, and support strategic initiatives, capital improvement projects, infrastructure enhancements, community development programs, and other municipal priorities. This contract award will enable the City to proactively pursue grant opportunities and strengthen long-term financial sustainability through external funding sources.

Request for Proposals #2026-RFP-024 was publicly issued and eight (8) proposals were received. After the evaluation of technical and cost proposals based on the criteria outlined in the solicitation, the Evaluation Committee recommends award to the highest scoring proposer: NCB Incorporated, 4017 Moonlight Drive, Little Elm, TX. 75068. Amount Not to Exceed: \$80,000.00 – 2021 SPLOST Funds

Motion to Table this item was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

6. **Council Consideration for Approval to enter into a contract with Onyx Media Services, Inc. for Audio Production Services: Recreation and Leisure Department – Presented by: Talisa Adams, Procurement Manager**

Background/History: The City of Forest Park sought proposals from qualified firms to provide professional audio production services for outdoor events at Starr Park. The selected firm will support city-sponsored concerts, festivals, community engagements, and other special events by providing professional audio equipment, generators, technical personnel set-up, operations, monitoring, and teardown services necessary to ensure high quality event sound production for outdoor events.

The contract is structured as an as-needed, indefinite quantity services contract, with no guarantee of a minimum amount of work. The initial contract term is for one (1) year with the option to renew it for up to two (2) additional one-year renewal terms, subject to mutual agreement. Services will be authorized through approved purchase orders or written event requests.

Request for Proposal #2026-RFP-027 was publicly issued and five (5) proposals were received. After the evaluation of technical and cost proposals based on the criteria outlined in the solicitation, the Evaluation Committee recommends award to the highest scoring proposer: Onyx Media Services, inc. 300 Long Creek Drive, Covington, GA. 30016. Estimated Amount: \$91,000.00 – General Fund – Special Events

Motion to approve Onyx Media Services for Audio Production Services was made by Councilmember James; seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Motion to approve the settlement and mutual release agreement with James Barton and to dismiss Civil Action No. CV2025CV06028 was made by Councilmember Gutierrez; seconded by Councilmember James. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

XIII. CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY

Ward 1 – Councilmember James stated she was saddened to see Director Matthews go, and thanked him for his service; referenced the July Ward meeting scheduled to take place on the third Thursday on the month, and encouraged attendance, and noted plans are in the work for a collaboration with Ward 2 for a joint Ward meeting to also take place at 696 Main Street; referenced the upcoming Christmas in July events, and asked for volunteers with all hands on deck assisting to facilitate this free event for the community, with the event starting at 7:30 p.m., and thanked sponsors for their support and gift bags to include: The City of Forest Park, Clayton County Public Schools, Forest Park High School PTSA, TShirtKingATL, Technique Concrete Construction, Ms. Jerrie's Café, TPA Group, Prizeskillz, HITT, Kids Helping Kids, , Denmark Ashby & Matricardi, Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, Swissport Cargo Services, Hudson, Concessions International, Falcon Design & Consultants, Victory Christian Church, Piper Sandler, and the Gillem Logistics Center; noted 208 families have signed up to participate, and although registration has closed, families can attend the event on July 17th and shop the remaining items.

Ward 2 – Councilmember Gunn stated members of the governing body work 9-5 jobs and are co-dependent on staff: thanked Directors Maxwell, Matthews, and Wiggins, along with Public Works Administrative Assistant Lydia Parilla for assisting with the Ward 2 park project.

Councilmember Gunn referenced a NASA mural project that was brought to her by a resident who was connected to NASA, and that she later presented to the city's Economic Development Director, who then presented the project to the URA (Urban Redevelopment Agency), failing to mention, give credit or disclose that it was her (Councilmember Gunn) who presented the project to Economic Development, and noted the Director did not include her or the Council Aides on any emails or phone calls; nor was she referenced as part of the presentation during the meeting, noting her frustration and feeling slighted and feeling as though the Director manipulated, as she had asked the Director for status and updates about the project.

Councilmember Akins-Wells called for a Point of Order – acknowledged by Mayor Ellison.

Councilmember Akins-Wells stated there needs to be a conversation between Councilmember Gunn and the Economic Development Director and further suggested the commentary may be best suited for Executive Session.

Councilmember Gunn stated that she will listen to the wisdom from Councilmember Akins-Wells, noting that she loves and appreciates staff's education, foresight, the depth, knowledge, wisdom and insight as subject matter experts, and respects and appreciates what they do, and would never disrespect anyone in that manner, noting the actions were heartbreaking; and stated the Economic Development Director should have mentioned that it was her who brought the NASA project to the Director's attention, and that information should have been disclosed and shared with the Board during the URA meeting.

Ward 3 - Councilmember Gutierrez noted USA plays today in the FIFA tournament, and is hopeful of a win; wished Director Matthews the best of luck in his future endeavors, noting he will be missed; referenced the Beautification Committee Adopt-A-Road project, and invited groups or individuals to sign up and participate, noting the requirement is the upkeep of the road, street, or way and a sign will be installed recognizing your organization; welcomed back Pastor Mike, where he was happy to see Forest Park represented as he continues to bless the community; referenced the upcoming Food Truck Friday event to include a Watch Party in the spirit of FIFA, noting watch parties have taken place around the city, and gave thanks to whomever provided him with an awesome Forest Park FIFA shirt, stating it was a great idea, and that he proudly wore it while in Savannah; referenced the upcoming Wellness Fair with Victoria Williams, promoting health and wellness, with vendors on site, noting with the kids out of school there will be information regarding immunizations and all things related to school, stating *health is wealth*; noted the upcoming Harlem Meets Georgia Back to School event, a group of individuals from New York, who has partnered with the city's Parks and Recreation Department for the 5th year, showering blessings on the students here in Forest Park, noting the department was recognized earlier today, and to please reach out if you need anything.

Ward 4 – Councilmember Akins-Wells commented that she hoped everyone had a great 4th of July and enjoyed themselves; noted Fund Fridays are back, taking place on the 3rd Friday of each month through September/October, inviting everyone to come out to enjoy this free community event to enjoy your neighbors and your park; referenced the next Chat, Chew and Connect initiative taking place on July 24th at the Willie Finch Community Gardens from 5pm – 7pm, and is not limited to Ward 4 residents, noting not everyone can attend Council Meetings, and is not tech savvy, so this event allows her to bring information to the community and meet with residents where they are; referenced the Community Closet initiative taking place on the 3rd Friday of each month, and will now include a VIP Closet within her office, and allows for

residents to shop for free new and used items; thanked Director Maxwell and the Parks and Recreation team for all they do as a vital department bringing the community together, noting she will be partnering with Parks and Recreation on the upcoming Family Game Night on Thursday, July 9th at 5pm at Starr Park, and invited everyone to come out; and wished everyone a blessed night.

Ward 5 – Councilmember Mears noted this is where you come to handle the people’s business, noting it may sometimes get a little heated; apologized for missing the last meeting regarding the budget as he spent time away with family; and thanked everyone from coming out.

Ward 4 – Councilmember Akins-Wells referenced the recent GMA Annual Convention where all but one member attended and gave kudos to Clerk Holiday for making sure that everything went smoothly.

Ward 1 – Councilmember James stated that it was troublesome for her that individuals are naming names from public comments to the dais, and just thinks that is not good; noting this meeting is a broadcast, and that you cannot take it back once you say something; noting she has been guilty of doing so herself relating to finance, and just wants to say that we have got to do better; noting all members must do better, and noted some things can just be handled personally, one-on-one, and then collectively in Executive Session; but does want to belittle anything that anyone contributes to our city; noting we have professionals that are working with us from the lowest of the lowest to the highest of the highest, noting these are people who are serving our community, and we should be respectful of them.

Chief of Staff, Pauline Warrior thanked Councilmember James for her comments, and noted that she has served in the capacity that she has been in for the last three weeks, and has had an opportunity to work up close and personal with each member of the directorate, noting it takes a lot to manage the operations of the city; extended a heartfelt moment of gratitude to the members of the Executive Leadership Team, and thanking each one of them for coming to work every day under very tense circumstances, and endured a transition that was not asked for, and wanted to make the community aware of that, thanking the community for building us up, holding us up, and appreciates the partnership; and stated that in the spirit of civility, is hopeful that we can move forward, and be able to look back on this time and appreciate the time spent, and the achievements and contributions made to focus on the growth of the city; noted and is sorry for any of the hurt feelings.

Mayor Ellison noted Director Matthews has shocked us all with his resignation of Director Matthews, wishing him all the best; thanked Gwinn Services for an incredible fireworks display that the family puts on every year in honor of their son, Teshon Gwinn, who died tragically in a car accident, and celebrates his life every year with this amazing display of fireworks every 4th of July, thanked the city’s Police Department for their assistance, and thanked the residents and golden girls for supporting this annual event, noting it was a very nice event.

Ward 2 – Councilmember Gunn thanked Interim Director Irons-Kumassah and the permitting department for pushing through the application for Gwinn Services.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION - Personnel, Litigation, Real Estate or Cyber Security OCGA § 50-14-1 None

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. was made by Councilmember Akins-Wells; seconded by Councilmember James. 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

Gwendolyn Ellison, Mayor