

Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on May 5, 2026, at 2:00 PM, Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

I. FY 2027 Budget Workshop 1

Mayor Rusty Paul called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

A. 2026-111 FY 2027 Budget Workshop 1

Eden Freeman, City Manager, discussed the FY2027 Budget Calendar, and the Priority Based Budgeting and Capital Improvement Project Budgeting models. The City's process is to establish priorities early and focus the budget around those priorities.

Priority Based Budgeting

- Built around priorities adopted by Mayor and Council
- Funding is directed to needs that advance priorities and core service delivery
- Department requests are evaluated on alignment with priorities and operational requirements
- High -priority investments move forward first so the budget stays aligned with Council direction

Capital Improvement Project Budgeting

- Major investments in the City's infrastructure, facilities, equipment, and long-term assets
- Developed from the City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program, which helps plan projects over multiple years rather than funding them one project at a time
- Prioritized based on Council direction from the Annual Retreat, service delivery needs, asset condition, safety, timing, and available funding
- Projects that received partial funding in a prior year (with approval from previous Council) may be recommended for additional funding in the proposed budget so the full scope can move forward
- All recommendations are vetted by Staff for readiness, cost, operational impact, and alignment with City priorities

FY 2027 Operating Budget Assumptions

- Prioritize recruitment and retention efforts to remain market leader
 - 3% COLA for all City employees
 - Evaluating health insurance options to continue providing high quality but cost-effective coverage for our employees and their families
- Estimated 20 % increase in General Liability Insurance
- Fund annual subcontractor agreements for key public safety services, 24/7 call center, public works, and recreation and parks maintenance
- Continued debt service for Public Facilities Authority, fire apparatus and equipment

Sandy Springs Police Department (SSPD)

Kenneth DeSimone, Sandy Springs Police Department Chief, reviewed the department's performance. There was a decrease in property crimes and violent crime for 2025. In addition, traffic incidents and citations Violent crimes are trending down. **Police Chief DeSimone** also discussed the *Total Calls for Service* from 2021 to 2025. Total calls in 2025 decreased to 98,048 compared to 105,392 in 2021 and 106,280 in 2024. Of the top ten calls in 2025, business check was number one at 33,155, followed by

traffic stop at 13,931. Other information presented *Traffic Unit and Traffic Response Vehicles, Police Department Requested Enhancements and Capital Requests, and Community Violence Reduction Grant Positions.*

Councilmember Melody Kelley asked are calls initiated by others?

Police Chief DeSimone said most are initiated by the patrol officer.

Councilmember John Paulson said we discussed the SR-400 Peach Partners Project with its own TRV. Please figure out a way to partner with them.

Police Chief DeSimone said it will help but they are not sworn officers.

Councilmember Kelley asked was a canine replaced last year?

City Manager Freeman said the price dramatically increased. There will be one a year as dogs age out of service.

Councilmember Frank Roberts asked what is the firearm/sight system upgrade?

Police Chief DeSimone said it is the red dot sight on all pistols.

Councilmember Melissa Mular asked why did real time assists increase significantly from 188 to 677, also the investigative leads from 456 to 862?

Police Chief DeSimone said this is mostly due to the proximity of the new headquarters in solving cases, and also the new technology for instance.

Councilmember Mular asked were there software upgrades as part of the new headquarters?

Police Chief DeSimone said yes. Software and hardware.

Councilmember Paulson said the real time assists from 188 to 677 is expanded capacity. Did crime increase?

Police Chief DeSimone said no.

City Manager Freeman said regarding overall stability, crime decreased.

Councilmember Kelley asked for information on speed cameras and revenue generated, and any legislature updates.

Police Chief DeSimone said people complain of the ticket and not speed itself. A legislature update is not available today.

City Manager Freeman said there will be discussion about extending the existing contract. Also funds generated will be in the General Fund.

Councilmember Roberts asked were there any issues with Georgia State Patrol (GSP) working SR-400 and I-285? Have they worked fatalities?

Police Chief DeSimone said not in the City of Sandy Springs.

Councilmember Roberts said they worked them in the City of Atlanta. Why not in Sandy Springs?

Police Chief DeSimone said Sandy Springs Police are quicker to get to the scene versus waiting several hours for GSP to respond.

Councilmember Andrew J. Chinsky asked can the City raise awareness or patrol the use of e-bikes and golf carts to avoid a serious injury?

Police Chief DeSimone said this is a nationwide concern. Unfortunately there was serious crash involving a child in Sandy Springs. There are upcoming training sessions with the Bike Unit and is geared towards teenagers or younger. Also Council can share information with constituents.

City Manager Freeman said there are built in the resources for police to begin developing the training program for the Bike Unit to warn kids be responsible.

Mayor Paul said there are many people with both e-bikes and golf carts in neighborhood streets that move at high rate of speed. It is difficult to control because it is mostly underage kids operating with the permission of their parents.

Councilmember Paulson said there should be a PSA to warn parents of the danger.

City Manager Freeman said one round is done and there will be another.

Mayor Paul said the young man who was seriously injured after colliding his e-motorcycle with an SUV today remains in a vegetative state as of today.

Councilmember Mary Ford asked what improvements should be considered in the budgeting process next year? How does the police budget submission reflect the priorities to do better, or more?

Police Chief DeSimone said the most pressing issue is jail and inmate housing with the close of the City of Smyrna's jail. It may cost more to house the City's inmates.

City Manager Freeman said the amount built into the budget should cover the City once we identify a new place.

Police Chief DeSimone said there were 2,794 people arrested last year.

Councilmember Paulson said that is almost 10 arrests per day.

Police Chief DeSimone said that is down by a thousand from last year

Councilmember Chinsky asked why is there a nationwide downward trend of crime? Is it possible this trend will continue?

Police Chief DeSimone said there are many factors. Border control for instance is huge. The U.S. Attorney's office has aggressively taken cases for prosecution which has decreased crime. This is also nationwide. Some historically violent cities like St. Louis for example had plummeted murder rates last year. Aggressive narcotics enforcement is another factor in decreasing crime as many murders are gang and drug related. Although it is difficult to control domestic violence, victim advocates help with

desescalating a situation before it leads to homicide.

Sandy Springs Fire Department (SSFD)

Keith Sanders, Sandy Springs Fire and Rescue, Chief, reviewed the department's performance. Of the *Total Incidents and EMS (Calendar Year)*, the Sandy Springs Fire Department responded to 22,256, compared to 26, 987 in 2021, and 22,677 in 2024. In the *Average Response Times by Station-2024 vs 2025*, Station 1 and Station 4 increased in 2025. For *Cardiac Arrest Data*, in 2025, there were 91 total cardiac arrests, 2 had no CPR, 22 needed CPR and there were 6 survivors. The yearly goal is to train at least 800 in CPR and include businesses and residents in homeowners associations. For *Hot Spots: Response Times 2025*, the average response time was 7:09 minutes. For *Hot Spots: All Incidents 2025* there were 11,763. Of that, there were 261 fire incidents, 4,488 EMS incidents, and 7,014 other incidents. The *Community Paramedicine Program* was implemented to address frequent 911 use for non-emergency calls and improve care for patients with ongoing medical needs. In 2025, there were 219 service encounters, 136 responses (911), and 74 trucks cancelled. There was savings of \$46,250. The *Fire Department's Requested Enhancements and Capital Requests* include a new aerial and engine, new bonus structure, additional staffing, active shooter PPE, fire equipment replacement and firefighter turn out gear/PPE. The *Emergency Management's Requested Enhancements and Capital Requests* include EMA preparedness exercises, annual cost of drone program, annual cost of AVIVE AED Community Plan, and emergency access system.

Councilmember Kelley asked will Station 1 be relocated long enough to determine the response time?

Fire Chief Sanders said yes.

Councilmember Kelley asked can hot spot graphic for 2025 be compared to the graphic from 2024?

Fire Chief Sanders said yes. Most of the calls in the north are EMS. There is also a senior facility, and many calls are received from there, but Roswell is assisting with those calls as well.

Councilmember Paulson asked what is occurring in the Roswell Road and I-285 area?

Fire Chief Sanders said car accidents.

Councilmember Andrew J. Chinsky asked what is the meaning of the color-coded dots in the Hot Spots graphic?

Fire Chief Sanders said it is the repetition of calls in the area and the darker spots mean more repetitive calls in that area.

Councilmember Kelley asked do the red dots indicate fires, green dots are other incidents, and blue EMS?

Fire Chief Sanders said yes.

Councilmember Mular asked how does the new bonus structure compare to other municipalities?

Fire Chief Sanders said they are all different. Some municipalities have no bonus structure, and others

create the structure in different ways. Municipalities often ask about the Sandy Springs model and the Police Department has done excellent work to incentivize that.

Councilmember Paulson said the code for fire inspections on new buildings was changed a couple weeks ago. Will this increase the department's workload?

Fire Chief Sanders said yes, especially with weekly checks of hydrants.

Councilmember Kelley asked will Emergency Management's drone program be a capital request?

City Manager Freeman said it will move to operating.

Councilmember Kelley asked why is turn out gear twice as much this year?

Fire Chief Sanders said we are changing the gear due to hazardous chemicals in it. There are also helmets that have expired and are replaced every ten years.

Councilmember Kelley asked will it cost \$200,000 each year?

Fire Chief Sanders said maybe.

City Manager Freeman said also costs have increased.

Public Works Department

William H. Martin, Jr., AIA, Public Works Director, reviewed the department's performance. *Requested Enhancements* include NexusWorx Fiberoptic Asset Management, Sinec Network Management Service, Utility Marking Services for GA 811 Requirements, Traffic Pole Maintenance, Increase in Street Light Maintenance/Painting, Sand and Salt Spreaders (2), and Additional Staffing. There were twenty-two *Public Works Capital Requests* to include Bridge and Dam Maintenance Program, Pavement Management Program, and intersection and operational improvements.

Councilmember Mular asked is there currently a total of two sand and salt spreaders?

Public Works Director Martin said there is a total of five. Two were previously replaced to refresh the inventory. We also maintain brining equipment for certain winter weather conditions.

Councilmember Kelley asked are any of the requested enhancements recurring, for instance maintenance?

Public Works Director Martin said street light maintenance for example is recurring but not every year.

Councilmember Kelley asked does the term utility extend to Fulton County sewage or Atlanta Watershed?

Public Works Director Martin said yes.

Councilmember Kelley asked does the City have a GIS map for the public to view active utility permits?

Public Works Director Martin said a database is maintained for utility permits and the Permit Technician can provide clarity.

Councilmember Kelley asked why does the GIS site not include activities Fulton County is doing in neighborhoods as it relates to my district? How should residents with complaints proceed?

City Manager Freeman said an emergency repair may not be on the site, but a planned upgrade will be. They can also contact the City.

Public Works Director Martin said the call center is a great start. Also the superintendents can locate active permits and determine if an emergency or a planned permit.

Councilmember Mular asked does the *ATMS-5* signal replacements include mount Vernon highway?

Public Works Director Martin said yes.

Councilmember Mular asked regarding the request for *Sandy Springs Circle (Johnson Ferry to Roswell Road) Multi Use Path Improvements*, are the new condominiums near there required to put sidewalk?

Public Works Director Martin said the intention is to connect.

City Manager Freeman said the portion to Roswell Road that has no sidewalk.

Councilmember Kelley asked how much of the \$650,000 request for *Stormwater Operation* is associated with the Stormwater Capital Improvements (Design and Construction)?

Public Works Director Martin said about \$400,000.

Councilmember Kelley asked when complete, will the *Stormwater Operation* request decrease?

Public Works Director Martin said yes, although it surged this year.

Councilmember Kelley asked will the request for *Traffic Calming* be about \$100,000 each year?

Public Works Director Martin said \$100,000 is in the budget this year as there was interest in modifying the rules and policies associated with the program. An additional \$50,000 was added to further explore with Council later this year.

Councilmember Mular asked is there also interest from neighborhoods, not just Council?

City Manager Freeman said more have come in and we want to be prepared for if Council wants to change the policy on how much to contribute, and what that impact might be to others that want to have traffic calming installed.

Councilmember Mular asked can Council be made aware of when there is a neighborhood request in our districts?

City Manager Freeman said it is best that is incorporated into Inside Sandy Springs.

Councilmember Chinsky asked for *Allen Road Intersection Improvement*, if GDOT follows through on the DDI and cul-de-sacs Allen Road, will that project move forward?

Public Works Director Martin said whatever the interchange and improvement may become is years away. This project is at Allen Road and Lake Forest and about northbound movement of traffic there. Cul-de-sacs may not change.

Mayor Paul said there is a sightline problem there with two lanes turning left and right and creates many accidents. Even if it cul-de-saced, there are enough residential and other movements there causing problems getting onto Lake Forest from there.

Public Works Director Martin said we successfully implemented traffic calming on Allen Road a couple years ago. We are already treating that as a relatively low volume roadway that is eligible for traffic calming.

Councilmember Chinsky said we should not spend possibly \$1,000,000 on what may not be needed in ten years.

Councilmember Roberts said the traffic that should be most concerning is north.

Public Works Director Martin said traffic studies show that we can prevent traffic from going into an always stop, which is what it does today at Lake Forest and Allen. That allows a freer and safer movement at Northwood. It is the downstream consequence that improves the condition.

Councilmember Roberts said if a car makes a left turn on Northwood that stops traffic that backs to the intersection at Allen Road. It is sensible to have the roundabout at Northwood.

Public Works Director Martin said we considered that, but Allen Road at Lake Forrest was a better place for the intersection improvement.

Mayor Paul said there is a conflict at Northwoods and Lake Forrest and will continue to be monitored.

Public Works Director Martin said in the last couple of years, emphasis has been on improving sight distancing due to vegetation, shoulder road, and more.

Councilmember Paulson said a through lane would just keep going south on Lake Forest and not be stopped by that.

Councilmember Roberts said a left turn on Lake Forest going into Northwood, stops southbound traffic, but there is only one lane there.

Mayor Paul said once the roundabout is there, the traffic study indicates we might not need it, but it will justify some ongoing investigations.

Recreation and Parks Programs

Brent Walker, Director of Recreation and Parks, reviewed the department's performance. Requested enhancements include software replacement, program supplies, site improvements and additional staffing. Capital Requests included the Morgan Falls Athletic Complex, Abernathy Arts Center Playground replacement, Racquet Center, and Tree Fund capital projects. For FY25, the total registration for all listed programs was 5,766. Of the top four registered programs and registration list, Back to School

Bash/NNO was number one at 1,500, followed by National Kids to Parks Day at 600. The top three contractor program registrations were the Sandy Springs Raquet Center at 69,542, Jump Start Gymnastics at 6,457, and JAM Sports at 2,119. Total registration for all listed programs was 85,094.

Councilmember Mular asked how big is the Abernathy Arts Center playground?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said about a thousand square feet.

City Manager Freeman said it will be an innovative playground replacement especially with the Abernathy Arts Center.

Councilmember Mular asked will the Heritage Playground serve younger children?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said we will accommodate children from two to twelve based on the equipment design and their physical capabilities.

City Manager Freeman said there will also be playground options for adults.

Councilmember Paulson asked will the Sandy Springs area of the Heritage Playground be improved?

City Manager Freeman said **Dave Wells, Director of Facilities/Capital Construction and Building Operations**, will provide more information.

Councilmember Chinsky asked is the expense for design?

City Manager Freeman said it is for the playground portion and funding on **Director of Facilities/Capital Construction and Building Operations Wells** presentation is to fix the mosquito net.

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said playground companies often provide redesign, buy their equipment, and offer 3D renderings ahead of time.

Councilmember Paulson said millions of dollars were spent on Morgan Falls Athletic Complex for years. Is the list of work to do almost complete?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said yes.

Mayor Paul said it is a friendly competitive environment with several youth sports programs and parents choose based on the quality of the of the facilities to enroll their kids. We have improved the facilities and there are more kids now than last year, and many more kids than four or five years ago. The program is attracting more families to stay in Sandy Springs and and enroll their kids in the City's youth sports programs. We will need to maintain some resources going into that facility over a long period of time. Recall, it also sits on top of a landfill, and there are environmental issues to monitor and ensure it is safe for children to play.

Councilmember Chinsky said the gap between Morgan Falls and competitors NYO at Chastain Park and Murphey Candler Park in Brookhaven was large but has been narrowed down.

Councilmember Paulson asked are you referring to caliber of the facilities?

Councilmember Chinsky said yes.

Councilmember Roberts asked if any funds are going towards the football area at Morgan Falls?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said yes. The addition of artificial turf on the fields will make it easier to transition from one sport to the next. We will also add permanent marking to stripe the field to play any sport, and this will make the space flexible.

Councilmember Roberts said there was discussion about private schools using the football field but it was mentioned the facilities are not up to par.

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said the primary issue is the sideline width for high school football. Also, there are no indoor facilities for the teams in case of inclement weather and more.

Mayor Paul said that field meets the state standards for youth programming, but not for high school programming.

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said although we cannot have them for a game, we can accommodate them for use as a practice facility, and more.

Councilmember Roberts asked how many teams currently use the field?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said that information can be provided to you.

Mayor Paul said the kind of programming families are looking for have expanded, and it is no longer just football. It includes lacrosse, soccer and more. That field has must serve a a multiplicity of uses which when it was built was not designed for, and we must to continue to put resources there.

Councilmember Kelley said about \$400,000 was approved for the park and not the athletic complex. Was this for the restroom renovation?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said yes, and for miscellaneous repair like lighting for instance.

Councilmember Kelley will the Rackets Center contribution recur every year?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said yes. In the contract with the City, they pay their rent and an additional \$2,000 every month towards a capital fund for small projects or improvements to the facility.

Councilmember Kelley asked is the \$24,000 for the Racket Center revenue?

Michael Hietter, Budget Manager, said it is listed as an expenditure but is budget authorization, and does not mean spending funds.

Councilmember Mular said the tennis center needed some improvements. Will there be funding for this as well?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said that facilities project was originally \$1,000,000 but reduced to \$500,000. This is for restroom renovation, deck replacement, and more, and some improvements are complete.

Councilmember Mular said there is no line item in the project budget for trees, and Tree Fund money is used to fund trees in those projects. Is this what the \$300,000 for the *Tree Fund Capital Projects* is for?

City Manager Freeman said there are restrictions on where to plant trees on public property.

Councilmember Mular asked what is the Tree Fund balance?

City Manager Freeman said there were significant contributions and this information can be provided at the next meeting.

Councilmember Kelley said a resident mentioned that there are significant invasives along the trail and we should be intentional about removing them.

Mayor Paul asked what is planted, for example faster or slower oaks?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said that information can be provided.

Councilmember Roberts asked where does Trees ATL plant?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said Front Yard Tree Program was started by Trees ATL to get private property owners to plant more trees, and the responsibility is not on public right of way in public parks. You can sign up through the City to have a tree planted in your front yard and the City pays the cost. The City partnered with them as a nonprofit to expand tree canopy with placement in the front yard.

Councilmember Roberts asked how many trees were planted?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said 77 trees were planted this past year and \$25,000 was spent. We are requesting 40 for the next fiscal year. Data from previous years can be provided.

Councilmember Mular asked did the City pay for only the trees planted and it was not a flat fee?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said yes.

Councilmember Paulson asked did Trees ATL also fund this?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said they also had associated costs and have a two-year maintenance program.

Councilmember Ford said the \$2,000,000 allocated for the *Trail Segment 2C Construction* is balanced against the progress we could make on the sidewalk list that people use to get to school, work, and more. How much more money? Is the design 20% funded?

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said we are building that fund in anticipation that once the design is completed, we will be fully funded and ready for construction.

City Manager Freeman said discussion is needed in this process and Council should provide feedback. Also consensus is needed if for example, you do not want to appropriate any funding to Trail 2C.

Councilmember Ford asked what if the project does not receive another \$4,000,000?

City Manager Freeman said it will be delayed significantly. We can provide a breakdown of how much is already funded so you can make an informed decision.

Councilmember Paulson said also include what the Conservancy has done with Trail 2C to have a full accounting of the status on the project.

Councilmember Kelley said for program registrations, the cost per person was around \$16, but appears to be now doubled. Also, there was a significant decrease in youth basketball registration, and soccer and track were also down. Hopefully this can be increased.

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said this is partially due to access to facilities, and there was also a change in staffing.

Councilmember Mular asked can the City have more programs that fill the need for the senior community?

City Manager Freeman said senior services is a topic in the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS). It is a function of county service provision, and not typically a city service. The City offers a lot of programs that are open to adult though not geared towards seniors.

Kristin Byars Smith, Assistant City Manager, said more information on this may be provided in the programming discussion for the Recreation Parks Master Plan.

Councilmember Mular asked why is it separated into senior versus other age groups for services?

Mayor Paul said historically Fulton County has spent a lot of money on senior centers. They took the lead on that about thirty years ago and managed the process in the SDS discussions. The Benson Center was one of the last senior centers built in the county. Discussions should happen now because we are in the early stages of SDS.

City Manager Freeman said also, we do not have the facilities to host an expansion of programming. This topic was brought to the county manager to possibly have access to the Benson Center and no response was provided yet.

Mayor Paul said we have not had many positive conversations with the owners of the facility. Also, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has a large senior program, oriented toward other senior services.

Councilmember Chinsky said we could also focus on multi-generational programming.

Mayor Paul said the City's art program should be considered. It is not recreational program, but it is open to all ages, and a lot of seniors who participate.

Director of Recreation and Parks Walker said also learning groups for example the Crafting Buddies Program, and more have a lot of seniors.

Performing Arts Center

Eden Freeman, City Manager, and **William Haggett, Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center**, reviewed the department's performance.

Signature Events Funding

- City will provide \$500,000 for Signature Events, including \$250,000 from parking revenue
- The Sandy Springs Foundation has committed \$25,000 to Skate Sandy Springs and \$20,000 to Stars and Stripes, and is actively working to secure additional sponsorships
- The Juneteenth Committee and the Sandy Springs Foundation are securing additional sponsorships for FY 2026, having received \$17,083.72 in FY 2025

Councilmember Kelley said the budget for Juneteenth is \$25,000 but is listed at \$15,000.

Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center Haggett said there is \$10,000 in our budget for marketing and other events also have separate funds for marketing.

Councilmember Kelley said last year we specifically increased the budget by \$10,000 to make it \$25,000.

City Manager Freeman said we will reconcile the data.

Councilmember Mular asked will it be free for the Night Market Event vendors to come and participate?

Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center Haggett said only for three months to ensure there is a functional need, and after the vendors will pay.

Mayor Paul asked for an estimated cost to create the houses for Sparke Sandy Springs.

Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center Haggett said it is about \$7,500 to build, decorate, and deliver them.

Councilmember Mular asked when there will be an announcement of the guest artist for Stars and Stripes.

Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center Haggett said May 18.

Councilmember Mular said the attendance decreased for Sundown Social Series yearly but there is an increase in the budget. Is this due to the caliber of talent?

Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center Haggett said yes. Initially people came out, and it extended. Though people came, it was the same. We are working to improve the attendance. We are creating a staging area and bringing in a stronger level of talent to drive more attention.

Councilmember Mular said also consider improving the types of food trucks for the event.

Mayor Paul said it is a challenging program to manage. There were also food trucks scheduled but they did not show up for instance.

Councilmember Chinsky asked if funding for signature events increased from \$200,000 to \$500,000, how do we know where it is going?

Meeting of the City of Sandy Springs City Council

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City Manager Freeman said this will be in the line-item detail on May 26 at Budget Workshop 3. It is in the Performing Arts Center (PAC) Fund as a transfer from the General Fund and applied towards this. In the past, PAC had to generate enough money from their produced events to pay the million dollars cost. This is not fair to PAC to pay for the free events that the City does.

Councilmember Chinsky said cost per attendee at the Blue Stone Arts and Music Festival is not surprising seeing the turnout last year. We must consider if the cost moving forward is worth it.

City Manager Freeman said Staff is revamping that event and not relying on contractors as much and instead bringing more local volunteers to help.

Mayor Paul said this event was the highlight of the social season in Sandy Springs and the City relaunched it. There were not many volunteers and contractors needed to be used, but people in the community can help and hence the reduction in the proposed budget.

Councilmember Paulson said it is a different event now. There were vendors along Sandy Springs Circle. It is more about entertainment than a festival with arts and crafts for instance.

Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center Haggett said we are revamping the arts and talent side of it to increase attendance.

Councilmember Paulson said the arts, tents, and shopping was a big part of it.

Mayor Paul said it was because vendors paid a fee, and they knew how many people were going to be there. Most came year after year, to see if the community sentiment was strong enough to make it work.

Councilmember Mular said last year at the Lantern Parada there were more people not from Sandy Springs. How can we increase the attendance of Sandy Springs residents?

Councilmember Kelley said my suggestion is to leverage local schools. A part of the elementary school curriculum is sculpture, and this includes making lanterns. The students are also in close proximity. This is the easy way to get people engaged there.

Executive Director of the Performing Arts Center Haggett said we will consider the marketing element and get local initiatives going next year.

Councilmember Chinsky asked how many of the 244 total for Byers Theatre and Lobby was City Springs Theatre Company?

City Manager Freeman said this information will be provided to you.

Information Technology Department

Eden Freeman, City Manager, reviewed the department's performance. There were capital requests for infrastructure hardware replacement and workstation replacement and upgrades.

Communications Department

Carter Long, Communications and Public Relations Director, reviewed the department's performance. Requested enhancements included the WCAG Compliance tool, Document Repository and Document Auditing, OttoApp Agent Integration, and additional staffing. Capital request was for the Interior Art Program.

Councilmember Paulson asked will the document repository and document auditing system include archiving?

Communications and Public Relations Director Long said yes.

Councilmember Melissa Mular asked for the document link for Interior Art Program.

Eden Freeman, City Manager, said it is in the Council document repository.

Community Development

Ginger Sottile, Director of Community Development, reviewed the department's performance. Permits Processed in FY2025 was 4,271 compared to 4,189 in FY2024. Plans Reviewed in FY2025 was 14,566 compared to 11,674 in FY2024. Inspections Performed in FY2025 was 14,686 compared to 12,431 in FY2024. Developer Meetings in FY2025 was 340 compared to 382 in FY2024. For the Code Enforcement cases, the total cases decreased in FY2025 at 1,670, compared to 2,175 in FY 2024. The Notice of Violations increased in FY2025 at 868 compared to 502 in FY2024. Of the special assignments, business license inspections

Councilmember Kelley asked are the MRH Code Inspections for each apartment community?

Director of Community Development Sottile said no. The MRH program is separate and not reflected here. This information can be provided to you.

Office of Innovation and Delivery

Eden Freeman, City Manager, reviewed the creation of this office. There is a request for a Chief Innovation Officer position and two positions in the City Manager's Office will be realigned to this office. There is a capital request for \$1,000,000 to acquire and implement a replacement for Lucy.

Facilities Department

Dave Wells, Director of Facilities/Capital Construction and Building Operations, reviewed the department's performance. Requested enhancements included EV chargers, HVAC contract and filter maintenance, an unscheduled plant replacement, and additional staffing. Capital requests included Back-up 911 Center, City Springs District Improvements, Heritage Lawn Stream Buffer Remediation and Park Renovation Facilities Maintenance, and Office Modification.

Councilmember Chinsky asked does the \$1,000,000 for the Heritage Lawn Stream Buffer Remediation and Park Renovation include upgrades for the new Sandy Springs logos?

Director of Facilities/Capital Construction and Building Operations Wells said yes.

Councilmember Chinsky asked will it also include standardizing the boardwalk in the park?

Director of Facilities/Capital Construction and Building Operations Wells said yes. This will be the boardwalks, walkways, and the parking lot on Sandy Springs Place.

Councilmember Kelley said there is \$5,000,000 slated for next year for the City Springs District Improvements. Will this cost increase?

City Manager Freeman said this depends on what is done with City Springs Phase 2. We are reserving funds. We anticipate building a new parking garage that would be publicly funded and this funding will apply towards that or any other public investment in that area.

Personnel by Department

Eden Freeman, City Manager, presented the positions that are being proposed this year. There is a net increase of 6 full-time positions because there are 3 grant-funded positions in the Police Department on City payroll, but are not City-funded. Also, there are 10 part-time positions proposed for FY2027. This takes the employee count from 648 to 664 this year.

Mayor Paul said we need to slow the addition of personnel. There may be justification for the positions, but the headcount is concerning.

City Manager Freeman said the budget this year requests what is essential to the service delivery in the City, and every request is critical to meet the demands.

FY 2027 Primary Contract Services Partner

Eden Freeman, City Manager, provided a breakdown of the City's primary contractors. The City is a public-private partnership and contractors included Public Safety, Facilities and Fleet, Recreation & Parks, and Public Works.

Non-Profit Summary

Eden Freeman, City Manager, provided a summary of non-profits which included the Abernathy Arts Center, Community Assistance Center, Keep Sandy Springs Beautiful, Sandy Springs Youth Sports Scholarship Program, Sandy Springs Youth Sports, and Solidarity Sandy Springs.

Councilmember Kelley asked what is the budget for the scholarships the City has within Parks and Recreation?

City Manager Freeman said that information is not available now but can be provided to you.

FY 2027 Capital Budget Assumptions

Fleet Fund

Eden Freeman, City Manager, provided a summary of the FY2027 Capital Budget Assumptions for the Fleet Fund. Requests were for Fire Administrative Vehicles Replacement at \$ 150,000, Police Fleet Vehicle Replacement at \$ 1,250,000, Public Works Vehicle Replacement at \$ 40,000, and Recreation and Parks Vehicle Replacement at \$251,500. The total request is for \$1,691,500.

FY 2027 Capital Budget Assumptions Tree Fund

Eden Freeman, City Manager, provided a summary of the FY2027 Capital Budget Assumptions for the Tree Fund. These included Capital Projects \$ 300,000, Education at \$ 25,000, Invasives at \$ 50,000, Maintenance at \$ 175,000, Surveys at \$ 15,000, and Trees ATL at \$ 40,000. The total request is for \$ 605,000.

FY 2027 Capital Budget Assumptions

Eden Freeman, City Manager, presented a complete list of Capital Budget Assumptions. These included Communications, Economic Development, Emergency Management, Facilities Management, Fire Department, Information Services, Innovation, Police Department, Public Works, and Recreation and Park.

Councilmember Mular asked does the Façade Improvement Program for \$500,000 come from the Development Authority's budget?

City Manager Freeman said no. This is from the General Fund.

Councilmember Mular said there was discussion earlier about using Development Authority funds.

Assistant City Manager Byars Smith said this can still be done, but we need to discuss with Council first before taking to the Development Authority.

City Manager Freeman said this is a good number given the size of Sandy Springs, but can be adjusted at Council's request.

Discussion

Councilmember Paulson said the 911 Back-up Center is referred to as federal community project funding. Did this have a previous funder?

Mayor Paul said it is congressionally directed spending.

City Manager Freeman said Representative McCormark and Representative MCBath's Office secured the congressionally directed spending for the City.

Councilmember Mular said Governor Kemp allocated \$50,000,000 for homelessness and the City may need to evaluate this problem.

Mayor Paul said the City's Charter directs the city manager to review all budget requests. Please provide this request to **City Manager Freeman** so that she may consider this request.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Approved: July 21, 2026

Russell K. Paul, Mayor

Raquel D. González, City Clerk