



Buckhead Public Safety Task Force – April 7, 2022, 6:30pm

Minutes (meeting took place via zoom)

As Amended

Welcome	Councilmember Mary Norwood	6:30 – 6:35
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Attendance taken, quorum present. March 24th, 2022 minutes approved (vote below)

Chairs Remarks	Valerie Sellers	6:35 – 6:40
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Fulton County Superior Court	Chief Judge Christopher Brasher	6:40 – 6:50
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Criminal cases are 50% of cases, they are 90% of trials. Superior is highest level of trial court

Do cases with title land, family law (i.e., divorce), and criminal (i.e., murder, assault) Due to COVID, from March 2020 to April 2021, court was virtual

Have 20 judges, budget of about \$50mm, paid for by state and Fulton County

Capacity limited due to COVID. Federal funds of \$75mm to increase court capacity

Decreased criminal caseload by about 1/3. Unindicted cases remain an issue. At the start of 2020, 90% of jail inmates were indicted, now about 40%

Fulton County Magistrate Court	Chief Judge Cassandra Kirk	6:50 – 7:00
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Court created by legislation 2013 – Chief Judge is elected; they appointed and assign other judges. Court operates 365 days a year & 24/7. Do not have jury trials, which allows for faster movements. Do civic actions, landlord / tenant, small claims (under \$50,000), garnishment. Also do first appearance

and warrant application, preliminary hearings, partners on pretrial diversion, public defender, mental health court,

207K cases filed, cleared 170,300. No jury trials, so processing faster – still have staffing issues that slows process some. Do electronic warrants. If someone is arrested, they do first appearance (felony only). Judges sit on mental health court as well. Handle non-complex as well. They can release person to pretrial or can release on own supervision.

Atlanta Municipal Court

Chief Judge Christopher Portis

7:00 – 7:10

Cases specific to Atlanta, be it Fulton or DeKalb, on city ordinances. Traffic violations are a part of their calendar. Six divisions of court. Have alternative sentences (i.e., under 21 years old, homeless). May do hit and run, fighting, shop lifting. 10 full time judges (about 520 cases a week, close about 2,300). They can send case to county court if they want a jury trial. 81% of case load is misdemeanor traffic. Pre- COVID, would cycle through 200,000 cases. Pre-trial intervention (life skills, decision making) can go with under 21 years old, mental health, substance abuse, also have homeless court program. Zero tolerance program in place for failure to appear on all cases, including traffic cases (street racing, etc.).

Fulton County Juvenile Court

Chief Judge Juliette Scales

7:10 – 7:20

Superior court named her chief justice – 7 other justices. Delinquency, children in need of services, transfers from state and superior court, emancipation, drug dependence. Not as much affect from COVID on case load and clearing cases. Work with Dep of Juvenile Justice. Have first time offenders program, and pre-trial programming. Use at Promise Centers for support and programming. Also have family treatment court and drug court, and truancy court. Also have high-risk youth court for more serious cases. Probation is limited to 2 years unless DA requests more. Ascent court is to incorporate those believed to be in gangs. Have 24/7 365 intake for offenses.

Each will speak on their court's role in public safety, information on court decisions, and the consequences

MARTA

Police Chief Scott Kreher

7:20 – 7:30

Collaborations and partnerships with the Atlanta Police Department

Began as Bus only in 1971 (rail in 1979) 454 staff, 346 sworn officers. Lost 63 sworn positions due to resignations, retire, terminations etc. biggest challenge is unsheltered population, especially when COVID dropped ridership by 50-60%. Hope teams have officers and unarmed assistance, partnership with PAD teams (prearrest diversion). 120 unsheltered population at end

of MARTA line at airport the other night due to poor weather. Partnership with APD on bike patrol around Lindberg MARTA station very successful in stopping quality of life crimes.

Questions and Discussion

Valerie, Mary, and Task Force

7:30 – 7:45

Questions included jail capacity, Judges spoke about complex cases taking longer, and resulting in backup, concerns about drag racing punishment in municipal court, municipal court spoke about limits on who can do restorative justice program, Question for Juvenile court about how many defendants are in gang – difficulty to tell if person in gang but are having more gang related charges. Questions about how well courts and police work together on crime issues.

Adjourn

7:45

Task Force meeting Attendance:

Mary Norwood – District 8 Councilmember

Howard Shook – District 7 Councilmember (unable to join due to IT issue)

Chief Timothy Peek – Deputy Chief Field Operations Division Atlanta Police Department – designee

Greg McNiff – Atlanta Police Foundation – designee

Don Geary – Fulton County District Attorney - designee

Michael Shoales - Fulton Sheriff Office – designee

Sheriff Pat Labat - Fulton Sheriff

Deputy Director Chris Hosey – Georgia Bureau of Investigations – designee

Major Kendrick Lowe – Georgia State Patrol

Charles Meriwether – Zone II Citizens Advisory Committee – designee

Brink Dickerson – Chairman NPU A

Nancy Bliwise – Chairperson - NPU B

Tim Robinson– Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods designee

Scott Cantrell –Livable Buckhead designee

Valerie Sellers – Chairwoman, Buckhead Public Safety Task Force

Rick Hamilton – Buckhead Business Association

Jim Elgar – Office of Councilmember Mary Norwood

Kent Strickland – Office of Councilmember Mary Norwood

Anrew Senzer – Atlanta Police Department

Beth Beskin – Buckhead resident

Individuals supporting MARTA Presentation District Attorney Presentation

Police Chief Scott Kreher

Individuals Presenting:

Fulton County Superior Court Chief Judge Christopher Brasher

Fulton County Magistrate Court Chief Judge Cassadra Kirk

Atlanta Municipal Court Chief Judge Christopher Portis

Juvenile Court Chief Judge Juliette Scales

Vote to approve the minutes from the March 24th, 2022, meeting:

Without objection, vote was unanimous. Motion: Mary Norwood 2nd: Charles Meriwether

Vote:

Aye:

Mary Norwood – District 8 Councilmember

Chief Timothy Peek – Deputy Chief Field Operations Division Atlanta Police Department – designee

Greg McNiff – Atlanta Police Foundation – designee

Don Geary – Fulton County District Attorney - designee

Michael Shoales - Fulton Sheriff Office – designee

Sheriff Pat Labat - Fulton Sheriff

Deputy Director Chris Hosey – Georgia Bureau of Investigations – designee

Major Kendrick Lowe – Georgia State Patrol

Charles Meriwether – Zone II Citizens Advisory Committee – designee

Brink Dickerson – Chairman NPU A

Nancy Bliwise – Chairperson - NPU B

Tim Robinson– Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods designee

Scott Cantrell –Livable Buckhead designee

Valerie Sellers – Chairwoman, Buckhead Public Safety Task Force

Rick Hamilton – Buckhead Business Association

Nay: None

Abstain: None

Vote to adjourn without objection, vote was unanimous. Motion: Valerie Sellers, 2nd: Mary Norwood

Aye:

Mary Norwood – District 8 Councilmember

Chief Timothy Peek – Deputy Chief Field Operations Division Atlanta Police Department – designee

Greg McNiff – Atlanta Police Foundation – designee

Don Geary – Fulton County District Attorney - designee

Michael Shoales - Fulton Sheriff Office – designee

Sheriff Pat Labat - Fulton Sheriff

Deputy Director Chris Hosey – Georgia Bureau of Investigations – designee

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Brink Dickerson – Chairman NPU A

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Tim Robinson– Buckhead Council of Neighborhoods designee

Scott Cantrell –Livable Buckhead designee

Valerie Sellers – Chairwoman, Buckhead Public Safety Task Force

Rick Hamilton – Buckhead Business Association

Nay: None

Abstain: None