



# Suwanee connects

suwanee.com | August 2021

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Suwanee Earns National Main Street Accreditation

# 17TH ANNUAL AUGUST CONCERT SUWANEE, GEORGIA



SATURDAY,  
AUG. 14TH  
TOWN CENTER PARK

EVENT SCHEDULE  
6:30 PM  
SEVEN YEAR WITCH

8:00 PM  
COWBOY MOUTH

\*All times are approximate. Free shuttles and off-site transportation are available. Visit [Suwanee.com](http://Suwanee.com) for more information.

### Get ready Suwanee - Cowboy Mouth is returning to Town Center Park!

The headliners of the 2005 and 2010 August Concerts will make their triumphant return to the Suwanee stage on Saturday, August 14.

Formed during the glory days of grunge music, Cowboy Mouth forged a different sound from the very start. It's a sound rooted in rock, punk, blues, and the attitude of the Big Easy, a town known for its week-long parties and swampy, southern vibe.

More importantly for the Suwanee concert-goer, Cowboy Mouth has a well-deserved reputation as a raucous, redemptive, live music experience.

"Cowboy Mouth isn't so much about the people onstage as it is about the feeling in the crowd," said bandleader Fred LeBlanc. "With every show, no matter where it is, we try to turn it into New Orleans during the middle of Mardi Gras."

Beer and wine will be available from onsite vendors and Town Center merchants. Bringing your own alcohol is prohibited. Shuttles and off-site transportation are available. Visit [Suwanee.com](http://Suwanee.com) for more information.



Scan for more August Concert info



# GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTING FOR THE NUMBER IMPAIRED

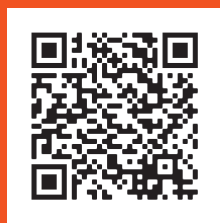
Not a numbers person, but feel like you should do your civic duty and at least *try* to understand the city's budget documents? Have we got a hero for you: introducing **The Performer®!**

Developed, copyrighted, and trademarked in 2001 by governmental accounting experts Crawford & Associates, The Performer® provides a "plain English" evaluation of a government's financial information. Using financial statement ratios, The Performer® provides a rating on a ten-point scale that represents financial health and level of performance, with 10 representing excellent health and zero indicating poor financial health and performance.

"One of the questions that I used to get from city councils, citizens, and governmental employees was, 'On a scale of 1-10, tell me how we're doing?'" said Frank Crawford, President of Crawford & Associates. "I couldn't really answer that question, due to the lack of a government-wide set of financial statements that were prepared on a single basis of accounting. When the Government Accounting Standards Board standardized the basis for governmental accounting, we took the opportunity to develop a model that we would allow us to analytically determine the answer to that question and apply it from government to government."

The City of Suwanee publishes multiple financial documents every year, all of which can be found at Suwanee.com. These documents are honored annually with awards such as the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association, and the Certificate of Distinction in Performance Management from the International City Managers Association.

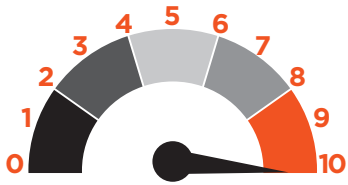
**Check out this brief overview of Suwanee's Performer® Score, or dive deeper:**



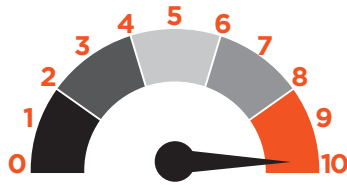
## SUWANEE'S 2020 OVERALL PERFORMER® SCORE: 9.0

## FINANCIAL POSITION – 9.5

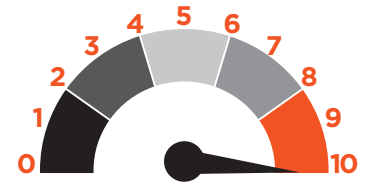
“Point-in-time measures” of the government’s financial status, solvency, and liquidity as of the fiscal year end.



**Current Ratio:** Will our employees and vendors be pleased with our ability to pay them on time? Suwanee’s government-wide ratio of current assets to current liabilities was 17.60 to 1, meaning that the city had over 17 times the amount of assets to pay the current liabilities.



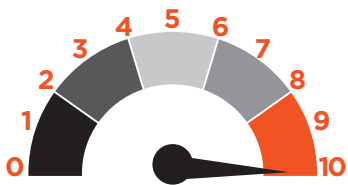
**General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance:** How does our General Fund unassigned fund balance position look? The unassigned fund balance amounted to \$4.8M, or 34.9 percent of annual General Fund revenues.



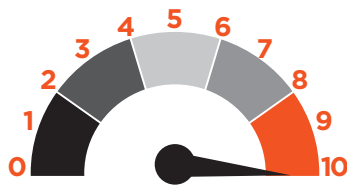
**Unrestricted Net Position:** How do our total rainy day funds look? At approximately \$20.5M, or 89 percent of total revenues, Suwanee’s unrestricted net position exceeds the model’s desired ratio of 50 percent and is considered excellent.

## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – 9.4

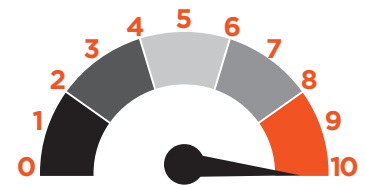
“Look-back measures” as to whether the government’s financial position has been improving, deteriorating, or remaining steady.



**Interperiod Equity:** Who paid for the costs of current year services: current, past, or future tax payers? The city’s total costs were fully funded by current year tax payers, generating revenues at a level of 123 percent of current year costs.



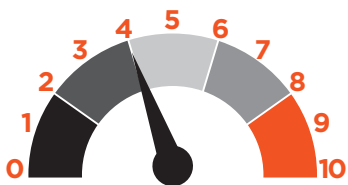
**Debt Service Coverage:** Were our revenue bond and note investors pleased with our ability to pay them on time? The city paid 100 percent of its revenue bond debt service from the proceeds of a current property tax levy and previously unspent property tax levies.



**Capital Asset Sustainability:** How willing are we to maintain our investment in capital assets? The city is replacing capital assets that are depreciating at a ratio of 2.3 to 1, which is considered an excellent financial indicator in the model.

## FINANCIAL CAPABILITY – 7.4

“Look-forward measures” of the government’s ability to obtain resources in the form of revenues or borrowing in order to finance future services.



**Revenue Dispersion:** How much of our revenue is beyond our direct control? The city had direct control over 43 percent (service charges and property taxes) of its revenue. This ratio indicates that Suwanee has limited exposure to financial difficulties due to reliance on taxes that are capped or require voter approval.



**Legal Debt Limit Remaining:** Will we be legally able to issue more long-term debt, if needed? Suwanee had approximately \$8.7M of general obligation debt applicable to the legal debt limit, meaning that the city had a little over 94 percent of its general bonded debt legal limit remaining.



**Property Taxes Per Capita:** Will our citizens be willing to accept property tax increases if needed? Suwanee has a property tax per capita ratio of approximately \$337, which is well above the satisfactory ratio in the model.



# From THE DESK of

TONI SHREWSBURY  
CITY OF SUWANEE SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

## Turning Property Developers into ART CONNOISSEURS

Did you know that there is a group of wild bronze horses running through a creek bed on Moore Road? Or an *amne* (a symbolic Tibetan structure made to protect people from harm) made from old car parts outside of Advance Auto Parts? What about a bear hunting salmon at Aldi?

If you didn't, I can almost guarantee that you'll notice now! And if you did, I bet you've wondered where the public art sprinkled throughout the city – in residential communities and on commercial sites – came from?

The City of Suwanee developed and implemented its public arts initiative in 2007. Part of that initiative included an ordinance designed to encourage and facilitate the creation and placement of art both in public spaces and within private developments. This program, Developer Percent for Art, encourages developers to voluntarily spend a suggested one percent of total construction costs to enhance their projects by creating and placing art within their own site. As an alternative, a donation may be made to fund future art projects or arts-related events within the city.

When a developer chooses to participate by including public art within his project, it's suggested that the art be installed outside of buildings and be visible or accessible from an adjacent public right-of-way, or in areas where the public will have access.

These developers don't have to become public art experts. As part of the formal planning and approval process for any private development project within the City of Suwanee, developers are required to meet with the Public Arts Commission (PAC). This city council-appointed commission of residents and business owners helps guide the developers through the options and can assist, if requested, with identifying appropriate sites, types of works, and artists.

The city defines public art broadly in order to encourage as much variety and participation as possible. Artwork may be functional, stand-alone, or integrated into the architecture of the buildings. For example, bike racks are *not* defined as public art; however, an original, artfully-designed bike rack *could* be. The same *could* be true of a plaza area – a unique paving pattern could turn it into public art. Most public art will fit into one of the following categories: architectural elements, murals, or sculpture.

The City of Suwanee has enjoyed an approximately 75 percent participation rate of developers who have chosen to either include public art on site or contribute to the public art fund – for a voluntary program, we call that a success! What we've learned is that if you communicate early enough in the process, most developers are willing to participate. We try to educate and remove barriers.

City projects are also included in the Developer Percent for Art initiative. The most recent example of city participation is the colorful three-story mural on the new addition of the municipal court building located on Buford Highway.

The Developer Percent for Art program underscores Suwanee's belief that inclusion of art in development projects serves the common good in a manner comparable to architectural standards, landscaping requirements, or zoning restrictions. Want to know something else that's really impressive? The city's overall public art program is funded by donations and sponsorships! (Hint, hint – please call me if you're interested in becoming an arts patron!)

*Toni Shrewsbury has spent the last 14 years working with the City of Suwanee. She serves as a special projects coordinator in the Economic & Community Development department. Of the many projects she works on, the city's public art initiatives are among her favorite.*

# TONI'S FAVORITE ART

Suwanee's SculpTour has brought 90+ pieces of art to the city through six exhibitions over the last ten years. Toni Shrewsbury has been involved in every exhibit from the RFPs to the selection, the artist coordination to the install. Here are a few of her very favorite SculpTour pieces.



Scan for a list of participating residential communities and commercial businesses.



**Winged Glory** by Jack Howard-Potter

“A silver seated figure with large golden wings, **Winged Glory** was featured in our second exhibit. Not only was it beautiful, but it was also somewhat anatomically correct, which was totally unexpected. I wasn't sure how the citizens were going to react and shared with the artist that the piece might not be readily accepted; he countered with, “Don't underestimate them.” I was so very pleasantly surprised to find that in the two years that the sculpture was on display, the city did not receive one single complaint about the piece. It turned out to be a crowd favorite!”



**Giraffe** by Jonathan Bowling

“**Giraffe** (from the 2013 exhibit) is a 15-foot-tall repurposed metal sculpture of a giraffe on wheels, something that resembled a Victorian-era children's pull toy. I loved the whimsical nature of the piece. One little boy walked by when we were removing the piece at the end of the exhibit and remarked that he was really going to miss his friend.”



**Dancer XX** by Jack Howard-Potter

“Jack Howard-Potter has participated in several SculpTour exhibits, and his sculptures are always crowd favorites. **Dancer XX** – a 20-foot-tall steel figure that moved kinetically when the wind caught his fabric cape – was just a breathtaking piece due not only to the imposing size of the sculpture but also the magic of watching him move. This sculpture can still be seen in Suwanee; it was purchased by Heartis Assisted Living after he “retired” from SculpTour.”

# FY2022 Budget Assumes Millage to Remain at 4.93, Same as Past Nine Years

The City of Suwanee began the new fiscal year on July 1, 2021 with a \$15 million balanced operating budget. Primarily due to federal COVID-related expenditures, this year's budget represents a 10.1% decrease in operating expenditures as compared to FY2021.



**Suwanee's  
\$15,069,730  
FY2022 budget  
includes:**

- **114 full-time and 14 part-time positions, including four new positions and five position upgrades**
- **0% group health insurance renewal**
- **\$382,550 capital funding**

**Scan to view  
the City of  
Suwanee's  
FY2022 budget.**



After analyzing the 2021 tax consolidation information provided by Gwinnett County, the City of Suwanee is proposing that the millage rate remain at 4.93 mills, the same rate adopted by the city the past nine years.

City Council is expected to adopt a fiscal year 2022 millage rate at its regular August 24 meeting. The city will hold three public hearings at City Hall on August 12 at 5:30 pm and August 24 at noon, and 6:30 pm before adopting the millage rate.

## SUWANEE EARNS 2021 NATIONAL MAIN STREET ACCREDITATION

**CITY HAS HELD THIS DISTINCTION SINCE 2000**



The City of Suwanee has been designated as a 2021 Accredited Main Street America program, a status which the city has held since 2000. Accredited status is Main Street America's top tier of recognition and signifies a demonstrated commitment to comprehensive commercial district revitalization, and proven track record of successfully applying the Main Street Approach.

"We are proud to recognize this year's nationally accredited Main Street programs that have worked tirelessly to advance economic vitality and quality of life in their downtowns and commercial districts," said Patrice Frey, President & CEO of Main Street America. "During an incredibly challenging year, these programs demonstrated the power of the Main Street movement to drive impressive local recovery efforts, champion small businesses, and foster vibrant downtown districts. I am inspired by their hard work and confident that these accredited communities will continue to help their downtowns flourish in the next stages of recovery."

In 2020, Main Street America programs generated \$4.14 billion in local reinvestment, helped open 4,356 net new businesses, generated 14,988 net new jobs, catalyzed the rehabilitation of 8,488 historic buildings, and clocked 983,702 volunteer hours.

Evaluation criteria for accreditation defines the communities that are building comprehensive and sustainable revitalization efforts and include standards such as fostering strong public-private partnerships, documenting programmatic progress, and actively preserving historic buildings.

"Our robust events schedule, good mix of residential and commercial development, great marketing, and general activity of our citizens and visitors contribute to this continued accreditation," said Suwanee Assistant City Manager Denise Brinson. "Town Center and Old Town have their distinct personalities, but together create a downtown environment that is uniquely Suwanee."

# Candidate Qualifying Dates Set for Council Posts

The qualifying period for Suwanee city council positions expected to be on the November 2, 2021 ballot will take place August 16-18, 2021. Residents interested in running for a four-year term as a city councilmember must first officially qualify at City Hall between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm on the dates specified.

City Council Post 3, City Council Post 4, and City Council Post 5 are up for election this fall. Linnea Miller currently occupies Post 3, Beth Hilscher currently occupies Post 4, and Pete Charpentier currently occupies Post 5. All city council positions are voted on a non-partisan basis.

The qualifying fee is \$270 for city council positions. Residents must have resided in the city limits for at least 180 days and be a registered voter in order to qualify as a candidate. For more information, please contact Election Superintendent Robyn O'Donnell at [rodonnell@suwanee.com](mailto:rodonnell@suwanee.com) or 770-904-2790, or visit [Suwanee.com](http://Suwanee.com).



RICHARD ARMOND  
MUNICIPAL COURT



BILLQECE  
NAQAWÉ  
CITY MANAGER'S  
OFFICE



CALEB PHILLIPS  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT



PHIL PILGRIM  
MUNICIPAL COURT

## UPCOMINGEVENTS

official newsletter of the city of suwanee, georgia

### AUGUST21

3	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
7	Farmers Market	8:00 am
7	Show Us Your Hustle 5K	8:00 am
9	Suwanee Fest Committee Meeting	6:30 pm
11	Public Art Commission	6:00 pm
12	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
12	FY2022 Budget Public Hearing	5:30 pm
14	Farmers Market	8:00 am
14	August Concert	6:30 pm
17	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
17	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
21	Farmers Market	8:00 am
21	Georgia Swarm Fan Fest	2:00 pm
24	FY2022 Budget Public Hearing	noon
24	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm
24	FY2022 Budget Public Hearing	6:30 pm
28	Farmers Market	8:00 am
28	Annandale Village Extra Mile 5K	8:00 am

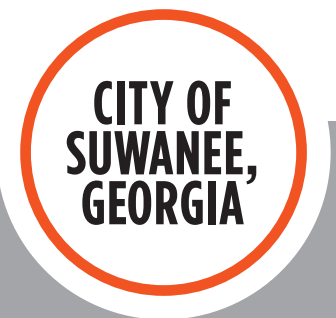
### SEPTEMBER21

4	Farmers Market	8:00 am
6	City Hall	CLOSED
7	Planning Commission	6:30 pm
8	Public Art Commission	6:00 pm
11	Farmers Market	8:00 am
11	9/11 Remembrance	6:00 pm
13	Suwanee Fest Committee Meeting	6:30 pm
16	City Council Workshop	5:30 pm
18	Suwanee Fest	9:00 am
19	Suwanee Fest	Noon
21	Downtown Development Authority	7:30 am
21	Zoning Board of Appeals	6:30 pm
25	Farmers Market	8:00 am
28	City Council Meeting	6:30 pm

**MAYOR** Jimmy Burnette 770/868-7115  
**COUNCIL** Pete Charpentier 770/757-3323  
Heather Hall 410/979-7905  
Beth Hilscher 678/546-3388  
Linnea Miller 678/592-4150  
Larry Pettiford 678/464-3651

**CITY MANAGER** Marty Allen 770/945-8996  
**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER** Denise Brinson 770/904-3385  
**CITY CLERK** Robyn O'Donnell 770/904-2790  
**FINANCIAL SERVICES** Amie Sakmar 770/904-2797  
**PLANNING & INSPECTIONS** Josh Campbell 770/904-3372  
**POLICE CHIEF** Cass Mooney 770/904-7610  
**PUBLIC WORKS** Bob Dean 770/904-3373  
**EDITOR** Abby Wilkerson 770/945-3386

Unless otherwise noted, City of Suwanee public meetings are at City Hall, 330 Town Center Avenue. Dates subject to change; check [suwanee.com](http://suwanee.com) for updates.



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