

**FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FIRST REGULAR MEETING**

January 07, 2026

10:00 AM



Fulton County Government Center
Assembly Hall
141 Pryor Street SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303



MINUTES-RATIFIED

This document has been ratified or approved by the Board of Commissioners, and is not binding on the County or any officer.

Ratification Date: February 4, 2026

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Robert L. Pitts

10:01 a.m.

ROLL CALL: Tonya R. Grier, Clerk to the Commission

Robert L. Pitts, Chairman (At-Large)

PRESENT

Bridget Thorne, Commissioner (District 1)

PRESENT

Bob Ellis, Commissioner (District 2)

PRESENT

Dana Barrett, Commissioner (District 3)

PRESENT

Mo Ivory, Commissioner (District 4)

PRESENT

Marvin S. Arrington, Jr., Commissioner (District 5)

PRESENT

Khadijah Abdur-Rahman, Vice Chair (District 6)

PRESENT

INVOCATION: Reverend Clifton Dawkins, Jr., County Chaplain

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Recite in unison

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEASE SWITCH ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (CELL PHONES, PAGERS, PDAs, ETC.) TO THE SILENT POSITION DURING THIS MEETING TO AVOID INTERRUPTIONS.

IF YOU NEED REASONABLE MODIFICATIONS DUE TO A DISABILITY, INCLUDING COMMUNICATIONS IN AN ALTERNATE FORMAT PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO THE COMMISSION. FOR TDD/TTY OR GEORGIA RELAY SERVICE ACCESS DIAL 711.

CONSENT AGENDA**26-0001 Board of Commissioners**

Adoption of the Consent Agenda - All matters listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the County Commission and will be enacted by one motion. No separate discussion will take place on these items. If discussion of any Consent Agenda item is desired, the item will be moved to the First Regular Meeting Agenda for separate consideration. **(ADOPTED AS AMENDED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Thorne, to adopt the Consent Agenda as amended by removing item #26-0006 as requested by the County Manager. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and
Abdur-Rahman

26-0002 Board of Commissioners

Proclamations for Spreading on the Minutes. **(SPREAD ON THE MINUTES UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

Proclamation recognizing "Deloris Hughes Appreciation Day." **(Pitts)**
December 19, 2025

Proclamation recognizing "Joe Beasley Remembrance Day." **(Arrington)**
December 19, 2025

Proclamation recognizing "Joseph H. Beasley Remembrance Day."
(Abdur-Rahman)
December 19, 2025

Proclamation recognizing "Level 10 and Friends Appreciation Day." **(Arrington)**
December 21, 2025

Commissioners' District Board Appointments**26-0003****Board of Commissioners****FULTON COUNTY CITIZENS COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT****(APPROVED UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

The Fulton County Citizens Commission on the Environment shall consist of citizens from throughout Fulton County to be appointed by the Members of the Board of Commissioners. There shall be fourteen (14) members to serve on the Commission. In making such appointments, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners shall ensure that the terms of appointment are staggered. Each District Commissioner shall appoint one Commission member to a four (4) year term. Each District Commissioner shall also appoint one Commission member to a two (2) year term to ensure staggered terms. After the expiration of each appointee's initial term, the regular term of office for such an appointee shall be four (4) years. No term of any member shall extend beyond the term of the District Commissioner who appointed the member to serve on the Fulton County Citizens Commission on the Environment; however, each member may continue to serve beyond his/her term until replaced. After the expiration of any appointee's initial term, the Commission may recommend to the Fulton County Board of Commissioners a list of eligible persons for consideration as appointees to the Commission. The Appointing member of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners may remove his/her appointee(s) to this Commission at any time and within the sole discretion of that individual of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners.

Term = 4 Years, staggered

Term below expires: 12/31/2025

Lynn McIntyre (**Thorne**)

Commissioner Thorne nominated Lynn McIntyre for a District reappointment to a term ending December 31, 2029.

Open & Responsible Government**26-0004****Real Estate and Asset Management**

Request approval of a Sewer Easement Dedication of 762 square feet to Fulton County, a political subdivision of the State of Georgia, from PPF / Royal Airport West Venture, LLC, individuals, for the purpose of constructing the Lincoln - AWDC 600 Project at 0 Naturally Fresh Boulevard, College Park, Georgia 30349.
(APPROVED UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)

26-0005 Real Estate and Asset Management

Request approval of a Sewer Easement Dedication of 13,862.4 square feet to Fulton County, a political subdivision of the State of Georgia, from Gary B. Coursey Jr. and Yvette G. Coursey, as executor of the estate of Gary B. Coursey, individuals, for the purpose of constructing the SoFu Commerce Center Project at 0 Georgia 14, South Fulton, Georgia 30349. **(APPROVED UPON ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA)**

Justice and Safety**26-0006 Solicitor General**

Request approval of recommended and required personnel and operating funding for the Solicitor-General, State Court Clerk and Public Defender necessary to fully support the implementation of the two (2) new State Court Divisions. **(REMOVED)**

FIRST REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**26-0007 Board of Commissioners**

Adoption of the First Regular Meeting Agenda. **(ADOPTED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Barrett and seconded by Commissioner Abdur-Rahman, to adopt the First Regular Meeting Agenda. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and
Abdur-Rahman

26-0008 Board of Commissioners

Appointment of the Vice-Chairman **(APPROVED)**

Appointment of the Vice-Chairman of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners for a one-year term, in accordance to the current Fulton County Code § 101-36 (b), amended by the Board on October 20, 2021 (Item #21-0839).

A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne and seconded by Vice-Chairman Ellis, to appoint Commissioner Khadijah Abdur-Rahman as Vice-Chairman of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners for 2026. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, and Abdur-Rahman

Nay: Barrett, and Ivory

Did Not Vote: Arrington

26-0009 Clerk to the Commission

Ratification of Minutes. **(RATIFIED)**

First Regular Meeting Minutes, December 3, 2025

Second Regular Meeting Post Agenda Minutes, December 17, 2025

A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to ratify the meeting minutes. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

26-0010 Board of Commissioners

Presentation of Proclamations and Certificates. **(NONE)**

PUBLIC HEARINGS**26-0011 Board of Commissioners**

Public Comment - Citizens are allowed to voice County related opinions, concerns, requests, etc. during the Public Comment portion of the Commission meeting.

Priority for public comment will be given to Fulton County citizens and those individuals representing businesses or organizations located within Fulton County, including their employees, whether such persons are commenting in-person, via Zoom or other electronic media (i.e., phone call). Non-Fulton County citizens will only be heard after all in-person Fulton County citizens, representatives of business and organizations located within Fulton County, including their employees, have been heard and the time allotted for public comment has not expired, except as otherwise provided in this code section. County staff shall verify the residency of each public speaker prior to such person being heard by the board. Speakers will be granted up to two minutes each. Members of the public will not be allowed to yield or donate time to other speakers. The Public Comment portion of the meeting will not exceed sixty (60) minutes at the First Regular Meeting, nor will this portion exceed sixty (60) minutes at the Second Regular Meeting. In the event the 60-minute time limit is reached prior to public comments being completed, public comment will be suspended and the business portion of the BOC meeting will commence. Public comment will resume at the end of the meeting. For more information or to arrange a speaking date, contact the Clerk's Office. **(CONDUCTED)**

7 Speakers: Camealaina H. Jackson (Cleaner Georgia); Kevin Anderson (Public Defender's Office Relocation); LA Pink (Fulton County Jail); Maggie Goldman (Homeless Families); Brother Anthony Muhammad (Animal Control); Eldson McGhee (Veteran's Commission); Darius Cache (Noah's Fund Non-Profit)

1 Zoom Speaker: Robby Caban (Sheriff/Animal Services)

COUNTY MANAGER'S ITEMS**Open & Responsible Government****26-0012 Finance**

Review and approval of the FY2026 Final Adopted Budget and FY2026 Resolutions. **(DISCUSSED)**

COMMISSIONERS' ACTION ITEMS**25-0895 Board of Commissioners**

Request approval of a Resolution of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners amending policies limiting the use of Fulton County staff for certain events by members of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners; and for other purposes. **(Ellis/Thorne) (HELD ON 11/19/25 AND 12/3/25) (FAILED ON 12/17/25) (APPROVED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ellis and seconded by Commissioner Thorne, to approve. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, and Abdur-Rahman

Nay: Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

25-0935 Board of Commissioners

Request approval of a Resolution to affirm that reproductive rights are human rights; to condemn the criminalization of abortion and related services; to urge the Georgia State Legislature to repeal the six-week abortion ban that endangers lives, and for other purposes. **(Barrett) (MOTION TO APPROVE FAILED ON 12/3/25 AND 12/17/25) (FAILED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Barrett and seconded by Commissioner Ivory, to approve. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yea: Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

Nay: Pitts, Thorne, and Ellis

Abstain: Abdur-Rahman

25-0936 Board of Commissioners

Request approval of a Resolution to establish a Fulton County Women's Commission to advise the Board of Commissioners on policies, strategies, and community partnerships that advance gender equity and address the systemic barriers impacting women; and for other purposes. **(Barrett) (MOTION TO APPROVE FAILED ON 12/3/25 AND 12/17/25) (FAILED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Barrett and seconded by Commissioner Ivory, to approve. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yea: Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

Nay: Thorne

Abstain: Pitts, and Abdur-Rahman

Did Not Vote: Ellis

25-0937 Board of Commissioners

Request approval of a Resolution to establish a "Healthy Women, Healthy Families" grant program in Fulton County; to provide \$1M in annual funding for the grant program to fund organizations focused on improving women's health outcomes and ensuring access to quality care; and for other purposes. **(Barrett) (MOTION TO APPROVE FAILED ON 12/3/25 AND 12/17/25) (FAILED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Barrett and seconded by Commissioner Ivory, to approve. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yea: Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

Nay: Thorne

Abstain: Pitts, and Abdur-Rahman

Did Not Vote: Ellis

25-0939 Board of Commissioners

Request approval of a Resolution by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners supporting its ability to govern local affairs and urging the Georgia General Assembly to preserve the Board of Commissioners' involvement in matters affecting Fulton County residents. **(Ivory) (MOTION TO APPROVE FAILED ON 12/3/25 AND 12/17/25) (FAILED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Arrington, to approve. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yea: Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

Nay: Pitts, and Thorne

Abstain: Abdur-Rahman

Did Not Vote: Ellis

25-0993 Board of Commissioners

Request approval of a Resolution to amend Resolution no. 22-0644 and Resolution no. 21-0282 that created and established the Fulton County Veterans' Empowerment Commission by revising its purpose and to establish funding for specific programming for Veterans through existing Fulton County programs; and for other purposes. **(Ellis/Abdur-Rahman) (HELD FOR A LACK OF A QUORUM ON 12/17/25) (APPROVED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ellis and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to approve. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and
Abdur-Rahman

25-0994 Board of Commissioners

Request approval of a Resolution to establish a Fulton County Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee to advise the Board of Commissioners on policies, strategies, and community partnerships that advance Fulton County's redevelopment plans pursuant to the Redevelopment Powers Law; and for other purposes. **(Ivory) (HELD FOR A LACK OF A QUORUM ON 12/17/25) (MOTION TO APPROVE FAILED)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Ivory and seconded by Commissioner Arrington, to approve. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yea: Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington

Nay: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, and Abdur-Rahman

Commissioners' Full Board Appointments**25-0995****Board of Commissioners****DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF FULTON COUNTY (HELD FOR A LACK OF A QUORUM ON 12/17/25) (APPROVED)**

Development Authority of Fulton County, amended (#21-0337) by revising subsection 118-50, entitled "Board of Directors, Membership and Qualifications," to provide as follows: (a) The Board of Directors shall consist of a board of not less than seven and not more than nine directors to be appointed by resolution of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. Each Commissioner shall have one appointment which shall be submitted to the full Board of Commissioners for approval. Two additional members shall be "at large" members, with one member selected and nominated by the Fulton County Board of Education for final approval by the full Board of Commissioners, and the other representing member selected and nominated by the Atlanta Board of Education for final approval by the full Board of Commissioners; (b) The members of the Board of Directors shall be taxpayers residing in Fulton County; (c) The members of the Board of Directors shall not be officers or employees of Fulton County.

Term = 4 Years

Term below expired: 5/31/2025

Mike Looney (**Fulton County Board of Education**)

The Fulton County Board of Education appointed Yngrid Huff for a Full Board appointment to a term ending May 31, 2029.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman and seconded by Commissioner Arrington, to approve. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, and Abdur-Rahman

Did Not Vote: Arrington

25-0996 Board of Commissioners
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF FULTON COUNTY (HELD FOR A LACK OF A QUORUM ON 12/17/25) (APPROVED)

Term = 4 Years

Term below expired: 5/31/2025

Erica M. Long (**Atlanta Board of Education**)

The Atlanta Board of Education appointed Dr. Bryan Johnson for a Full Board appointment to a term ending May 31, 2029.

A motion was made by Commissioner Arrington and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to approve. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and
Abdur-Rahman

COUNTY MANAGER'S PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Open & Responsible Government

26-0013 External Affairs
Presentation - Fulton County Preparations for 2026 World Cup. (PRESENTED)

EXECUTIVE SESSION**26-0014 Board of Commissioners**

Executive (**CLOSED**) Sessions regarding litigation (**County Attorney**), real estate (**County Manager**), and personnel (**Pitts**). (**APPROVED**)

PRESENT IN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION REGARDING LITIGATION, REAL ESTATE, SECURITY AND PERSONNEL: Chairman Pitts, Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, Commissioners: Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, and Arrington; County Manager Dick Anderson; County Attorney Y. Soo Jo; Deputy County Attorney Shalanda Miller; Chief Financial Officer Sharon Whitmore; Assistant Chief Strategy Officer Steve Nawrocki; Police Chief W. Yates and Clerk to the Commission Tonya R. Grier.

a. A motion was made by Commissioner Thorne and seconded by Commissioner Barrett, to enter into Executive Session. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

b. A motion was made by Commissioner Barrett and seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, to approve the request for representation in item #3 as discussed in Executive Session. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yea: Pitts, Thorne, Ellis, Barrett, Ivory, Arrington, and Abdur-Rahman

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'

FIRST REGULAR MEETING

JANUARY 7, 2026

10:00 A.M.

Alexander Solution, LLC

“A Court Reporting Firm”

(Whereupon, the meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.)

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the First Regular Meeting of 2026 of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners. Today is January 7th; it is 10:01 a.m. Madam Clerk, please, call the roll."

CLERK GRIER: "Chairman Robb Pitts."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Present."

CLERK GRIER: "Commissioner Bridget Thorne."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Present."

CLERK GRIER: "Vice Chairman Bob Ellis."

VICE CHAIRMAN ELLIS: "Present."

CLERK GRIER: "Commissioner Dana Barrett."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Present."

CLERK GRIER: "Commissioner Mo Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Present."

CLERK GRIER: "Commissioner Marvin Arrington, Jr."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Present."

CLERK GRIER: "Commissioner Khadijah Abdur-Rahman."

VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN: "Present."

CLERK GRIER: "Mr. Chairman, you have a quorum."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Please rise for the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance."

(Whereupon, the invocation was given by Reverend Clifton Dawkins followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.)

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right, continue, Madam Clerk."

CLERK GRIER: "On page 2, Consent Agenda, **26-0001**: Adoption of the Consent Agenda. All matters listed on the Consent Agenda are considered routine by the County Commission and will be enacted by one motion. No separate discussion will take place on these items. If discussion of any Consent Agenda item is desired, the item will be moved to the First Regular Meeting Agenda for separate consideration. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board, we have one item to be removed today on page 4, 26-0006, Solicitor General: Request approval of recommended and required personnel and operate funding. This item will be removed and will not be discussed for separate consideration."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Which item is that?"

CLERK GRIER: "On page 4, 26-0006."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "I have a question about that. First of all, why is this on this agenda? How did it get on the agenda?"

CLERK GRIER: "That is not -- that will be a County Manager item."

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Yes, sir, I'm prepared to address that."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Mr. Manager."

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "I think with both Christmas and New Year's -- and I'll take responsibility for this, we did not have our normal biweekly call with all the partners to review any agenda items that were going on. So when we saw the draft agenda, it had one item which was the discussion of the budget that is outside of the Commissioner's items. When it was published, was when we learned that this item was on as a separate item, and obviously, it's on the consent agenda. It didn't have proper documentation, but more importantly, it's duplicative of the budget discussion. So the suggestion is remove this item as a separate item, include discussion, which we have at least a one page summary in the budget presentation that you've already received. There may be, obviously, more that is desired to be presented, but that's when it would be -- that's when it will be discussed. We've tightened up the one last part of our process that allows an agenda item to get on the final agenda where it will require -- even if I don't have all department heads on a call it would require my approval. So again I take responsibility for it getting on here inadvertently."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "I'm glad to hear that because this could get out of hand if every department can just put stuff on our agenda, so I'm glad you caught it."

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Yes, sir."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Anything else, Madam Clerk?"

CLERK GRIER: "That's all I have."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioners, any item? All right. I'll entertain a motion to approve the consent agenda as amended."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

CLERK GRIER: "First Regular Meeting Agenda on page 4, **26-0007**: Adoption of the First Regular Meeting Agenda."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. No items? All right. Motion to adopt by Commissioner Barrett; seconded by Commissioner Abdur-Rahman. Please vote."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

CLERK GRIER: "**26-0008**, Appointment of the Vice Chairman."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. I'll entertain motions. Commissioner Thorne."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "I make a motion to nominate Commissioner Khadija Abdur-Rahman for Vice Chair."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Is there a second?"

VICE CHAIRMAN ELLIS: "Second."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Any other nominations? Any other nominations?"

COMMISSIONERS: (No response.)

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Nominations are closed. Let's vote."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes: four yeas, two nays."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Next item."

CLERK GRIER: "**26-0009**, Ratification of Minutes. First Regular Meeting Minutes, December 3rd; Second Regular Meeting Post Agenda Minutes, December 17th, 2025."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Any additions or corrections? Madam Clerk? Nothing? All right, Commissioners, there's a motion to approve by Commissioner Thorne, it's seconded by Commissioner Abdur-Rahman -- Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, please vote."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

CLERK GRIER: "**26-0010**: presentation of proclamations and certificates. There are no proclamations or presentation today."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Praise the Lord."

CLERK GRIER: "On Page 5, Public Hearings, **26-0011**: Public Comment - Citizens wishing to participate in public comment will be allowed to appear in person or may choose to participate virtually via Zoom videoconferencing by registering on the county website www.fultoncountyga.gov. Priority for public comment will be given to Fulton County citizens and those individuals representing businesses or organizations located within Fulton County. Speakers will be granted up to two minutes each. The public will not be allowed to yield or donate time to other speakers. The public comment portion of the meeting will not exceed 60 minutes. In the event the 60-minute time limit is reached prior to public comments being completed, public comment will be suspended and the business portion of the BOC meeting will commence. Public comment will resume at the end of the meeting. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board, we'll start with speakers here in Assembly Hall. We have received seven speaker cards. Will the seven speakers please come forward: Camealaina Houston Jackson, Kevin Anderson, LA Pink, Maggie Goldman, Brother Anthony Muhammad, Eldson McGhee, and Darius Cache."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. First speaker and if you know the rules, when you have 15 seconds remaining, I'll just say 15 seconds, and that you give you -- to begin to conclude your remarks. Thank you, ma'am."

CAMEALAINA H. JACKSON, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "Okay. Vision for a Cleaner Georgia presented by Uptown Cyber World."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Speak up a little bit, ma'am, or come closer to the mic."

CAMEALAINA H. JACKSON, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "Presented by Uptown Cyber World Corporation, Vision for a Cleaner Georgia. Good day, everyone, this is my vision for a cleaner Georgia, but before we do that, I need to stop to see -- I'm frozen -- a movement dedicated to undergraduates in cleaning up the streets and sincerely not violence or with oaths, but with you. I am Alayna, your Atlanta creating a healthier atmosphere, not only for the sheriffs but for everyone pretentious. My American champion community dollars, I have 90 million community dollars into circulation up to, to date. By the end of the fiscal year, it and myself will more clever attain 900 percent. I am able to waiver my interests of not a game. I'm sorry if my net leave last year, but I will be back in accordance due to my (inaudible). Don't doubt me, please. Would have sworn in, I am in my third phase of the Federal Reserve and assess SBIR monetary

(inaudible), and I am a butch, too. With the remodeling of Peachtree will be enough to miss the vision of a collateral July, fair enough? Okay. (inaudible) resident (inaudible) Jenna Rose, Houston Jackson. Okay. Can I say more? One last thing -- one last thing. No more power for the people. Thank you."

KEVIN ANDERSON, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "Good morning, Commissioners. My name is Kevin Anderson. I am an assistant Public Defender for the county, but I just want to make it clear, I am appearing in my personal time today in my personal private capacity. I'm not representing the Office of Public Defender at all. But I did want to address the proposal to move the office location from downtown Atlanta to outside the perimeter closer to Mableton than downtown Atlanta. You know, this is a difficult one to address because it does not really, aside from purely budgetary reasons, it does not seem what - clear what sense that would make. This takes a 10- minute walk to the courthouse from the office and turns into, you know, on good conditions a 20 to 30 minute drive, need to look for parking, you know, to get from the lot to the courthouse. And this is just simply not sustainable for our attorneys who need to regularly be in court sometimes, be in court on short notice. You know, I'm sure the court, the judges themselves would not appreciate the additional delay, and this is just simply not sustainable for the attorneys. It is also farther from Fulton County Jail, which means it's more difficult for attorneys to visit the clients that they need to see on a regular basis in order to represent them effectively. And it's also less accessible to the population we serve, we'd be moving the office from the confluence of our two main train lines plus bus routes to the end -- very end of the MARTA line and then an additional bus ride from there is simply more difficult for our client population."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Fifteen seconds, sir."

KEVIN ANDERSON, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "You know I just do not see this as respectful of the work that we do, the space we need. I would ask the Commissioners to do what they can, you know, stay at 100 Peachtree, but we need to be accessible to the courthouse. Thank you."

LA PINK, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "She don't give a dang. We've all seen him though, shrugging them shoulders, baby. Your face expressions always tell your whole corruption. Anyways, same corruption, New Year, which is a shame. Here it is we dragging in that same year from last year, right here, into 2026. But of course, we all witnessed something glorified. I know the Demonrats don't like it, but hey, y'all gone have to accept it because it's coming to Georgia. Trump did his thing. And just know that bomb that he dropped, he's about to drop one in Fulton County for this voter fraud election. Y'all just don't understand what's about to take place. He started with a top dog to show y'all he coming to get you little dogs, Ike Arrington, Mo Ivory, all of y'all, that's you know, involve y'all self into this political brew, especially when it deals with the Sheriff. I don't think y'all understand how connecting yourself with the Sheriff and Fani Willis and all of that you doing -- you shaking your head, you know, but you're running for a position that you -- I don't think you're ready for, that you need to stay right there and kind of take some notes. I know you call yourself an attorney, but you're really might want to go do some checking, yeah, because Georgia got you twisted. They got

you twisted in your job description. But however, the case may be, hey, you know, live your life how you want to. We got some other people coming for you. But what we really need to work on is this jail, like I said. I'm going to continue to apply pressure to it until it pop. Because if y'all continue to think that the Sheriff is going to continue to sit there, y'all got another thing coming. And I want to make sure that he knows that that picture on Trump's wall was taken directly by him, so that's a direct insult --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "-- 15 seconds."

LA PINK, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "-- to what's about to happen. So for all y'all that is connected and I know you probably think that I just be up here talking, but I'm going to walk that walk because I'll be down here singing."

MAGGIE GOLDMAN, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "Maggie Goldman, District One. Ever since I learned about the excellent programming of nonprofits serving families facing homelessness in North Fulton, it has been clear to me that there are only so many spots available. If you are a family that is not in an established program, there is very little, if any, access to case management which could include financial literacy, credit repair, assistance with receiving qualified benefits including food and childcare, resume and job searching support, and resources to obtain permanent housing because many of the working poor live in Extended-Stay hotels. I have been looking for ways that Fulton County can provide services to this population, and I was referred to a hotel count that was just completed in DeKalb County. A presentation was given yesterday to the Commission detailing their results. They visited 42 hotels and identified 714 families that they would consider homeless, including 1635 children. Sixty percent of them were single moms, 82 percent of them were black women. I asked the same organization to prepare a proposal for hotel count of homeless individuals and families in North and South Fulton, and the proposal mentioned 200 hotels they would screen for homeless residents. Even if that number came down to say 150 hotels that is three times the number of hotels that they counted in DeKalb. North and South Fulton's hotel count of homeless could easily double or more of the DeKalb count, potentially 1500 families and 3,000 children. These are families who are living in the affordability gap. With the numbers of residents this large --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "-- 15 seconds."

MAGGIE GOLDMAN, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "-- we could develop a public-private partnership for needed services. I'll be reaching out to each of you with a proposal and the DeKalb presentation in hopes of funding this hotel count in the 2026 budget. And you could always fund it by properly appraising commercial properties in Fulton County."

BROTHER ANTHONY MUHAMMAD, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "I am that I am. Brother Anthony Muhammad. As-salamu alaykum; hotep. Namaste. My soul honors your soul under the place where the entire universe resides; under the light, the love, the truth, the beauty and peace within you because it is also within me to share these things. We are unique. We are the same. We are one. I come down here to petition the members of this Council, the Commission, to talk about your Fulton County dog control. We have

in the property of Atlanta affordable housing, and affordable housing has begun to be a problem in the communities as mine, in District 11 where we have had people living over there for 30 or more years, over 40,000 people living in that community, one of the largest dark anti-matter people that look like us, Mr. Pitts, and you Ms. Rahman, and you Ms. Ivory, and all you Caucasians, Mr. Arrington as well. But what I come to talk about is how Fulton County had these dogs that they seen come up to my house. I told them, the dog was loose, and they were in the yard on my property because they don't have a fence on the private property next door. Don't have a fence. The man let the dog run free. And then you have the dog pound to come out and they told me, just take pictures, Brother Muhammad, and we'll come back out and give them a citation. Then they say you're the same man that did it two years ago, with the last person that lived over there. Yes, because they were the same people renting property. But if you're going to have Fulton County not follow up, according to Mr. Trump, we have a right in the 14th amendment --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "-- 15 seconds."

BROTHER ANTHONY MUHAMMAD, PUBLIC SPEAKER: -- "the 14 amendment specifies in 1981, all persons within the jurisdictions that are dark matter, black; and he said in policy contract and public policy in business as well. Something should be done. I'm going to stay. I have to talk with you people that represent y'all. They were supposed to have gave y'all a copy --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "-- thank you, Brother Muhammad, thank you. Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, sir. Brother Muhammad, thank you, thank you, thank you. Next speaker. Next speaker. We'll get it. We'll get it. We all get it. I got -- listen, Vice Chair. Next speaker. Brother Muhammad, please. Next speaker. Next speaker."

ELDSOON MCGHEE, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "Good morning. I just want to be thankful for this opportunity. First of all, I want to thank my Commissioner, Marvin Arrington, Jr., for causing this moment: this moment where, I'm representing the Veterans Empowerment Commission. And my reason for being here is that I represent a call to unity, not just for veterans, but for our community nationwide. The passing of Joe Beasley and Isaac Clark this past month gave us an opportunity to see that all veterans in Fulton County are not homeless or in trouble, but all relate to some kind of conditions that they developed from military service. And I'm wearing my uniform today because I want to remind you of the presence of our US military and the need for it and what our young people going to need to do right now. I have a grandson in the military. He has to come back to Fulton County Atlanta, Georgia where I live, where I was born, and where my family lived. What we're here today, Commissioner Arrington started a Veteran Empowerment Commission about three years ago, and we've been functioning for the last three years. Fulton County has put up \$3 million into the community to help veterans which I think is a small amount for the problem that we have. But that was an effort, and we touched over 4,755 veterans, but that's a drop in the bucket when you come downtown --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "-- 15 seconds."

ELDSOON MCGHEE, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "-- you still see the homeless in our streets. So I'm asking that the Fulton County Commissioners today to support Commissioner Bob Ellis' amendment to this commission because it's the best thing that we can do right now that five of you come together and make this decision today. Thank you."

DARIUS CACHE, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "Happy New Year. My name is Darius Cache, founder and executive director of Noah's Fund for mental health research and education, a 501C3, nonprofit organization that was started here in Atlanta. Noah was the son of a friend of mine. He was fatally abused while his mom was at work. Her boyfriend, who had no prior diagnosis of anything to do with mental health, became overwhelmed while he was babysitting and harmed Noah in a way that caused his death. Noah was 16 months old. Our mission is to protect children like Noah who may be at risk of physical abuse or neglect from parents or caretakers that may be experiencing untreated mental issues or emotional instability. To do that, we assist with things the families may need for the children like, for example, purchasing new shoes. Our vision is a world where no child loses their life at the hands of an adult. On the way to that vision, one goal we have is to decrease cases of pediatric vehicle heatstroke by 50 percent. Pediatric vehicular heatstroke claims an average of 37 to 39 children each year in the US alone. Georgia ranks fifth in the nation for hot car deaths since 1998. Noah's fund for mental health research and education is now registered as a vendor for Fulton County and we look forward to the work to come to protect our children and strengthening our families."

CLERK GRIER: "Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board, we have eight speakers on Zoom."

RICO DOLLAR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Good morning, Commissioners. The first person to speak is Robby Caban. Robby Caban."

ROBBY CABAN, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "All right. I'm calling in to express my support for the prior speakers who have come in monthly as a taxpayer. One in regard to the human rights violations occurring in our prison system -- jail under Patrick Sheriff Labat. I, as a resident, would expect that he be investigated given all the deaths and the federal mandates coming down. Additionally, I want to express my support to the residents who have come forward to the predatory real estate practices, ongoing fraud that are increasing our taxes in order to accommodate affordable housing. Additionally, the problems at the Tax Assessor's Office with incorrect assessments, failure to notify, tax liens that are problematic. I personally have experienced this myself, and if I was a senior and didn't work for myself, I would not have been able to correct those matters and, in fact, I would have had a tax lien that was fraudulent on my home. I also challenge the assessment correctly, which many seniors cannot do. Their system is disconnected, discombobulated, and in need of correction. Lastly, I want to reiterate the need for the animal control contract to have meaningful, meaningful reform, not a Band-Aid. You have removed Lifeline Animal Project, the County contractor from enforcement, but Lifeline still influences not only Fulton County, still remains the shelter

contractor, and instead of nine and a half million tax dollars, you've paid them seven million tax dollars with no investigations despite the harm, the public risks that occurred, the lack of services that whistleblowers came forward about where is the refund for taxpayers who paid for services that are unrendered? You even allowed the Atlanta Fulton Emergency Management under Homeland Security to hire an employee who was terminated by Lifeline with cause reported by whistleblowers who admitted that --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "-- 15 seconds."

ROBBY CABAN, PUBLIC SPEAKER: "-- (inaudible) taxpayers did not receive services and there's been no investigation on that. Instead, you are silencing advocates, you are retaliatory towards advocates, specific Commissioners have been retaliatory. This is unacceptable."

'RICO DOLLAR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "The next person to speak is Cassandra Littlejohn. Cassandra Littlejohn. The next person to speak is Fig White. Fig White. The next person to speak is Greg Beck. Greg Beck. The next person to speak is Karla Scipio. Karla Scipio. The next person to speak is Shanette Williams. Shanette Williams. And this concludes our Zoom public comment."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Continue, Madam Clerk."

CLERK GRIER: "Continuing on page 5, County Manager's Items under Open and Responsible Government, **26-0012**, Finance: Review and approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 final adopted budget and Fiscal Year 2026 Resolutions."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right, Mr. Manager."

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners. Of course this is one of two meetings in January to finalize the 2026 budget, so we appreciate your patience with us as we put this together. We've now finalized 2025. Kudos to Sharon, Ray, and Sabrina and their staff for working pretty long hours over the holiday to pull all of that together. The good news is the actuals coming out of 2025 are 20 million better than projected, so that is, once you take out the amount required for the reserves, is a good number. As you will see as we go through this, we've elected to, outside of addressing a couple of items which seem like there was great consensus on, which was for the BOE compensation increase, and then the animal services prosecution support, and the solicitor's office, we have placed that, at least for purposes of today's discussion, into a reserve that would be addressing the consent order. And I think, as we look at that further and I'm sure discuss it in great detail, you will note that there are no knowns which we have talked about for contracts that we've already entered into, commitments that we've already made, those have a certain financial implication for 2026, and then there are known unknowns; most notably the staffing emphasis. In other words, we know that we need to commit to that that needs to be the highest authority inside the jail, both from a monitor and a practical

perspective, but what we don't know as we sit here today, is how successful we will be. Will the incentives that we've reviewed will they you work? Will those need to be enhanced and how that -- how that will play out. And that has a very significant financial implication. By putting this into the reserve, and we've reviewed this with the County Attorney and her staff in detail yesterday, and she's supportive of this, as you'll see, we've moved from about 17 million in actual expenses this year against the consent order to a budget of 53 million recommended for next year, so that's almost a three X or so improvement. Or, I would say, I guess, increased improvement and increase in that effort, again, with the primary focus on staffing. So again, I leave it to the County Attorney to interject and give her opinion on this either now or later, but certainly we've reviewed with Soo Jo yesterday and was very pleased to get her feedback. You know, I think at this level, budgeted expenditures will also show, it requires a certain level of revenue. So I'll obviously defer to Sharon Whitmore, our CFO, to explain the millage rate implications of that. When you get to midyear, you will know more than you know today, in terms of both the expenditures which drive the revenue, which then require the millage rate, because by then, with the known unknowns, at least the consent world will be a little bit more solid than they are as we sit here today. The one percent reduction that we recommended across all departments has been absorbed, so in other words, they have presented plans back, and that is now planned for in the budget, so I don't think that's a major issue. You may hear differently or you may have heard differently, but not from our perspective and not from my experience. The last thing just to remind you of, and again, much of this, as I say, is not evenly spread, but from a taxpayer perspective, this still represents about a seven percent increase in revenue and a 16.7 percent increase in the budget against the actual expenditures in 2025, so it's not insignificant. Again, a lot of it's in different areas, it's not a 16 percent increase across all departments by any means, but if you're looking at it from 30,000 feet, that's still fundamentally what this recommendation represents. And then last, keeping an eye on financial stability, and I think I'm sure this will be covered by Ms. Whitmore, the fund balance requirements with this level of spending are 253 million. That's almost double from the time that I started, so we have built the fund balance 98 percent more from the time I started to now, not because of my management, but because of the work of this Board to identify the priorities, be judicious in their use, and maintain this fund balance for purposes of financial stability and, of course, the AAA rating, which you'll find as we - not in this discussion, but as we move in to the subsequent one in January and early February, we'll be talking about and specificity the amount of bond funding that we need, which you're already aware of, but when that will go to market and when that AAA bond rating will be, will be most important. So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I think we have a brief presentation that the CFO, Ms. Whitmore, will lead us through, and then we're prepared, of course, to not only answer questions, but take any direction from today to really crisp this up for the next meeting."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Thank you. Mr. Manager, Madam CFO."

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Next slide, please. Commissioners, the County Manager covered some of this with his remarks, but this is the behind the word schedules, if you will. So this first slide is our review of our 2025 actual results for the general fund; and it is a comparison to what we

presented as part of our midyear review. From a revenue perspective at midyear, we projected a revenue at 932.9 million. Our actual results were 933.3. It's about a \$400,000 difference. From an expenditure perspective, we had projected 939.9 million. Our actual results were 920.3, that's a \$19.6 million additional underrun on the expenditure side. Those numbers together, the additional revenue and the lower expenditure number, resulted in about \$20 million in additional funds balance that we were able to carry forward into 2026. So our projected ending fund balance at midyear was 232.7 million and our actual was 256 -- I mean, 252.6. Next slide, please. We just kind of wanted to review some of the underlying results -- some of the reasons for the changes in our final results from the point in time that we made our midyear projections. On the revenue side, we did receive about 1.7 million more than what we had projected at midyear. At midyear, we had some revenue that we had received that came to us with a description that was questionable, and we were working with the DOR to ensure that those resources, in fact, belong to the county before we included them in our numbers. So upon validating that, we do see that our local option sales tax numbers increased slightly over what we had projected. In our public utility property tax area in our midyear projection, we did not expect that we would receive much from the current year public utility tax billing. For the last several years, those billings have gone out very late in the year in a way that did not allow for sufficient time to collect the current year billing in the current year, and much of that had ended up being carried over as a prior year receivable in the next year. So in '25, we ended up collecting a significant portion of the '24 public utility as a prior year receivable, plus bills were able to get out a little earlier this year, and we collected more on the current year portion than we had projected at midyear. What we try to do is, from a budget perspective, is to make sure that between the two -- the two categories, current year, and/or public year, we at least account for a full year's billing because the billing timeframe has not been very predictable over the last several years. So what you'll see is an increase in current year public utilities. From a reduction's perspective in our actual '25 revenue, meaning categories where we did not receive the revenue that we anticipated, we saw less revenue come in both the current and prior year real and personal property tax categories. We had projected to collect about 96 percent of the current year billings. We came in closer to 94 percent and the prior year tax amount that we had projected that we would receive, we received a little bit less than what we have projected. So the two combined is about 11.4 million. And then in all other revenue categories, you know, we had about a 800,000-dollar reduction from our projections when you just net everything else together, all the ups and downs it resulted in about \$800,000 less. On the expenditure side, the areas that we saw reduced expenses from our original projections: the consent decree. We did not spend 100 percent of what we had allocated and then our projections we made the assumption that we would spend 100 percent of what we had set aside for that purpose. We had delayed bond issuances. The manager spoke about the jail bond earlier. We also had money in the budget this year for the freestanding emergency department, which at the last meeting in December, the Board acted on for that issuance. As a result of that, we did not need to make a debt service payment on that issue this year, so that resulted in about 8.1 -- those two combined resulted in about 8.1 of unused resources. From our midyear projection on salary and fringe benefits, we ended up spending about \$3.8 million less than what we anticipated. We had 2.2 million in obligations that invoices were not

presented on and purchase orders lapsed at the end of the year. And then from an election perspective, because there was not a statewide runoff, required the runoff election that happened in December for the municipalities, that cost was borne by the municipalities, and so that freed up resources that the county had programmed for elections. Next slide, please. Excuse me. That did not go down -- it just didn't go down the right way. Our changes that we're recommending for the 2026 general fund budget, this slide represents the changes that were recommending to the overall revenue budget. As a result of the items that happened differently in '25 then we had expected them to happen, we have some changes that we need to make in 2026. For the prior year property tax -- prior year receivable number, we are requesting to increase that amount by \$5.9 million. And for the current year property tax for public utility, we're requesting to increase that by 12.7, while at the same time in the prior year property tax public utility category reducing it by 14.5. This has to do with the timing of receipt of the '25 public utility receivables and the fact that we didn't collect as much on the current property -- current year real and personal property tax digest as we had expected. Together, that increases the total revenue by 4.1 million, bringing our '26 proposed revenue from 996 million to one billion one hundred thousand. Next slide, please. From an expenditure perspective, the proposed budget -- the November proposed budget, total expenditures were one billion 53 million -- 53.2 million. And we have three categories of increases that we have recommended in the revised proposed budget. The first is a reallocation of a little over 400,000, for Registration and Elections. There were invoices for costs that were incurred in December that are the county's responsibility to pay versus the municipality's responsibility. So we do need to roll some funds over and allow for those invoices to be presented and paid in 2026. We also, as the Manager indicated in his remarks, have provided an additional increase to our consent order fund of 19.5 million, and then we have two additional departmental enhancements that total a little over 600,000. That brings the total expenditure change to 20.6 million, and the total proposed general fund expense budget to 1,073,700,000. And the Manager commented to this a little bit in his remarks, this does represent a -- it's a 8.4 percent increase over the 2025 general fund budget at a 16 percent increase over 2025's actual results. Next slide, please. Walking you through the consent decree compliance fund, as the Manager mentioned in his remarks, our '25 actual expenditures were 16.9 million, and in the proposed budget, we had recommended 31.8 million for the consent compliance fund. We are recommending in the revised budget that we do two things: one is that we reallocate the balance of what was sitting in the inmate services unit to the compliance fund because those resources are currently being used to support compliance-related cost, either this federal consent order compliance or a previous consent order that was issued into the GAO consent order. And then the additional 19 million that was recommended, all of that combined, totals 53,056,868, which we're recommending the funds would be held in nonagency in a separate unit for consent compliance. Next slide, please. The two additional departmental enhancement requests that have been recommended the Manager covered, as the Clerk of Superior and Magistrate Court, funding in the amount of 370,000 -- 370.8 thousand, which is sufficient to support an increase in the BOE's member's stipend, to \$150 per day. And for the Office of Solicitor General for an animal services prosecution unit, \$276,000. As the Manager indicated in his comments, that comes from the presentation that was made during the last operations report regarding the outstanding cases related to

animal services. Next slide, please. And then -- also, the item that the Manager mentioned when the agenda was set relative to the State Court judges, we wanted to present the Board with the information that we had received during the budget process related to the request for funding related to the two additional State Court judges. So this slide is provided to show you a high-level summary of the number of positions requested and the associated budget, and then what we have recommended and what is included in the revised proposed budget relative to these two new judgeships. So in total, there was a request for 36 positions totaling 5.1 million, within the proposed budget and within the revised proposed budget, we have funded 20 positions totaling 2.8 million. Next slide, please. And then, Mr. Chairman, this is our last slide, and then we'll, you know, turn it over to the Board for questions or comments and feedback. This is just to resummarize the general fund proposed -- revise proposed budget of FY 26 beginning fund balance of 252.6 million with the recommendations that we've made for revenue, the proposed revenue budget would be one billion one hundred thousand. The proposed expenditure budget would be 1,073,700,000, and the ending fund balance will be a hundred and seventy-nine million, which is equal to 16.67 percent of the expenditure budget and meets the county's minimum fund balance reserve requirement. We also just wanted to note here that the revenue that is proposed, assuming with all the underlying assumptions that we made regarding growth in the digest collections, it does estimate out to about a 9.26 millage rate in order to support that total amount of revenue, and we would expect, based on the current calendar, that we would be before the Board in June -- the second meeting in June, to finalize the millage rate for the year. And with that Mr. Chairman -- oh, the only other thing that I wanted to mention is that in the binder that you received, and in the electronic version of the document that was attached, we do have two Resolutions included in that document, one is the required Budget Resolution, and the other is a Resolution that would go ahead and authorize the 2026 COLA, and would make it effective for the first pay date in March, and that's it, Mr. Chairman."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Thank you. So we'll make an assumption you stand by all the numbers that you have before is at this point in time. Commissioner Arrington, you have the floor."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "So if we can go back, I think it was maybe slide eight or seven. My question -- yeah, eight is perfect. So I understand that we have the two new State Court judge positions coming, and I see that you have four positions recommended for the solicitor general. Is that two per judge?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "It's one attorney and one investigator per judge. And Commissioner Arrington, that's the same for the public defender. So we gave them each one attorney and one investigator per judge."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Yes, but it's not the same for the other 20 state court judge court rooms that are there. Each state courtroom has two solicitors and two public defenders, so I'm trying to understand how we expect to -- these people to operate on calendars with 80 to 100 people, and we're only given them one solicitor, right? How do we give these judges one solicitor and all the other judges have two

solicitors? How do we give these judges one public defender and all the other judges have two public defenders? I see we've got our state court judges and our solicitor here. Maybe perhaps since no one was able to answer my question, I'll ask our solicitor and our judges if they can answer the question. And I guess, maybe I'll ask a different question. Mr. Gammage, how many solicitors do you have in all other courtrooms?"

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "Thank you, Commissioner Arrington and good morning, Commissioners, Chair and Vice Chair. Two prosecutors, two assistant public defenders, a victim advocate who's tasked with ensuring that we don't violate Marsy's Law or the Crime Victims Bill of Rights, and an investigator, and a legal support staff member, a paralegal. I think it's clearly critically important -- and thank you all for calling us up. Clearly -- these are minimum standards. These are minimal constitutional standards. The state court is an ecosystem. The clerk has to have resources that are effective and appropriate. The judges have to have resources in their chambers -- it doesn't stop there. The people assigned to the court rooms have to have appropriate resources and across the metro, and across the nation whether its superior court or state court, the minimal standard that's accepted and not enough resources, Commissioner Thorne, is two prosecutors and two assistant public defenders. We've got some information we've shared. I think it should be extremely telling to you all that the public defender represented by Ms. Walsh, the state court prosecutor, the former chief judge of the state court, Judge Wes Taylor, who actually really stepped out of the county, went up to our legislature, revealed the case numbers, revealed the standards, and our state legislature said you're under resourced and underfunded, and so we need a minimum of fully staffed -- two fully staffed additional courtrooms. And then we have our new recently appointed state court judge, Jane Morrison, all united under the same theory, and we all -- all we want to do is our best for the people that we're sworn to serve. When these two new judges are sworn in by Governor Kemp in about another week, I think it's the 13th -- when they're sworn in, they'll begin with the backlog that they need to address because we've already been underfunded. I say that respectfully -- and under resourced and overwhelmed with a number of cases. And so, the notion, respectfully, that they will begin with half of the standard resources that are presently available in all of the other understaffed courtrooms. We do have a presentation. I've shared it with each of you. My Chief of Staff, Ms. Bickerstaff, has just a few slides she loved to show to show you what our ask was. I think it's also telling that last year in preparation for Judge Taylor's and the judges' communications with our legislatures, we presented a unified budget. We said here's what we need to function at a minimal constitutional level. So this is not new, we don't mean to be coming here on the eve of a vote regarding the budget, and we've had these conversations on an ongoing basis. And out of all of the so-called enhancements that we critically need, you can't overlook these two judges. They should be equal, at least to the other courtrooms. Again, we do have that slide. We understand your time, but I do want to turn next to the judges -- or to the public defenders' representative, and this is very, very important, because all people have to be safe. And it's the number two legislative item last year as identified by Fulton County; it's the number two legislative items. Ms. Walsh."

LAUANA WALSH, FC DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER: "Thank you. Good morning, everyone. I'm here on behalf of the Office of the Public Defender with apologies from Mr. Kenner who is unable to be here today. I just want to say that we have been in conversation with both Solicitor Gammage and with the courts in general, regarding the needs of the courthouse community in general and State Court. We are all in consensus that we need these extra resources. They are not an extravagance, but a bare minimum that's necessary to have the courts fully functional. We have presented to Finance and previously to the Board of Commissioners, data that shows that we are already working above the standards that have been established by the American Bar Association in terms of caseloads. That was before we had the addition of the two judges. While the additional two judges do help to spread out the caseload, they still do not address the needs for sufficient staff to be in compliance with the Bar Association standards, and to provide the best service to all of our clients that they require that is needed under the Constitution. We are fortunate that we have been able to have a very good working relationship with our other court members. We have reached consensus of what we believe to be the minimum standards. Again, we do not believe that this is an extravagance. This is not a matter of trying to have Cadillac services. We are just trying to have a vehicle that can get us from point A to point B without breaking down. So I just want to say that I encourage you all to consider the joint proposal that we have made and to seriously consider how your vote will impact the efficient or inefficient operations of State Court. Thank you."

CHIEF JUDGE JANE MORRISON: "Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Commissioner Arrington, thank you for the invitation to join you this morning. Mr. Manager and all the Commissioners, I just want to stand here today as Jane Morrison, whom you may know in past roles, but also as the new chief judge of the State Court of Fulton County, and I want to assure you that the proposal that's been brought forward to you that was crafted by the former chief judge, Wes Taylor, is one that comes from the experience of your State Court bench. This is a bench that we've been doing this for decades, many of us, and when we come to you and we say we need X, Y, and Z to run the court rooms smoothly, that is something that I hope you will have confidence in, given the fact that we've been doing this, many of us, for years, for decades and we know what it takes to run your courtrooms and State Court smoothly. This is a very high-volume court, one of the highest volume courts in the Southeast, and the resources that we're asking for do come out of carefully thought through and coordinated conversations amongst all of the different parties. It's important today that you've heard from the actual litigants who use the courts, the Solicitor, the Prosecutor, the Public Defender, these are the people who know what is needed, and I want to thank you very much for your consideration of the coordinated thought-through proposal that Chief Judge Taylor had put together and presented. Thank you."

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "Allow your time; I know you have a busy day. Good to see everybody. Hope everybody is doing well. Happy New Year to everybody. I guess, I did get this ball rolling back last year, and I really do want to first off thank all of y'all for being a partner in this and getting this to happen that we have two new state court judges. According to the statistics, of course, you know, we have fewer than what even the state would say we should have, but that's okay, we going to do great with 12 judges

going forward, and we really do appreciate the fact that y'all got us here. I also want to say, because I know everybody comes up asking for money, and I want to tell you the good things. I also want to tell you that I want to thank County Manager, Dick Anderson and his team for making the theory reality. We've got the courtrooms, everybody's ready, and we're going to be ready to roll when these two new judges get appointed next week, and that's very exciting. Joe Davis was huge in this, Kevin Kerrigan, Tim Diamond was integral, and I really want to thank Mike Rowicki who really made all of these -- because there are a lot of moving parts to make this happen and make it reality, and so that's one of the wins. It's a really good positive thing that happened in the county and didn't spend a lot of money getting it done; so everybody came together to make that happen. It was a real positive in the county. I know we hear about negatives all the time. And I just want to say to y'all and say thank you for all of that, and to let you know that I do think that you really need to give some serious consideration as to fully funding those two courtrooms. This is something that is a small percentage of what I know you're considering spending to keep people in the jail. This is a small percentage to keep people in the jail for the time they should be in there, and not more time. And it costs a lot more to keep somebody in jail than it is to have them on probation and to keep them supervised, and get them the services and the resources that they need. And I just want to give you one example, and I see it all the time and I've seen it recently, and that is I get cases, new cases coming into court, and I say, well, man, that name's familiar. And I look back, and I'm like, oh, I have two open cases with this individual. And some of them are back a lot longer than they should be. I mean our caseload, unfortunately, because of the way we're staffed, and the reason why we have the two new judges coming on board, is because we have cases that take longer than way more than we should, way more than the National Center of State Court says that we should. And what the result of that, is not just always just people, you know, we're not getting the cases, from a criminal perspective, it's real people's lives. It is people who aren't under supervision, who aren't getting the resources; they're not doing the classes that they need to do, like the Family Violence Intervention Program. And so what do I get? I get another case where somebody has gone and beaten on their spouse, significant other, you know, a child's mother, whatever it is, and they've gone and they've done that again allegedly, and they haven't had a single class. They don't know anything other than this is the relationship I've always known, it's how I grew up, it's all I know, and I have no other perspective other than that. The only way we get there is if we can actually manage cases effectively, get them to resolution as quickly as possible, so that we get them the resources -- mental health; you name it, all of those things. That's just one example that I'll give you that's real that I have cases pending in front of me with right now. And I thank y'all for your time. If you have any questions for me, I'm happy to answer them, but thank you all very much for what you have done."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Thank you. I do have follow-up questions, I guess, particularly since it was your plan. I see that the judges got eight positions that we're -- they're recommending eight positions which is what you requested."

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "Yes, sir."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "I see the clerk requested nine positions, but they are only recommending two. Is anyone from the clerk's office here?"

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "The chief clerk is here, and I didn't mention -- but he can. You've got to have the clerk's folks to manage the paperwork -- it's not paperwork anymore. And then I'll get out of the way for him, but I will say one quick thing since you brought it up. With the clerk's office being understaffed, that is again a very real issue. It's not just about paperwork not getting done or, you know, the things moving the way they should. It causes mistakes, and those can be ministerial in nature because of what the clerk does. What that means is they aren't necessarily subject to sovereign immunity. And so, that leaves the Fulton County, not to our budget, I guess, but to Fulton County's budget of possibly seeing issues that might be brought by folks who stay in jail longer than they ought to because of paperwork wasn't done, because there aren't enough resources. So anyway, that's one thing I'll make -- you want to hear from Donald?"

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Yes, I do want to hear -- I do have one more question though. How many solicitors and public defenders do you have in your courtroom?"

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "I have two and two."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Two and two."

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "Yes, sir. And you know better -- can I ask you a question?"

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Sure."

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "-- as well. I'm sorry. Because you know better than I do now, but when I was an assistant solicitor in DeKalb, we had two prosecutors and two public defenders and a lot of that was because, especially with prosecutors, you have a senior prosecutor who knows a little bit more than the other usually, and can help train the junior prosecutor; and so, you get that constant training effort that comes in when you have two folks with one, I mean, you really -- you never know what you're going to get in a courtroom just from a training perspective. Mr. Gammage could probably talk to that, but that's what I've seen across Metro. I don't know if you have seen anything different than the two/two model."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: No, I haven't. And I was also going to ask you, have you always had two?

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "Yes, sir."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "And I assume, Judge Morrison, you've always had two solicitors and two public defenders in the courtroom as well?"

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "I'm sorry, I will --- let me correct. There have been times when I've had one public defender because of issues with staffing and things like that, but it's pretty minimal that I've only had one, but for short periods of time, right? Yeah, I mean, sometimes when you have staff -- you don't have enough staff, then you've got to manage it with one, but generally I have two and two."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "And what is the average size of a caseload? We're talking like 80 to 100 cases?"

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "That's a month that come in. We average, I think, it's 900 per judge, open pending cases. And when you talk about the number of cases and not to -- but the numbers are astronomical, especially like when you consider to Superior Court -- now, there cases are different, obviously, but the type of case is different, but our caseload is very high -- over 900."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "I'd love to hear -- thank you, Judge Tailor. I'd love to hear from the clerk's office about the resources and why -- I guess, you know, why you requested nine and you only got two -- I mean, you know, how many -- why did you request nine and, you know, it doesn't look like you're going to get nine, but you know, perhaps you might need more than two."

DONALD TALLEY, CLERK, FC STATE COURT: "Yes, thank you. Good morning, everyone, I'm Donald Talley. I'm the clerk of court and the court administrator for State Court. I know you don't see much of me as being the clerk of court, but there's another clerk of court besides the Clerk of Superior and Magistrate Court. First of all, thank you for what has been provided as resources upon the request that we've made to be able to manage the two new -- the caseloads of the two new State Court judges. But with the clerk's office, I can tell you that we are severely understaffed. If you look at what other clerk's office have around Metro Atlanta and neighboring counties of equal size, equal volume, such as DeKalb, Cobb County, we're probably about 25 to 30 staff members less than what they have. We have the same volume. When the AOC made their recommendation for 16 judges, they based it upon the number of new filings. Our new filings equate to about approximately about 50,000 a year. But what they don't take into account are all of the filings. When they say new filings, they're looking at criminal caseloads as well as our civil caseloads. But what they don't take into consideration are the subsequent filings. Last year alone, we had over 400,000 filings; 400,000 with only approximately about 26 staff members. Of those 400,000, many of them were subsequent filings. No one looked at the subsequent filings. They only look at the new case filings. So we're talking about motions; we're talking about things for discovery. There's a lot that takes place. Of that 400,000, approximately about a 180,000 of those were touched by my staff. It is difficult for us to be able to not only build those cases, because in order for a case to move, you have to have caseload management, and it starts with the clerk's office. So we asked for those nine positions just to be able to manage what we have in place. To give you another idea of what has happened here in the last few years, on the civil side of things with dispossessory cases, because we've done such a great job of managing our dispossessory caseload, we've seen a significant increase in the number of dispossessory filings. In 2017, we had

approximately about a hundred and seventy dispossession filings for the entire year. This past year, we had approximately about 17,000 dispossession filings with the same staff. What has happened over the last few years with many changes, the community is demanding changes. As a result, we've implemented new projects, new systems; however, we've done all this with the same staff. As you all know, in 2016, there was a separation of Magistrate Court from State Court, and a lot of the staff that was there with the State Court went over to Magistrate Court and Superior Court. That's about 39 -- or maybe 50 employees. Well, here recently as of 2021, first appearance cases are now back with State Court. They're back with State Court. I have the same staff, and we're still trying to manage those caseloads. No additional staff. I need some assistance. I need some help. I'm begging of you."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "So if you can, be more specific about the clerks that are needed for the two judges. I mean, I get it. I understand your overall, and thank you for providing that background information. But I think specifically what we need to hear is how many people do you need for the two new judges?"

DONALD TALLEY, CLERK, FC STATE COURT: "For the two new judges, I definitely need the nine, and that is clerical staff. Okay? In addition to that, we also ask for some additional court reporters. Right now, we have seven court reporter positions, ten judges, and I've been trying to manage what we can with just seven court reporters to handle the trials, motions, and probation revocations. It's challenging to do. We've also had to use outside agencies just to bring court reporters in on our civil cases. So included in that request for nine staff members are clerical staff, as well as five court reporters. This is not an exorbitant request; this is something that we absolutely have to have in order to survive. The two new judges come along; they're going to be moving cases a lot quicker. I have to have staff in order to make sure these cases are flowing properly, so I ask you to please support us in this request."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "All right. And I don't know if I've clearly heard how many are needed per judge."

DONALD TALLEY, CLERK, FC STATE COURT: "Per judge, yes. Well, per judge, I need at least three clerical staff per judge in the clerk's office, so that will be six and then plus, as I mentioned, five court reporters. So in all honesty, we need 11 positions total. Now please keep in mind, I have no vacant positions. There's no positions for me to go and hire or fill. I have no vacancies. We don't really have vacancies in State Court. We're fortunate that when someone comes on, they're working with us, they stay with us, so -- but we need additional staff. So that's my clerical staff, that's court operations specialist positions, senior court operations special positions -- these are entry level positions that we are requesting along with the court reporters."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Thank you."

DONALD TALLEY, CLERK, FC STATE COURT: "You're welcome. Any other questions?"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "You want to ask him?"

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "I know about I'm not in the queue, but before they leave --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "-- they're not leaving. Listen, they're here. They were brought here for a reason, so who do you want to ask a question of? All right. They want to go in as in the queue. All right, Commissioner Ellis, you have the floor followed by Commissioner Barrett followed by Commissioner Ivory. Do not leave. And we're just rehashing all of this that we've gone through at budget time. This is same thing that y'all have heard, so I guess we'll invite everybody else to come. That's fine, as long as we've got time. Commissioner Ellis."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "I think we can stay on this particular topic. I've got -- kind of sort of make a macro statement about, you know, kind of the budget as a whole with -- before I lead in, because the lead into kind of the comments I want to make relative to this and say, certainly with, you know, a proposed, an additional 16.7 percent spending over the prior year, I think the amount of funds that we got allocated in total for the entirety of the budget are more than adequate. And it's a significant number that we're asking taxpayers to fund; it's an additional, about \$153 million of spending over the prior year. Now, there's a lot of components as the Manger noted that makes this up, and that this is not spread evenly, and clearly, we can see one particular component which is overweighting, you know, kind of the spend on this. And it's an important one, but there's a balance to all of this in terms of front and back end, like was noted by Judge Taylor, I believe; and that's a -- that's an interesting argument. It can kind of flip both ways that people can overuse. But this particular priority was something that we had as a Board, right? That we wanted to collectively go get the new additional State Court judges. I think State Court has done a good job in terms of all of our courts in terms of more -- very clearly outlining their efficiency and the need for this, and we all bought into it, and I think we all want to see this come out of the gates with success, right? So there seems to be some degree of breakdown in communication. I don't think you all would have proposed this to us with the idea of this coming out and not working. I don't think that would necessarily -- I would hope that's not the intent. But we seem to have some degree of breakdown in communication. I don't want to ask you to kind of -- what happened with that? But my -- really, what I would like to see -- and I've got a couple specific questions in here and don't want to get too far down into the weeds, but I would hope that we could get -- read into this next two weeks, sit down with these constituents, the stakeholders that are here today, and better understand this because I'm assuming what you've attempted to do here was try to determine what the proportional amount of resources that were needed to fund the two additional judges; not necessarily other asks that, you know, kind of the individual stakeholders may have had outside of that. Is that sort of what was attempted to be done in terms of what was recommended here?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "Commissioner Ellis, we were trying to ensure that we provided for the judges, their chambers, and proportionately for the solicitor and public defender, attorneys, and investigators."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Okay. So that -- I don't know, maybe I heard two and two, and I guess that is four and four, right? That's kind of where some of this stuff you were hearing, but with the solicitor and the public defender, right?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "Yes, sir, we provided for --"

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "-- I get it. Right, I mean -- but there are some other points that have been raised. We can all kind of get down and weigh in on the weeds on the stuff, and we want to, that's fine. But I think there are more than adequate enough funds here to look at reallocating some funding in some other areas into this, and let's get it to a point that we all feel comfortable and we get right. Maybe the number's not 5.1, maybe it's 4.9, maybe it's 5.3. I don't know. But I think we're within, you know, kind of a framework here to basically, I believe, get this out of the gates right, and it would be my ask and hopefully the rest of the Board would concur with this too, for y'all to sit down, take another look at this, and then come back and recommend some reallocation of funding into these areas, but maintaining it, but not going, you know, above this sort of top level of spend. And, you know, so I think there's some good points that have been raised. I mean, obviously, there may be some underlying questions that need to kind of get at, and I will leave it to you all to kind of wrestle with it a little bit, but I think we're probably -- we're going to need -- it's been demonstrated we're probably going to need to get closer to the 5.1 than we are to 2.8. So I'll come back on some other things, and I've got some suggestions about some areas we need to think about, potentially reallocation; but I'll let other folks who want to talk on this specific issue to come back to that."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. I agree with you. Commissioner Barrett, because a reallocation, that's where the rubber's going to meet the road where we take -- if you fund something now, you're going to have to take it from someplace else, Commissioner Barrett."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all. First of all, Madam Chief Judge, congrats on the new role. I look forward to working with you. Thank you all for putting this together. Thank you, Judge Taylor, for getting this started and putting it together and all of you guys for being here. I have a question about the total number, because I did go through the presentation and obviously, I spoke to Solicitor Gammage yesterday in some detail about this, and I have spoken to a variety of you over the course of the year leading up to this. But right off the bat, the original number that you had, Solicitor Gammage, in your enhancement request was higher than the 1.8 on the slide up there. So you had like a 1.954, I believe, was the number. And so, my question is for all of you, are these numbers on the left side the accurate numbers for everything you would need to accommodate the new state court judges? In other words, I believe when I talked to you yesterday, Solicitor Gammage, the 1.954 not only included your two solicitors per courtroom, but also investigators and what have you, but also, the victim witness/assistance program folks, for the Marsy's Law. I may be getting the terminology wrong."

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "You got it perfectly well."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Okay, great, and some operational funds as well. So I just want to make sure that we are not -- even if we -- my recommendation is that we -- I agree with Commissioner Ellis that you all sit down and work through these numbers, but I want to make sure that we're not just saying okay, here's the people, and then you're also -- you're still short on funding for, you know, paper or whatever else it is you need to get the work done. So I want to make sure these are comprehensive numbers so that you can actually use the judges to their full extent. And to your point, Mr. Gammage, this is all in service of better throughput in the courts, moving cases through, not building up backlogs, and in many cases, improving at least the length of stay in the jail, getting people in and out faster who have gone through your office. So the question being again, just to circle back, are these numbers the right numbers on the left-hand side there for each of you?"

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "Thank you for the question, Commissioner Barrett. We are in accord that these are the right numbers. And I would ask you to consider -- we're here, county management team is here, perhaps on a break since we're all here from our various court proceedings and demands, perhaps we can get together today if that's reasonable. We have a number. It's not an overreach, it's what's standard. And so, respectfully, I think Commissioner Ellis is right on in the court systems because of being -- having these resource challenges. Lots of cases get reset as Judge Taylor shared, but we also have the opportunity right now, today, I think, to deal with this matter, and the right parties to do it are here. I hope you all will consider that."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Yeah, I appreciate that, and I want to say, I'm in support of us funding this fully so that they could do what they're meant to do. But I don't want to let go of the comment you made, Solicitor Gammage, about the sort of underfunding that has gone on over a number of years, and I will basically hold my comments right now until this HB-625 issue, because I do have other things I want to talk about as well with regard to the budget, but I do think -- you know, I sat through 90 something percent of the enhancement meetings, the budget hearings that you all had this year, and I heard again and again from the justice agencies, those of you that are here and some that are not here, that they were underfunded, that they were understaffed, that there were not enough resources. And I've asked consistently when Mr. Nawrocki's been presenting, what is the -- you know, how do we start to measure the backlog? We've measured sort of the COVID backlog, and then, you know, how do we measure backlog building up again now without enough staffing? So I do think, you know, put it under whatever funds you want to put it under, call it a consent decree fund or whatever else you want to call it, but at the end of the day, all of this is relevant to improving the situation at the jail. And we have to invest not just in, you know, fixing plumbing at the jail and helping the Sheriff get staffed, all of the things we need to do, but also to funding the entire, and you used the word ecosystem, justice ecosystem. Unfortunately, we don't have a CJCC in Fulton County. This would've been a great forum for all of us, including you, Mr. County Manager, to have these discussions and for the Board to be read in a little bit earlier to some of this. It's not there. You guys are doing the work

together, I appreciate that, and I think we need to really be serious about investing in justice, so I'll let it go there."

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "I just want to make sure everyone knows, those judges are going to be sworn in, and so we really need to -- and the reason why I press is because we need to start interviewing people to put the human beings in those courtrooms as those dockets are starting to be transferred and increased, so any delay has potential detriment."

LAUANA WALSH, FC DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER: "If I may, I just had one thing. With respect to the chart that is presented, I believe that the number on the left, the requests for the public defender's office, I'm showing that the comprehensive need that we had submitted actually is a higher number than the file that's reflected on the sheets. So we had asked for four total public defenders for the two courtrooms, two per courtroom, and to include also a supervisor, two investigators, a social worker, and a legal secretary to manage all the additional administrative matters that were -- that we need to take into account with the added judges, so I just wanted to bring that to your attention while I had the audience here."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "No, that was answering my question, so I appreciate that. And so, can we get a comprehensive list of all of that, not just the staffing requirements, and not just a staffing for the two and two, but the full list of requirements that everybody has to make this work. You know, I understand -- I totally get where you're coming from, Mr. Clark, and so I think we really need to understand the full set of operational costs here and make sure that we're not sort of, you know, giving you a car with three wheels."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right, Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all so much for being here. Happy New Year, and I appreciate your patience in standing and going through while we're doing all of this. I want to thank our finance team and county management for the work that went into preparing this revised proposal. I will note though that the materials were sent to the Board at 8:11 p.m. last night in advance of today's vote. So that obviously is not enough time to do a thorough examination of all of the documents that were sent. And so I'm pleased to hear that my colleagues would like for us to have more discussion over the next two weeks before we take a vote on this budget. I think that's what I'm hearing, and I'm pleased to hear that. I am keenly aware of these issues, not only as an attorney, but as a person -- as a Commissioner who has a Chief of Staff who was not only a former public defender, but also a former prosecutor. So I, on a daily basis -- that is Attorney Maria Banjo. I, on a daily basis, get the opportunity to dive deeper into what is really happening because there's someone in my office who has done both of those jobs. So we had a conversation with the county management team many months ago about this very topic when the State Court judge, when we knew that we were going to have to fund this, and we talked about the most minimal of standards was two and two, and all of the request that you have in here. So it does surprise me that we are not funding this fully and completely, because we know -

- and I have witnessed in this county that we adhere to minimal standards. That even in the way that we handle the idea of rules-based budget is anything that is like required, and that we must do to meet minimal standards, we do that; except, we're not doing it here. And so, I feel like we will have the opportunity to have these discussions a little bit more and figure out if it's not what I believe to be true about reallocation, because we are always working with thin dollars for the needs and the services in this county. But really being honest with ourselves about what amount of money it takes to actually run this county properly. The crisis we have right now, and the word understaffed is the most used word in Fulton County. Everybody is understaffed. Year after year, the departments -- and I sat in almost every single department budget meeting -- says they are understaffed, that they need more in order to do their jobs effectively; and most importantly, in the areas where we spend the most money, the jail and the court system, our justice system. We've accepted that we're in a crisis in Fulton County with the jail. We have heard on the news, we have the consent decree, the federal government has said that, and we have all accepted that, we're making allocations for that in our budget, not probably even enough, but I'll talk about that later. But we sort of stuff under the table the understaffed other department which are our courts, because we don't have a consent decree, because it's not talked about in the newspaper all the time, but we have two crises. We have to fix our jail and we have to properly fund our courts. And both of those cannot be done without the other. So I would just like for Solicitor Gammage to come up -- or actually Chief Judge to come up as well, the chief judges, former and present, and, yes, you're a team. Could you just speak to the impact on a person's life and the jail population when the courts are underfunded, because I think that a lot of constituents understand what happens when people are sleeping on the floor of the jail, and that our monitor has said that we are understaffed in the jail, and this is the reason why the number one priority for the county in 2026 is to staff the jail properly. Tell me what understaffing in the courts does to a person's life, and how it affects the population at the jail."

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "May I begin? Thank you for that question. Criminal matters -- customarily, criminal matters customarily begin with an arrest or the issuance of a citation, and then an individual is booked in. And as we all are aware, that's a current 24 hours a day, every single day. We've even proposed collectively to have 24-hour court, night courts. That's never been funded. We made that request, since law enforcement is making arrest 24 hours a day and people are being booked into the jails. Directly to the question though, as I tremble thinking about it, every single case represents someone who might be innocent. And so, when prosecutors and when public defenders, and when the system is underfunded, there is a failure of justice. And so, in as much as we are working stridently -- honestly, y'all, our teams are working almost 24 hours a day. Prosecutors don't get sleep. The affect is that they're overwhelmed, they're overworked, and as much as they care and are conscientious, and are well-trained along with our public defenders, they're tired. They're stretched thinly. They're quitting at alarming rates. The effect that it has is that one of those individuals or two or 500 of them will not be properly prosecuted. Why, because we're just too damn busy. We're overwhelmed. Someone may get stabbed in this dilapidated jail who needed mental health treatment, but you know what? My prosecutor had 500 cases to manage. And one case might have 12 charges. How

much time do we expect an individual public defender, judge, prosecutor, clerk to spend trying to determine whether this human being is innocent or not? How many investigators should go out -- I only have 27 for tens of thousands of cases. How many of them should go out an extra five times to try and find a victim of domestic violence? How much effort should we expend? Twenty-seven investigators, tens of thousands of cases, that's been part of our enhancements for years. Judge Tailor and Judge Edlein run an amazing accountability court for the most high-risk impaired driving offenders, many of whom are seeking help. I got to go through the cases and make a decision about whether they should go there. There's a criteria. I got to do a whole bunch to get the case file. If I've missed that, by me, I mean my team. If we've missed that, justice is denied. Not only for the victim like some of us here who've been injured by drunk drivers, the people here today who have been a victim of drunk driving; justice fails, the guilty potentially go free without punishment, cases linger, some for three years, and it ain't our faults because we're working hard. And we've been making these petitions and honorable, reasonable, thoughtful requests, and you've been helpful, but if it's my nephew, if it's my neighbor, I want a damn system that really tries to find out whether they committed the crime, whether they can get resources. I want a victim advocate when a dog attacks someone and mauls them. I want to have enough victim advocates. I only have 10. We lost our state funding for victim services. We petitioned for that, it was denied. So this victim doesn't get caught, so they miss coming to court, and they moved in this transient society we're in, and I didn't have enough investigators or enough victim advocates to track them down and find them. What it means is justice is denied. It means that defendants who might be innocent might miss their due process rights. It means that people might spend two minutes with the case. Somebody might get convicted because we didn't have the resources to go and uncover the truth about it. And you know, it's really difficult at times, you all, for elected officials - I'm an elected prosecutor. I have to make the community think we're safe. It's part of my job. They're not. They're not safe. This is not hyperbole; these are facts. Judge."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Do you want to hear from each of them?"

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Yes."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Okay. So try to be brief. We want to accommodate everybody, and the final analysis is it's going to boil down to the millage rate."

CHIEF JUDGE JANE MORRISON: "Mr. Chairman, I'll keep that in mind and there are people who have been far more articulate about this than I need to be. But you all know the old adage, and it's an adage because it's something we understand; justice delayed is justice denied. Charles Dickens writes about this, centuries -- a century ago. Not just in criminal cases, but in civil cases when families can't get justice to resolve issues throughout our court system, when business people can't get cases resolved. Backlogs are an issue that cry out for public attention and for your attention, as the lawmakers. I'm going to turn the details over to Judge Tailor, who worked on the proposal here, but just thank you for your attention to this important matter, not just in criminal but in our civil cases as well. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Thank you, Judge."

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "I'll be real quick and try to answer the specific question. Here's an example for -- actually, what happened to me recently. So because of the way the clerk is funded, and the number of staff that he has, which is minimal, like he said, 20 fewer than DeKalb, Cobb, and we all have the same case docket, and he's got 20 fewer folks to manage the same caseload. I mean it's -- and even more than what DeKalb has. What happens is, we all try to work together to overcome that. So our litigation managers, who you've funded for each State Court, they manage our criminal docket for us. What's happened over the 15 years that I've been here is more and more work is put on the litigation manager. They have to do more and more of making sure that the case is filed correctly, that if somebody gets arrested, it used to be that the clerk's office could go through there, they'd notify us and say here's what's going on, here's what happens. Now it's being shunted to the litigation managers. I'm not saying it's a bad thing, I'm saying it's a thing that we are doing because we're having to try to figure out how we deal with the case docket. So what happens is, things like this: if your litigation manager is out on vacation during the holidays, and somebody has a bench warrant for their arrest because they didn't show up to court, but lo and behold, it's because they've been incarcerated in three other jurisdictions during the time when they were supposed to be here in court. And that person's mama is e-mailing me directly. So what do I do? I have to send this to my litigation manager to try to figure it out. So what do we do when we get back, he's on the calendar. I'll be seeing him tomorrow to figure this all out. Public Defender's office frantically having to try to work to figure out and you know, to figure out was he incarcerated on the day he's supposed to be in jail? But that is something that because the clerk's office is underfunded, had to come to us from his mama rather than the clerk's office picking it up when he was incarcerated and sent to Fulton County. So those are real instances where he didn't necessarily have to be in Fulton County Jail if we had known about it before. He might have, we don't really know, we're going to find out tomorrow, but we could have addressed it sooner. So that's why this funding is really important."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you. Can I just hear from the public defender on that?"

LAUANA WALSH, FC DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER: "Yes, thank you. So I think that the picture that I want to give you all is that we are operating as though everything is a crisis. We are having to rob from Peter to pay Paul. We are only able to deal with the items that are the people who are in front of us that day or this week, always trying to play catch up. We can't really spend the time that we need to spend that we should be spending, that the Bar says that we should be investing in all of our clients, in investigations, and for people who are out on bond and who are pending -- I get calls all the time from people saying I can't get a job because this is showing up as an open case. I can't get the case calendar because there's a delay in the system and it's going to be, you know, another six months before we can get this resolved. People are getting picked up on bench warrants as has already been said. It's going to take us another two weeks before we get them on a calendar. It's just -- I'm speaking in an animated way because that's how it feels. It feels as though we are always acting in

crisis mode instead of being able to manage professionally with all due diligence. Again, we're not asking for Cadillac services. We're just asking enough to be able to do the job that we are supposed to be doing effectively. That's what we're tasked to do, to give our clients effective representation. And some days it feels like we're just not there, because we just don't have enough people. So we just again ask you to consider that the people that we're representing are entitled to effective assistance of counsel; that the effects that are spilling over do affect jail population. I stand here under a different position from other stakeholders here in that our office also represents clients in Superior Court. So we also have a lack of resources on that end as well, so again, it just feels as though we are always trying to figure out where we're going to get some coverage. In Superior Court, if somebody's out, we have three attorneys I believe it is who are going out on maternity leave. We have no clue how we're going to cover those, you know, those cases, because we are fully staffed. It's not like we can hire additional people while those people are out on maternity leave. So again, I just feel as though our clients, the citizens of Fulton County, the courts, everybody deserves a system that is working as it should be, efficiently, and not always feeling like we're under the gun. So we're just asking that you give full consideration to the requests that we've made and understand again that we're doing this in a very thought out way in conjunction with each other."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you so much, and Mr. Chairman, thank so much for obliging me with your patience. I have one quick, very last question, and this is not a court of law and I'm not a judge like many of you are, but I do have that lawyer in me, so I'm just going to ask you a very simple yes, or no question. Just please reply, yes, or no. Does the gross underfunding of the court system have an impact on the jail population?"

(Whereupon, all justice partners present, answered in the affirmative.)

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you very much."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right, Commissioner Thorne."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "I'll be brief, because a lot of my questions have already been answered, and I do concur that we do need to adequately accommodate the two new judges, which has previously been said. Ms. Walsh, you kind of went quickly, because I had a question about the five positions and you kind of rolled off all the positions. Can you give me those positions again and then the total number?"

LAUANA WALSH, FC DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER: "Certainly. So we need four PD2's, two per courtroom. We need an additional supervisor, not just for those two attorneys, but for the other attorneys who have been under supervised because of the number of attorneys we have; two investigators, one social worker, and a legal secretary."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Okay, and a legal secretary. Okay. And that's in addition to the two, the two defenders per judge; the four?"

LAUANA WALSH, FC DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER: "This is a total ask."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Okay. Okay, great."

LAUANA WALSH, FC DEPUTY PUBLIC DEFENDER: "So a total of nine positions as opposed to the five that are reflected there."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Okay. Okay. Thank you for clarifying that. And then Mr. Gammage, you mentioned that you lost funding for victim services from the state."

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "Yes."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Was that across-the-board, everybody in the state, they just decided not to fund victim services, or can you give us a better history of that?"

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "Sure. Thank you for the question. (Indiscernible.) over the course of the last eight years, we have been getting a reduced budget, federal funds made available through the state under particularized statutes to serve victims of crimes, may contact counsel et cetera based on a written criteria of cases. That amount has been becoming less and less over the years. And so we work with the prosecuting attorney's counsel of Georgia, and for the last, I would say probably three budgets -- I'm looking back at my chief of staff, probably last three budget seasons, that deficit was made up by funding from the county, and that's what the state and the feds suggest you to do, go to your local funding source when grants -- and you know, since you asked and thank you for doing it, we also lost the funding at the state level to staff abandonment court, which happens in the Magistrate Court. And abandonment court, criminal abandonment court is where -- and we've sought that funding from this Body, but it's where -- and it's victim related as well, but it is where custodial parents whose noncustodial parent is not upholding their responsibility. Those custodial parents don't just take the civil route of child support, they come to the court and petition the Magistrate Court to issue an arrest warrant, and that process involves a number of different things, but it's best when there's a prosecutor. Well, we also lost those state funds, not due to any fault of our own, it was just simply cut. And so, I wanted to open up to the fact that it's those victim services as mandated under Marsy's Law, and the Crime Victim's Bill of Rights; and it was four positions most recently that we lost in addition to that other state funding from the Department of Community Services. And so, to the point that Ms. Walsh and the judges have made, and the clerk, what we've been doing is taking the prosecutor out of Judge Taylor's courtroom and sending them over on a day when they should be preparing their cases; sending them down to the magistrate court under the theory that forgive the pun, we can't abandon the children because if I'm not there to prosecute those cases, then there is no prosecutor. And so, we're doing that on a rotating basis to make up for that gap. The accountability courts, I've got prosecutors rotating through there, the misdemeanor mental health court, which we stood up back in 2017, you all made an investment in it, and it got great results, well, we're rotating prosecutors there. And Commissioner Thorne and other Commissioners, every single year, we point out these things. We

really do, and that Cadillac kind of justice that I believe people deserve actually, and Ms. Walsh suggested, if we had the resources to really investigate a case in those accountability courts, to really give more than just a helping hand, but the actual attention that a mama needs who's coming to court for help, that would involve obviously much more robust investment, but the benefits that people would really be safer. People will be closer to receiving just resolutions in an efficient and fair manner. And with those victims, I am constantly worried -- constantly worried that we're going to find ourselves caught violating Marsy's Law, and there's not, you know, County Attorney Soo Jo here, there's not a lot of penalties right now under Georgia law, but it is a statutory requirement. I got ten victim advocates; we've got thousands and thousands of cases. And Commissioner Thorne and Commissioners thank you all for wanting to hear more from us. I don't know if that means every department needs to come back down here, but what I do know is that if we're not safe in the community, then we shouldn't expect business to come. If we're not safe in the community, Commissioner Thorne, lastly, we're not safe in our own homes. If our court systems fail and our jails fail, none of us are safe. These are just minimal investments we're asking for."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "I would like to see if we could try to secure some more state funding for you as well. I don't know if that's adding to our legislative agenda or how -- I guess, Jessica would have to answer more to that if she could start some conversations to restore the state funding. Maybe we can get the history if it's been cut. No, it's money that comes from the federal to the state and then dispersed. So if it's coming, why aren't we getting that disbursement? That's my understanding."

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "Yep. It's been cut through the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council of Georgia and again, this has been -- you know, each year I get a letter that says this is how much the decrease is going to be this year. And customarily we come to the county and that deficit has been met. This time it's caused us to lose those positions for lack of a better way of putting it."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Okay."

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "And not provide those services."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Okay. Yes, I think victim services are very, very important and being within compliance with Marsy's Law is very, very important, and the abandonment that you mentioned too as well. So probably could have some off-line conversations with you on that as we're rolling into the legislative season to see what we can do and hopefully restore some of that and from the state level."

CHIEF JUDGE JANE MORRISON: "I will. Thank you very much."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Thank you. I appreciate all of you for coming down and congratulations on your new position. I'd like to have a meeting with you to, you know, get to know you a little bit better and what you do and how you do things or what you're looking forward to doing in managing the State Court. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Thank you very much. Commissioner Arrington, you want to be heard again?"

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Yes. So thank you to everyone. I think it's been very productive. I don't want to beat the horse to death anymore, but we heard from everyone up there except for court security. What is court security and who provides that, is that's the Marshal's office? Is that the Sheriff's office? Glad to hear all of you all in alignment, but the one person we haven't heard from is either a Marshal or the Sheriff. You know, what is this court security? Again, is that the Marshal or the Sheriff, who is that, and who will be providing that? Is that outsourced? I've only seeing the Sheriff's officers in the courtroom."

KEITH GAMMAGE, SOLICITOR GENERAL FC: "The way I understand it is some of that is managed by our sheriff, Sheriff Labat, and some by our Marshal. I don't know if it's the Marshals in Magistrate Court and the Sheriff's deputies in the State and Superior Court, but I did ask our chief investigator, Tim Peek to step down. He may have --"

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "-- I mean, my experience, I've only really seen the Sheriff's officers in the courtroom whenever I go into the courtroom. And so, I guess my question is, is this court security for Sheriff Officers or Marshals?"

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: This was -- we had asked our various stakeholders. I believe this is from we asked the Marshal to be here, so this is the Marshal's ask, and the Marshal's do -- they do some of ours. They do our traffic calendars. And so they actually do provide security at some of our calendars, but not directly to -- I will say, this would not be directly related to the two new State Court judges."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Well, let me make -- because that's my --"

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "-- that's my understanding. I shouldn't say that since the Marshal's not here, but this came from the Marshal."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "I would just say, let's make sure we have the Marshal and the Sheriff included, because my experience over the last 30 years as a practicing attorney inside the State Court in Fulton County and Superior Court of Fulton County, is that there are Sheriff's officers, and there's not just one, there's always two Sheriff's officers in each courtroom, at least whenever there's a judge on the bench, so."

CHIEF JUDGE WES TAILOR: "And your experience is similar to mine. Mine is, there is one -- in State Court, there's only -- there's one unless there are inmates, and if there are inmates, there are two."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Thank you. So I just want to make sure, as we're having this conversation, County Manager, that we're including the Sheriff and/or the Marshal and/or investigators, whoever, I just want to make sure that is comprehensive and that we're really -- and certainly the chief judge."

CHIEF JUDGE JANE MORRISON: "Commissioner Arrington, thank you very much for bringing up that issue. As someone who had the privilege, although it was a sad privilege to represent the family of Julie Brandau, the court reporter who was slain. Court security is essential, and thank you for thinking of that."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right, Commissioner Ellis."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "I'm done with this. I mean, I don't know if we want to continue on this topic, or we're starting to move to other areas?"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "You want to -- you're still on this topic? Okay. Who -- one last question here for this."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "With the court security follow-up. That is a funded position, but when I looked at the Marshal's office, the budget only went up a hundred thousand."

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "Commissioner, it's actually sitting in nonagency for this very reason. When we asked the Marshal in her budget hearing, because she did not present anything at that point for additional resources for these two state court judges, she indicated she would not be providing the security. So we funded this, and through the meetings that we've been having about the move have been trying to get to final answer on where the resources really need to go in order to ensure that security has been covered. My understanding was that the Sheriff's office had indicated they would be providing the coverage in the court rooms, and would also provide escorts as needed outside of the court rooms through the justice center, and that Magistrate Court covers -- I'm not going to remember the two specific courts that she said she covered, but there were two like calendars or something that specifically that her team covered, so this has been discussed. We put the resources in the budget; they're in nonagency until we get some direction on really where we need to place them. So if there's going to be a follow-up discussion, then perhaps we can close that out as part of that discussion and move the resources where they should be."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Thank you for that explanation."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Okay. Thank you very much. All right, Commissioner Ellis, Commissioner Barrett, Commissioner Thorne."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Thanks, Mr. Chair. I just want to get back in and talk about places for reallocation and numbers to look at and add three or four things that I want to know. I think obviously a lot -- there was a lot involved in that discussion, but I think the main thing for me is, let's just get the funding for the two courtrooms right? I mean, that's the main thing, and I think in terms of where additional resources that should be looked at as well as some areas where I think just some general questions. If we need additional funding, which sounds like we will for that, let's look -- have y'all go look at it

and identify where those funds could come from. I think this 19.5 million, and the additional recommendation that's noted on the consent recompliance, that can be a source for it. If investment in this reduces that, then it's going to reduce the outlay we need for the others, so, you know, test some of that out. There's some rationale for it, and then you know or there's some other areas within nonagency to look at. Two other specific areas, they're smaller, but I want to note them, one, in terms of just a -- this is more a mechanical transfer and we may need to look at it from a legal standpoint, but I don't really think we do. I think it's the change we should make is we've got -- we used to have multiple art centers in the county, but now there's only one. The existing ones that we had have been migrated over to all cities, South Fulton, Atlanta, and Sandy Springs, respectively. We have one that's remaining, that's The Darnell Center. It sits in the unincorporated footprint. I think, those centers right now, I mean, the cities are funded in city budgets. We should shift the funding for that into our FID budget. It may not be a lot of money, but I just think mechanically we should do it. And then one -- just from a number to look at and evaluate, you know, I'd like to have some conversations with you off-line on it, but the number if I look at regardless of the additional 466,000 you noted that sort of floats in to pay for things, that billing that took place in the prior year that we got to pay for, and as I struggle with in the Registrations and Elections area, how we're going to a proposed budget of 33 when in 2024, our actual was 31.85 or 65, I can't see -- whatever that number is, 65 it looks like. And I would hope we could kind of look at that and give that some consideration as we're looking at trying to find funding to reallocate over to this area that we just discussed. And just to verify, the Board of Equalization, you know, bump is in here, correct, and that's addressed already? So that comes in there. We've got compensation or a COLA of what amount?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "The dollar amount we have set aside for COLA, the percentage; 3.45 percent."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Okay. So that's in here and that's based upon a full year impact?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "No, it's based upon 22 pay periods with the COLA being included in the first paycheck in March."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "First paycheck in March, okay. So that comes in, in March. Okay. And then which is kind of how we've -- it historically comes in, and we've bounced around, but that sort would have been the target, right?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "Yeah. Effectively, it allows if the Board approves it."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "So you get the payroll set before --"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "-- yeah, after -- it allows it to be implemented as soon as possible after the Board takes action on the budget in January."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Okay. Okay. My last statement is not necessarily a budgetary statement, per se, but just to sort of I would just say, it impacts all this and it's something I think we need to bring attention to within 2026, and it's, you know, outside the budgetary discussion, but it's related to all this is I see it and I hear it, in terms of the different things that we do, and I think it's most prominent within tax than courts. I think we have clear opportunities for some technology efficiencies to be brought to bear. And I think a lot of times when it comes to those things, it's a matter of will not money, in terms of being able to just look at what you're doing and have people step back and do things different ways. And I know of a lot of that is easier said than done, but we've heard about some stuff specifically, you know, in some areas where we've just have been doing stuff via paper for God knows how long and, you know that wouldn't be tolerated in, you know -- you got restaurants that are run with, you know, more sophisticated scheduling systems and all that sort of stuff than we have running very large operations. We do some things in the technology well, right? But there are opportunities for us, and I think that's something that we got to more aggressively get our hands around in 2026, because you can't -- you can't run any operation whether it's a government or a private business without applying technology more effectively and efficiently. I mean, it's just where we're going is where we are, you don't have -- you're never going to have enough financial resources or people resources to continue to do things the way that you've been doing them for the prior decade. The world is moving in a whole different direction in that and, you know, we've got some opportunities with that that hopefully we can kind of start to bring into focus in 2026. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Barrett."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a variety of questions here I'm going start, since we were talking with the group that was here about people not being safe and about victims and all that, I have a couple of things I'd like to sort of point out in terms of victim protection that I think we really should be considering in this budget. First of all, in the solicitor's budget that the position, the victim's witness assistant program position I think is positions, where the grant funding was lost, I believe it's -- the number I have is \$413,417 which is what it said in the tranche, and I don't know if that's still the right number, but I do think, you know we can't -- while I understand and have participated very much in the discussions around lessening the number of people in the jail, I think, you know, we can't forget about the people who are victims, and I think it's really critical that we are doing -- and Marsy's Law is law, so we have to provide those services; and, you know, as Solicitor Gammage pointed out, if they don't have the budget to do it with separate staff members, they're going to have to juggle other people around, which slows down the process. So I think we really need to consider that \$413 -- or rather, yeah, 413,000 for that as well as the -- there's a \$2 million in total request from the DA's Office for the family justice center that they are working on. It's partly -- it's broken down, I think, in to two separate dollar amounts. One is sort of for the actual billed out, I think, and the other is for operations. And I think, you know, they're getting a lot of funding for this from federal grants. They're getting a lot of help from the APS, even I believe is giving them an empty school building to use for the facility. So they're being very resourceful and there's a lot of

community partners involved in the family justice center which, for anybody who doesn't know what that is, high level is just a way to sort of put all the services for victims in one building, because victims are struggling to move all around the county to get these resources. So this is an effort -- and these are -- this is a standard practice. There are these family justice centers in other municipalities, and so in areas across the country. So I think it's a really worthy endeavor, and I think, you know, we should be participating in that and helping to support that with the supplementary funds, so that's two million. I also want to mention on the victims' front, the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation, AVLF, has their safe and stable families' project, which operates out of the Fulton County Courthouse. It is specifically for survivors of intimate partner abuse, and they are funded through philanthropy, but mostly through federal and other grants. And unfortunately, the total cost to operate their safe and stable families' project in Fulton is 2.02 million, I believe. I have the information if anybody needs it; and they've lost about a million in grant funding. So I think it's really imperative that we continue to support survivors of domestic abuse -- domestic violence with this service. So I'd like us to include the million dollars for that as well. So I think there might be -- I did not have this grouped together, but I had it grouped together by department, and because we had this whole other conversation, my notes are a little disjointed, but I really think that anything we have in here -- I think some of the other departments in the justice side may have had some other victim's programs were unfunded and staff positions as such, but I really think we need to look at a comprehensive package for the victims of crime in this county and, you know, these are the people who we did not keep safe and who feel very unsafe now and still may be, depending on when people get out of jail and that kind of thing. So I think it's very important that we protect those folks in Fulton. So in addition to that, we heard from a lot of, you know, Solicitor General and the Public Defender, and such already, but we didn't hear from the Marshal, and I think the Marshal walked in, so I do want to say that I know the Marshal desperately needs a technical person, that was one of her enhancement requests was for a technology position. I would like to make sure that she gets that in her office as well as, you know -- I just want to make a broad statement here, because we talk a lot -- and since I've gotten here and every year we've talked about how there are all these positions that are not filled, and we have sort of let that kind of be out there as the fault of the department for not being able to fill positions. But I think, based on what I heard at the budget hearings, I don't know if you heard the same thing, Commissioner Ivory, when you were there, but I heard many, many, many department heads in those meeting talk about the struggle to retain employees. So it's not entirely that they can't hire, sometimes they often, I think, can hire, but they can't retain, and some of that, not all, but some of that is due to the salaries, and what we are spending. And so -- and you know, we know in the Sheriff's office it may be due not only the salaries but the benefits package and other incentives and some other things. So I think we need to be realistic about supporting these departments, giving them, you know, positions at salary ranges that they can't hire the best people or can't retain the best people or those kind of things, I think remains problematic. So while I don't have specific numbers around retention, I do think we really -- if we want to improve again, just sticking with the justice agencies for the moment, if we really do want to improve our ability to retain folks in all of the offices -- I know -- I believe, Marshal McKee, I think you told me you lost several people this year. And I think -- so it's happening across all of our justice agencies, I think not just the Sheriff's office. And so, I think this is

something we need to really be looking at, and putting it off another year or whatever, I mean, I still think we're under a consent decree for a reason, and part of it is understaffing in the jail, but it's also impacted by understaffing in the courts and in some of the other various agencies, so not all of them, but I think it's worth looking at. The DAs office in the same way asked for quite a large number of positions. I don't know what the right number is to balance out what we need from that office in terms of reducing the population in the jail and moving people through the system faster, but I certainly don't believe the answer is nothing. So I think the number of positions that the DA asked for was about 40 assistant DAs and 20 investigators. I threw together numbers for half of that, which is 2.4 million for the assistant DAs and 800,000 for the investigators. You know, for me, this is not an all or nothing or my number or their number thing. I think -- they don't want zero. If we can give them one more of each, great; if we can give them two more of each, great. I'd like to see them get as many as they need, but we should at least be trying to help improve that throughput as well. The Magistrate Court asked for three additional judicial assistant positions. I would say the same is true there; relatively small ask altogether, 278,000. And then, you know on some just general purpose items -- by the way, the full ask I believe from the Marshal's Office was around a million. So I don't know what we can do there, but I'd like to see her get as much of that as we could possibly squeeze out of this budget. Last not least, I have a couple of things outside of the justice agencies. You know, we are now facing a lot more people in this county who are -- who have lost healthcare, who have not been able to afford insurance because of the cuts to the subsidies in the Affordable Care Act/Obama Care. And so, you know, I proposed, and it's still on the agenda, a women's health -- healthy women, healthy families grant program for a \$1 million. You know, I think at the time, Mr. Chairman, you said some of these things were more worthy of consideration in the budget versus those stand-alones. So you know again, I'd like to, you know, put this up for part of the budget discussion to put a \$1 million towards this healthy women healthy families grant program, not that I don't want men to be healthy as well, I do, of course, but there are many single parent households led by women and that is why we called it healthy women healthy families and I really would like to see us try to step into the gap, even though a million dollars is a tiny, tiny amount compared to what the need is. It's at least us doing something, trying to stand in the gap for women, so I'd like to see us talk about, think about that. I still -- I'm going to say it one more time this year, I still would like to see us do the federally-qualified health centers pilot program for a \$1 million for the same reason, people have lost healthcare, it's going to get even worse, and helping to pay the co-pays for folks at the federally qualified health centers, I think will go a long way to addressing some of these chronic conditions that send people to the hospital. And then, I know we've got an agenda item today on the veteran's money. We have been talking about a million for veterans, I'm still asking for that. I know the agenda item is 750,000, but I would like to see us honor our veterans and ensure that they are, not only getting some funding to help with a whole host of needs as determined by their commission, but also the awareness factor, sort of splitting it into these separate roles coming out of arts, and coming out of community services are great, but I really would like to see the awareness of us, you know, help to beef that up, because that's half the battle for veterans is they're just not seen, and we need to help them be seen. Last but not least, we have a real opportunity, I think, with - and we often overlook the work we're doing -- it's a complete shift in gears here but,

with affordable housing. And we work already with the Metro Atlanta Land Bank. We do fund them, but we've underfunded them last year and so they once again, I have an ask for about a 186,700 and some dollars, and I'd like to see that happen. I think it's a tool we can use to improve affordable housing in the county, and we should consider doing that. So those are all, at least for today, my requests."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Thorne."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "I'll be brief. Ellis touched it, because everyone's kind of touched on a lot of the same things I would address, but Ellis touched on technology, efficiencies and the Marshal. She needs a technology person, which I'm sure she's probably not the only person in Fulton County, so I talked with you, Kevin, and some ideas you had to assist departments, maybe get some dedicated staff that works primarily with people like the Marshal's Department. I don't know if you would like to share your thoughts on that."

KEVIN KERRIGAN, FC CIO, IT: "I'm happy to do so, Commissioner Thorne. Good afternoon, Board Members. So I would say that, you know, we have a shared services model; we want to provide services and IT support to all of our county departments and agencies. Just like every department, we have our own challenges with filling positions, keeping them filled, but we are working on specifically for law enforcement and courts carving off, really separate in the two, our justice partners and our law enforcement agencies, of course, are both very large and need more dedicated resources to meet their support needs from an IT perspective. And so, we have a vertical that we're establishing for law enforcement will have some staff to help with their application stack, and we do have dedicated desktop support and user support teams that can take on those responsibilities. Typically, we have a technical liaison within the department for agency that work with us to coordinate anything that's more immediate or top-of-the-line, but we do have a ticketing system to fulfill, you know, smaller requests or needs. I will say we have seen challenges with embedding an IT resource in a given department if it's just a one or two person team, that limits their growth or mobility, and then they have challenges if that resource is to move on to another organization, then filling that gap tends to fall back to a centralized IT organization. So oftentimes there's a pendulum swing, resources get dedicated, then they flow back. They get dedicated, then they flow back. I've lived through this through many organizations in my career. So I just want to bring that awareness to the conversation to say what is the best model that provides the support they need and if it's more hands-on day-to-day, how do we address that. The longer-term support, I think, tends to be more successful when you have a centralized organized IT support model."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Thank you for that. As well with the Marshal's office, there was some conversations about moving. We had someone from the Public Defender's Office come down and give public comment about moving them, and I know we've had to relocate to accommodate these new State Court judges, so we have made moves. But the efficiency for some of the departments operate now has maybe -- have made them less efficient. Marshal McKee expressed that now the Magistrate Court is split into two locations, which is causing her office to have to serve two different

locations. And then the Public Defenders, as he said, they are practically moved to Mableton. So I don't know if you -- you guys can address that and what your thought process was around it?"

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "I think the comments for the Public Defenders were premature at best. There is a facility that's available now that DFCS has moved out, on Fairburn Road, not too far from where we all visited when we went out for the disability training center. It has a lot of potential because of its size and scope and free parking, and it's a 15-minute drive to downtown. We initiated discussions with Maurice Kenner, who's the Public Defender, to see if it was suitable. He rejected it at first, then he came back and wanted to go further. Nothing's been decided, nor is that in any way linked to the creation of the two court rooms. So that's independent, but something that's, you know, I think has some value for consideration under the notion of we would be better as much as we can if you initiated this, is to move to own space versus lease space. Well, who are primary leased space occupants; the Public Defender, the DA, and the Tax Assessor. So to some degree, it's a nonstarter to say the Public Defender shouldn't even be considered in that equation. Now, should it be there or potentially could it be simply across the street which is now also vacant at the corner of Peachtree and MLK, so that's another alternative. And then last, which we were asking Sizemore, right, is the name of the firm, our space planning firm, is to look at really all vacant space that exists in the courthouse, because one thing that we learned as we were going through the process of identifying the two court rooms and then the movements to be made to accommodate that was, we have more than significant -- more than ample, I should say maybe, vacant space in the courthouse. So that hasn't been optimized, neither is now this, you know, opportunity across the street, nor this facility where DFCS is located. The facility where DFCS is located is where the accountability court has decided to go. So there is actually some synergy potentially, accountability court services between Public Defender and accountability court, so for all of those reasons, that comment to me was premature and from his perspective, I'll say it that way. On the court rooms, it was, you know, a tremendous amount of work with a very short period of time to optimize the two court rooms that were needed and then the movement of the Magistrate to accommodate that. We had -- I don't know how many meetings -- but it was a weekly meeting for about three months, and a forced march to get both the court rooms identified, the agreements in place with all of the parties, and coverage from a security perspective, and court room flow and the like put in place. So as you've heard, Judge Taylor said that was done with a team effort. If that requires, you know, some more Marshal coverage or something different that was also considered during that whole process. But in the end, as was said, you know, it was done with a speed as an absolute requirement and very little investment in terms of new buildout or things of that nature. So I'm actually pleased with that aspect of that part of the plan. And then just briefly, since we were talking about it, I think -- first of all, kudos I think to all of our justice partners for coming down. I think, clearly, we can reallocate within what we have to satisfy the aspects of that proposal that need to be satisfied, but I think as Commissioner Arrington was go through his questioning, you got it right to where we got, what is the difference between the wheat and the shaft. In other words, it's very clear when you said two and two. It's really not an argument and we started low. Less clear, when you start talking about past sense of how we divided up the

clerical staff, and this is going back way in time, between Magistrate, Superior, and State, less clear when you start talking about grants that go away because our policy, not finances policy, the policy has been that we don't backfill every grant because you can think of how that would be a slippery slope of we get grants, the grants go away, and then we're going to fund it from the general fund. Now I'm not suggesting that victim's advocates shouldn't have a higher calling, but that has been the policy. Therefore, as those grants go down, we look to try to find other ways to either fund or address that. And then when you get all the way down to the level of what was being discussed by the Public Defender's representative, she's talking about boiling the ocean, in other words, she really is talking about the whole system is underfunded. Well, is that -- you know, is this addressing -- trying to address that issue or is it addressing the two court rooms? So I think though, we can go back and, you know, clearly we got the direction today to do that and close that gap, but it's you know, somewhat the difference between the bid and the ask, and that's the reason there's a difference between the bid and the ask, if all of that makes sense."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "It does. Thank you for that clarification. That's all I have right now."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right, Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you, so much. As I said before, I want to say thank you to the finance team and to the County Manager's Office for the work that went into preparing this revised proposal. And I did have a very thorough document asking of seven pages of questions which I'm going to -- and the Chairman is happy to hear this, going to hold because we now have the opportunity to have a conversation about it in the next few weeks before we vote and also many of the questions that I have, have come up from Commissioner Barrett, Commissioner Arrington, Commissioner Ellis, and Commissioner Thorne who have been present in this conversation. So I thank them for asking those questions so that we can sort of comprehensively have a conversation. I want to say that 72 people are sleeping on the floor of the jail today. That is a current number, which continues to highlight that we are in a state of emergency. And we, meaning my team and the County Manager's office, had a really productive conversation several weeks ago about what the budget would look like if we could actually fully fund the services that departments are asking for, and we went many hours painstakingly going through what we thought were the items that came to about six or seven that we thought would achieve that, and that ended up with a millage rate that was of around or about, if I'm remembering correctly, 10.28. And in there, we had a discussion, County Manager that you actually proposed, which I found to be so interesting and informative, about the concept of declaring a state of emergency. We went back and had a conversation about what happened during the pandemic and about how the county declared a state of emergency which then allowed for certain things to happen: the freeing of certain funds or the ability to use certain funds. And we discussed that we are in a state of emergency. And you raised another great sort of name for something that we could do, which was to provide ORCA light funding, something like what we did to fund the justice partners during the pandemic, but we would do it again and sort of call up -- I don't know if that was even the name of it, be we

used it as sort of a placeholder that if we gave, we assigned 25 million. If we gave an ORCA like infusion again to our justice partners, we might get the same result we got during the last state of emergency was that the caseload went down very sharply and so did the population in the jail. So I want to ask you to revisit that conversation in the next two weeks. And I understand that we are in a fiscal pickle. I understand that money just doesn't fall from trees, and what we're asking of our constituents is a lot, but what we must do is correct, what we haven't done in the past, which is to deal with our grossly underfunding our departments on every level. And I think you've heard that today from just that particular department which are here. There could be many, many more that come the next time, and I hope and invite them to do that, because I think it's important for people to hear from the departments -- for us to hear from the departments. And so, I hope during the next two weeks we can sit down again and go back to that concept of we are in the state of emergency not just with our jail, but with our justice partners. If we don't properly fund the jail, if we don't properly fund the justice, the courts that feed into that direct correlation, we're going to continue to be at a deficit. We're going to continue to put lives at stake. So I look forward to coming back in again. I'm actually completely relieved in this meeting to know that we are not going to rush -- I know how hard it is to go through this process. But receiving it last night at 8:11 p.m. was not enough adequate time for me to be able to fully understand the decisions that were being made. So I thank all the Commissioners that have participated in this conversation for bringing up the idea of let's take the next two weeks to really talk about the things that we have to talk about. One item that I'm particularly concerned about is the permanent supportive housing dollars that are in the behavioral health budget for the agreement we have with the city of Atlanta to provide those permanent supportive housing services. And I sit on the Board of Partners for HOME and I've had several conversations with Catherine Vassell about the impact that this could have to the homeless population or to the continuous outlay of affordable units and permanent supportive housing units in the city of Atlanta. Of course, our biggest city and where most of my District lies, and I know that was about \$1.4 million for the 2026 year. And I do not see it allocated in the proposed budget, so can you just give me a little bit of a conversation about how we might handle that, or if that's another thing that we're going to need to talk about?

DR. PAMELA ROSHELL, FC COO: "Thank you, Commissioner. So for 2026, there are 302 permanent supportive housing units that are in operation. Those came online over the years and the last of that 302 came online the fourth quarter of 2025. The proposal for 2026 is to fund all 302 permanent supportive housing units through three funding sources. One is the \$500,000 that we received from the state annually, that's 500,000; 800,000 from a contract that was previously in the Department of Behavioral Health that we are no longer providing that service. It is reentry services, and those are being handled through another mechanism. The third opportunity is to redirect funds from an existing contract that we expect to go out to bid later in the year, and we will not need all of those resources for 2026; specifically, that contract is the child and adolescent service contract at Oak Hill. We've had some issues with the performance of that contract, and we plan to present an RFP to the community and will, in the interim, use those resources for 2026. That only handles 2026. So moving forward as additional supportive housing units come online, we currently do not have a funding

strategy. What we have proposed to Partners for HOME is that we work together in a couple of ways. One is to go to the state to enhance the 500,000 that we currently receive. Number two, is to look at whether or not there are any Tax Allocation District dollars that can be directed to permanent supportive housing units that are in those districts. And we look forward to working with Partners for HOME in that effort. Number three, is to ask the city of Atlanta if they -- how are they using their opioid dollars, many of the constituents that are in these permanent supportive housing units also experience substance abuse disorders, and we believe that the opioid dollars may be another funding mechanism. So again, of the 550 units, today 302 are in operation. We have figured out a funding strategy for 2026, and we'll need to look for resources to fully fund the 550 units."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Okay, so thank you so much, Dr. Roshell and Madam COO, for that. But I want to be clear that there are -- and when I said 1.4, it's 1.8 million that they are actually in need of, and 207 more units are going to come online. And so, you're saying that we do not currently have the funding for those 207 units that are coming online?"

DR. PAMELA ROSHELL, FC COO: "Yes, ma'am."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Okay. So then I am saying after that, that we need to find a way to resolve that. If there was ever a crisis in Atlanta or in Fulton County because if you live in Atlanta, you live in Fulton County. We are talking about the same residence, the same homeless population, the same people that need the same services. And while I am definitely in agreement that we need to speak to the city of Atlanta about how they can bring resources to the table as well, what we agreed to do, we need to do, and we need to stay in compliance with that intergovernmental agreement that we signed. And we need to figure out in this most important space, homelessness, permanent supportive housing services, which is our job to do to figure out how to do this. So if it means, as a part of our complete analysis of what is the amount of money it takes to effectively run the services that we are supposed to provide in Fulton County, if that 1.8 million is a part of that, then I would ask that we figure out how to find that 1.8 million; and not just because I sit the board of Partners for HOME, because I care and I drive by homeless people every day coming to work as a Commissioner, and I live off of a street where when I drive near the Hill Street bridge near Grady Hospital, it is filled again with homeless people under that bridge. We have to deal with this problem. It is not Atlanta's problem alone; it is also Fulton County's problem. So I look forward to being able to talk some more about how we might be able to find some resolution to that. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Yeah, just briefly. I want to echo the request, and, I guess, the general sentiment with the budget from Commissioner Barrett and Commissioner Ivory, County Manager, you know I've been saying for years that we do not fund our budget properly, and then we really need to see what our expenses are. Now it doesn't mean that we can fund all of that stuff, right? I mean, you know, but we

do need to have a real idea of what it would take and, again, the reason these positions have been open for ten years is because we're not offering enough salary, not enough benefits; and it doesn't mean again they won't be able to settle or resolve all of that this year with our 2026 budget, right? But somehow, we've got to be thinking about what are the actual costs to run, because again, you know, the first ten years I was here, there was a five percent budget cut on everyone's budget. And we hear today for our Solicitor and from our Public Defender that people are not only overworked, but underpaid and stressed out, and working 24 hours a day, right? So hopefully we can get a better idea of what it really takes. You know, I almost want to see -- not that it will be our 2026 budget, but I would love to see the budget with everyone's request and then obviously -- and you guys have done a great job of going through that and sifting through that and cutting back. But, you know, somehow that's got to be the baseline number. The baseline number is got to be what the requests are and then, hey, we can't afford that this year or next year or whatever year we can afford it, but I think we need to have an idea what those numbers are, rather than just asking people to make do or get by with the amount of money that they made do or got by with for the last ten years. You know, the thing that I would submit to you, you know, we got -- we got basically a billion-dollar operating budget with half of that money going to justice and public safety. I would submit to you if we spent more money on health and human services and on the arts on the front end, we wouldn't have to spend so much on justice and public safety on the back end. So I'm also going to be asking for the \$500,000 for the summer youth job program to be put back into the budget. We did that for ten years. This is the first year we haven't done it. You know if we don't help keep these young people busy and employed during the summer, they are likely to get into trouble, wind up in our criminal justice system, and so providing jobs for young people and youth during the summer worked out well for us for ten years. I don't know why we all of a sudden took that out of the budget this year. But, again, if we invest more in people, in health and human services, I guarantee you that the amount of money that we're spending on justice and public safety will go down on the back end. We just have to make the investment on the front end."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Barrett."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to -- I got back in the queue specifically when Mr. Kerrigan was talking about the technology and the tech support essentially for the departments, and then I realized there were few things other than I also didn't -- didn't say when I was at that before. But on the technology side, I think, you know, I, you know, I've said before, I think we -- we have sort of underfunded on technology for a number of years as well. And I'm glad that we're doing the ERP system. I'm looking forward to seeing what kind of efficiencies get built in when that comes online. But I think when it gets to technical support staff for the departments, you know, the reason I specifically asked for the position for the Marshal's Office is because from what I understand, in particular on off hours, weekends and nights and things like that when they're -- or they're trying to do their work, but even just when they're out in the field during the day, there are problems getting quick turnaround from

tech support. And they're -- so they're using our current staff member, I believe in -- and the Marshal is here if we want to get more detail on that. But I think that's the problem. So I -- the reason I'm getting sort of back in the queue to ask about it is because I've -- I get you on the shared model. But if we don't have a comprehensive shared model, we can't offer really fast turnaround, in particular for any of the law enforcement agencies who need quick turnaround. If something's not working and they can't get a warrant up on their screens or they can't -- they need that quickly. You know, some of the other departments may not have quite the urgency. So I guess my ask would be if we -- if either we need to continue to sort of put these positions in the field, or we need a really comprehensive plan, which would be more money into your budget to address -- to address a shared model. But one way or the other, I think we have to have a better way of getting, especially for the law enforcement agencies, a quick turnaround. It would be great to have it for all departments, but certainly for the law enforcement agencies. So -- so I guess the question I have is, do you have any numbers around what you would need to sort of improve that response time? I mean, I'm looking at you. I don't know if you're the right person to ask, but --"

KEVIN KERRIGAN, FC CIO, IT: "Commissioner Barrett, I don't have numbers right in front of me, but I will say that you know, a number of items we've brought to the Board recently, especially the Axon item, which I think touches a lot of what law enforcement is doing when we talk about body cameras and other equipment. Part of that agreement is more managed services from that vendor to provide more timely response. That's -- so that's one way we're taking on improving that immediate need for equipment. So, you know, we do also offer, you know, on-call services, but we actually had conversations internally with my team about how we need to be more effective in that space to address those 24/7 operations, with the Sheriff, with the Marshal and, you know, FCPD as well. And so I think there are ways that we can look at improving that model, and I think it does include some managed service offerings, because one person can't do that, right? So even if we added one person, right, they can't work 24/7. They can't support us, you know, across that timeframe. So what is a managed services model for those vendors that can support us around those immediate needs, and I'd say we are moving in that direction with the Axon piece, but then where is that additional need? So looking at our, the Toughbooks that are used in the field as well for those law enforcement agencies, looking at a model that would provide faster turnaround times for any issues with Toughbooks, which are now going to be a part of our PC refresh programming. They were not initially, and now we're bringing them into the fold, which will also include that. So I think part of that, though, is now looking at where can we add additional support to that vendor relationship, which would bring, you know, more support for those devices and for those law enforcement agencies as well. So I think there's a lot of things that are in the works and moving to create a better support model that I think we'd want to come back with, a more comprehensive plan around internal support, the external support we're receiving, and then talk with leadership in these law

enforcement agencies to say, well, where are there still gaps that we're not considering to make sure we're holistically taking care of all of their needs."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Madam CFO, are there -- I did not have a chance to pull this because it's really just sort of bubbling up as we're having this conversation. But are there a variety of departments that had enhancement requests for technical staff that weren't met, do we know? Because I know the Marshal had it. But I don't know who else had that request."

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "There may have -- there may have been one or two others. Most of the requests that were technology, were for devices --"

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Or software."

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "-- PCs -- PCs in particular. But I will certainly go back through my notes from the hearings and through the enhancement list to specifically look for a technical, like an actual technical position. Off the top of my head, there isn't anything that's -- that's bubbling up. I just -- I just keep hearing that we need -- we need PCs. We need our laptops. We need our devices."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Thank you. I think I would be -- for me to be more comfortable that, that for example, the Marshal doesn't need a person, I would need to feel more comfortable that this is a -- that there's a plan. Yes, thank you, Commissioner Thorne. Yeah, that there's a -- that this is like the money's in the budget to either put the person directly in her department so she has what she needs to deal with the way things are today, or that you have a plan to make things so that she doesn't need a person. But either way, I think I'd like to -- and I feel like we really have to have that before we agree on this budget, because this -- we can't let her hang for a year without true technical support. That's not okay. So I think -- and I'm saying her because I specifically talked to her about this role. But I -- that's why I asked you, Madam CFO, if there were others. Because I think while we're looking at that for the Marshal, we should just be making sure that we're -- there are no other gaps like that. Because, you know, that's pretty critical. And you know, for those of us who don't have emergency tech needs, it's frustrating when you can't get a fair -- a quick turnaround. But it's one thing to be frustrated, and it's another thing to be at somebody's door and not have the information you need, you know, in law enforcement. So if it's at all possible, I would encourage you all to sort of put something on paper and come back with assurances that either she's going to get that role or you're going to cover that so that she has the response that she needs. Oh, sorry, I forgot. I don't want to forget my other things. So on the under runs that you, when you went through the presentation, Madam CFO, you were talking predominantly about the difference between the midyear projection and today. But I just wanted to clarify, coming into the midyear projection, we were --

we had that \$69 million number. Some of it was revenue, and some of it was under run. And if I -- just correct me if I'm wrong here. But I believe the under run portion of -- coming into the -- at the midyear projection was -- was it 56 million, something like that? 65.4 or something, 54? I don't remember."

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "It was 54 million."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "54. I knew it was somewhere in there, okay. And so we had 54 million in under runs at by -- that we knew about at midyear. And then now we've added another 20 million in under runs. Okay, so the reason I'm bringing that up is because that's 70 million in under runs. And you did -- you did lay out, at least to some extent, I think -- well, you laid out, to be fair, in your presentation, what those were made up of in the -- in the 20 million. And I'm sure you told us at the time of the 54 million, what -- what it was then, but I don't have that whole entire comprehensive list in front of me. I think my question is, and I know Commissioner Arrington brings us up every time we talk about under runs, that we have a significant amount of under runs like that every year. And then, this is 74-ish million in under runs. And you know, I want to make sure that we are -- I mean, I don't think we should -- I don't expect us to budget down to the zero, right, where we have no under runs. That's unrealistic, or we don't plan for less revenue, more rev -- I mean, I get that there's got to be some wiggle room there, for sure. But you know, when we're talking about whether or not we're going to give \$184,000 to the Metro Atlanta Land Bank, and we're -- have 70 million in under runs, that just feels bad that we sat on that money that we budgeted and we weren't able to fund some of these smaller things, a million dollars for federally qualified health centers or a million dollars for women or whatever when we had 70 million that we didn't spend. So I just want to -- I guess my question is, can you point to a consistent pattern of where those under runs are hitting year over year, over year. Because I know some of it is un -- being unable to hire people, and it's empty positions. We already talked about that in terms of retention, and that may be part of that reason. What other categories are they that are continually happening that are leading to this level of under run? And is there any way to sort of get a little closer to the bone on that so that, you know, I don't know if that's -- look, you know, I always bring up non-agency. It's a big, big part of our budget, like over 26 percent of our budget I think is in non-agency. 80 million of it is listed as other there's lots of different contingency funds like this year, I think there's lots of different contingency funds. Like this year, I think there's a 10 million -- you have 10 million in there for debt service on the jail as an example. But in our conversations yesterday, we probably are not going to use 5 million of that, because we would be making a payment right now in the first half of the year, which we know we're not doing. So I think there's 5 million there that could be reprioritized for some of these other things. And there are some older things that are sitting in non-agency. And I'm not -- I did not have time to come through it, line by line by line, but we talked about one of the small ones that there's a statutory gender equality initiative of, it's like, less

than \$100,000 but it's sitting there, not getting used. And that's more than half of what Metro Atlanta Land Bank needs, right? So, like, it wasn't used at all last year. Do we really need to be saving that, putting that aside, or can we have a different policy, and if we have to write a resolution to undo that, or whatever, then let's do it. I mean, let's look at some of the things that we've been putting aside and not spending, in particular, last year to this year. But certainly, if it's more than a year, and are there some ways to just, instead of saying, well, that's statutory and putting the money aside and never using it, can we look through with more of a, you know, a microscope and find some of these things, a million here, 5 million there, 100, 200, 800,000 here and there that will add up for us. And I think, you know, we need to be doing that in this moment. So I just want to bring that up, because I think, you know, just in a short amount of time, we identified yesterday, a couple of places where there's -- there's a -- I think, like a -- what is it, a million tucked away for Commissioner budgets that are not where they need to be. Like, do we really need to do that? Or can we get our budgets right? There's 2 million tucked away for compensated absences. Do we really spend that every year? Do we need to? Like, are there ways that we can sort of -- and that, again, this was just like sort of -- I cherry picked a few that just stood out to me. And I'm not the expert on this, you are. But that would be my question. I know we're looking so hard to cut from everywhere. Are there some places like that that we can do some surgery? Just making sure I, before I say I'm done, I want to make sure I checked all my notes. Oh, I do want to say on the permanent supportive housing issue that Commissioner Ivory brought up, I do think that is mission-critical, too. I mean, we know this is a huge, huge problem right now. And I'm appreciative that we're at least going to do our best to fund the existing units. But it would be really unfortunate if we can't continue to move forward with that, which would mean continuing to fund the new units as they come online. So whatever we can do to address that, I think the, you know, it's so top of mind for citizens right now, affordability and supportive housing and all of those things. And so -- and there again, that's a thing that can help, you know, as Arrington was, Commissioner Arrington was pointing out, you know, everything we're doing to help people who need help is -- is helping people stay out of the criminal universe. So we should be doing that. So I think that was it for now."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. It's 12:51 Commissioner -- Vice -- Commissioner Ellis, you have the floor."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Thanks, Mr. Chair. I'll be really brief. Just a couple -- well, I'm not going to necessarily really brief, maybe briefer than I was earlier. Couple points. As I listened to a lot of the dialogue today, I would have sworn that we had cut a budget about 15 percent and that nobody was getting more money, when the reality is what's being proposed here is \$235 million more than we spent in 2023. And it's 16.7 percent higher than what we spent in the prior year. So the notion that we're somehow just starving ourselves is -- is not factually borne out. We've made a lot of significant

investments in a lot of things. I mean, I'll -- there's a lot of stuff you have to be careful about by not responding and just reacting to anecdotes. We've made significant amount of increases in funding for salaries, correct, over the past several years? And in fact, if you look at some of these areas, we are retaining people at record rates where we made those salary adjustments. So the notion that somehow our salaries are not competitive is not also borne out in many of these numbers that we see. Because we have taken action and they have been addressed. And in many cases, we're higher than the market and our competitive -- than our -- than our peer governments are. So I just want to just put a -- put a little bit of just sort of cautionary note on this for the public, and also, as to say, you're the ones that are funding all of this stuff. And we know that you have a limited purse yourselves and that you are struggling. And you know, I -- my objective is, we work through not only this budget but then throughout the course of this year is to not ask you to do any more than you're already doing. And I think that that's what we should all be striving for up here. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Barrett."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry, I just have to say, like, with all due respect, if we were paying somebody \$2 and now we're paying them \$3, it's still not enough when they should be making 20. Like, it -- the fact that we increase by certain percent is not really relevant. If the numbers we're significantly low and they're still -- they're just a little better now, we haven't solved the problem. And I think, you know, in any other arena, whether it's investing, whether it's business, everybody knows you got to spend money to make money in the corporate world. In our case, we have to spend money to ultimately save money and save lives. We are spending millions of dollars this year on consent decree, not just the fixes we have to make for the consent decree, but the monitor's team, the technical advice. Like, we're spending millions of that that we would not have to spend if we had spent the money properly earlier. So to say, yes, we've gone up in an increase, but we -- but we held back for year after year after year, leading up to this. So, you know, when are we going to start to really address the problems and fund people? We -- you know, one of my pet peeves in not just here in Fulton County but across the country, is that we have accepted and made it okay that police officers and sworn officers have to work a second job to pay their bills. Like, why is that okay in this country? These are the people who are putting themselves in harm's way. And we expect them to not only work 40-hour jobs, but 80 hours, because they got to go do a second job somewhere. That's insane. So like, we don't want to give them double overtime to stay here? We don't want to pay them more to work a good job? We would hire way more people if they didn't have to work two jobs. And again, that's not all us, that's a -- that's a nationwide systemic problem with how we treat law enforcement and teachers and many other public servants who are doing the hardest work in the country. So I'm just saying, we should not be accepting those things. We should be trying to make them better. So all that to

say, I did forget one other thing, which is I didn't bring up the Sheriff's Office at all, but -- and I did that in part because we had talked about the consent decree numerous times. But I do think we -- I am pretty sure, you can correct me if I'm wrong here, but did we include, I guess I'll just ask it. Did we include double overtime for the Sheriff's Office for this year? Because we had that resolution that ran out at the end of last year. But what are we doing for double overtime for the Sheriff's sworn officers this year?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "The consent fund has the same amount of resources that the Board approved last year for overtime included in it. It's a little more than \$5 million."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Okay. Why did you air quote?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "Because it -- because it was approved overtime as the general classification of use. So currently, since the double overtime pay authorization expired at the end of the year, 12/31, then we just revert back to regular overtime pay, which would be time and a half pay. So I was just -- I was just saying that there is a bucket of resources that has been placed into that fund designated for overtime."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Okay. So let me -- this brings up my last point about the Sheriff's Office and the consent decree and all of that, which is that if there's a bucket of money under a made-up new fund that we have, called consent decree unit, whatever we're calling it now, why are we putting the Sheriff's budget in a bucket that is not the Sheriff's Office? I mean, I'm sorry, but overtime is operational money for the Sheriff. Why is that not in the Sheriff's budget? I do not understand this model of putting everything in a -- this non-agency holding bucket to be meted out and parsed out when we already know what these expenses are in many cases. In my opinion, there are the expenses laid out in that are -- that are accounted for in the consent decree unit, or whatever we're calling it, should be put into the departments they belong in, whether it's the Sheriff's department for Sheriff's operational needs, or IT for technology needs, or DREAM for maintenance needs. Those -- that money should be in the departments it belongs in. I mean, how else are -- if we're not -- the consent decree is not a department. It is not an expense category. We are under a judicial consent decree. It is a legal mechanism. It is not an expense category. So we should put the expenses where they belong, because in many of these cases, they are going to be -- some of them are nonrecurring, some of them are recurring. But they should be in the departments where they belong, and should be spent that way instead of having Accounting and Finance be a roadblock or red tape in the middle of the process of these departments actually spending that money. So I would really like to see that happen. I suspect that it won't, but I would really like to see that happen before we finalize this budget, in particular with the expenses we 100 percent already know about."

If it's staff, it belongs in the department it's in. If it's systems, it belongs in, you know, Mr. Kerrigan's department, et cetera."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "So one of the things I think that we -- that we really got to do and one of the reasons we have, I guess, kind of these budget back and forths, you know, again, we need to provide the resources that the departments are asking for. The rub comes in because no one wants to tax the taxpayers. And so one of the things that we've got to do, Mr. Manager, is look at diversifying our streams of revenue so that we're not 80 percent reliant on personal property taxes for funding, right? And we've got to really work with the commercial appraisers on assessment of the commercial properties, because, you know, if we had a magic wand and the money could just appear, we'd give everybody everything they wanted, right, in order so that they could operate. But the -- again, the rub is the increase on the millage rate and the property taxes, and so what we've got to do is diversify our streams of revenue. And it's so telling that you said earlier, what you said earlier, our reserve fund balance has doubled since the time that you -- that you started, right? And we went from a \$69 million budget surplus. Now, we learn there's another \$20 million in actuals on the end of the year. I don't know if that's 74. I count that as \$89 million budget surplus, plus the 235 that's in reserves, right, or 170 that's in reserves? And so that's a lot of money. That is a lot of money. There's got to be a way to borrow against it, right? We can't borrow against that reserve fund money, right? We can't look at aligning our -- and I've said this before as well, we need to align our fiscal year with the time that our taxes come in so we don't have to borrow money until it comes in. That will save money right there. How much money will we save if we don't have to go get all this tax-anticipation notes? Because we've already got the money in, and our budget is aligned with our fiscal year. We've got to think at the box. We can't just keep doing the same things that we've been doing because those are the things that we've been doing. We have to think intelligently. We have to work smarter, not harder, right? And so thankful again for everyone and everything that everyone has done. But we cannot -- we cannot keep doing the same things and expecting different outcomes. We do the same thing, and we're expecting different outcomes. But we get the same outcomes, because we're not doing anything differently. And so we definitely got to work with our assessor and the commercial appraisers on assessing those commercial properties. But we've also got to look at other ways that we can diversify our streams of revenue and align our fiscal year with our tax year. There are plenty of things that we can do to be in a better position to provide our departments with the resources that they need with -- without going to I taxpayers, right? I mean, because therein lies the rub, right? We got people up here that want to give as many resources to everybody as they can. And we got people up here that don't want to tax themselves or their constituents any more. So -- so how do we look at that with fresh eyes? How do we look at that with the new -- with

a new vision to say, hey, we can provide more resources without putting the impact on the taxpayers of Fulton County? Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Thorne. 1:04."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Sorry about that."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "No, take your time, go ahead."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "I don't know if someone could comment on the reserve fund balance. I know when you came in in 2017, was that balance underfunded? And what is keeping that reserve in our credit rating and how that helps us? Is it -- I don't know if someone would like to comment."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Well, the rule of thumb in public finance is you try to have two months of operating in your reserve. And that's one of the reasons why we have a AAA bond rating. Go ahead, Madam CFO."

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's what I was going to say. It may have been 2016 when we changed the fund balance reserve requirement, it used to be one month, and we increased it to two months. And the Chairman is correct that that is a -- certainly an industry national record -- you know, recommendation that you keep at least that as a reserve. We use it for liquidity purposes. It is, you know, whatever we have in reserve at the end of the year is what we, from a liquidity meaning cash, cash-on-hand perspective, is what we start the new year with spending, and then, along with the revenue that we do collect on a monthly basis, until we get to a point where we have to do a short-term borrowing, which we borrow against future tax receipts. That's what the tax-anticipation note is. And then as we get to the end of the year and we've received our tax revenue, we pay that note back and then we roll-on into -- into the next year. But the reserve requirement at one point was just one month. And then in 26 -- I think it was 2016, it was brought to the two months, and we have, you know, worked diligently to be able to maintain that with each, you know, with each -- with each budget cycle without having had to dip into it, with the exception of the year that we had the tax reset. Other than that, we've been -- we've been pretty good."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Thank you. Thank you for that clarification. And then one other clarification that I want to make. There were some comments made that our police officers aren't making a living wage. You know, as someone who has an office that's very familiar with the police, and we were presented at Marshal's Deputy just out of school with benefits makes over a hundred grand a year. The reason they take second jobs is because they're offered second jobs. And it's a great way to enhance your salary if you choose to do so. But that's a choice. I don't want the public to think

that we don't pay our officers a wage that they can live off of and are forced to work a second job. And that's it, thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN: "Thank you, Chairman. First, I wasn't going to weigh in on this conversation, because we go through this every year. But I would be remiss if I didn't remind the listening audience, this is not our money. This is taxpayers' money. I think about when my eldest child was in college, and we would go to lunch, and when I would tell her to pick where we would go, she would find the highest place to go. Oh, let's go here, let's go there, because she knew I was paying for it. When she graduated from college and we went to lunch and she was having to pay for it, then it was McDonald's, because she had to pay her own money. And so what I say is to the listening audience, because we have this conversation every year, do we tell our veterans no? Do we tell our Marshal no? Who do we tell no? Who do we tell yes to? We don't have a printing press. We're not going to put it on the taxpayer backs. And it's disingenuous to give the listening audience the perception that anybody in Fulton County at once time made \$2 and now they making three. That's not -- that's not true. That is not true. Could we have a higher rate of pay for some people? Yes, we could. But there are employees here that will tell you the entire package, even if they are not making ideally what they would like to make, what they have in insurance and other benefits are, in a lot of cases, better than other places even the private sector. Government can't do it all. I've said it once, I'll say it again. Nonprofit, the private section -- sector and government have to work together. We do not have a printing press where we can just print out money and tell everybody, yes, that's the reality. We have to make decisions that sometimes may not be popular for the Commissioner that's sitting up here. But it's best for the taxpaying citizen of Fulton County. And I can only speak for myself when I say that my first duty from a fiduciary standpoint is to protect the taxpaying citizens of Fulton County and make sure that we are spending their dollars well and with accountability. That is all."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Arrington. Excuse me. Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Yeah, I just want us to -- I want us to be accurate. And I -- and I don't remember, Madam CFO, if it was 2015 or 2016. I do remember it was one of the first resolutions that Commissioner Ellis passed. I think it may have been 2015, as far as the reserve amount. Maybe Commissioner Ellis can -- his memory is better, since he was the one that did it. But we didn't get that AAA bond rating until last year. And I told y'all that then. It took -- we did that, and it took ten years for us to get that AAA bond rating. So we're not going to put that on there. Because we had that reserve for two months reserve resolution. It was sponsored by Commissioner Ellis for ten, maybe 11 years before we got the AAA bond rating. So we're not -- I'm just not going to let y'all put that on there. I'm not going to let you all put

the AAA bond rating on that resolution, because that resolution was in place for ten or 11 years before we got the AAA bond rating, all right? So we're going -- we're going to be clear. Every time y'all say that, I'm going to bring it up, and let you know that that's not accurate."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Yeah. Any other comments at this time?"

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Mr. Chairman, can I just both respond to a very good thought, and then ask for some additional guidance? When Commissioner Arrington brought up the notion of diverse revenue, I think that is a great challenge. I would just remind you that each time we come to one of these stops on train to diverse revenue, whether it's LOST negotiations that we make some progress on, of course, that's sales tax that would not affect the property taxpayer directly, we make some progress, but not substantial. J-LOST was an idea championed by some you that we went to the legislature that was going to be for the jail, a dedicated sales tax. That got no traction at the legislature. T-SPLOST was an early victory ten years or so ago, which accrues about -- and it's coming up again next year that will be, or this year, I'm sorry, in 2026, hopefully for approval by the -- by the voters. That's hundreds of millions of dollars that go to transportation improvements that do benefit Fulton County citizens, but not probably seen as from Fulton County, even though, without our leadership and our agreement and lobbying the legislation, T-SPLOST would have never happened, because it had never happened before. Why? Because that penny was going to MARTA and still goes to MARTA. That's another hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue collected in a different way to, to your point, of a diverse revenue stream that we don't have to take advantage of. And then the, you know, the single most significant one that has a huge amount of political issues associated with it are exiting the TADs. I mean, it's 2.5 billion into the future if we don't continue to participate in the TADs as they currently are constructed. So I just, you know, help us help you. In other words, in terms of both these revenue opportunities when they come up and when they come up again, and/or if we should revisit some of these or take seriously the implications of passing on opportunities, because that's what creates an enormous amount of pressure, is walking by these revenue, revenue opportunities. And then lastly, Mr. Chairman, we will -- and I -- you could take us up after lunch. But we would benefit from some guidance, in other words, do we leave here with any limitation on the upper bound in terms of revenue? Do we assume that everything that's been mentioned today should be included? Because there's a, you know, there's a great gap between what we now have brought forward versus where this discussion has led. And I don't want to -- I don't want to lead anybody to believe that I'm making a decision independent of getting the direction from the Board. So the more clear you can be with your direction, the more satisfied you will be with whatever we bring back in two weeks for consideration."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Well, you touched on what I wanted to say before. I haven't said anything yet, before we break, recess for lunch, that you've heard a lot today. And you will hear a lot more two weeks from today. But everything that we talked about has a price tag. And in order to fund everything that has been request -- we use this term enhancement, all of these enhancements, to fund all of them will require raising property taxes. So my ask is for you to give us the millage rate that some of us want that will be required to raise taxes to fund everything that has been requested, that's number one. So you pay for all of this by raising the millage rate, raising taxes, or cutting. There's no in between. It's one of those two extremes. And you've heard anything from 10.28 up to all kinds of numbers. I mean, if you add them all up, it's probably a 12 or 13 percent millage rate. And if that's what we want to do, we can vote it up or vote it down at the next meeting."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "I don't think the millage rate vote comes up till August."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "The -- that would be the direction. Start with everything that's been asked for, what that would be, and then come down. All right, Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "And County Manager, with all of the respect that I know it takes to do what the Chairman just asked, if we could please have it a little -- in a, you know, in a timely manner, to review it prior to the next meeting, rather than the night before. I would really appreciate it."

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Yes, ma'am. We will commit to -- no, commit on behalf of our team. What always happens at the end of the year is this close out, so it's almost, you know, it's a flawed process that produces what it's designed to produce, which it's a fire drill for the first meeting. Now for the second meeting, I think we can commit ourselves a week in advance, which means in the next week, we need to develop, yes, no? I thought --"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "I just need to be clear that I understand what you're asking us to do. Are you asking us to bring back a fully built out budget with the detailed schedules by department that have the amount that every department requested, full amount that they requested from their enhancements, plus anything else that we may have -- okay, because I'm seeing some are saying -- some heads are going up and down and some are going side to side. So are you simply asking the question, if we funded everything that was requested, what would the millage rate be? Because that's two different levels of work."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Well, what I suggested was that you give us a millage rate on what would be required to fund everything that was requested by the departments."

Some support that, but we'll see where their support is when it comes to voting, yes or no. And then they're been items requested today. Just give us, give some options."

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "Okay."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Yeah, I think I'm not going to interpret what the Chairman is asking for. But I know that in the exercise that we have done before, I asked simply, what would the budget look like if we were given all of the things that -- if we were given the priority items that are needed to effectively run the county? And we had deduced down to six things that were really super important, which many of them were talked about today. And so for me, I want to see that, but I also don't have any objection to seeing anything else that you or he or any Commissioners think should be in there. So I don't think it's the 200 million of enhancements, but it's what you have already deduced and what we kind of talked about today."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Just start with --"

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "And I assume it's not --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Hold on, Mr. Manager."

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Oh, I'm sorry."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Start with everything that's been asked for by departments, then those six things that, whatever those six are that y'all have been discussing, what the millage rate -- what the -- what the millage would be required to fund those six things that y'all have discussed. And I'm not privy to that, but that's, that's two, two scenarios right there."

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "And I'm assuming that's not -- I'm not assuming detailed schedules. I'm assuming a directional deck that would outline broad options."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "And I think if you went back and you sort of looked at the minutes of this meeting --"

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Right."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "-- I think it would be easy to figure that Commissioner Arrington asked, just one of the things he asked for was restoring of the youth budget, right? Something Commissioner Barrett asked for was, you know, in the area of healthcare. What I asked for was the ORCA Lite. I mean, I think you could sort of --"

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "I got -- I got three pages worth of notes --"

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Perfect, perfect."

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "-- plus, I think you're right. I think first of all, we can meet with any of you that we -- that would like to meet with us to make sure that we understand. Secondly, I think, I'm sure they've got even more notes than I do. And we can go back and look at explicitly what was said. But I think we can do a all-in what was discussed, what was proposed at -- at a minimum."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Okay. Ms. Barrett, Commissioner Barrett, you want to be heard?"

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Personally, I will have -- I have all the things I asked for and some others that I didn't bring up today in a spreadsheet. I will share that with you so you don't have to guess and try to remember what I said, because I was very out of order with my comments today. But I will send you that spreadsheet, you know, later this afternoon. I personally don't, I mean, you do whatever you want to do based on what the Chairman's saying. But I don't think there's anybody sitting up here that thinks we should be funding all of the enhancement requests that the departments made. And to be fair to us, I don't think we ever got an actual, complete and accurate list of all the enhancement request. Because some of the -- there was a dup -- some of them were duplicative. So we never got a clean, a fully clean list of the tranches, where things that had already been included in the budget were taken out. So I don't even really know what that fully looks like. And but I don't -- it's not that important to me to have that at this point. I think it's more important - I just don't think anybody -- I just would hate for you to spend a ton of time on -- on the everything model, when I don't actually think there's anybody here that is trying to have that happen. So that's just my opinion."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Vice Chair."

VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN: "Thank you, Chairman. Do we still have the budget committee process? We don't?"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioners, no."

VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN: "Okay, alrighty. My concern first and foremost, is the overtaxing of the executive staff, because we can easily have a scenario with seven different ideas of what the budget should look like. And to me, my personal opinion, I believe, is staying in one's lane. If you all are going to make the money that you all make, then I'm going to ask you to do your job. But I am not going to try to do my job and your job too. That is my opinion, I stand on it. However, I believe that looking at what was asked and what we can work within the millage rate that we have, because I'm not going to support a millage rate increase. I'm not, under any circumstances. In 2026, where people are losing jobs, and have so many other burdens, I'm not going to give them extra one. And so I would not ask you, in good conscience, to come back

with something that is going to require a millage rate increase. Now I'm only one Commissioner, but I want to go on record saying, I'm not going to ask you to do that, because I'm not going to vote for that, for one. For two, I have a problem with putting too much on you all's plate. We have one more meeting to deal with this. And so it is, in my opinion, Chairman, with all due respect, that we be crystal clear, County Manager, on what we're asking you all to do, because I'm sitting here hearing two different messages. And I know if I hear two different messages, you all are hearing two different messages. So are we going to be crystal clear on what as a Board, because all of us sitting here can meet with the County staff and get the numbers and get what they need and speak to it as eloquently as they have. However, as someone who is respectful of the Fulton County taxpaying citizens' dollars, how do I ask you all to spend 24 hours, seven days doing everything, well, maybe this scenario, maybe that scenario, maybe a scenario that's in 2033. It's not fair. It's not conducive financially or fiduciary for the taxpaying citizens. Now, all of us can ask you, we have a right as sitting Commissioners, to ask you for any information we need. But what I'm concerned about, you have seven, seven different people up here that may have seven different ideas of what a budget should look like. And so do we put that burden and overtax the county's senior staff, or are we clear in the direction, knowing that we have the power to get the information that we need at any time other than when the cameras are running on both of the BOC days? My opinion. And so as someone who understands, understands taxpaying citizens of Fulton County are watching us, I don't want to see anything that's going to require a millage rate, I don't. I can only speak for me. I would like to see, if the request that have been brought today can be fulfilled, whether it means reallocation or otherwise. I'm not getting in that lane because that's you all's lane. But what I'm not going to do is over tax the senior staff, I'm not going to do it. And more importantly, I'm not going to be silent when I look and see that it's being done. End of story."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Okay. 1:25. Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Yeah. I just want -- I want us to be crystal clear, because I believe that we're conflating issues. Right now, we are tasked with the budget in January. Right now, we are tasked with adopting the budget. We adopt a millage rate in August. So I don't know why we keep hearing all this talk about millage rate. The budget as proposed today in this document that we just went through, can you go to page 9, please? The budget as proposed today by the senior staff and the County Manager anticipates a -- an increase or a 9.26 millage rate based upon the recommendation as is, without any reallocation or without any additional budgets. But we don't have to decide the millage rate. A few years ago, we assumed a higher millage rate for purposes of the budget. And then when we got to the midyear review, we didn't need to adopt the higher millage rate. We assumed a higher millage rate for budget purposes. But when we got to the midyear review, we had enough revenue to come in, and we had enough expenses that were -- I guess, not enough expenses in

order that we did not actually have to increase the millage rate. So colleagues, I want us to -- I want to ask us to focus in on the budget. We will have time to have a millage rate discussion in August. Right now, the discussion is about the budget. And we know that we can assume for purposes of the budget, a higher millage rate and not actually have to adopt that millage rate at a later time, because we may have fewer expenses. And we typically -- we typically do have fewer expenses. And we typically do have more revenue. We just found, on August 19 or the first meeting in August of 2025, we learned that it was a \$69 million budget surplus. Today after we found the actuals, we learned that there's an additional \$20 million surplus. That's \$89 million surplus from 2025. So let's focus on the budget and adopting a budget. And let's talk about the millage rate when we get to the millage rate in August, because that is when we vote on the millage rate."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "You don't want to be heard? All right, 1:29. Anything else?"

COMMISSIONERS: (No response.)

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Nothing else? Entertain a motion to recess for lunch, where we may discuss items of real estate, litigation, and personnel. Motion to do so by Commissioner Thorne, it's seconded by Commissioner Barrett."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

Recessed for Executive Session at 1:29 p.m.

Resumed Regular Session at 2:50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right, Madam Clerk."

CLERK GRIER: "Bottom of page 5, Commission -- Commissioners' Action Items."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Well, no, wait a minute. Items from Executive Session."

Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY: "Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one item for action and voting. Is there a motion to approve the request for representation in item 3 of the Executive Session agenda?"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Motion to approve by Commissioner Barrett, seconded by Commissioner -- Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

Y. SOO JO, COUNTY ATTORNEY: "And there are no further action items from Executive Session."

CLERK GRIER: "Okay. Bottom of page 5, Commissioners' Action Items, **25-0895**, Request approval of a resolution of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, amending policies limiting the use of Fulton County staff for certain events by members of the Fulton County Board of Commissioners; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioners Ellis and Thorne."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Motion to approve by Commissioner Ellis. Is there a second? Seconded by Commissioner Thorne. Commissioner Ivory, you have the floor."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "This has come up several times about limiting the way that we do town hall meetings. And I just want to reiterate that Commissioners need flexibility to meet constituents where and when -- when and where they are. One-size-fits-all restrictions undermine public engagement. This is -- I don't even understand the necessity for this resolution. But it limits opportunities for residents to meet with their Commissioners by restricting timing, locations, and total number of events. It shrinks windows for public participation and weakens the connection between community and government. And we heard from a lot of constituents that they did not want a limit on any information, a town hall, a meeting that a Commissioner would have with their constituents. We shouldn't be hiding from our constituents. This is about limiting accountability, restricting access to Commissioners in controlling where events can occur builds walls not trust. Residents deserve the ability to engage in spaces that are convenient, familiar, and accessible to them. So Fulton County exists to serve all constituents, and county support should not be restricted when it is necessary to reach them where they are. If this passes, I think we all know that residents lose dialogue, access, and connection. They lose the chance to meet their Commissioner in ways that foster understanding, trust, and effective governments. And that is why I will not be voting for this."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Yes. This, I do not understand the need for this resolution either. Again, this is my 12th year as a Commissioner. I was elected in 2014, took office January of 2015, and every year since that time, I have had -- held multiple town halls and invited the staff out to speak, because they are the experts. So I host a homestead exemption town hall. I need the staff from the Assessor's Office there to address the residents and answer their specific questions. When I hold the town hall for the tax bills when they come out, we have the Tax Commissioners and the Tax Assessors staff people there to answer their questions. When I host budget town halls, I have the staff from Finance there in order to answer the questions, the specific questions that the public has about the budget. Not only does this resolution limit the

staff, but it also limits, oh, I guess it limits the number of times you can use staff, so you can only use staff three times a year. Well, every time I hold a town hall, I host at least three, if not four, town halls. When I was first elected, I represented East Atlanta. And there was no way I was going to ask the people from Grant Park or Summer Hill to come over to the Wolf Creek Library for a town hall. So I host my town halls around my district and take the information to the people. And I've done that for 11 years without any interruption, without any fanfare, nor without any complaints. And so I am befuddled as to why there is a need for this resolution at this time. You know, we -- I -- my office, we submit our dates for 2026 last year. They're already printed in my newsletter, all of my 2026 town hall dates, already printed in my newsletter. We will work with the County Manager staff and in order to have people there. So everybody already knows my stuff a year in advance. But this is a restriction on getting information to the people. And the residents have found it very helpful. They bring their tax bill to the town halls. Staff is there to answer the questions about their bills and assist them. And so I will not be supporting this either. I don't know, maybe there's someone that's abusing it. Maybe there was some abuse going on that was the reason for this. But it just doesn't make any sense to me to limit -- and I guess, maybe it make sense to have some limits, right? But you know, I've been hosted these town halls, again, for 11 years. This is my 12th year. And I've never had any complaints, nothing but applause for taking the information to the people, right? Not asking people from East Point to come over to Summer Hill, or not asking people from Wolf Creek or the City of South Fulton to come over to Grant Park for a town hall because I can only host one town hall. Now, I like taking the information to the people, and I'll still be doing that. And you know, we'll just have to find a way to make it work."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Ellis."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Just to be real brief. You know, past two comments by the previous two Commissioners have mischaracterized this resolution. I'll read part, part 6. There are no limitations on the number of town halls, county staff, parenthetical, other than External Affairs, FGTV, DREAM, and IT, closed parenthetical, may participate in, but such participation is subject to the discretion of the department head and not required. Department heads may involve county staff, supplies, materials, and equipment for town halls subject to their individual discretion and alignment with departmental goals. Department heads are not obligated to support a Commissioner's town hall events when it should interfere with their normal operations and departmental goals. Paragraph 7: Events other than town halls shall be constructed solely by individual Commissioners and their staff, which we have plenty as well as budget included funding, setup, and promotion. Commissioners should not expect county staff to attend or provide supplies, materials, equipment to such events. So you know, you're free to -- I took the comments that were made. I built these into the resolution to clarify what my intent was. And I think this is a reasonable thing which also provides, you

know, a reasonable amount of guidance for our -- for certain numbers of our support staff where, you know, they're not overly taxed or overly -- and overly required to do something that's outside of their general scope of duties. I hope we'll be supportive of it today."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Barrett."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "I just think that every Commission District has different needs, and that the various Commissioners elected by the people in their districts should be able to serve their district in the way that best suits that particular part of town. And I think both -- well, frankly, I think all of the Commissioners up here have had a variety of different events that have been appropriate to their parts of town. And you know what -- you know, what Commissioner Arrington is talking about, having done for 11 years is worthy of respect, not curtailing. And I think this is a solution looking for problem. There's no problem here that needs to be solved. It's extraneous and unnecessary."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you, Commissioner Barrett. I 100 percent agree with that. And thank you, Commissioner Ellis, for giving that explanation as to the clarity of your resolution, which has no bearing on me changing my mind at all because it is language that I don't find to be useful at all or serving any purpose. I don't know if this is in response to some isolated incident that you heard about, or are -- a complaint that came specifically to you. I wish that you might have rather addressed whatever Commissioner that was that maybe you received some isolated incident about. But I have only had absolutely positive responses from staff and from anybody in the building when I've asked, hey, would you mind coming to my town hall meeting? And even had the response, I would love to, I haven't done one in a while, and I would love to do that. That was actually the Tax Commissioner who came to my very first one when I first was inaugurated last year. So I think this is -- I think this is unnecessary. And I'm not really sure why you did it, but I can't support it. I'm sure you already have the support for it. You wouldn't have put it on here if you didn't. That's sort of the way it goes, and so we will pass it. But I don't think it will have any change or effect to anything."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Thorne."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "I personally hold town halls. I think they're great. It's great way to engage, have dialogue, access, connection. But I do -- I tried pass a similar resolution a couple of years ago because there was some abuse of use of county staff going on. They were asked to come to NPU meetings. They were asked to bring stages, sound equipment, all of that, for the setup, which kind of, it was more of an NPU meeting than it was truly a Commissioner event town hall. So there has been

some abuse in the past. We need to be respective of our External Affairs department when they have to have these staff allocations, doing it on weekends, you know, they have to allocate, okay, you're going to be working Saturday, so maybe you can't come in and help me with the normal stuff on Monday, because you're setting up for this. So I think having some limitations in place, especially as we're entering in the campaign season, sometimes that line gets blurry. Is this a town hall, or is this a campaign event? It would just make us make sure we want to use our four times to use External Affairs, FGTV, DREAM and IT for those select four. I think day and ages have changed. You know, we've all done some virtual town halls, which is a great way of engaging your residents who particularly don't want to go drive to an event or it's too far for them to go. I think that's a great way to maybe encourage some more virtual events. I've talked with my staff because after the millage rate hearings, I had so many questions and so many emails and so many -- I ended up holding back-to-back virtual town halls. But my staff kind of got familiar with how they could run it and not have to use External Affairs to run it. So I think it would force us to utilize our staff better. And I think it's a good thing to keep the strain off those departments who are having to utilize staff off hours in random locations that they're maybe not familiar with and be respectful of using the county staff on a limited basis."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "So for Commissioners that don't represent parts of the city of Atlanta, they may not understand the importance of attendance at NPU meetings, when NPU meetings are where the residents are. That's where the people are. That's where the decisions or being made, and it is a great opportunity. I remember back when the County Manager first came, we were having -- the External Affairs held some town halls on something that was going on, and no one attended. There was no one there. And I said, well, why aren't we doing these at the NPU meetings where the people already are, right? So it just really shows a lack of understanding, a lack of comprehension, and a lack of the dynamics of the different districts."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Any other comments? The motion on the floor is approve."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes; four yeas, three nays."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Next item."

CLERK GRIER: "Page 6, **25-0935**, Request approval of a resolution to affirm the reproductive rights of human rights, to condemn the criminalization of abortion and

related services, to urge the Georgia State Legislature to repeal the six-week abortion ban that endangers lives; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioner Barrett."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Motion to approve by Commissioner Barrett, seconded by Commissioner Ivory. Any comments?"

COMMISSIONERS: (No response.)

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right, let's vote. Motion is to approve."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion fails; three yeas, three nays, one abstention."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Next item."

CLERK GRIER: "**25-0936**, Request approval of a resolution to establish a Fulton County Women's Commission to advise the Board of Commissioners on policies, strategies and community partnerships that advance gender equity and address systemic barriers impacting women; and for other purposes --"

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Motion to approve by Commissioner Barrett, seconded by Commissioner Ivory. Let's vote."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion fails; three yeas, one nay, two abstentions."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Next item."

CLERK GRIER: "**25-0937**, Request approval of a resolution to establish a Healthy Women, Healthy Families Grant Program in Fulton County to provide \$1 million in annual funding for the grant program to fund organizations focused on improving women's health outcomes and ensuring access to quality care; and for other purposes."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Motion to approve by Commissioner Barrett, seconded by Commissioner Arrington -- Ivory. Let's vote, please. And this is one of the ones you've asked them to add in."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion fails; three yeas, one nay, two abstentions."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Next item."

CLERK GRIER: "25-0939, Request approval of a resolution by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners supporting its ability to govern local affairs and urging the Georgia General Assembly to preserve the Board of Commissioners' involvement in matters affecting Fulton County residents sponsored by Commissioner Ivory."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Motion to approve by Commissioner Ivory, seconded by Commissioner Arrington. Commissioner Ivory, you have the floor."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I spoke about this last meeting, and I want to bring it up again, because it is important. This resolution is about keeping county decisions for county functions in the hand of -- in the hands of this Commission. Local control is not just a principle, it's practical. If it involves Fulton County, Fulton County leadership should be making the decisions. I hope we can pass this resolution to keep the power in the hands of this Commission where it belongs. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: All right. The motion on the floor is to adopt. Madam Clerk.

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion fails; three yeas, two nays, one abstention."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Next item."

CLERK GRIER: "25-0993, Request approval of a resolution to amend Resolution 22-0644 and Resolution 21-0282, that created and established the Fulton County Veterans Empowerment Commission by revising its purpose and to establish funding for specific programming for veterans through existing Fulton County programs; and other purposes sponsored by Commissioners Ellis and Abdur-Rahman."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Motion to approve by Commissioner Ellis, seconded by Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman. Commissioner Arrington, Commission -- Vice Chair, Commissioner Ellis, Commissioner Ivory. Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "As the Commissioner that led the effort to start the Veterans Empowerment Commission and secure the initial money, the million dollars that was allocated for the first three years of this program, it is disheartening to see someone else come and try to change the mission, the program, and then take money from other existing programs to fund the program that was already funded. A program which the County Manager said he could find the million dollars for it to include the money directly for the veterans. And so, you know, I might support this, but I don't support the way that it was done, right? I'm not going to ever deny giving our veterans resources. I think we should prioritize our veterans, show them that they are a priority, and allocate the \$1 million a year that we had previously allocated. We just found out

today -- we, before today, we thought we had a \$69 million budget surplus. We found out today, we actually had an \$89 million surplus. And we got another \$176 million in a reserve fund. And we won't allocate \$1 million towards veterans so that we know that they are -- so that they know that they are a priority in Fulton County? It's a shame."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Ellis."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Thanks, Mr. Chair. The Commissioner to my left can mischaracterize things all he wants to. In terms of a budgetary framework, we're sitting here, and we got a budget that's presented to us right now that involves a millage rate increase. So we're not sitting on some significant surplus, just to clarify that. The resolution that is put forward, like we're all in support of veterans, everybody up here. We established this thing with one purpose. They came back and they said they couldn't do that. We modified it again. This thing was established in 2022. We modified it, and then in that entirety of this time, we've got an Advisory Board which has never provided us with advice on anything related to veterans. And I think there are a lot of -- a variety of reasons why that may have come occurred or not occurred. But we've not moved the ball forward in terms of how veterans are -- how we work in way to fashion, whether it's through money or other means, within the context of Fulton County, to improve life for veterans within Fulton County. And that's what this resolution seeks to do, is to bring a focus of that in the utilization of this Commission to work with different units of our existing government in programs that we have right now, and to piggyback off of those, and then build and enforce this focus on the veterans' community that we all desire. And I hope everybody will be in support of that today."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you, Chairman. This policy mimics ideas I brought forward in the past. For example, I proposed a senior property tax relief fund that would create a nonprofit bucket to fund immediate displacement assistance for seniors. At that time, several people on this Board said a nonprofit under our umbrella wasn't realistic. Now, the restructure of the Veterans Empower Commission is essentially creating that kind of nonprofit structure to receive grant funding. That said, the current proposal lacks several key facets. It only funds veteran housing programs and arts programming. While I fully support funding veterans' programs, this is a narrow focus. Some of these arts programs have previously raised concerns among Commissioners, for example, ceremonial items like painted pianos. But now, all of a sudden, programs like this are deemed important. My bottom line is, I will always vote to fund veterans' programs, but we should focus on strategic, community-based solutions that maximize impact and ensure taxpayer dollars are efficiently used. But let's recollect the record as a reminder. The same people agreed strongly against this structure before. Standards shouldn't change based on the day or the person who is sponsoring the legislations -- the legislation. All of these quotes that I'm about to read are from when we try -- when I

proposed a nonprofit for a senior property tax relief fund. On 12/3, Commissioner Ellis said, I do not think the function of government is to develop nonprofits. But today, it is. Commissioner Thorne on that same day said, I encourage working with a nonprofit instead of starting a government nonprofit that we have to manage. Different, depending on what she says of votes today. We can't just set up a fund and say, you can donate to the fund. Nonprofits are wonderful, but they are not at government organized nonprofit, and that is completely different, and it doesn't make sense at all. So I will vote for anything that helps veterans, and that is the conundrum that three on this Board that are not part of the four majority are always faced with. We come up with good ideas, we bring them to this Commission, they are voted down. They are copied and pasted and repurposed for a vote of the four. And like you will see right now, what will happen is it will pass, because the four decided before we got here today, that it would pass, even if it's contradictory or hypocritical to words they've said in the past. Then it leaves the three to decide, can I vote for -- would I vote against, something that I had already put in play earlier, maybe three times earlier. And that, of course, is not something that three in the minority, meaning Commissioner Arrington, Commissioner Barrett, or I, ever will do, not to the arts community, not to seniors, not to veterans. So here we have again what I like to call the cut-and-paste, happening again on something that had already been set forward. So we'll move forward, and I will vote for it, because I will never take something or delay purposely for credit, something that is important to our constituents like veterans, seniors, arts community, women, or anybody else. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Barrett."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I concur with Commissioner Arrington and Commissioner Ivory. And I -- I said in my budget request notes that I do strongly believe that we can manage a million dollars for our veterans and that the framework in which they have been working on that grant program works. You went down, I know, and spent some time with them at their last meeting, or maybe, I don't know if it was two meetings ago, but I think, you know, with guidance, they can get where they need to go. They have some new members now. I think they have the potential to -- they -- they already successfully did the million dollar grant program one time. I think we ended up with 750,000 spent or something like that. But it was the first time we had had the money specifically under their umbrella. I think we should continue to move forward in that way. And I think we, you know, as I said, I think there's a -- there's an awareness around veterans' issues that gets lost sometimes in the shuffle. And I think empowering the commission that we have not only to advise us, as I hear you, Commissioner Ellis, that they have not come back with any advisory reports so far. But I think we should work with them to make sure that happens. And -- and I think we should give them the ability to -- and I understand that your revised version of the resolution says that they will work with the Grants Committee. But it feels much cleaner

to me if they are allotted the money directly, so that the -- what they are considering is apples to apples, versus the Arts Committee trying to craft some small section of that 200,000 of their budget for the arts grants to be veteran related. It just doesn't feel as -- as effective to me. So I'm going to support it because I won't -- I'm not going to vote against our veterans. And if this is good for that, I -- you know, if this is the best we can do with the board we have today, then so be it. But I do think it's not the best move for our veterans."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Ellis."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Yeah, just to correct the record again. And from the Commissioner to my right, this is not, create a nonprofit entity. In fact, it was a nonprofit entity and it didn't work, and it got disbanded, right? So therefore, this idea that you came up with, we had evidence that maybe they don't work. This is just to utilize them, just to seek out grant opportunities, just like we would in any other area of government. So it's not duplicative, it's very specific, and it's focused, and it's designed to get this commission to work with us in county government to further benefit veteran -- our veterans' community. It has some specific focuses to start with that hopefully we can build upon and get somewhere with something. And just assigning money does not equal results. And that's what we've seen -- that's what we've seen to date with this. And I want to -- I want to make it something different and hope we'll be supportive of this today, and begin that work of moving forward in the work of unity, which the Chair of this Commission called for this morning."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Thorne."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Yes. I was just going to reiterate the point of the falsehood. Line 4, the resolution, Board of Commissioners and shall abandon being established as a nonprofit corporate entity and can no longer apply for grant -- grant funding as a nonprofit corporation. So it's exactly opposite what my fellow Commissioner implied. I work closely with the veterans in my area, Johns Creek Veterans Association, as well as a lot of nonprofits in my area. They see the need for them to come together better again, they try to gather the whole county, to see where services are lacking, where they have abundance of services, how they can help veterans, no matter where they are in the county. I think this is a great stepping stone. Perhaps in the future, we can raise it back up to the million, but keep it starting small and then gradually getting back up there. And we're three quarters of the way there, so it's not that much more. So anyway, I support this resolution. I do not think it's hypocritical. I don't think we should be starting nonprofits. As Commissioner Ellis said, this is one that failed and does not work. So that's why I fully support this resolution."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman."

VICE CHAIR ABDUR-RAHMAN: "Thank you, Chairman. I won't belabor the issue, but I do want to make this statement for the listening audience. I take issue with anyone that want to mischaracterize me and give their own version of what's important to me when they haven't had a conversation with me. I'm a Navy mom. I'm the daughter of the late James Frank Jackson, as well as Victoria Travis Jackson. We have a history of veterans in our family. And so you will never mischaracterize or give somebody the opinion, which is truly your opinion, of about how I feel about veterans. I support this. I supported the way that it's being done because the other way did not work. Now, having said that, I will go back to what I said when we had the conversation about Arts and Culture. A lie will hurt you over and over and over again. The truth may hurt you once, but the truth stands alone. This will work for the veterans. This will make sure that we get the traction that we need instead of doing props and photo opportunities for the media. I support our veterans. I'm a Navy mom, and I come from a proud lineage of all of the branches of the armed services. Take issue with that, but at the end of the day, let the chip fall where it may, and we'll see a year from now. Thank you, Chairman."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Madam Clerk."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

CLERK GRIER: "**25-0994**, Request approval of a resolution to establish a Fulton County Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee to advise the Board of Commissioners on policies, strategies and community partnerships that advance Fulton County's redevelopment plans pursuant to the Redevelopment Powers Law; and for other purposes sponsored by Commissioner Ivory."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "We have a motion to approve by Commissioner Ivory, seconded by Commissioner Arrington. Commissioner Ivory, you have the floor."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason that I did this is that obviously for proactive leadership on our side, being one of the partners in the TADs, Atlanta has already begun these discussions. Fulton County should not wait as a Board to have these discussions. We need to shape how TADs are used in the county. It's a strategic investment, and being involved now ensures TAD funds are allocated effectively to support redevelopment that benefits communities equitably. Establishing a committee will allow the county to monitor TAD performance and make informed decisions about whether to continue or to adjust them in the future. Leading on this ensures that residents' voices and needs are considered, preserving dignity and promoting balanced growth. Fulton County, we need to set the standard that Fulton County has historically set the pace on social and economic initiatives. Taking a

leadership role in TAD oversight reinforces that reputation. So the purpose is to establish the Fulton County Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee to advise the Board of Commissioners on policy, strategies, and partnerships that support redevelopment efforts under the Redevelopment Powers Law. And ensures redevelopment is equitable, preserves residents' dignity, and involves, most importantly, community input. The membership would be 14 members total, two members appointed by each Commissioner. And they would make recommendations to the Board on issuance, allocation, and distribution of TAD bond proceeds. This must -- the operations will establish bylaws within 60 days of the first meeting, and so on. We know we have created advisory committees in the past. We know how that goes. In short, this resolution creates a 14-member advisory committee to provide expertise, guidance, and community input on Fulton County's redevelopment projects funded through the TADs, ensuring transparency, equity, and strategic planning. It's really important for us to stay at the same pace that the city of Atlanta and APS are, who are the other two partners in the TADs, who have formed committees in order to analyze their increment and everybody else's. I don't think this is conversations that should happen in a vacuum, where some are invited, some are not. Some know that a meeting happened; some don't know a meeting happened. It's important, as the Mayor has built his entire Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan around TAD increments. And I would like for us at Fulton County to be as transparent about our participation in that as we can be. And that is my reason for trying to implement this Advisory Committee. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. The vote's open. Motion -- I'm sorry, Commissioner Barrett before we vote."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Sorry, I hesitated there. I just have a couple questions and thoughts. First of all, there's been a lot of discussion lately, I think around some potential new TADs in North Fulton. I've heard of a -- I've heard, like, some conversation about a couple of different things. So I guess my ask is, would this, could this be restructured to include the discussion for TADs in all 15 cities? Because, like, there's not NPUs in all 15 cities. So some of the language may not quite exactly work across all 15 cities. This -- so that's on the plus side if we're going to do something like this, which is not, you know, I see pros and cons. But I would think we'd want to be talking holistically about how we're going to work on TADs across the board. So like, if there's, if we're looking at -- and you know, my personal opinion is that there's a -- there's a happy medium between no TADs and all TADs for 30 years, no questions asked for city of Atlanta. But I also think there are probably some merit to some of the other cities that have had TADs in the past, or would want to have TADs in the future. So I'm not -- I don't -- I think there may need to be a broader discussion than we generally have here on the dais. So I can be supportive for that reason. The only thing I want to be cautious about is there, in terms of community input, always want community input. But in terms of the projects themselves, that community engagement

is happening through the Invest Atlanta meetings and the TAD Committee there. So I just want to make sure we're not being duplicative and having one set of decisions in this advisory committee and another set in each of the other, you know, if Roswell ends up having their own advisory committee or what have you. So I think, I mean, my take is something makes sense, it's fine with me to support this with the knowledge that as we bring it together, it may structurally need to be --"

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Sure."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "-- changed."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Sure. Well, when I say Fulton County, I don't mean Atlanta."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Yeah, it's just that --"

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "-- yeah, sure. And we can absolutely, whatever, tweak to language that would be more explicit that it includes all of Fulton County. But it doesn't in this language mean just Atlanta at all. It's not written that way. So yes, it is for all of Fulton County, including the TAD conversation that are going to happen for the north side."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Okay. And then the only other thing I would say -- and you know, I think you and I have talked about this, Mr. County Manager, knowing, you know, you mentioned, even today in your remarks about the budget that we -- if we took, you know, if we had all the increment from the TADs, we would have however many millions a year in our budget. But I think we had talked about, and I don't know if you still had plans to put together some kind of suggestions around middle grounds, what that might look like if we renegotiate for a certain period of time on different TADs. One maybe needed for another five years, what have you. But I think without some of that guidance on what that money looks like for Fulton County, any advisory committee would be sort of flying blind. So I would just want it to be a part of the discussion. Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Thorne."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Yes. That was my initial impression was that I don't feel like it was very well thought out. It was more thought as Atlantic-centric. So there are 12 total TADs countywide. Eight of them are in Atlanta, the other four are Hapeville, College Park, Union City, and East Point. Alpharetta just approved a TAD. We don't know the -- we haven't been informed. They haven't come to us for a ask yet. Roswell has been forming a TAD as well. I just kind of wonder, because when it comes to -- I follow the Fulton Development Authority meetings, and so I try to understand what's going on in each TAD on my own. We do have appointees on a Beltline TAD that just

inform us of what's happening in the Beltline TAD. My appointee on there is always telling me about public comment and how everybody's against TADs, and it's a very long public comment. It's a very lengthy meeting. Invest Atlanta, your role is to come and inform us of the eight TADs that they manage. So I don't know if this is just another overlay of having more people involved in a process that's just going to complicate things more. Because I don't know how my appointees in North Fulton are really going to understand the true nature of what's going on in South Fulton. And meeting on a quarterly basis, I don't think they're going to be kept up to date enough. I don't know who will help manage this committee, because they'll need some department here that will come kind of help manage them, get them the information, that type of stuff. So for me, I just -- it sounds like a good idea, because TADs seem to be the buzz word in Atlanta, up in my area as well. But I don't think it's quite thought out how it's actually going to work. And I feel like it might be an overlay that's just going to complicate things, and they're not going to be very informed."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Commissioner Ellis."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think for several of the reasons that Commissioner Thorne noted and for a few others, I'm not supportive of this particular approach. We've got existing TADs. TADs that have governance structures, committees, advisory committees, subject to, you know, things that go through, Invest -- Invest Atlanta and other groups. So those processes are already in place. The best I can recollect, the first TAD that would be due for exploration is 2031, it's 2026 right now. So you know, there is no need for us to rush to any sort of discussion around -- around this, just because somebody else may be, you know, promulgating or pushing for some sort of early decision on something. We also have our own sort of discussions we've had related to our own sort of budgetary planning, which has taken place. But most importantly, when it comes matter to -- comes -- when it comes around to property tax dollars and spending that money and figuring out how it's going to be utilized, I'm not in favor of advocating that responsibility to committees. I think that rests with us as elected officials. And I think we need to design our own processes around monitoring the effectiveness of these, the way the money is being spent and when they ultimately will sunset. Because that's ultimately what these are about is generating something that's going to deliver a future large tax base in the future. And that's my position on these and why I won't be supporting this resolution today."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Barrett."

COMMISSIONER BARRETT: "Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to -- it's likely this is not going to pass, but I would say it might be worthwhile to revisit something more broad, and that maybe is less about trying to make -- have the community make a decision about a project. But I think to have a policy for how we interact with TADs, evaluate whether to move forward with some, negotiation strategy, et cetera, because

we don't -- we don't really -- we end up sort of talking about them as one offs here, as opposed to an overall TAD policy philosophy strategy, what have you. So I would just -- I'm going to support this, because I think it's a good start. It may not be the exact framework, but I also -- I understand it probably will not pass. And I would just encourage everyone to sort of, let's talk offline, maybe, and try to come up with something that we can do to have a more holistic strategy here."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Yeah, first, let me address Commissioner Ellis' comments. This is not about abdicating the Commissioners' responsibilities to deal with the issue of the TADs at all. It's -- it's not just about informing what is happening with the TADs or approving a project list. This is a -- clearly a broader discussion about the county's use of TAD -- use of TAD funds. So TADs, we all know, are used as a negotiating tool. We should not be behind in that discussion. We should be a part of what are -- the others that participate in the TAD are already doing, which is thinking about how the long-term effect of TADs will -- will have for our county, for our school system, for the city of Atlanta, and all of the other 14 cities in Fulton. So we -- it is not about they don't expire until a certain amount of time. People are discussing it right now, and we don't need to be behind in that discussion. So yes, we can tweak the ways that people report. We can -- but I have talked to the various representatives of TAD appointees, and they are not in the conversation in the way that we as a funder would be if we were having our own internal conversations. And too often on this Commission, those conversations happen in silos, only the between certain people, which does not give the benefit of other Commissioners understanding what is also going on. So when a Commissioner is able to appoint two people to a committee and have their exact interests represented, I think that is very important, and that is why I brought this forward. So I still stand by it. I know it's not going to pass because of our four-vote majority that already decided it's not going to pass. But I will continue to try to move forward in order to have these discussions become wider and more accessible to all Commissioners."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Commissioner Ivory, I was wondering if you might be willing to hold this so that it could be refined. I know the city of South Fulton is also looking to do some TADs. And I wonder, perhaps it could be refined, not that it still would get the four votes. But perhaps it could be refined to be more inclusive of North Fulton and South Fulton, and perhaps, maybe we'll get the four votes."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "I don't have any objection to holding something to add in logical comments that Commissioners have made here. But those logical comments could be included in it right now if it passed, even as we are putting together the bylaws and all of it. I do not think it will pass, no matter whether we hold or not. So I think it's

important not to just hold for the exercise of holding, when I'm not going to get the support from the majority of four anyway. So I'd rather go for a vote and vote it down. And that speaks volumes as to how we feel about, you know, analyzing our ability to start preparing for something as big as TADs right now."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Thorne."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "I just wanted to bring up that we do have a review process. Personally on this Commission, I haven't had to approve a new TAD, but in the past, 2017 I think was the last TAD that was approved. We do have an internal review process in the county that should be taken in. You know, we have Community Development, Public Works trying to see if the infrastructure is there. We have the Tax Assessor at the table. We have the Tax Commissioner at the table. We have Finance and we have the County Attorney. So those are all different departments, and then for them to have to answer and give a report to us after they review a TAD and answer to 14 other people who may or may not be as informed as we are, as they are, as we are, collectively with the ins and outs of the workings of the -- the county. So that's why I think it might be just a layer that might be just adding a complication layer to the whole process. Every TAD is very, very individual, different goals, different properties, as we all know. And I think each TAD is so unique that I don't know if this 14-person board could possibly get all the information from all the different entities that you need to review a TAD. So that's kind of another -- an added concern that I have. And I haven't talked to anybody, I haven't talked to anybody on the Board about this. I actually had to leave, which I apologize having to leave early last meeting, and that's why it was held. And I meant to talk to people, talk to you about it even, but the holidays came. So happy to have more discussion in the future, but right now, I'm -- just can approve it."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "Thank you. I appreciate that response, Commissioner Thorne. And again, this is not for the purpose of analyzing the creation of new TADs. This is all areas of TADs. This is whether it's the creation of new TADs, the extending of TADs, the performance of TADs, all of the things that are related to the TADs, and not just necessarily how we begin TADs and what offices participate in that. But thank you for those comments. And it's going to fail. I'm 195 percent sure of that. And so it'll come back again, and perhaps we could have that discussion then."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Madam Clerk. The vote's open."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion fails; three yeas, four nays."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Next item."

CLERK GRIER: "On page 7, Commissioners' Full-Board Appointments, **25-0995**, Development Authority of Fulton County, the Fulton County Board of Education has appointed Yngrid Huff for a Full-Board Appointment to a term ending May 31st, 2029."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Motion to approve Vice Chair Abdur-Rahman, seconded by Commissioner Arrington."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion --"

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "995?"

CLERK GRIER: "On page 7."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "All right."

CLERK GRIER: "And the motion passes unanimously."

CLERK GRIER: "**25-0996**, Development Authority of Fulton County, the Atlanta Board of Education has appointed Dr. Bryan Johnson for a Full-Board Appointment to a term ending May 31st, 2029."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "We have a motion to approve by Commissioner Arrington, seconded by Commissioner Barrett. The vote's open, please vote."

CLERK GRIER: "And the vote is open. And the motion passes unanimously."

CLERK GRIER: "On page 8, **26-0013**, External Affairs Presentation, Fulton County Preparation for 2026 World Cup."

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Good afternoon and happy New Year, Commissioners. Just today is a really high-level overview of some of the plans and preparations that are underway as we are just about six months out from the World Cup, which will be taking place here in Fulton County. Next slide, please. I know this has been a long day, so I'm going to try to go through this pretty quickly. But just as a -- to remind you, Atlanta is one of about 11 US cities that are hosting the World Cup. It will also be hosted in Mexico and Canada. Next slide. We now have the match schedule, and we know the countries that will be coming here. I'm not going to read them all, for fear of messing up one of them that we have. We're very excited to be welcoming the world here to Fulton County. Not all of the teams have been finalized. There are still some playoff games happening in Europe that will determine the final lineup. But did want to note, as we go through this, one of the operational considerations that we're looking at is, as you see from the schedule, there are a

number of matches that will happen about half a mile away from this building in the middle of a workday afternoon. And so we've had some preliminary discussion, for example, with our partners in the courts and with some of our facility team about whether we need to consider any operational adjustments during those days that parking and traffic may be very heavy downtown. But very excited to welcome these amazing players and teams from all over the world here to our community. Next slide, please. Just about 300,000 visitors are expected from all over the world. Atlanta, because of our airport, will be a hub for, you saw the map in that first slide for visitors traveling to other US cities. So we will we -- we're expecting pass-through traffic as well as visitors who are here for the games. The statewide economic impact estimate is about \$500 million, about 70 million-plus specifically for lodging, hotels, Airbnbs, short-term rentals, so restaurant, hospitality community, our arts organizations. So there's very significant economic impact expected. Next slide, please. Just wanted to know, many of our partners here who are listed are -- this is the World Cup Host Committee. Fulton County is not part of the Host Committee, but we have had a lot of discussion, and we'll talk more about the coordination in just a moment. Next slide. So our role at Fulton County is really in a couple of key areas. One is public safety coordination. We're going to talk a little bit about that, but for security reasons, we cannot go into great detail. Our assets, so our facilities, I just mentioned some of the operational impact, community engagement, especially with the non-host cities, and then promoting Fulton County as a designation while we have those 300 million -- 300,000 visitors coming through our community, as well as creating opportunity for the people who live here already. Next slide, please. So Fulton County Police Department, Sheriff's Office, AFCEMA, the Board of Health and others are participating in regional coordination. We have applied, Congress approved federal dollars last year for public safety for the World Cup cities. Fulton County has applied for those dollars. There -- for a portion of dollars that would cover things like overtime for police officers and some of the other public safety costs. We have, Emergency Management is working very closely with the Urban Area Security Initiative on coordination exercises, emergency planning. Our Emergency Operations Center, which is activated for any major events in the city, will be activated and will be hosting some of our public safety partners here in the facility, just as they do for the Peachtree Road Race, the Publix Marathon, any major events, our EOC is activated. So we are very excited by that. Chief Yates is here, but again, can't go into all of those safety planning details here, but wanted to let you know that we are part of that process. We have not received word of what funds have -- will be approved. But I wanted to let you know that we have applied for those. Next slide. We are also looking at, as I said, parking, street closures, any match-day impacts on our operations. So that's part of an ongoing discussion. Did want to note that your one meeting in July is a match day. It's actually the semifinal match day. So that's something that we may want to look at as well. It is -- the match is at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon that day. Next slide, please. Also wanted to just mention that the Fulton County Airport is a major

factor, sponsors, visitors. It is a general aviation airport, so noncommercial flights, but Coca-Cola, for example, is a world sponsor of FIFA and the World Cup. Their hangar is at FTY. So we're expecting to see very high volume, just as we do for Super Bowls and SEC Championships and any major event, we see very high volume. Because of the number of international flights, customs coordination is a very important consideration, so we are in those discussions now. But that will be part of our ongoing planning process. Next slide, please. Also want to let you know that we, as I mentioned, Atlanta, of course, is the host city. But the 14 other cities in Fulton County are also planning their engagement, so they're having viewing party plans and other coordination. We have had some preliminary conversation and are having ongoing discussion with those cities about what their plans are. We've also talked, David Manuel and I have been in discussion about and are starting that process with our Arts Contracts for Services partners to say, what activities are you having? So while visitors are here, we have an opportunity for joint promotion of all of the wonderful things that people can do while they're visiting Fulton County. Part of that will be the creation of a mobile-friendly event calendar specifically focused on Fulton County cities and partners. So again, our very rich arts community, our city events, that will be part of this coordinated calendar. Next slide, please. Also, since today, we have heard from a number of departments, we also did make a funding request. So I wanted to share with you some of the creative -- some of these things would be funding dependent, and that is part of the enhancement request that you have. But we're also going to identify everything we can do within our existing resources. So I just wanted to share little bit of that creative with you. And we'll -- over the next couple of slides. Next slide, please. So this is our request was for 1 million for a paid advertising campaign. I'm sorry, some of the fonts did not translate over. Next slide, please. So this is an example of what that creative would look like. This is a paid spot within the Atlanta Airport. Next slide, please. And again, these are conceptual, so various looks and feels that could be again, promoting the cultural assets and visitor opportunities that we have here across our county. Next slide. Including things like transit-oriented advertising, bus wraps and in-transit center ads as well. Next, please. This is an example on a taxi. Next slide. Looking at vehicle or mobile billboards. Next, please. Signage for the Government Center because we're in such close proximity. These, again, are very conceptual, but looking at really activating the space here at the Government Center for visitors who are in the downtown area. Next slide. This is another side of the building that's from Mitchell Street. Next slide, please. Our beautiful bridge. Next slide, please. And then also working through our PR partners on just promoting all of those opportunities, like I mentioned that coordinated events calendar that is Fulton County specifically focused. I know DeKalb and Gwinnett and other counties around us are going to also be activating, but we want to keep visitors, as much as possible, within Fulton County while they're here. Many of our smaller cities have convention and visitors bureaus of their own, so working with those

staff as well. Next slide. I think -- I think that's the end. So with that, Commissioners, I can take any questions."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Commissioner -- excuse me. Commissioner Arrington."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Madam CFO, is this million dollars in the budget?"

SHARON WHITMORE, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER: "It is not currently."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Okay, thank you. I don't know -- so I'm supportive in general. But I don't know how advertising Fulton County to people that are already here in Fulton County on MARTA buses and inside of the building generates anything for us. I mean, typically, when you're doing this type of advertising, you do it outside of Fulton County, because you're trying to bring people in. They're already spending the money to bring everybody here. So I don't know. We, you know, we may need to talk about that and look at it some. I mean, we're just going to be advertising Fulton to Fulton. And obviously, there'll be the 300,000-plus people here --"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Right."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "-- but they're already here. So I just don't know --"

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Yeah, I think it's to generate the impression, it's the one-time opportunity with 300,000 visitors over a multi-week period to generate an impression. Now, will that lead to business investment and, you know, other positive attributes? That's always a question around advertising. But I think we wanted to bring something forward, because we had not heretofore presented even conceptually, what we could do. So we've been on a, you know, a fairly short string here to develop some ideas. I think these are good ideas. Now, it's not -- doesn't come without a cost. So I understand your question. But if I were -- I wouldn't let this opportunity pass without doing something."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Well, my other question is, why are we not on the Host Committee? Go back to them slides --"

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Well, that's --"

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "We're doing, coordinating, supporting and AFCEMA and all that. How much is all of that costing us to provide all those services?"

DICK ANDERSON, COUNTY MANAGER: "Yeah. I don't have that number off top of my head. And we've applied for grants for that, but we were not invited to be on the Host Committee."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "Well, I -- when I spoke to the Mayor, he said, how much money do y'all have? We put that million dollars up, we might be -- we'll be invited on the Host Committee. I mean, like, we're going to spend it outside of what's going on. That doesn't make sense. It makes more sense to spend it, and be on the Host Committee and be a part of everything. That -- I mean, that's what makes sense to me. But, yeah, I don't know. We're going to give MARTA some money. We're going to give some taxi cabs some money. And we're going to give the airport some money for these ads, and somebody going to just print some banners, and the banner company going to get some money. I don't know, Mr. Manager, unless -- unless you're going to get us on this Host Committee, I don't -- I don't see how this makes sense, especially what we're doing. Do we know how much we applied for in federal grants?"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "I think it's between in the neighborhood of 1.5 million. And again, it's -- it's, these are federal dollars that are specifically for public safety purposes only. So they would cover some of those expenses, including the Board of Health as part of our application, so for example, pop-up restaurant inspections. There are very considerable public safety expenses that could come along with that."

COMMISSIONER ARRINGTON, JR.: "I mean, I guess if we're getting 1.5 million in grants, not that we will actually get it. But to the extent that we've applied for 1.5 million in grants, probably makes -- it might make sense to spend a million dollars because then we're really gaining, you know, half a million dollars, right? But I'm thankful -- thank you for -- I mean, yes, we probably need to do something. But I would rather do it as part of the overall effort than just doing something off on our own."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Commissioner Thorne."

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Thank you."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "I think the purpose is having 300,000 visitors who think they're coming to Atlanta that there's other cities outside Atlanta, and to draw them to not only visit Atlanta, but perhaps go to South Fulton to the Bear Creek Nature Center or go hiking somewhere, or you know, go up north, explore. Because I think a majority of people will come in and they probably will just stay in Atlanta, and Fulton County has a lot more to offer than just Atlanta. But with that being said, it's kind of hard to dedicate a million dollars towards this when we have so many other things that -- other needs as well in the county. The \$600 million in grants, I don't know if you went to NACo this year. I know Commissioner Ivory, you were there. We got to go to a FIFA thing. And basically all they wanted us to do is to advocate for that 600 million-plus federal dollars they wanted for public safety and security. They really didn't want us at the table, I felt like. But they want us to go and lobby our representative to get that funding, which they

now got the funding, and it can only be used towards public safety. It's -- grants can only be used towards public safety --"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER THORNE: -- so if we spend a million, we'll be spending federal dollars to provide a service, and we won't get anything tangible back, except that we provided our police force, our buildings, our Emergency Management System people to work during the FIFA World Cup. So I don't really see that correlation. If we spend a million, we get 1.5 back. I don't think that would be there. So tough, tough ask, especially this time around. But it's --

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Understand."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "-- also a great opportunity to launch your experience Fulton. I did have question like --"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Sure."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "-- why were we doing in Spanish? I know we have Spain here, but --"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "That, I -- one of the things we -- that was a mockup, Commissioner. And we -- we did look at the countries that are visiting, and so partially for digital communications, primarily we would look at having some translation services to the extent that some of our visitors are coming from, you know, Spain, from Saudi Arabia, from Morocco, like from South Africa. Many, you know, many countries, the visitors do speak English, and they'll be very comfortable with that. But for visitors who come, particularly for our digital ads, we would want to have embedded translation services. We chose that as a mock up, just to kind of give you an idea of what that could look like if we wanted. Spain has two matches, so that's one country that we know will be -- we'll have a number of visitors. And they, Spain has a particularly strong following for their team, so that was one of the other reasons that was just pulled out."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Okay, okay. Yeah, and with AI translation services --"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Right."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "-- it's so much easier to travel -- anybody who travels from those countries --"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Yes."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: -- is probably familiar with translation, Google Translate and all of that and the currency translations as well. And I just want to mention there's like one typo, it's Wednesday, June 24th --

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Oh, thank you."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "-- and not 25th on the slide."

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "That's a hundred percent Jessica."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "And I don't think we have voted for our calendar yet. I'm not aware of voting for our calendar for this year, which we usually do at the beginning of the year. So maybe we can alter that date."

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Madam Clerk, is that something -- I thought that we received it already, but I may have been mistaken."

CLERK GRIER: "Yes, that was voted on in October."

COMMISSIONER THORNE: "Was it voted on? Okay. So maybe we can still change the date if need be. But it's late afternoon match. So maybe we can still accommodate a shorter workday. Thank you."

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "All right. Commissioner Ivory."

COMMISSIONER IVORY: "This is -- thank you for that presentation. And I know we have all heard so much about World Cup. This was one of those topics that the County Manager and I discussed about, should we include this million dollars in the budget, in the budget that I asked him to do for me that came to 10.28, it was included in that. Because of our decision that there -- is this -- is just one of those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that in our generation may never come again. And that if we had the money in a sort of dream world, we would want to give to this million. I do sit on the Showcase Atlanta Board, which is the entity in the city of Atlanta that's, you know, sort of doing all the things. And to Commissioner Arlington's comments about we -- it would seem better to use it in a more effective way that might be in partnership with one of the sponsors and doing something, I do think that that's worth -- if it comes to pass, that we -- that this Board would agree to include that in the budget. If we moved on from there, I think that the leverage of that million dollars should be used in way that gives us the maximum benefit that we can get from it. And I can only imagine that as we get nearer to the dates of these things happening, people are going to fall short of budget dollars that they needed to do things, whether that's a very big, you know, private sponsored events, or if it's a meeting with all of the sponsors, things that I think would benefit our

economic development if we were -- if the Chairman was in the room talking about the great things about Fulton or if we -- you know, I don't know with the event would be. But I'm thinking if we were able to come in as a part of financial partner, at a time when I'm sure the Showcase Atlanta, or the city of Atlanta, will be looking for additional dollars to support an activation. That might be the moment where we could actually utilize these dollars to mean something that is a real return on our investment for us, because we would be in a place where we would actually be talking to some of those 300,000 visitors that need exposure to Fulton County and can bring economic opportunities back. So maybe it's not taxis, and maybe it's not, you know, things up on the Fulton County wall, because how many are coming. But I think we could think more exact about how the best use of that money if we -- if this Commission voted on it."

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Commissioner Ivory, thank you for that. And just a couple of quick, I guess, comments on that. So one, Showcase Atlanta has been a great partner. They have worked with us to talk with -- Showcase Atlanta, as well as the Mayor's Office have talked with us or worked with us to talk with some of our smaller cities who don't have necessarily all as much information or resources. Every city in Fulton County, I think, has a youth soccer program, for example. So some of our cities are very excited about really activating, you know, young people, making them feel part -- I -- the Olympics were held here the year after I graduated from Emory, I was very excited to be, you know, 22-23 and be part of that and going to events. So just thinking about young people who are here, whether they're college students or young adults or who may not be able to afford tickets, and creating some opportunity for them. And again, making sure that every city in Fulton County gets to be part of the excitement for, you know, kids in South Fulton or Roswell or wherever they are to be part of it. So they've been a great partner with that. I agree that some of the dollars could be -- some dollars, period can be very well spent, both in partnership with the Host Committee as well as with our cities who are trying to do things who are not part of the Host Committee. One final thing I would say is that the Metro Atlanta Chamber is part of the Host Committee. There are many small Convention and Visitors Bureaus across Fulton County. Of course, the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau does an amazing job. There is no one except Fulton County Government, whose role is promoting Fulton County. And so I think that is one of the unique opportunities we have. There is no Fulton County Chamber of Commerce. There is no Fulton County Convention and Visitors Bureau. We are the only ones promoting Fulton County. So I think that is one opportunity that we need to think about, whether it's a million dollars or some other resources, I just wanted to call that out."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "I'll just be real brief. And I get that point you made, but I also don't know that a million dollars is going to be particularly impactful in terms of that

promotion and what really net benefit that gets to the taxpayers, when a lot of the taxpayer-funded money is coming through and going to these other entities, right?"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Sure."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "Many of these are getting their funds through sales taxes, hotel-motel taxes, whatever that are coming back into this, right?"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "That's true."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "So, you know, I'm skeptical of just what that -- what that benefit is. And I'm also sort of skeptical of just throwing your name on there and throwing, you know, 30,000 bucks in there for some -- sponsoring some event, you're one of 25 on there. I think that's a private entity doing that, and should be that domain. I -- one thing I would say from this, related to the World Cup and related to other stuff, when it comes to wanting to use some forms of advertising, we should have a discussion with MARTA about them giving us access to bus stops, this to advertise our services for free, given the amount of tax -- Fulton County, we are one of the four, you know, contractors on that, you know. So we should open up a discussion with that in --"

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Glad to do it."

COMMISSIONER ELLIS: "-- you know, in seeing if we can have some, you know, whether it's for this purpose or -- or other purposes, I think that should be there, given the amount of Fulton County residents' investment in MARTA. So that's just -- I just want to -- for while it was out there that just sort of triggered me, so."

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "Thank you."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Anything else? Well, MARTA needs something from us now, so it's a good time."

JESSICA CORBITT, DIRECTOR, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: "All right. Thank you very much, Commissioners."

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "Anything else, Commissioners?"

COMMISSIONERS: (No response.)

CHAIRMAN PITTS: Madam Clerk?

CLERK GRIER: No further items.

CHAIRMAN PITTS: "No further items to come before us today, we are adjourned."

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.