

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL

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**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – MAYOR’S BUDGET ADDRESS**

**City Council Chamber, 1st floor, City Hall**

 **July 23, 2018**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Location:** City Council Chamber, City Hall – St. James Building; 117 West Duval Street,

**In attendance:** Council Members Aaron Bowman (President), Greg Anderson, Danny Becton, Lori Boyer, Anna Lopez Brosche, Doyle Carter, John Crescimbeni, Garrett Dennis, Terrance Freeman, Reggie Gaffney, Al Ferraro, Bill Gulliford, Tommy Hazouri, Joyce Morgan, Sam Newby, Ju’Coby Pittman, Matt Schellenberg, Scott Wilson

**Excused:** Council Member Jim Love

**Also**: Mayor Lenny Curry; Jason Gabriel, Peggy Sidman and Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel; Kyle Billy and Kim Taylor – Council Auditor’s Office; Jessica Matthews, Staci Lopez, Adri Maguire Segui – Legislative Services Division; Steve Cassada and Louie Marino – Council Staff Services; Mike Weinstein, Angela Moyer and Teresa Eichner – Administration and Finance Department; Sam Mousa, Jordan Elsbury, Leeann Krieg and Chiquita Moore – Mayor’s Office; Fire Chief Kurtis Wilson

**Meeting Convened**: 9:00 a.m.

Council President Bowman convened the meeting; Council Member Schellenberg gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. President Bowman introduced Mayor Lenny Curry to deliver his annual budget address.

Mayor Curry outlined his core principles for City government – a balanced budget with no new taxes, reduction of the City’s accumulated debt ($20 million annual debt service savings since he has been in office), public safety improvements, improved children’s services, infrastructure backlog reduction, and a business-friendly climate. He said that public safety is the City’s top priority, and he has allocated $30 million additional to the Sheriff’s Office this year to hire new officers, purchase equipment and launch a “real-time crime center” to go along with the Shot Spotter and ballistics information systems recently purchased. The Fire and Rescue Department budget will increase by $17 million to add new fire stations and additional rescue units and personnel, with the goal of eventually having rescue units stationed at every fire station. On the subject of public safety, the Mayor thanked JEA and City employees for their quick and effective responses to the hurricanes the last two years.

Mayor Curry said that child safety is crucial; children are experiencing too much violence and have too little expectation for their futures. The circle of violence must be broken and hope restored. The development of the Kids Hope Alliance was a start and is transforming child services. The KHA budget will be $41.4 million, which includes the addition of $1.7 million for school mental health and wellness programs, including partnering with the school system to hire 60 additional therapists for 1-on-1 and group sessions. He hopes to increase KHA youth participation by 10%. During the course of his remarks, the Mayor introduced several young people making a mark in the community by their activism.

The library budget will see an expansion of funding for additional library hours and personnel and $850,000 for new materials. It will also include $2.5 million for land acquisition for the long-awaited Oceanway branch library. The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department will receive funding for additional park maintenance and repairs, including repairs to Friendship Fountain.

Next year’s budget proposal includes significant funding for capital improvements, with the Mayor noting that capital spending is up from $0 the year before he was elected to $72.6 million in his first year in office to a proposed $161.4 million next year. $12.3 million is being proposed for road paving, $9.1 million for sidewalk construction and repairs, $2.75 million for pedestrian crossings and safety, $6 million additional for drainage rehabilitation, $12.5 as a City match to state funding for the start of removal of the Hart Bridge expressway, $120 million to UF Health Medical Center over 5 years ($15 million this year) for facility improvements, $60.3 million for the Emerald Necklace project ($13.1 million this year), $1.5 million for the Clara White Mission’s White Harvest Farm barn/greenhouse project, $10.8 million over 3years for restoration of historic African-American cemeteries ($2.5 million this year), and $25 million over several years for Jacksonville Zoo improvements (to be matched by private Zoo fundraising for a total of $50 million). The Mayor also noted that the JEA has pledged the proceeds from its sale of the former Southside Generating Station for The District development to a septic tank phase-out initiative

Mayor Curry said that a vibrant downtown is vital to Jacksonville’s economic well-being and that the downtown must become an urban hub. He proposes $2.5 million to replenish the Downtown Economic Development Fund and will fund 2 additional staff positions for DIA. He noted that as of Monday July 16th, the abandoned Berkman II tower has new owner and a plan for redevelopment with a hotel, entertainment center and parking garage. On-going plans for the Shipyard property, Parking Lot J at the Stadium Complex, and The District are signs of downtown growth finally within reach. The Mayor said that there are signs of success all over Jacksonville, from the Beaches to Cecil Commerce Center to the St. Johns Town Center.

The mayor noted that the $1.3 billion General Fund budget is $33 million more than last year, and has good reserve fund levels, is sustainable, and is largely a result of the pension reform process of several years ago at work; without that reform and the financial breathing room it provides, none of the improvements and enhancements being discussed today would have been possible.

Council Member Anderson, Chair of the Finance Committee, distributed and discussed the budget calendar and departmental presentation calendar. The Finance Committee will meet immediately after the conclusion of the Special Council Meeting to make a recommendation on the tentative millage rate which must be approved at tomorrow night’s council meeting for mailing to all property owners by the state-mandated deadline. The budget hearings will begin on August 16th and will meet 2 or 3 days per week through August, led by the Council Auditor’s Office. Enhancement requests will be held to the end of the process. Council Member Boyer is assembling a list of potential enhancements for consideration, and Council Member Morgan is also working with the Council Auditor on a similar list.

**Meeting adjourned:** 9:31 a.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research

7.23.18 Posted 5:30 p.m.

Tapes: Mayor’s Budget Address meeting – LSD

 7.23.18