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2024 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The 2024 legislative session adjourned on March 28, 2024. This was the second year in the two-year biennial thus any legislation that did not pass is ineligible for consideration when the legislature convenes in January 2025. Governor Brian Kemp signed many bills, but listed here are the most relevant to the City.

SMYRNA SPECIFIC:

HB 1241 (Stoner-D)

- Revises the compensation of the mayor and council members

APPROPRIATIONS:

- \$7.3 million for local maintenance and improvement grants to reflect ten percent of projected motor fuel revenues.
- \$3.4 million for emergency medical service (EMS) transport reimbursements
- \$2.5 million addition for the Georgia Housing Voucher program to support the requirements of the Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement.
- \$250,000 to continue the implementation of the Electric Vehicle Charging Pilot Program through the Department of Agriculture.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS:

- **HB 1407** (LaHood- R)** makes procedural changes to Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) negotiations and allows counties to utilize additional unincorporated revenues to fund unincorporated services.
- **HB 1073** (Washburn-R) Zoning: Halfway Houses and Drug Rehabilitation Centers and other provisions:
 - Prohibits local governments from imposing additional procedures for zoning decisions involving the location of halfway houses and drug rehabilitation centers.
 - Prohibits local governments from requiring the placement of video surveillance equipment at gas stations.

- Senate floor amendment that permits municipalities to allow for the sale of alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption in Underground Atlanta on Saturdays from late evening until early morning and on Sundays from late morning until midnight.
- **SB 171** (Burns-R) limits the length of time a director of a development authority can hold office after their term expires and mandates that directors or members of the governing board of a development authority undergo yearly continuing education of at least eight hours of training on development and redevelopment programs within the first 12 months of their appointment. After July 1, 2025, directors would be required to complete at least two hours of training annually.
- **HB 1105** (Petrea-R) Immigration Bill:
 - Establishes penalties for local governments, local officials, local employees, and jailers who enact or adopt sanctuary policies or practices.
 - Requires the Georgia Department of Corrections to maintain a database with immigration status, offenses, and home countries of state prisoners who are not United States citizens.
 - Requires county and city jailers to notify the U.S. Department of Corrections if they detain an illegal foreign national.
 - Requires jailers to produce a quarterly report that will be posted on the city or county website, as well as the Department of Audits and Accounts Website
 - Does not penalize the county if the sheriff does not comply.
- **HB 516** (McCollum-R) Georgia Department of Transportation Housekeeping Bill:
 - Changes the date for when the Department of Agriculture will begin regulating and taxing the use of electric vehicle charging stations to January 1, 2026.
 - Defines "commercial motor vehicle restricted highway" and prohibits vehicles with more than six wheels from operating on such highways and sets penalties for violations.
- **HB 456** (Gunter-R) increases the term for municipal court judges from one year to two years.
- **HB 461** (Thomas-R) prohibits local governments from calculating building inspection fees based on the cost of the project. It also requires that the proceeds from permitting fees be used to fund the permitting administrative process and not the local government's general operations.
- **HB 206** (Sainz-R) authorizes the creation of a financing mechanism called Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy. This concept allows local development authorities and downtown development authorities to finance energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, and resilience improvements on private commercial property.

STUDY COMMITTEES:

The following resolutions to create study committees passed. Members must be appointed to the committees by the Speaker or Lieutenant Governor. Senate committee chairs may also elect to hold committee hearings on issues relevant to their committee jurisdiction throughout the summer and fall.

- **HR 1498** creates a study committee that studies the operations of private water systems around the state.
- **HR 1554** creates a study committee to evaluate navigable streams and the issues surrounding their ownership, private and public rights of use, and other related matters.
- **HR 1505** creates a study committee that evaluates the development of solar facilities.
- **HR 1418** creates a study committee on the Use of Local Fees to Support Affordable Housing.
- **HR 1432** creates a study committee to evaluate disaster mitigation and resilience.

Since the Legislative Session has concluded, all attention has been refocused to our elections. Every legislative seat will be up for reelection this year. As we've seen, the Primary Elections have passed, and we will have new representation in Smyrna in the 2025-2026 Sessions. Incumbent Representative Teri Anulewicz lost her reelection bid, and Representative Stoner did not seek reelection. State Senator Horacena Tate has retired from the legislature after many years of service, and her successor will be decided in November.