



**CITY OF FOREST PARK MAYOR & COUNCIL
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION**

Monday, October 04, 2021 at 7:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: www.forestparkga.gov
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>
Phone Number: (404) 366.1555

FOREST PARK CITY HALL
745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

AGENDA

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells
The Honorable Allan Mears

Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager
S. Diane White, City Clerk
Mike Williams, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME:

INVOCATION/PLEDGE:

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK:

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. **Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from September 20, 2021**
- S. Diane White, City Clerk

OLD BUSINESS:

2. **Approval of Employee Vacation Sellback – Chief Executive Offices**
3. **Approval of law firm to hear ethics cases (Ethics Officer) – Chief Executive**

ADDENDUM:**4. Resolution to Authorize Ethics Officer - Executive Office****Background and History:**

Resolution to authorize ethics officer to investigate and administer all pending or future ethics complaints until such time as the ethics board is fully constituted and trained.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following issues: Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate)

ADJOURNMENT:

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 404-366-1555.

File Attachments for Item:

1. Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from September 20, 2021 - S. Diane White, City Clerk



CITY OF FOREST PARK MAYOR & COUNCIL CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, September 20, 2021, at 6:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: www.forestparkga.gov
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>
Phone Number: (404) 366.1555

FOREST PARK CITY HALL
745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

DRAFT WORK SESSION MINUTES

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells
The Honorable Allan Mears

Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager
S. Diane White, City Clerk
Mike Williams, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Butler at 6:00pm.

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Angelyne Butler, MPA	Mayor, At-Large		✓
Kimberly James	Council Member, Ward 1		✓
Dabouze Antoine	Council Member, Ward 2, Mayor Pro-Tem		✓
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		✓
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Darquita Williams, Interim Finance Director; Shalonda Brown, HR Director, Bruce Robinson, Deputy Director Public Works, James Shelby, PB&Z Director, Tarik Maxell, Director of Recreation & Leisure, Joshua Cox, IT Director, Michael Gentry Police Department and David Halcome, Fire Chief

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager**COMMUNITY INFORMATION/REMINDERS:**

- Clayton County Rental Assistance Program has been extended to October 3rd. This is for Clayton County residents needing help with rental assistance can apply for funding now. For more information contact 404-858-6147 or email – erap@claytoncountyga.gov.
- Clayton County HUD Office has funds available for homeowners needing roof repairs, plumbing, etc. City residents needing such assistance should contact them at 678-632-1670. They are encouraging residents to do this ASAP. There are flyers outside of the Chambers at the table.
- Early Voting is October 12-29 from 8:00am to 5:00pm. There are two Saturday days, October 16th and 23rd and those hours are (9:00am – 5:00pm). The location for early voting is City of Forest Park's Mary Ann Connelly Senior Center located at 5087 Park Ave, Forest Park, GA 30297.
- General Election Voting will be held on November 2nd from 7am – 7 pm at the City of Forest Park Elaine Corley Recreation Center in the Gymnasium, 803 Forest Parkway, Forest Park, GA 30297.
- Absentee ballot applications can be requested by contacting our City Clerk/Elections Superintendent Diane White's office at 678-704-4784 or via email elections@forestparkga.gov or by visiting The Elaine Corley Recreation Center, 803 Forest Park, Forest Park, GA 30297 Monday thru Friday 8:00am – 4:30pm.
- Councilman Gutierrez will be hosting a Senior Bingo Night at the Senior Center, September 24th from 5:00pm – 8:00pm.
- Councilman Gutierrez Hispanic Heritage Festival on October 2nd at Starr Park (1:00pm – 8:00pm).
- Mayor Angelyne Butler invites all residents, business owners, and friends to the City of Forest Park's Second State of the City Address. The program to be held October 13th, 2021, at 7:00pm at the Living Faith Tabernacle, 5880 Old Dixie Highway, Forest Park, GA 30297.

CITY OPERATIONS:

- Clarification purposes – At the Sept 7th Council meeting I made the statement that “on August 24 I participated in a zoom meeting with all the parent liaisons within Clayton County Schools.” I just wanted to clarify that I met with all the all-parent liaison within the Forest Park cluster of schools, not the entire county.
- City of Forest Park and the Forest Park Ministers Association held its first 9-11 Remembrance Day Ceremony on September 11th at the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. Thank you to all the men and women that serve and protect us daily. Thank you to our own Forest Park Fire Chief Clemons for working with the minister's association to commemorate this solemn occasion.

CONGRATULATIONS –

- The Clayton County Chamber of Commerce held its Valor Public Safety Awards on September 9, 2021.
- Forest Park Fire Department Battalion Chief David Flagg was nominated for the Leadership Award for excelling in community-oriented engagement and activities.

- Our own Superstar Sgt. Brittney Sparks received the Merit Award for personal time given both on and off the job to our community.
- Forest Park Police Departments Officer Jeffrey Liebert received the Silver Star Medal of Valor Award, which is the second highest award for bravery and heroism.
- Forest Park Police Department Sgt. T. Gladden received a Life Saving Award, which is given to a public safety official in recognition of acts taken in a life-threatening situation.
- Forest Park Police Officer Darris A. Ramos received the “Top Driver” at the Fulton County Public Safety Training Center Emergency Vehicle Operations Course.

SHOUT OUT

- Mr. Huu Do of our Code Enforcement Division on becoming an International Code Council – Certified Maintenance and Housing Inspector.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion on Employee Vacation Sell Back (This is for Discussion Only) – Chief Executive Offices

Background/History:

Due to years of increased demand on staff, staffing shortages and with the current COVID-19 pandemic it has become very difficult for some to use vacation time. Previous City Manager’s allowed for several employees to accrue above the maximum amount for their years of service. Periodically these long-term employees have been allowed to sell back overages of vacation and/or sick hours to the city. The City Manager is seeking the governing body’s guidance regarding a policy to allow employees who meets the criteria to sell back “one-time only” overages in vacation hours at their normal rate of pay. This would reduce the city’s long-term liability and provide for a re-set on vacation time that allows only the maximum rollover per current policy.

There was discussion by Governing Body:

Councilmember James – I would be in favor of the buy back.

2. Discussion on Rental Assistance Program for Forest Park Residents – Chief Executive Office

Background/History:

On September 7, council approved to set aside a portion of the city’s American Rescue Fund allocation to potentially fund additional rental assistance specifically for City of Forest Park residents. The city’s previous program was administered through Clayton County Community Services. The city had also received a proposal from the City Edge Project to review. The City Manager is seeking direction, after discussion from the governing body on funding these programs.

There was discussion by the Governing Body.

Mayor Butler – If this does go through would we use the city edge project to administer.

City Manager - the City Edge did submit a proposal to us and with reviewing the proposal they do have the capabilities of handling such administration that would be needed. This is one of the options. I know Clayton County Community Services did handle when COVID first hit. The City Edge Project is right here in the City of Forest Park, and they would be specifically for Forest Park residents.

Councilmember Gutierrez- the fee they are charging us how does it compare with Clayton County.

City Manager - what was told to me is that Clayton County took 20% for administrative cost. So, whatever the dollar amount that was funded it was 20%.

Councilmember Gutierrez - it is roughly the same. Is there a record of City Edge? I read the packet. I guess my only concern is that it seems like a religious organization. I am a man of faith, but I do not like to incorporate religion with funds. Are there any biases with that? Is this strictly off need.

City Manager - from what I read in City Edge and with me talking with them this is strictly on need. They do have other services. Well, this is the only one we got in and two just reading the other services they have even though our piece would be for rental assistance. If you have someone that is homeless or in need of job training those resources are available with City Edge. But these services would not be funded from the money that we provide. We would only do the rental assistance but if someone came and needed those additional services, they will be available.

Councilmember Gutierrez - would we have any say in anything else or would they oversee everything?

City Manager - we can design the program for the rental assistance piece, that is what we would have say over.

Councilmember Gutierrez - ok, would it be for houses or apartments? How long? What are the specifics?

City Manager - this is what council would approve. Again, this is for discussion. Basically, with the direction I'm given by the Council we would go back and write the program. So, if you wanted a certain time frame, a one-time or multiple times. If you want to do houses, apartments or whatever that would be this is just a discussion to get the direction to bring back the program we would like to see them fund and if they would be able to fund. It is the same kind of program Clayton County Community Services doing for us. It is just another organization that will be able to administer directly into the city.

Mayor Butler - yes, that would be ok with people living in apartments and or people renting homes, but we need to determine a cap and how much you will allot per applicant. How much are we allocating for this?

City Manager - that would be up to the Council. The Council has approved \$400k. It could be all to one, partial to both. It could be whatever way the Council choose.

Councilmember Gutierrez - could we also use some other services? I saw that they offer other things or do we have to use it just for rental assistance.

Mayor Butler- like utilities?

Councilmember Gutierrez - I saw that they offered tutoring.

City Manager - we would only be funding for the rental assistance.

Councilmember Akins-Wells - is there any reason why we are not going with the county?

City Manager - there is no reason why we are not going with the County. That is why we put it on here that the county did it before. I know City Edge is a project that is directly in the City of Forest Park.

Councilmember James - I would say that I love this idea. I don't know if it is true or not, but I know there was possibly some issues with delay with county funding. If we can invest in an organization that is right here in the City of Forest Park; it would be a good thing.

Mayor Butler - so, the city is funding this. So, are you talking about the Clayton County Community Services sending out payments?

Councilmember James - no, I have been to a meeting with Clayton County Housing Authority, and I do not know if it had anything to do with the community center. There were some issues with a delay with people receiving the funds when they put in their applications. So, if we go with someone that is focus here on Forest Park then our residence would be more apt to getting what they need.

City Manager - this would be for Forest Park. The residents going to City Edge would be Forest Park residents in need and City Edge would be talking directly to them. If you go to Clayton County, you could be standing behind someone that lives in Jonesboro and everyone else from Clayton County.

3. Discussion and Approval of Surplus city Equipment – Information Technology

Councilmember Antoine – I would like to know if the surplus phones can be sent to Haiti to the (2) two schools.

Councilmember Gutierrez - what do we usually do with these items?

City Manager - it was told to me that once we surplus these items, I asked about them going back to the manufacturer because I do know that Apple gives you rebates, but I guess that may be for personal not for government entities. So, I think they raffle these phones off for staff, but I think that what years ago. I am not quite sure.

Mayor Butler - how many phones is it again?

City Manager - I think we have (46) phones.

4. Approval of Ordinance Amending Ethics Code to Create Ethics Officer – Legislative

Councilmember Gutierrez - I was under the impression that we were going to work on our board, and this would be a temporary fix to address those matters. So, we will not have an Ethics Board of citizens if we approve this?

City Manager - we would amend to have an ethics officer (one person) or a firm.

Councilmember Gutierrez - I do not I do not like the concept of taking it from the people. I agree if we need to hire someone to address the issues until we get our board in place, but I would like the people to have the say because they are the ones that should give us the recommendations.

Councilmember Akin-Wells - first we just voted on this not too long ago. It was unanimously voted on that this was a bunch of political mess. So, my questions to you Mike is according to the ordinance now when it says the board members shall serve, until someone else is appointed is that disregarded? Why would we take that from the residents because that would be non-bias because there is a person from each ward. We are breaking our own ordinance.

City Attorney – to answer the first piece. There is a provision in the current ordinance that allows for Mayor and Council to remove board members or all of them by a majority of vote. So, that would address that, if need be. The second part of your question, it is the difficulty that staff has had getting the board to meet in the first place.

Councilmember Akin-Wells - who has been trying to reach them? I know I have spoken to couple of them, and no one reached out to them. A phone call was made about a training and that they would be back in touch with them. Were certain ones reached out to were all of them reached out to and who did it and is there any proof is there a record of it? To just disregard the board members even if it comes to put another board in place or appointing new members, to do away with it, it shows that it is all political. Either way, whatever the majority decides but I just want to put it on record it is a bunch of political mess and trying to make policies that are benefiting people personally on stuff. We are here to do city business. So, people are so locked up on what Councilmember Wells is doing and what another elected official is doing. We are putting this in our policy we are making it a bunch of mess for our policy. It goes back to what Councilmember Gutierrez said and this is what I read we cannot remove them, but for anything but cause. That is a policy that would be hard to overturn. So, we would have to deal with that whoever that one person or that firm is. I do not see that as being unbiased. Whatever they decide, their political moves. But just know that is all political. This is not in the best interest of the city but for the best interest for certain individuals. Again, I will say the same thing I said before. If I walk in here and do not speak to whoever I do not speak to is that room for someone to file an ethics violation because of what you all put together then that is what that is; it is a bunch of political mess. You cannot control who I speak to. You cannot control how I look and even if that is put in here it is going to have this one person that you all are trying to put over everything running back and forth because violations are going to be everywhere. "Oh, Councilmember Wells did not speak when she came in the building"; "Oh she looked at this" and "Councilmember Gutierrez did not honk the horn at me when he". That is a bunch of mess. We have other things to focus on like why has not the groundbreaking for the fire station has not taken place. Why businesses do not come into this city; but this is what you want to focus on. So, however it goes but majority rules, but this is a bunch of mess we have other things to focus on; I do. I think this is ridiculous as to what they have you spending time on as our city attorney. It needs to be an ethics board. Well, you stated yourself there should not be a board because this is how this political mess get going anyway. This should have been relayed instead of them coaching you to come up with this political mess.

Mayor Butler - Mike, would you like to respond.

City Attorney - just to guess the frame the ordinance itself. It does two things; it replaces the ethics board with an ethics officer that has no ties to the county, no ties to the city to get an objective review of any complaint. All that person does is provide a recommendation to Mayor and Council for further disposition of that charge. It is very much like the current ordinance does. All the ethics board can do now is give a recommendation to the Mayor and Council. That does not change. I hear loud and clear Councilmember Gutierrez's point about having the people weigh in on that. The other side of the argument is that you are the representative of the people. So, it would come back to the Mayor and Council ultimately as the elected body. The other part of the ordinance I think you referenced regarding conduct the council has discussed multiple times the idea incorporating a code of conduct into the ethics ordinance. The previous draft that

you had was very long and had to many pieces. This ordinance does not incorporate that; it just incorporates a much shorter version that requires elected officials to maintain high standards of conduct. As I mentioned to you on the phone call today, yes sometimes it could be a judgement about whether this was appropriate behavior or if this was rude conduct. The advantage to having an independent investigator review something like this who has no ties to the city. It would not be an ideal situation it would not be a political decision made it would be an objective decision that whatever conduct was complained of whether if it rises to the level or not. Is this the perfect ordinance, I would never say that? But, considering where we are and the fact that we have had several months go by where we cannot get the board to meet. This was seen as a good alternative and a recommended alternative to allow the city to move forward on this ethics issue.

Councilmember Akin-Wells - that is understandable that months have went by. Has the person responsible for trying to get the board together doing what they are supposed to do? If they are, where is that on record?

Mayor Butler - Ms. White wants to chime in.

City Clerk, S. Diane White - yes, Mayor and Council when the first complaint came in and I contacted all of them. I even call some of you all to get the phone numbers for the board members that were elected, and I had to find the board members. But I did talk to everyone, and I sent the information out to them. We scheduled the training. The training was scheduled on May 28th, a letter was sent out each one of them. I called them and I emailed them the invite. Everyone got the same information about the training on the 17th. A couple of days before I called to verify if everyone was coming. On that day, I called several of them. There were only (2) two people to show up. Councilmember Gutierrez and Ms. Morris, I think that is Councilmember Mears appointee showed up for the training. I called the other (3) three a couple of times during the day to find out what was going on and I could never get in contact with any of them and they never returned my call. When we had the hearing on the 17th, Stephanie called them initially on the 11th at 11:44 a.m. told them we were having a meeting to listen to the hearings and to discuss business. She called them, she sent them an email. She called them back on the 16th to remind them about the meeting on the 17th. After that I knew that this was coming back to the council, so we have not tried to contact anybody since that time. But we have had to reached out to them each time either by phone or email to tell them about the meeting that was scheduled. The last person, Ms. Barbie the number that we have for her is not a good number.

Councilmember Mears - the problem that we have here is we have a bunch of citizens that want to do well but nobody wants to pony up to the plate when it comes to punishing one of their friends. Everybody up here has got people and people do not want to get in the mess we are in politically right now. With this option we have now we have somebody that does not know anybody and could care less... when we pick them. You are not going to get a party of 4 or 5 that do not know something and do not care about somebody losing their job. This serious business when people up here us can go out here and run wild and nobody corralled them up and tell them they are wrong and make them pay for what they have done. No one wants to live in the city go against the council. With this in mind, you can get someone that is unbiased and tell us what to do and bring the evidence to the city and let the city decide who's right and who's wrong and not the people in the city that is scared to stand up and talk.

Councilmember Akin-Wells - just to piggyback off what Councilmember Mears said as far as people being scared. First, I work for the citizens of the Forest Park, I do not work for you, I do not work for the City Manager, or any other elected official. I work for the citizens of Forest Park. Therefore, the citizens of Forest Park can determine if I am running wild out or not, not you and not this person you all put in place to be your yo-yo. So, I just want to make it fair for everybody. You can get a complaint tomorrow and just

because you do not side with these group people you are running wild. Somebody sending me a picture and somebody filing an ethics charge because I sent it to the mayor that is not me running wild. Me having a personal issue with a landlord is not me running wild. So, these frivolous complaints that you all trying to push they are charges. They are not charges until somebody say they charges. The somebody you all are trying to put in place is a somebody that you all are trying to control because it is a bunch of political mess. To say that you don't want to put friends and people or people are scared. No, the people in the police department are the ones that scared to speak up about the things that are going on there, those are the people that are scared. Let us talk about the real issues in the City of Forest Park and not what Councilmember Wells getting sent to her phone and someone taking it as stalking them because I do not have the time.

Councilmember James - yes, I wanted to speak to something Councilmember Gutierrez had mention and some of the other things that have been said. That was my draw back in the beginning to as far as taking it away from the citizens of Forest Park. But after speaking to other citizens in Forest Park what they mentioned to me is that items are too serious to not move forward with getting someone qualified to look at the information. If we had an officer, we would know that a complaint is filed. It won't sit dormant for a while because we cannot get people together. This is not just a problem that just came up, this has been a problem that is going on for a while getting the board together to serve, this is not someone that we are choosing this is an RFP process where we are seeking a lawyer or a firm that has ethics history. It is not someone that we will pick out a random person because we want to pick out a random person to handle things. No, it is a process that we talked about moving forward to doing because we cannot allow complaints to go unanswered and there has been complaints from citizens as well. You file a complaint, and nothing happens. Well nothings happens because we cannot get the board together. I have talked to my appointee and why they did not show up, I do not know. The point is, we are either going to move forward, or we will continue to go through the same thing repeatedly. We are not trying to pick out one person to you know this is Kimberly James's one person that she is picking out, no. this will be a process. We will put in the hands of our very capable City Manager to put the information out there to seek out firms to seek out attorneys to seek out whomever would be willing to serve our city and our citizens so that they know that if there is an issue that they have against me or anyone then they will have an opportunity to be heard. We won't have to go through the process of trying to go through training which no one shows up for, then when we have the meeting, no one is trained so they do not know what is really going on; this is a process that we can put in place to allow us to move forward as a city not hand picking anyone; just moving forward as a city. Madam Mayor I do not know if you can have Dr. Cooper speak on the process to even try to find someone that handles this.

Councilmember Akin-Wells - I was going to ask the same thing, but I was going to ask Mike. So, the City Manager is going to be the person that handles that and not the procurement officer? Because it is going to be bias to death, so that it why I am trying to see how that process is going to work.

Mayor Butler - first, we are going to have Dr. Cooper respond.

City Manager - I just want to say it has been (4) months or so since I have first been told about this whole ethics board. We have been trying our best to get the ethics board and everyone together. The procurement process-procurement reports to the city manager just like everyone else in the city except the City Attorney. That mean the procurement process would go through the procurement office. The city attorney and I we would sit down and help write out the specs as to what we are looking for as a city. Then we would have attorneys that propose if again this is a big if we do not know. We can put it out there and get no one, we can put it out there and get 1, we can put it out there and get 10 but regardless of what we do once we put out the specs to say this is what we are looking for the attorneys would then respond, and they would be

reviewed and scored like any other procurement process. Whoever the finalist is they would be brought in to do presentations to the council for the council approval. So, that would be the process councilwoman.

Councilmember Akin-Wells - how long will the process take?

City Manager - the process can take from one month to two months depending on how quickly we get the feedback from the attorneys.

Councilmember Gutierrez - I understand the citizens requests. They need to get these (2) issues addressed; we have (2) complaints currently. I do not mind voting with that. I don't know how many cities have this. I always thought the ethics board the people made those decisions, not an attorney. I know at the end of the day it comes back to us anyway. Is this a common thing within cities?

City Attorney - the more common thing is to have an ethics board. Several cities I know that in Dekalb county this specific proposal is what sort of inspired it they do have an ethics officer. Several cities have an ethics officer some have both. To answer your question the majority especially those that are a city of ethics under GMA program have boards.

Councilmember Gutierrez - so I guess my point is I do not want to take it away from the people. I do want to address what the problem is to those citizens. So, is there a way to find some common ground where we are going to work on the ethics board? For me, that is an excuse from the councilmembers that you cannot find anyone that is capable. Because I had 2 or 3 people that I could have choose but I felt Mr. Nobles, is fearless he is a Navy veteran and I know that we have some Navy vets out there that are not scared of people. We need to find the right people and put them here. It is a democracy process. I do not like going against freedoms. If it is the right to have a child or not, your right to wear a mask or not or the right to get vaccinated or not; those are your freedoms. To me this is a board of people. If you can find people for your D.A. board and other boards, I think we can find some capable people to serve on the ethics board. It is up to you all again, but I would be opposed to permanently putting an officer there to replace the people; that is who I want to oversee the ethics stuff. I am not opposed to assigning someone to address these (2) issues.

Councilmember Akin-Wells - I am not either. But as far as the old it cannot be removed unless there it is for cause and all of that; I do not agree with that. I do not agree with having someone having control over if speak or not because that is my right. We have rights as elected officials, and neither one of you can control my freedom that it is up to me. So, I just think it is petty and immature and says a lot about certain people because if it was the other way around and I am going to bring this up. Things that were actual ethical charges should have been filed they were overlooked. For someone that was abusing their veto power un recusing, recusing themselves. We focus on stuff like this but not the stuff like that. So, I just that is ridiculous. But whatever the majority decides. But again, we should not be bounded to one person because I again I do not know how much faith you have in the people that elected you but the people of Forest Park I have faith in I feel like some people are out to do the right thing and everybody is not afraid. It is about the people, the people and not about us.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following issues: Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate)

It was motioned to recess into Executive Session at 6:40pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.

It was motioned to reconvene back to Council Work Session at 7:01pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

It was motioned to adjourn the Council Work Session at 7:02pm

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.



CITY OF FOREST PARK MAYOR & COUNCIL CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Monday, September 20, 2021, at 7:00 PM
Council Chambers and YouTube Livestream

Website: www.forestparkga.gov
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3c28p0A>
Phone Number: (404) 366.1555

FOREST PARK CITY HALL
745 Forest Parkway
Forest Park, GA 30297

DRAFT CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MINUTES

The Honorable Mayor Angelyne Butler, MPA

The Honorable Kimberly James The Honorable Dabouze Antoine
The Honorable Hector Gutierrez The Honorable Latresa Akins-Wells
The Honorable Allan Mears

Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper, City Manager
S. Diane White, City Clerk
Mike Williams, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Butler at 7:02pm

INVOCATION/PLEDGE: The invocation and pledge was led by Dr. Leon D. Beeler.

ROLL CALL - CITY CLERK: A quorum was established.

Attendee's Name	Title	Absent	Present
Angelyne Butler, MPA	Mayor, At-Large		✓
Kimberly James	Council Member, Ward 1		✓
Dabouze Antoine	Council Member, Ward 2, Mayor Pro-Tem		✓
Hector Gutierrez	Council Member, Ward 3		✓
Latresa Akins-Wells	Council Member, Ward 4		✓
Allan Mears	Council Member, Ward 5		✓

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Darquita Williams, Interim Finance Director; Shalonda Brown, HR Director, Bruce Robinson, Deputy Director Public Works, James Shelby, PB&Z Director, Tarik Maxell, Director of Recreation & Leisure, Joshua Cox, IT Director, Michael Gentry Police Department and David Halcome, Fire Chief

PRESENTATIONS:**1. Proclamation Presentation – Legislative****Background/History:**

Councilmember Gutierrez would like to present a proclamation acknowledging October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

The mayor read the proclamation for Hispanic Heritage Month.

2. Presentation by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Morcease J. Beasley

Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, Superintendent - of Schools gave an overview of the school system. There are currently (2) schools in virtual learning, and they are Sequoyah Middle School and Forest Park High School. Of course, we are managing the virus and the positive COVID cases and we are making decision in collaboration with the Clayton County health district, epidemiologist, principals and others. You should know that we only move a school to virtual learning if we see that the data and the number of positive cases has really negatively impacted the operation of the schools. So much so that if we have so many staff members in quarantine that we cannot operate the schools face to face and we have to go to virtual learning. We are doing our best to manage the situation. We are encouraging all person that are eligible to get vaccinated we know that students of a certain age are eligible to get vaccinated of course they would need parent permission if they were below a certain age. We are encouraging our parents and family to get vaccinated, and we are encouraging our employees to get vaccinated. Currently we have an incentive occurring encouraging employees to get vaccinated and we will award them \$500 if they are vaccinated by September 30th if they are full time and \$250 if they are part time. This is our way to minimize disruption and keep kids in school, face to face and hopefully ensure the kids are learning at very high levels. The City of Forest Park High School continues to make us very proud. In 2020, the graduation rate was 74.7% the previous year it was at 72%. It continues to go in a positive trajectory. We anticipate the data for this year has not been released by the Department of Education we anticipate improvement as well. As an Advance Placement Portfolio school, Forest Park High School is offering its students, I think a global educational experience ensuring that our kids are not just college and career ready, but they experience what it feels like to do college content at a high school level. We are very proud of the work Mr. Manning, faculty and staff are doing over there. Our school system is improving in every area. We will be sharing some information with the Clayton County Chamber, at 11:00am for those that can attend please do so. We will continue to navigate this very successfully. We will continue to feed families, provide meals and vaccinate. We will continue to wrap support around our students and their families.

Mayor Butler – what are the updates on the S.T.E.M. school? It was a part of the S.P.L.O.S.T.

Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, Superintendent of Schools – the middle school is the next school that is slated to be rolled out. I want to say that it is the next project. As a matter of fact, that is a tight piece of property over there. That is a tear down- build up, so just so that everyone will know. Once the new Morrow High School is completed the students at the old Morrow High School will go to the new facility, we will use the old facility to help house Forest Park Middle School students until the new facility is built. I hope we have the community's support as we build the new facility. If you have seen the design for the Michelle Obama school, Morrow you all know we will have a phenomenal design for Forest Park Middle School.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: (All Speakers will have 3 Minutes)

There were two (2) speakers:

Cliff Pellegrine – the city council just amended the ethics ordinance last year and new ethics board members were named. We have also hired a new City Manager and hired a new City Clerk as a result there has not been adequate documentation to prove the need to dismantle a board that has not been given an appropriate opportunity to meet. Now we have a proposal to hire a single outside agency for a back log of (2) cases. Something smells bad here in Forest Park and I do not believe it is the transfer station. Why are we in such a hurry to subvert citizen involvement in our city's business? Why are we in such a hurry to process (2) complaints? It sounds like the signs 2.0, it looks like the same trigger but a different weapon. More importantly why are we taking such a long time to get assistance to those that are facing evictions. The ARF funds must be disbursed to those in need expeditiously. Why is it so far down the list of your priorities? Why are we just considering a change from Clayton County Community Services? Should we have been taken proposals weeks ago? What is the hold up? I thank you for your time.

Dr. Leon Beeler – the Forest Park Ministers Association is going to conduct a political forum on October 7, 2021. I believe everyone here has received a flyer. The ones that have attended the forums that we have conducted before, this is a forum not a debate. So, what we will do is make sure that each candidate will have an opportunity to adequately answer questions and not be debated from each other or the audience. I want to make sure you attend. We are counting on you to send questions in. The questions will be screened and must relate to the City of Forest. The forum will be held in our community center. We have a lot of space over there to ensure that we are social-distancing and we ask that you wear your mask. We want to make sure everyone is safe. There will be a free testing and vaccination this Saturday, September 25, 2021, at Gateway Restoration Church at the corner of Phillips Road and Forest Parkway beginning at 10:00am to 2:00pm. If you have other locations that you would like to be set up, let us know. We are working with the United Way and the Clayton County to get thing done. I look forward to work with you.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA WITH ANY ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

It was motioned to adopt the September 20, 2021, Council Agenda as printed.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

3. **Council Approval of Council Work Session and Regular Meeting Minutes from September 7, 2021 -**
S. Diane White, Interim City Clerk

It was motioned to approve the Council Work Session and Regular meeting minutes from September 7, 2021.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. **Council Approval of Rental Assistance Program for Forest Park Residents – Chief Executive Office**

It was motioned to approve the Rental Assistance Program for Forest Park Residents.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Gutierrez.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.

5. Council Approval of Surplus City Equipment – Information Technology

It was motioned to approve the Surplus of City Equipment.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.

6. Adoption of Ordinance 2021-12 Amending Ethics Code to Create Ethics Officer – Legislative

It was motioned to approve the approve the Ordinance 2021-12 Amending the Ethics Code to Create Ethics Officer.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears to approve the Ordinance 2021-12 Amending Ethics Code to Create Ethics Officer.

Councilmember Antoine – I heard the Clerk say she reached out to the residents on her first attempt and had 2 of the 5 participate in the meeting. But I know my appointee had two strokes and a response of phone calls and emails is something that she would not be able to do. I am in favor of giving it another try to see if we can get some new residents, but I am also in favor of the residents that do not want to sit on the board that we appoint an officer so that is where I am with it.

Councilmember James – Madame Mayor how would we go about appointing new people? Because of the ones that did not show up or was not able to come, would we go ahead and find other members. What would be the process of selecting new members for the board?

Councilmember Akins-Wells – did we appoint somebody?

Councilmember James – yes, we did.

Mayor Butler – it could be however we want it to go about selecting members. Some of the previous boards we had recently start to ask for resumes or bios.; it is in our hands.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – so, if any resident would like to be involved not just with the ethics board, we are requiring them to submit a resume' and if they do not; they won't be considered.

Mayor Butler – it is another way for us to get familiar with people that we may not be familiar with and just getting a little bit of their background. We have asked that people submit it, some have not, some chose to and then again it is up to us as to how we want to proceed.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – is that a requirement with other boards? Is that something somebody said they wanted to do? Or is that something the majority of the council decided?

Mayor Butler – the two boards that I am on that was appreciated when it was asked. So, it did not go before the council, it is up to the board.

Councilmember Mears –Madam Mayor, point of order they had to be sent off to training. We normally send them off take them and feed them and pay them too, right. We had 2 of the 5 and they are back out. There has to get a true count of someone that is going through the training and will stick it out. Back in the old days they put them on the bus and sent them somewhere and stayed all day in classes (s) and fed them and paid them and brought them back. It is not about that. The whole thing in a nutshell is the people do not want to be put on the spot when it comes to making a crucial decision and I know that everybody loves everybody but sometimes you have to be a bad guy. When you are not bad, they do not show up.

Councilmember Gutierrez- I can lend you a (rep) representative if you want to. I have 2-3 people. If anyone needs someone, I think Ms. Julie would still be down to do this. My point is I understand you Councilmember Mears and the accountability aspect for what is out there already. I am not opposed to hiring this person to lay judgement on these cases and bring back to us if that is your urgency. But taking it away from the people is just something I'm just not ready to part with.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – I agree with Councilmember Antoine as far as tabling it. Like Mr. Pellegrine stated we have a back log of (2) complaints. So, the issue to push it now, we have all this time since the beginning of the year to talk about the ethics board and people on the ethics board but because these frivolous complaints are out there and now the pressure is on. I say don't take nothing out of the citizens hands I wish we could have citizens on every board because that is the one thing, they get to do they already do not involve. I say speak for Ward 5 and not for all of them because I have people that are willing to participate, I will even let you pick someone out of my ward if that will make you feel better. But don't speak for everybody because some people would be glad for someone to invite them to be involved in their city.

Councilmember Antoine – for me, I want to try this attempt again. It is not hard. It is not something that would take long we could appoint some new citizens and if that doesn't work then we can go on because we have no choice, we tried. So, let's give the citizens another chance and then if that doesn't work then we can go with appointing one individual, I think that is the fairest way. I know that my person was very sick, and she was not up to sitting on a board.

The motion was amended by Councilmember James and seconded by Councilmember Mears to hire an ethics officer to hear the (2) two pending cases and council will reappoint members to the Ethics Board.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Mears.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY GOVERNING BODY:

Councilmember Antoine – thank you all that came to the meeting tonight. I apologize that I am not here it is not that I am wasting time, I had surgery, but God is good I am recovering. I will see you all soon. Bundle up because Fall is coming really soon. God bless you and know that Dabouze Antoine loves you all.

Councilmember Gutierrez – thank you for everyone that came out today. Thank you for the public comments. I am excited about getting this money to our people here in Forest Park. I know that the City Manager and city employees will work diligently on working to get that done. I am also excited to see that proposal by our Forest Park organization I am all about giving back to our people. I am excited to that see we are finally proposing and bringing things to the table for us to decide on. It is election time, so I highly encouraged everyone to go to the Ministers Association's forum. I went when I was invited when I ran and it was a good time, gave me exposure and give my ideas to the

community. I was very appreciative of that, so make sure you attend and listen in that way you know who is running in your city. I appreciate the proclamation to my colleagues and the City of Forest Park. It is Hispanic Heritage month it is a big part of my identity, and I am happy we are recognizing. We canceled the tailgate because of the rain. I am really excited about the initiative we have with the seniors committee we will have the first event on September 24, 2021, beginning at 5:00pm to 8:00pm at 696 this is to bridge the gap between us and the people. If you are interested in joining the Seniors Committee, I think it is a great opportunity to propose ideas to for our city. Come out and enjoy some Bingo with us. If you are not registered the vote or know someone that needs to be registered, please come out. We will have live music and DJ's it will be hosted by *The Panthers in Action* (youth committee). The event will be held on September 28, 2021, beginning at 4:00pm to 7:00pm at Starr Park. There will be music and games. Please come out to enjoy the Hispanic Heritage festival on October 2, 2021, at Starr Park beginning at 1:00pm to 8:00pm. There will be live music, cultural foods, vendors, face painting, the famous bull and bounce houses. We would really appreciate some sponsors to funds more things. On October 8, 2021, our Police Chief is hosting a Coffee with the Chief event that will be at the BP gas station located at 4950 Forest Parkway beginning at 7:30am to 8:30am. I really appreciate the flyer that is printed in Spanish so I want to shout out Chief Clark, I think it is extremely important that all of our citizens can come out to talk to you. Welcome to all of the new people that were hired. Thank everyone for being out here and make sure you are out there spreading love be careful COVID is still out there. We are in week 7, I teach 2nd graders and they are beating up on your councilman. Thanks everyone for coming.

Councilmember Akins-Wells – thank everyone for coming out. Again, to piggyback off the election. Please, please, please get out and vote. We need people in office that is going to focus on the people and not themselves. Go to the forum to see who the best candidate and please, please, please cast your vote. I would like to go back to the ethics stuff that was voted on. The only reason why I voted yes because it is never about me. So, these frivolous me that has been filed I am covered, no weapon formed against me shall prosper and I will continue to put that out there. Whatever is in God's plan and not man that is what it will be, but no one will dictate how I look at someone or if I speak to someone or whatever. Thank Councilmember Antoine for speaking up and not letting people have control over us as elected officials. On October 29, 2021, will be showing movie at Starr Park in the amphitheater. The last Fun Friday will be the third Friday in October instead of November. I do not want it to be cold and waste money and people not show because of the weather. We will be going out with a bang! So, ff you do not have anything planned, please come out and fellowship with your community. You all have a great night.

Councilmember Gutierrez – thank you Councilmember Wells you reminded me of our Food Truck Friday that will be held on October 1, 2021. We are partnering up with Clayton County Public School Social Studies department we will be showing the movie "CoCo". We will have live music and DJ. The next day we will have the clean up on Watts Road. Hopefully, I can get some people out there. I really would appreciate if We had a program here in Forest Park where you could sponsor a road. You can have your name on the street and sponsor the area and clean it once a month. That is a great thing to put your name on a sign and take ownership of that road.

Councilmember Mears – I am glad everyone came out tonight. Short and sweet, that is always good. I appreciate you for coming, get your shots and come back to see us.

Councilmember James – I just wanted to tell everyone to go out to the website under Ward 1 I hosted my Forest Park Ward Meeting I changed the name from Neighborhood Meeting to Forest Park Ward Meeting on this past Thursday. Director Shelby gave a project overview of the Livable Center's Initiative for Downtown Main Street. You all can watch the video it is very informative. Where we've informed the stake holders of the vision and goals for downtown and developed the framework of the policies and programs to help accomplish that vision. We also shared how we shared guidance for the development and identified the key redevelopment sites and the strategies to activate those visions are listed. It is a great information. You will see the presentation of what Main Street looks like now and see what the proposed Main Street will look like; it is a beautiful thing. So, please go to the website and look at the neighborhood meeting for September and get that information. Also, at the meeting he shared the information on the

pedestrian bridge. You will see how the bridge will go across the railroad tracks and Forest Parkway will lead to Starr Park. It is a beautiful thing that we are doing, please take a look at it. We also had our Firefighter/Paramedic Armstrong to give information about the *National Preparedness Week* and Schoolboard member Williams gave information about the updates for COVID. Make sure you go out and get the information. If you want to be informed my job is to make sure you get the information that's happening in Forest Park. We have what I call our subject matter experts that are available to make sure you get that information. So go out and check out that. Regarding the ethics officer I think it is a good move for us to try to identify something that is going to help us move forward in our city. I want to protect not only those that are in our city but those that work for our city. We want to make sure they are not put in a place where they do not need to be. So, it is important to do what we can, so they have an avenue to express what their concerns are. A lot of times you say there are only (2) complaints but there are other complaints that people have not said because of the lack of being able to be heard. So, I am willing to give it another try. So, if you know anyone that is interested in serving on the Ethics Board, please reach out to me. As long as I am your council person, I am going to do what I can to ensure that everyone is treated fairly, and they have an out and avenue to be heard. I want to remind you about the Homecoming Parade that will be held on October 12, 2021. This will be a very celebratory event. This Saturday, September 25, 2021, we will host the 5K Run/Walk race. We have put together a team the *Forest Park Panthers Strong* will be out there at 8:30am.

Mayor Butler – thank everyone for coming out tonight. The State of the City address is coming up on October 13, 2021, I hope to see everyone that is presence in these seats in those seats at Living Tabernacle at 7:00pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: (When an Executive Session is required, one will be called for the following issues: Personnel, Litigation or Real Estate)

ADJOURNMENT:

It was motioned to adjourn the Council September 20, 2021, Regular meeting at 7:45pm.

Motion made by Councilmember James, Seconded by Councilmember Akins-Wells.

Voting Yea: Councilmember James, Councilmember Antoine, Councilmember Gutierrez, Councilmember Akins-Wells, Councilmember Mears. The motion carried.

File Attachments for Item:

2. Approval of Employee Vacation Sellback – Chief Executive Offices

CITY OF
FORESTPARK

City Council Agenda Item

Subject: Approval of Employee Vacation Sellback – Chief Executive Offices

Submitted By: Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper

Date Submitted: September 23, 2021

Work Session Date: October 04, 2021

Council Meeting Date: October 04, 2021

Background/History:

During the council workshop and executive session of September 20, City Council discussed the need to resume adherence to the city's vacation policy by providing a "one-time only" pay-out to several employees with overages in vacation at their normal rate of pay. Employee's will have regular withholdings and deductions from weekly paycheck withheld as required. The city manager is requesting council's approval to amend the FY22 budget by decreasing the reserve for Contingency 100-22-1510-57-9000 to Increase Finance Sick/Leave Sell Back 100-22-1510-51-2901, Increase PD Sick/Leave Sell Back 100-31-3210-51-2901, Increase Recreation Sick/Leave Sell Back 100-41-6110-51-2901, Increase Public Works Sick/Leave Sell Back 100-51-4210-51-2904 and Increase Fire Sick/Leave Sell Back 100-60-3610-51-290.

Cost: \$ 67,000

Budgeted for: _____ **Yes** X **No**

Financial Impact:

The FY22 budget included \$35,000.00 for this payout, but the maximum is all sold back what they had over would be approximately \$67,000.00.

Action Requested from Council:

Approve amendment to the FY22 Budget and authorize payout of "one-time" vacation overages.

File Attachments for Item:

3. Approval of law firm to hear ethics cases (Ethics Officer) – Chief Executive

CITY OF
FORESTPARK

City Council Agenda Item

Subject: Approval of law firm to hear ethics cases (Ethics Officer) – Chief Executive

Submitted By: Dr. Marc-Antonie Cooper

Date Submitted: September 28, 2021

Work Session Date: October 04, 2021

Council Meeting Date: October 04, 2021

Background/History:

At the September 20th, meeting the governing body approved for the City Manager and City Attorney to move forward identifying several attorneys or law firms to serve as an ethics hearing officer. We obtained a list of rotating law firms and reached out to each requesting that they provide an engagement letter for the above referenced services. We received the requested information from two firms (1) Robert Jackson Wilson, PC, Lawrenceville, GA and (2) Chandler, Britt and Jay, LLC, Buford, GA. The City Manager is seeking direction from the council on which firm to engage to move the ethics process forward.

Cost: \$ 10,000

Budgeted for: _____ **Yes** X **No**

Financial Impact:

Budget will be amended to move \$8,000 from 100-20-1110-52-3402 Printing City Code Amendments to 100-20-1120-52-1105 -Ethics Board which increase the line item to \$10,500 to pay for ethics complaint review.

Action Requested from Council:

Approval of the herein listed budget amendment and an engagement agreement with one law firm mentioned above.