

COUNCIL PRESENT: Danny Dunagan, Sam Couvillon, George Wangemann, Ruth Bruner, Zack Thompson, Barbara Brooks

STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Lackey, Angela Sheppard, Jeremy Perry, Nikki Perry, Matt Hamby, Kevin Hutcheson, Denise Jordan

INTRODUCTION:

City Manager Bryan Lackey generally commented on recent shooting incidents. There was a request for differentiation between incidents occurring inside versus outside the city limits.

Mr. Lackey began the retreat by discussing how it will be different from those in the past. He commented on the development of a budget website and a budget video to replace budget presentations.

Mr. Lackey briefly commented on the takeaways from the 2018 retreat. He indicated departmental goals will fall into one of the following categories: economic development, internal operations, leisure services, infrastructure improvements and quality of life.

- Council Member Bruner confirmed urban leisure was the same as place making.
- Council Member Brooks requested more emphasis in the 129 South area.
- Council Member Wangemann requested signal light improvements on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard at Old Athens Street. It was noted this is a state route.

Mr. Lackey commented on discussion about limiting new initiatives in 2020. He also mentioned the possibility of a recession based upon economic trends.

FINANCIAL UPDATE:

Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Perry presented operational changes occurring in the last year.

- Changes to the Property Tax Statement in regards to the present Service Delivery Strategy and Millage Rate increases
- A new tax bill showing the Fire and Parks & Recreation Tax Districts

Mr. Perry presented historical revenue and expenditure information. He also provided a SPLOST VII update.

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET PRESENTATIONS:

City Manager Bryan Lackey stated each budget presentation will address departmental accomplishments, challenges and initiatives.

City Manager's Office

Assistant City Manager Angela Sheppard presented the following:

- Accomplishments
 - Gainesville 85 Business Park
 - Parking Deck Addition
 - Downtown Infrastructure and Streetscaping

- West Side Tax Allocation District (TAD) Adoption
- Establishment of the Land Bank
- Reacquiring property from Koch Foods
- Development ideas for Railroad Park
- Agreement with Fairway Outdoor Advertising to replace older billboards with digital billboards and providing advertising space for city events
- Eliminated second reading of ordinances

- Challenges/Opportunities
 - Development of the City View and the old jail site properties
 - Lake Lanier Olympic Park
 - Expending SPLOST VII and developing SPLOST VIII
 - 2020 Census

- Initiatives
 - Tax Allocation District (TAD) and Opportunity Zone Marketing
 - Census Complete Count
 - Administration Campus and Building Renovations
 - Georgia Place Making Collaborative

Council Member Thompson suggested strategically placing website kiosk throughout the city.

NOTE: Council Member Wangemann left at 9:45 AM.

Finance

Chief Financial Services Officer Jeremy Perry presented the following:

- Accomplishments
 - Annual awards for the budget and financial reports
 - Implemented Special Tax Districts
 - Partnered with Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce to offer a Small Business Seminar
 - Series 2018 Revenue Bonds
 - Creation of a Tax Allocation District as a catalyst for new development
 - Established the Gainesville Spring Chicken Scholarship Fund and You're the Reason Scholarship Fund through the North Georgia Community Foundation

- Challenges/Opportunities
 - Retaining employees with competitive wages and benefits
 - Continuing to provide same level of service
 - Cross training employees
 - Custom Reports through the financial software (New World)
 - Alternative ways to pay vendors
 - Capital Project tracking software

- Initiatives
 - Budget process through the financial software (New World)
 - Create opportunities for redevelopment through Westside Tax Allocation District
 - Dissolve Lakeshore Mall Tax Allocation District

- Diversify the city's investment portfolio utilizing an Investment Manager

RECESS: 10:01 AM

RECONVENE: 10:13 AM

Fire

Chief Jerome Yarbrough stated the department has 103 employees and commented on promoting the department with pride. He stated the last year was filled with audit and compliance related matters. He presented the following:

- Accomplishments
 - New ladder truck expected to be in the City's possession by July
 - A design team has been established for station two
 - Preliminary plans have been established
 - A contractor has been secured
 - Upgraded radios and mobile data terminals
- Challenges/Opportunities
 - Growth
 - Traffic
 - Call volume increased by 42%
 - Response time
 - Goal is 5 minutes (79% of calls are within the goal)
 - 2018 average response time was 7.24 minutes
 - 3% of the calls are related to a fire
 - Firefighter Cancer
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Staff retention
- Initiatives
 - Technology communication
 - Fiber optic
 - Cyber awareness
 - Drone technology with certified pilots
 - Equipment replacement
 - Need for two additional stations – 30 additional personnel
 - One in Dawsonville Highway (NW) area and one in 129 (SE) area
 - Health and safety
 - Preventative measures
 - Lifestyle changes
 - Additional chaplain
 - Station improvements with most of the work occurring in-house by firefighters
 - Flooring and painting
 - Technology

Council Member Brooks stated as the 129 corridor moves closer to completion, there will be an increase in residential and commercial growth.

Golf

Director of Golf Rodger Hogan presented the following:

- Accomplishments
 - Online tournament operations software noting 52 events have used the software
 - Reinitiated the Herd Junior Golf Program
 - Elementary and middle school golfing program
 - Initiated snag golf
 - Video flyover of the golf course using drones available on the website and YouTube.
 - Resolved drainage problem at hole #4
- Challenges/Opportunities
 - Relocation of the pump station intake valve
 - Renovation of the Grill
 - Golf cart path deterioration
 - Maintenance building/equipment storage issues
- Initiatives
 - Completion of the Grill's renovation and staffing
 - Add 40' x 50' area to rear of existing maintenance building
 - Cart path repairs for 200 linear feet
 - Continue dialogue with Corp of Engineers for pump station intake valve

Community Service Center

Community Service Center Director Phillippa Lewis Moss presented the following:

- Accomplishments
 - New Senior Life Center programming, membership and organizational fees
 - VIA Micro Transit Study is in progress through the Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - Provided Dragon Boat and Main Street Shuttle Services
 - Utilizing the State's dispatch system to schedule dial-a-ride transportation (QRyde)
 - GoGo Art
 - No waiting list for Meals on Wheels (125,000+ meals to 400+ households)
 - Meals on Wheels kitchen expansion
 - Developed a transit advertising concept
- Challenges/Opportunities
 - 2020 Census – Population Management
 - Gainesville is now a large urban community which increases the workload
 - Client safety background checks/fingerprinting required by the Department of Aging Services
 - One company provides this service in two locations within Hall County
 - 400 volunteers will pay \$50 each to submit fingerprint and wait for results
- Initiatives
 - Nurture community partnerships
 - Replace existing fleet with at least two buses having a trolley cover to mitigate while attracting tourism in the downtown/midtown area

- Create a public-private transportation partnership with VIA for micro-transit to provide an innovative transportation solution with local branding
 - Anticipating a hybrid system
 - Advantages include traditional and modern capabilities for scheduling rides
- GoGo Art Part II at bus shelters utilizing a \$50,000 grant from the Federal Transit Administration
- Meals on Wheels volunteer recruitment and retention to address fast paced growth in South Hall
- Improve Meals on Wheels service delivery with an additional van
- Expand services to include pottery, exercise, cooking classes and new software to schedule activities as well as contact clients with time-sensitive announcements
- Replace Community Service Center roof
- Evaluate the need for a community navigator to direct people to resources

There were concerns that the background check/fingerprinting requirement may discourage Meals on Wheels volunteers. There was a suggestion to request assistance from the local legislative delegation.

Convention and Visitors Bureau

Communications and Tourism Director Nikki Perry expressed appreciation for elected officials and management understanding they are not just party planners. She presented the following:

- Accomplishments
 - Economic Impact
 - Hotel/motel tax revenue continues to increase
 - Fishing tournaments gain national and international attention
 - Rowing events
 - Downtown events are growing so much that the Chicken Festival is moving to Longwood Park and the Beach Bash is moving to Lake Lanier Olympic Park to accommodate larger crowds
 - Local, regional, statewide, national and international promotion using the website, social media and branding opportunities
 - Ambassador Program
- Challenges / Opportunities
 - Transition from cable to social media productions
 - Changing perceptions, i.e., downtown is not just the square
 - Businesses
 - Parking: Train people to expect and embrace walking
 - Promote connections between Lanier Tech, Roosevelt Square, UNG, city parks, Lake Lanier Olympic Park
- Initiatives
 - Islands to Highlands Trail
 - Potential at Roosevelt Square
 - Place Making: Creating places for people to have experiences

Council Member Brooks expressed a desire for Jazz music at a First Friday event.

Community Service Center Director Phillippa Moss shared information about the city's eligibility for national funds supporting music venues.

RECESS: 12:00 NOON
RECONVENE: 1:00 PM

Note: Council Member Wangemann returned to the meeting.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation Agency Director Melvin Cooper presented the following:

- Accomplishments
 - Riverside and Desota Park Renovations
 - Wilshire Trails Improvements
 - Civic Center Improvements
 - Lanier Point Athletic Complex Improvements
 - Park Signage Implementation
 - Fitness Equipment installed at playground areas
 - Expanded community events
 - 60,000 fitness visits at Frances Meadows Aquatic Center
 - Sponsorships totaling \$52,000
 - \$13 million in impact fees
 - 395 volunteers
 - Customer service campaign for public input on skate park
- Challenges / Opportunities
 - Lake Lanier Olympic Park transition team has been established
 - Skate Park's estimated cost is \$1.5 million with payment, pending approval by the Parks & Recreation Board, from Impact Fees
 - Creating more open play space
 - Intergovernmental agreement with school system for facility usage
 - Staffing
 - Aging facilities, infrastructure and parks
 - Master Plan Implementation considering limited funds for capital projects
 - Incorporating Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) into annual budget
- Initiatives
 - Location for Youth Sports Complex
 - Resurface Longwood Tennis Courts
 - Skate Park
 - Continuing park signage
 - Multi use of Roper Park
 - Redesign of City Park
 - Continue health initiatives
 - Lake Lanier Olympic Park master plan, programming, policies and procedures
 - Recreation Management Software Upgrades

Upon inquiry from Mayor Dunagan, Mr. Cooper estimated \$200,000 would be needed to maintain the Youth Sports Complex. Mr. Lackey commented on how this would impact the annual budget.

Administrative Services

Administrative Services Director Janeann Allison commented on the importance of working with Department Directors before presenting the following:

- Accomplishments
 - Onboarding allows employees to electronically complete new hire paperwork
 - Revised New Hire Orientation Program with more information including Information Technology and Active Shooter training
 - High Deductible Health Plan decreased claims experience and has 77 new enrollments
 - Restructured Wellness Incentive Program to include dental cleanings and physical exercise
 - Risk Management is more visible which reduced workers compensation claims by \$157,541
 - The addition of a Risk Management Assistant reduced claims lag time from 20 to 6 days
 - 91% participation in KnowBe4 online training for cyber security
 - Blocked 296,000 malicious emails
 - Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) provided a clean audit at Municipal Court
 - Mock trial conducted for Centennial Arts Academy, including a coaching session
 - Citation statistics decreased in conjunction with Hands Free Device legislation

- Challenges/Opportunities
 - Transitioning to paperless efforts
 - Generational gaps
 - Human error associated with benefit and retirement reports
 - Inadequate court software
 - Continue computer training and diligence

- Initiatives
 - Retirement/Retiree informational sessions
 - Online benefit enrollment
 - Combined safety and wellness benefits fair
 - Citywide supervisor training
 - Refreshed performance appraisals
 - Continued focus on information technology
 - Standard Operating Procedures
 - Current updates on all equipment
 - Testing end-users ability to identify malicious emails
 - Tax Refund Intercept Program (TRIP)
 - Department of Driver Services Audit
 - Increase Technology Fee to fund court software

RECESS: 2:01 PM
RECONVENE: 2:14 PM

Police

Chief Jay Parrish presented the following noting a lot of the 2018 activities are on Facebook:

- Accomplishments
 - Sponsored 133 community events including but not limited to Shop with a Cop, Coffee with a Cop and teen driving
 - Conducted 38 concentrated patrol efforts during the last half of 2018 to improve roadway safety
 - Continued focus to reduce crime trends
 - Traffic and crashes reduced by almost 4%

- Challenges/Opportunities
 - Opioid abuse and epidemic
 - 130 people die every day in the United States from opioid overdoses
 - Mental health and crime
 - Inappropriate opioid usage causes mental health problems
 - Substance abusers are more likely to commit a crime

- Initiatives
 - Crime trends
 - Concentrated patrols
 - Public Service Announcements (PSA's) to increase driver awareness
 - Data collection to identify causes
 - Opioids
 - Strong presence with Drug Free Hall
 - Mobile Drug Collection efforts
 - 100% employee participation in Narcam & First Aid training programs
 - Wrap around services
 - Mental Health
 - Partnership with Mental Health Court
 - Crisis Intervention Training for at least 50% of employees

Upon inquiry, the Chief shared additional information about staffing, police presence in the downtown district and opioid problems.

Council Member Thompson expressed a desire to establish a penalty associated with blocking intersections.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

City Manager Bryan Lackey requested an executive session to discuss real estate and litigation.

Motion to close the meeting for an executive session to discuss real estate and litigation matters at 2:48 PM.

Motion made by Council Member Thompson

Motion seconded by Council Member Bruner

Votes favoring motion: Couvillon, Wangemann, Bruner, Thompson, Brooks

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STAFF PRESENT: Bryan Lackey, Angela Sheppard, Denise Jordan

Motion to close the executive session to continue the retreat at 3:07 PM.

Motion made by Council Member Wangemann

Motion seconded by Council Member Thompson

Votes favoring motion: Couvillon, Wangemann, Bruner, Thompson, Brooks

OTHER BUSINESS:

Police Chief Jay Parrish provided a brief update regarding shootings that occurred at McDonald's, at the Huddle House, in Newtown and on Parkhill Drive.

ADJOURNMENT: 3:29 PM

/dj

C. Danny Dunagan, Jr., Mayor

Denise O. Jordan, City Clerk