

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – MAYOR’S ANNUAL BUDGET PRESENTATION**

**Meeting Minutes**

**July 20, 2021**

**9:00 a.m.**

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

**In attendance:** Council Members Sam Newby (President), Danny Becton, Aaron Bowman, Michael Boylan, Matt Carlucci, Kevin Carrico, LeAnna Cumber, Randy DeFoor, Garrett Dennis, Rory Diamond, Al Ferraro, Terrance Freeman, Reggie Gaffney, Tommy Hazouri , Joyce Morgan, Brenda Priestly Jackson, Ron Salem, Randy White

**Excused**: Council Member Ju’Coby Pittman

**Also**: Kim Taylor and Phillip Peterson – Council Auditor’s Office; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Cheryl Brown – Council Director/Secretary; Jessica Matthews, Bernadette Smith and Melanie Wilkes – Legislative Services Division; Peggy Sidman and Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel; Brian Hughes and Stephanie Burch – Mayor’s Office; Steve Cassada and Eric Grantham – Information Support Services

**Meeting Convened**: 9:01 a.m.

President Newby convened the meeting and announced that Council Member Pittman is feeling better in her recovery from her bout with COVID-19, and expressed the Council’s condolences to Council Member Ferraro on the recent death of his mother. Council Member Carrico gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. A roll call of the attendees was taken. President Newby introduced Mayor Lenny Curry to give annual budget address.

Mayor Curry began by stating that the COVID-19 pandemic is still causing tremendous problems in Jacksonville. He has heard from the leaders of the city’s hospitals that they are seeing rising COVID caseloads and hospital admissions and urged that everyone get vaccinated and encourage others to do so to stop the spread of the disease. He thanked the City employees for their dedication to serving the public during the year-long pandemic. The Mayor also highlighted the Connectible 20 in 20 partnership between the City and the Jax Chamber of Commerce to create job opportunities for persons with intellectual challenges and introduced several program participants who are now City employees.

The Mayor announced a half-billion dollar capital improvement program (CIP) and a $1.4 billion General Fund budget for FY21-22, all of which is possible because of the sound fiscal practices proposed by the mayor and adopted by the Council during his 7 years in office. He said the CIP will tackle long-overdue projects and commitments, including the following highlights: $25M for paving; $50M for parks, libraries and quality of life enhancements this year and next; $54M for drainage and resilience projects; $50M for septic tank phase-outs; and $5M additional to UF Health. The budget focuses on investing in intervention, prevention, and diversion projects for public safety, including establishment of a third Cure Violence site. The budget provides for 70 new Fire and Rescue Department employees, including both firefighters and plan reviewers, and establishment of a new marine unit. There will be raises for police and fire personnel due to the outcome of collective bargaining. The budget provides $35M to UF Health for public health this year, and he will propose $40M next year.

Mayor Curry said Jacksonville is undergoing an economic boom with new corporate headquarters and expansions, and Jacksonville is gaining a reputation as a low cost, high quality place to do business. The City also supports its small businesses which are great job creators, and will be adding another employee to the Jacksonville Small and Emerging Business (JSEB) office and improving the Access to Capital program for small businesses.

Civilian employee raises are budgeted to reward employees for their dedicated service to the public during the pandemic and its recovery.

Q and A

Council Member Ferraro asked when individual meetings will be scheduled with council members to discuss the proposed budget. CAO Brian Hughes said that staff members are ready to meet with council members upon request.

Council Member DeFoor asked if the Council’s strategic plan priorities were included in the budget, for example the funding for upgrading a park in each council district. Mr. Hughes said that the budget does incorporate the Council’s priorities, in some cases in greater amounts than the Council recommended.

**Meeting adjourned:** 9:25 a.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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