

- Leadership
- Expectations
- Transparency
- Stability

CITY OF ATLANTIC CITY  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

- Accountability
- Credibility
- Excellence in Execution



MAYOR MARTY SMALL, SR.

City Hall  
1301 Bacharach Boulevard • Suite 706  
Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401  
Telephone 609-347-5400

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Andrew Kramer (Public Information Officer) – 609-226-3470; [AKramer@acnj.gov](mailto:AKramer@acnj.gov)

# Small Administration Accomplishes 91-Percent of Department Goals Set Forth in Mayor’s 2023 Atlantic City State of the City Address

**Atlantic City, N.J. (December 19, 2023)** – City of Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small, Sr. held his annual State of the City Year-End Review News Conference, yesterday, in the Mayor’s Conference Room at City Hall, where each department director looked back on their goals as presented in the Mayor’s 2023 State of the City Address that took place in January. Each director discussed which goals were met, and if a goal was not accomplished, why it was not met. Out of 127 goals between all the departments, 116 were accomplished in 2023 (91-percent).

“I am extremely proud of each and every one of my directors and assistant directors for following my vision, and for everything we were able to accomplish this year,” said Mayor Small. “This is a next level approach where we are truly affecting the quality of life of our residents for the better. You can’t look at everything we got done this year and say the City of Atlantic City is not becoming a better place.”

Below, please find the highlight summary from each department’s presentation:

### Administration

Business Administrator Anthony Swan discussed his office’s efforts to increase transparency via improvements to the city website, as well as through the CitiStat program, which allows residents to present their issues publicly every two weeks to department directors. This year, the city found new, innovative ways to increase economic development, an example being the launch of a free

'How to Do Business with the Great City of Atlantic City' seminar, among other similar programs. As part of efforts to re-envision the Planning and Development department, BA Swan, in his words, said the city put together a "world-class team" of individuals to work in different areas. The Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) funded projects such as HVAC and lighting repair at City Hall, the Atlantic City Aquarium and other city buildings.

### **Revenue & Finance**

Chief Financial Officer Toro Aboderin announced the city saw yet another tax decrease in 2023, while her department wisely spent taxpayer money, putting it to good use. The department minimized the impact of rising costs of state health benefits by finding a new provider with a lower rate. The finance department took advantage of lower rates to make significantly more aggressive investments, earning upwards of \$5-million. New revenue streams from 2022, such as Hotel Room Tax, Opioid Settlement Funds and Cannabis continued growth throughout 2023. New revenue streams in 2023 include the Clean and Safe Fund and Infrastructure Fund. There were no upgrades to Moody's and Standard and Poor's ratings in 2023, however director Aboderin is hopeful that is accomplished early in 2024.

### **Engineering & Grants**

City Engineer Uzo Ahiarakwe and City Grant Consultant Jim Rutala successfully secured the capital funds to complete the Gardner's Basin and Chelsea bulkhead projects, with work on the Lower Chelsea bulkheads ongoing. The Ducktown bulkhead is under design. The Atlantis Avenue Pump Station project was significantly delayed and is ongoing, as is construction on Second Bridge in Venice Park, with an anticipated completion of sometime before the end of 2024. Preliminary design for traffic light synchronization along some of Atlantic City's major roadways is finished. Once final design is complete, the project can move forward. Gardner's Basin renovation is nearing completion. For 2023, the goal was to pave 28 streets, but Ahiarakwe announced the Engineering Department paved significantly more than that (Atlantic Avenue paving is currently underway). The Route 40 Resiliency Project is ongoing, with the addition of a \$20-million federal grant. Community Development Corporations expanded into new neighborhoods on 2023, and the hope is they will one day in the near future be in every neighborhood.

### **Public Works**

Director Crystal Lewis announced the department's 'Project Clean' community cleanup initiative expanded this year, with more neighborhood participation. The department worked diligently to install a GIS mapping system of all city owned lights, which will soon become available on the city website during storms. The department performed a complete overhaul of the new fuel station and recycling depot center at the Public Works Yard. The fuel station should become fully operational once new parts arrive. The depot is fully operational for Atlantic City residents. Public Works installed new signage at public parks as part of a continued effort to improve aesthetics. A new 'We see it, we cut it' slogan was implemented to improve the city's landscape. The process of complying with DEP regulations by labeling all city storm drains got off to a late start in 2023, but is now underway.

### **Planning & Development**

Director Jacques Howard updated the progress of the new City Master Plan, which consists of new elements of health, cultural and urban agriculture. It is expected to be completed well ahead of the 2026 deadline. A comprehensive housing policy will be included in the housing element of the Master Plan. The city secured an \$800K U.S. Economic Development Authority grant that allowed the city to hire a concierge and contract a marketing specialist and videographer. The department has the plans in place for upgrades to the City Hall courtyard and parking lots, which will include electric charging stations. The department successfully implemented a micro loan program, while adding a Principal Planner and Zone Officer through internal promotions.

### **Solicitor's Office**

City Solicitor Michael J. Perugini announced his office was once again able to decrease budget costs to defend the city for liability matters, coming under budget for the third year in a row. The office increased the intensity of risk management plans by using data collected in areas with increased risk or exposure to liability. A new strategy was implemented to revise the procedures of the Solicitor's Office in analyzing city redevelopment proposals. Through two property auctions held in 2023, \$3-million in city-owned properties were sold.

### **Licensing & Inspections**

Director Dale Finch revealed his department was able to enhance the quality of his staff through multiple training sessions, including mold remediation training, lead-based paint training for code enforcement officers and training through Rutgers in multiple dwelling and hotel inspection. The department worked with Public Works to aggressively cut grass and weeds in lots, issuing 1,343 violations in 2023. Through retail building inspections on the Boardwalk, 70 properties were found to have violated maintenance code. This has been addressed and the issues resolved. The department also updated the abandoned property list to 70 properties, while aggressively enforcing short term rental violations, which include overcrowding, trash and noise. A total of 167 unlicensed short-term rental summonses were issued.

### **Municipal Court**

Director Gina Holmes announced the merging of Atlantic City Municipal Court and Pleasantville Municipal Court will commence on January 1<sup>st</sup> under the name "Joint Atlantic City Municipal Court" which will save the taxpayers of Atlantic City money. The Repeat Offender Court was created to help defendants seek treatments. Electronic ticketing for traffic citations was implemented to reduce entry errors and increase efficiency. Atlantic City Municipal Court, in partnership with the One Evolution Anti-Violence Program, drew nearly 100 people during two Internal and External outreach days, with similar events expected in 2024. Atlantic City Municipal Courts are now fully staffed. Renovations to the Public Safety Building are in progress.

### **Information Technology Department**

Director Patrick Quinlan discussed ways the department was able to enhance public safety systems (installing computers in fire trucks and command vehicles and rolling out iPads to ACPD negotiators) and replace antiquated technologies (expanding the city's intercom system and upgrading Verizon phone infrastructure). Installation began on the \$5-million citywide camera and surveillance system for police. The department expanded new building access for all city buildings, while evolving existing systems to

embrace mobile technology. The City of Atlantic City website – acnj.gov – was revamped with a new look and feel, and includes new sections like CitiStat and Resident Resources.

### **Public Information**

Public Information Officer Andrew Kramer talked about attracting more visitors to the website through efforts ranging from cleaning up outdated information, keeping the homepage and calendars fresh and regularly updated, and adding more video to the site. The Public Information team made a conscious effort to attend more city neighborhood events and help neighborhood groups promote their events. The office found new ways to promote the city, including utilizing the city's notification system to alert residents of news and events and by partnering with the Simplicity App to help spread information. The office continues efforts to get more eyes on the city's monthly 'Great Day' Gazette newsletter and has worked to increase national and regional exposure by increasing the amount of news releases sent to media.

### **Human Resources**

Assistant Director Rosie Segura discussed new employee training that took place in 2023, including sexual harassment, discipline and Microsoft Office training for all staff members. New Jersey Steps supervisory Training also garnered positive feedback. The department adopted the 'Help Not Hurt' model for employee discipline as more of a corrective measure in an attempt to change their behaviors. All employees are required to conduct supervisor evaluations in addition to the prior supervisor evaluations that are typically done. All employees received raises at the beginning of the year and more opportunities were created for younger individuals and promotions from within are sought. The HR department also increased their focus on recruitment, while retaining the best and brightest.

### **Fire Department**

Fire Chief Scott Evans announced the department successfully expanded the Jr. Fire Academy in its second year. In an effort to increase personal safety, firefighters were required to complete bailout training in 2023 while new equipment was purchased through a grant. Also, through a grant, construction on Fire Station 2 is moving forward and is expected to begin in the Spring. An initial concept study was completed on the Connecticut Avenue Firehouse Museum Project (the oldest in the city), with the goal being to turn the building into a museum, administrative office, community room and learning center. The ACFD implemented Wireless Digital Assistant (WDA) in all firehouses for quicker response.

### **Police Department**

Police Chief James Sarkos discussed the department's new deployment plan, which began in 2023 and has been successful to this point, with the exception of adding more officers to Renaissance Plaza, which will be addressed in 2024. Also in progress is the addition of more officers on foot and bike patrol. This past year, all ACPD staff leadership positions have been filled, while fulltime ranks were increased by 20 officers. Officers also received extra training this year thanks to the State of New Jersey. Rifle resistant plates and bulletproof helmets were purchased for officers. A total of 20 additional radar units were added to patrol cars. Police launched a new recruitment initiative and a Summer Class II summer student program.

## **Health & Human Services (Including the divisions of Youth Services, Recreation, Senior Services, Multicultural Services and Anti-Violence)**

Director Jarrod Barnes reported the department addressed homeless and mental health issues in various ways, which include new hires (two social workers, a homeless liaison and a peer and recovery specialist), the creation of a homeless database and a Mental Health Awareness Week at City Hall. Steps continue to moving forward to bring a dog park to Atlantic City. The department partnered with Atlanticare for maternal and child health programs. Atlantic City Youth Services held two, weeklong College and Career Fairs, started a competitive E-Sports team with the Recreation department and a barbering program, and formed a citywide youth strategy group. Atlantic City Recreation began offering more diverse programs, services and leagues for children and adults, implemented team building nights and increased community partnerships. Atlantic City Multicultural Services launched a cultural music appreciation series, expanded food distributions and built cultural awareness through 13 flag raising ceremonies at City Hall and exhibits at the Noyes Arts Garage. Atlantic City Senior Services were able to reach new seniors through expanded outreach, dive deeper into social services and held another successful Senior Gala which drew well over 200 Atlantic City residents. Anti-Violence launched a gun violence reduction initiative, started a Reentry services program and began hiring more kids off the streets for their One Work Program.

Mayor Small will be delivering his 2024 State of the City Address on Friday, February 2, 2024 at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City during the Atlantic City Metropolitan Business and Citizen Association Luncheon.