

UNION CITY MINUTES
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
(State of the City Address)
TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2018
7:00 P.M.

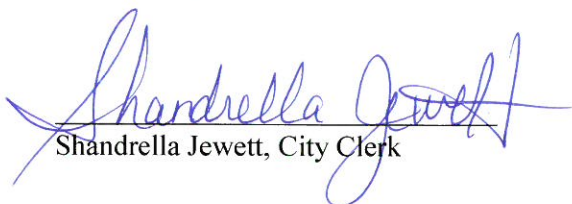
Present: Mayor Vince Williams, Councilmembers Brian Jones, Angelette Mealing, Christina Hobbs, and Shayla Nealy; City Attorney - Dennis Davenport; City Manager - Sonja Fillingame and City Clerk Shandrella Jewett

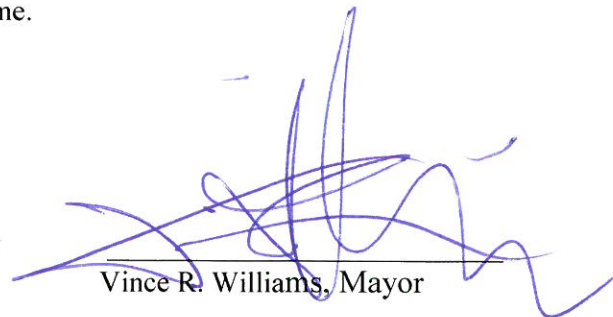
Absent: Assistant City Manager – Tarsha Calloway

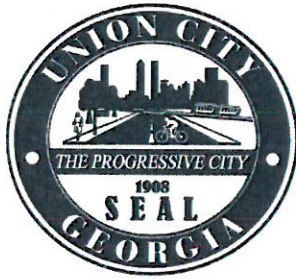
The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

- I. PROCESSION OF CITY COUNCIL:
- II. PRESENTATION OF THE FLAGS:
Benjamin Banneker ROTC Color Guard
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:
DaVaughn Jones, 5th Grade (C.H. Gullatt Elementary School)
- IV. NATIONAL ANTHEM:
Latrice Strickland
- V. INVOCATION:
Invocation led by Dr. Craig Soaries (*Global Empowerment Center*)
- VI. WELCOME TO BANNEKER:
Principal Duke Bradley, III, Ph.D. (*Principal of Benjamin Banneker High School*)
- VII. OPENING:
Michael Hightower
- VIII. SELECTION:
Liberty Point Chorus
- IX. INTRODUCTION OF HONORABLE VINCE WILLIAMS:
Cookie Smoak, President (*ATL Airport District*)
- X. STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS:
Honorable Vince William (*Union City Mayor*)

State of the City Address delivered at this time.
- XI. ADJOURNMENT:
The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.


Shandrella Jewett, City Clerk


Vince R. Williams, Mayor



STATE OF THE CITY

Mayor Vince Williams
March 20, 2018
Benjamin Banneker High School

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, it is an incredible privilege to be here with you tonight. I am truly honored and grateful to be in your presence. I cherish the trust you have placed in me and I'm incredibly humbled to serve as your Mayor!!!

As Mayor, I am often called upon to provide remarks and addresses. But this is the one I look forward to the most—when I share our City's progress, our achievements, our opportunities and YES, even our challenges. So family, here I stand---**110 years after the founding** of the wonderful City of Union City---ready to be **bold** in sharing with you and the world what **U.C.** stands for.... It's resurgence....It's regeneration. It's insistence on **Next Level 2.0**. I must begin by expressing my continued and

unwavering gratitude for the Fulton County School Board, Dr. Duke Bradley, and the amazing students and staff here at Banneker. You have hosted this event for three years. And each and every time, it reminds me - why we must be obsessive in thanking our community partners for showing up and showing out for this City. Let's give Banneker a **Next Level 2.0** applause regarding the enormous progress and gains for test scores and school improvement. Folks, the connection between schools and cities and their impact on communities is patently clear. We find common ground with Banneker and all schools focused on improvement. Their story is also Union City's story. It is not about **who you used to be** as much as it is about, **who you choose to be**. Am I right Dr. Bradley?

To my wonderful wife Sharon and our daughter Nia—Thank you for your unwavering support...for sacrificing so much... and for stealing my heart.... Sharon, every time I look into your eyes, I know that I am complete and deeply blessed to spend my life with you. Would you both please stand and be recognized! Ladies and gentlemen, to know me is to know how much I love my family. I love you both to the moon and beyond!

.....**On the topic of family**, Mayor Pro Tem Brian Jones, Councilwoman Angelette Mealing, Councilwoman Christina Hobbs, and Councilwoman Shayla Nealy---I simply cannot imagine lifting this City

without you. **There is an old Ethiopian proverb that says when spider webs unite, you can tie down a lion.** And so too, it is with this Council. **We are united.**

We are one. We work together. We stand together. And we see this City's future together.....

Again, we must be obsessive in thanking our partners. So I must acknowledge the presence of several elected officials here tonight. If you are an elected, or an appointed official, please stand and be recognized. The City Council and I would like to thank you for being focused, loyal, and fierce to the belief that it is, **Union City's time.....**Your very presence validates that we are not only moving in the right direction but are doing so surrounded by giants who protect our city and who have risen to the occasion, by assisting with lifting us up.

Let me tell you, for us to provide the stellar service this city deserves, we count on so very many to show up and work hard every day..... Our City Manager Sonja Fillingame, Assistant City Manager Tarsha Calloway, City Attorney Dennis Davenport, City Clerk Shandrella Jewett, Police Chief Cassandra Jones, Fire Chief Joe Maddox, Chief Judge Ronald Freeman, Our Department Directors, Lee Blich, Lonnie Ferguson, Ellis Still, **Linda**

Goodman and Managers Rhonda Jones and Trey Bennings. **Will you all, please stand!!! And Remain Standing....** Members of our Boards, Commissions, and Authorities please also stand. Ladies and gentlemen, let's **give them all a round of applause.** Team UC, you represent the very best of public service. Every day.....Every day.....You sacrifice time with your own families to help serve and protect ours. Every day....Every day...You measure your job success through a stronger and more thriving community.....

And to the amazing people of Union City and everyone gathered here tonight, please know that we do what we do for you. For us, all roads lead to UC. We eat and breathe this City and will forever remain insistent that it will become the best it can possibly be.....

I could easily stand at this podium and deliver the State of our City in these short words. **“The State of Union City is ----Strong”**. But what about the path along the way? What about the battles fought and won? What about the optimism that fills us for the amazing opportunities to come? Family, I am compelled to share our full story.....To proudly talk about the dash between 2017 and 2018.... and how we are going to **“get at it”** the remainder of this year and beyond.

Hear me.....Union City was not created **110 years ago to be mediocre.**

That's why we have remained resolute in

Rebuilding...Rebranding...and Revitalizing... That's why you are not only seeing change in this community but feeling it as well. And that feeling can't be purchased on Amazon (although we love Amazon, because they are right here in Union City). It can't be explained by Google (although we love them too, because they are also in Union City). Nor can it be defined by Webster. But I hope you feel what we feel....The spirit of real community change.....**The spirit of a vision putting in work, to one day become reality....**

We have pushed to bring new jobs to this community....to create a new market in the film and entertainment industry...to strengthen public safety....**to brand and promote** Union City as a **wonderful destination to live, work, play and stay!.....**and to improve our streets and maintain healthy financial reserves....And we certainly could not have achieved our goals without you. You will forever be the **You in Union City**. And so will people like **Sasha Armelin, Liberty Point Paraprofessional, Lindsey Knox, C.H. Gullatt Teacher of the Year! And Kakenya Williams, Liberty Point Teacher of the Year!** All of you have mastered the art of making learning a joy for our kids. **If you're here**

with us tonight, ... We honor you for giving your students a solid foundation. You have seen something special in them and have chosen to nurture and develop it. And the truth of the matter is that everyone in this room is here because, at some point, someone did the same for us. We thank you for being a critical part of Team UC.

UC Eagles.....You, too, are the **You in Union City**. **You teach us how to “take a shot”** and that if **Union City** puts in the work, sweat equity and dedication---**VICTORY** is just around the corner. **Congratulations on your State Championship!**

I want to also talk about employees like **Paula Middlebrooks, Nydia Akin, and Pat Leverette, will you please stand?** Ladies and gentlemen these three ladies just weeks ago, saved a life right in the reception area of City Hall..... This is what true **TEAM WORK** is all about!

Our public safety personnel, and all of our City employees continue working every day to keep our City secure and safe.

These men and women make the difference.

How we react to challenges reveals the strength of our community’s true character.

They prove our resilience. And make us stronger.

In the face of misfortune, UC'S compassionate, creative, and collaborative spirit always shines through.

Team UC has shown that we can handle anything that comes our way. That gives me great confidence when I say: The “**State of Our City is Strong**”, stronger than any challenge we face, and strongest when we stand united. I see people from different backgrounds in this room joined together in a shared love for our great city. That matters – because we are navigating through one of the most politically divisive times in our nation’s history.

We need Union City’s culture of collaboration now more than ever. We cannot let dysfunction derail our progress.

We have too much to do. There is too much at stake to let petty posturing overshadow the public good. We’re all Union City!

We all want the same thing. A safe city. A clean city. A city of hope. A city of opportunity. **Please join me in thanking them.**

Commissioner Emma Darnell, who unfortunately couldn’t be with us tonight. I am compelled to thank her once again on behalf of myself, the City Council, and our team for helping us to reimagine senior living and aging with dignity in Union City. Your efforts, combined with the wonderful resources we have, along with other partners like Christian City, are helping us multiply impact. Last year, I mentioned that a new Senior Services Program was in the making. Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to

report that Commissioner Darnell and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners have helped us deliver on that promise. Like many of us, our seniors face many challenges. But in U.C., thanks to our Commissioners, **having a hot meal M-F, won't be one of them.**

Neither will having access to a facility where you can meet new friends or have viable fitness or life enrichment options....I challenge us all to support our seniors and understand that the best place to find a helping hand is at the end of our own arms. **Right Mayor Hurst?**

My point is that, Union City is making its mark. And the spirit of partnership will always be at the point of the spear. You see, we have been on an extraordinary journey---all of us.... But if I may be honest, some may think that our vision is too daunting, too big of a mountain to climb. But in my opinion, we were assigned this mountain to show others that it can be moved. We must continue to be innovative, progressive, and most importantly, collaborative. Because old ways won't open new doors. That's why we are working so hard to achieve progress. And that's why we take our aspirations for this City incredibly seriously.

Finance

I am pleased to report that we have made monumental strides since this administration took office in 2013. This has required us to stay focused and to not look in any direction but ahead---because **the future for UC is right now**. And so too it is, with our current financial position..... We have been intentional in prioritizing budget decisions; in holding our departments accountable for spending; and in creating strong partnerships to leverage resources. The result has been a fine-tuned financial strategy for our City.

To date, the Council and I adopted a Fiscal Year Budget in the amount of over **\$38,854,625** which included **\$21,746,381** for the General Fund. The combined fund balance at the end of FY 17 for major governmental funds was **\$20,382,422**. Of this amount, the City's general fund reported a positive fund balance of **\$14,576,195**. Family, that's a **Next Level 2.0** moment for Union City. Why you may ask? Because that is the number that indicates our financial stability the most; **the number** that says that our expenditures have not exceeded our revenues; **the number** that says we are in a better position to handle any **unexpected costs and to maximize any unexpected opportunities**..... But even beyond those things---it is **the number** that says how far we have come and how it is

hard to defeat a City that **never** gives up. In 2013, during a still brutal economic climate, that number was not \$14.5 Million. It was **\$964,196**. Thank you UC Council, Tarsha Calloway, Team Finance, Department Heads, and City Manager for helping to change a number....and helping to change a City.

Parks and Recreation

Ladies and gentlemen, quality of life is about finding “that” sweet spot. Our citizens, through their approval of a bond referendum for parks and recreation, have endeavored to bring to life a sweet spot in U.C. This is not a game changer—Instead, it’s a whole **NEW GAME**. Because by the end of this year, we will open the doors to our new multi-purpose community center, and transform the options our residents have regarding recreation, arts, and culture.

Having a gathering place; prime meeting space, our own gymnasium, and our own theater is a critical step along the path of **Next Level 2.0**.

Because what we know is that people are searching for a sweet spot. They want connection. They want culture. And, they want community. The root and suffix of the word community is “**COMMON-UNITY**”. And you,

know.....I can't wait to hear the voices of our citizens in that building in
"COMMON-UNITY"----personifying our growth, our vibrancy, our
evolution, and the titanic change that is knocking on the door of U.C. and
this region. The Community Center is more than just a "facility". It is
marked territory that says in this City, we are stronger together.

Our continued renovation of the Highway 29 Ballfields using a phased but
deliberate approach, is both a stepping stone and a milestone at the same
time. It is recognition that our kids deserve a safe place to grow and thrive.
We have expended funds to demolish dilapidated structures, regrade
Ballfield 1, establish new fencing, lighting, and dug outs. City Council, there
are many birds in the sky, but few...very few....are UC Eagles. Am I right?
Of course I am right....This Council and I are working hard to give our little
eagles a place where they can be proud to nest! **And SOAR!!!!**

Our efforts regarding the community center and ballfield renovation
initiatives have been combined with the execution of high quality arts,
recreation, and cultural programming for our citizens and visitors. There
are many....But just to name a few: Our Pinktober Breast Cancer Run,
Movies by Moon Light Series, Music and Arts Festival, and Community

Health Day Program. And did I mention that our sports programs have increased by almost **20% in 2018?** It's working family. Our investments are paying off. **Next Level 2.0.** Parks and Recreation....

Economic Development

If we are going to have a diverse economy that provides our families with employment opportunities, and a positive environment for business creation----we must to be ready to compete in the marketplace. This realization has been paramount to our ability to land the companies we now call partners including companies like **ASOS**, a British online retailer making a **\$95 Million dollar** investment right here in Union City; or, Wal-Mart E-Commerce, Amazon, Coca Cola, and Proctor & Gamble who have invested a **combined** total of well over **\$300 Million dollars** in our community.

The reality is that e-commerce creates opportunities for local economies like ours. It is absolutely where the market is headed. Do the research, we certainly have! The market is demanding this change. Why do you think Amazon, is making a \$5 Billion investment in construction to grow a second headquarters? Why are cities like Atlanta and beyond trying to land

that deal? I'm glad you asked! It is because there has been a transformative shift in the market. Look at the decision **TOYS R US** was forced to make. And bringing more selection and inventory closer to the customer has become a reality. The fact that retail is changing has become a reality...**And the fact that we have to change with it in order to compete in a global economy has become a reality.**

I am proud to announce tonight that the new state of the art **AUDI** showroom is near completion and Union City has been selected by two additional premier automotive giants, **Land Rover/Jaguar** and **Mercedes Benz**. To keep up with demand, **Mercedes** has decided to build a second facility that will serve as a showroom for their new inventory. These are additional economic wins that will grow our tax base, drive our local economy, create new job opportunities and will support our need and the demands for the supplemental services we all desire.

We are also pushing forward with the building process in our community. A total of 1,750 permits were issued in FY 2017. This is a **228% increase** in comparison to FY 2013 and serves as another “**driver**” **for site selection.....**

I must also pause and celebrate our partnerships with **Connect South Fulton**, the **ATL Airport District**, and the **Aerotropolis Alliance**. These entities are **game changers** and represent the kind of regional collaboration that will move the needle of progress for not only Union City but our surrounding jurisdictions as well. Cookie Smoaks, we need you!

Public Works

I am beyond impressed by the commitment demonstrated by our Public Works Team and its leadership under Director Lonnie Ferguson. I know how hard they work and the amount of love they put into this City; picking up litter; working in the sun and rain; helping to keep us safe during inclement weather; taking care of our storm drains, remediating dump sites....And speaking of dump sites...We will hold those who think they have a welcome mat to come in and destroy what we are trying to make great---accountable. People say that life is an echo. If that is true---then what they dump, they will get back... And what **“they”** think of this community, actually exists in them.... But back to our Public Works Team.....

FY 2017 Highlights for our Public Works Department Included:

- Maintaining approximately (200) miles of Right of Way

- Recycling 50 tons of metal
- Providing a citywide 24 hour around the clock roadway treatment during the snow and ice storms as well as assistance during Hurricane Irma
- Inspecting, cleaning, and repairing over 3,000 storm-water structures
- Completing or commencing the following initiatives:
 - Shannon Boulevard, Oakley Road, and Lakeside Drive Sidewalk Improvement Project
 - Dodson Road and Union Street Resurfacing, Sidewalks, and Drainage Improvement Project
 - Lester Road Sidewalk and High Point Pedestrian Improvement Project
 - Citywide Pavement Markings -Improvement Project
 - Peters Road Resurfacing Project
 - SR 138 and SR 14 Landscaping and Intersection Improvements Project---this is a joint venture with the City of Fairburn....I said earlier that we must be obsessive in thanking our partners...So...**Thank you to the wonderful City of Fairburn....**

We are also preparing to expend approximately **\$23 Million** in TSPLOST funding to further assist with our infrastructure needs...This resource will help us continue the work of resurfacing our streets. It will also provide funds to help us partner with GDOT and bring a **diverging diamond interchange** to State Route 138. This will be a critical **Next Level 2.0**

step in reducing traffic congestion and improving the operations at the I-85 and State Route 138 interchanges. Now folks that's a Real

GameChanger!

Public Safety

Your expectation of public safety is given high priority under the leadership of Fire Chief Joe Maddox and Police Chief Cassandra Jones. We are moving even closer to **Next Level 2.0.**

- We're awaiting the delivery of our new fire engine that we were able to purchase, and this will mark the first purchase of an engine in approximately nine years!
- The Fire Department responded to 4,927 calls for service and delivered a fire prevention message to over 6,500 individuals
- Police made 823 physical arrests and completed 8,300 incident reports
- Code Enforcement issued 9,206 notices
- We held our first "Camp 911", a police initiative to foster better relations with our youth;
- The police department is making great strides in achieving a new level of State Certification which will result in quality improvement

Employee of the Month:

Last year the City Council and I wanted to make certain the men and woman of **TEAM UC**, know without a shadow of a doubt that we appreciate them, so we implemented an employee of the month program guided by Rhonda Jones our HR Manager ... Well this month our employee of the month goes to none than **Officer Donna Baker** – Member of UCPD

CONCLUSION

I don't take lightly the privilege I have been given to come here tonight---to be able to share the good news that we are moving in the right direction and that there are incredible possibilities on the horizon for U.C. Make no mistake about it, the State of Union City remains strong. Economic development must **remain a city priority**. Make no mistake about it, our strength is our people but also our location. We are just 10 miles from the **world's busiest airport** and we have an incredible amount of undeveloped land---sitting, ready to either be kept as green space, made a residential oasis, serve as a thriving retail/entertainment/hospitality center, or developed as an innovative technology hub.

President John F. Kennedy once said; “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present, are certain to miss the future!”

So we will, stay fearless. **We were not formed 110 years ago to be any other way.** We are not interested in “**the standard**” rather we are seeking **Next Level 2.0** for U.C.. Because there is still much work to do. Every inch of a City has a story to tell. Cities are epicenters of creativity, innovation, adventures, energy and life. They’re moving, breathing and living. Cities have a heart, personality and looks. But cities are most identified by its people, by you! We learned a long time ago, that success won’t come and find Union City. Union City has to go out and get it. So Union City, let’s go get it!....

The Bible says: “Humble yourselves before the LORD, and HE will lift you up!!!” James 4:10 Folks I’ve said it before, Union City is **OPEN FOR BUSINESS** and ready for the **NEXT LEVEL!** I’ve made **this next statement countless times.** **“It’s time to remove the Mayberry mindset and mentality.”** Union City, GOD doesn’t just want us to get by, **GOD’S Plan** is for us to Prosper! GOD Bless you all, GOD Bless America, GOD Bless Georgia, GOD Bless Fulton County, and GOD Bless the Great City of Union City..... Remember we are truly our brother’s keeper, it’s the responsibility of those of us that can bring hope to those who feel hopeless!!!

TO..... NEXT LEVEL 2.0 UNION CITY!!!

The Future Is Now!!!!!!

Thanks everybody.....Good night!!!