



January 18, 2018 Council Work Session

Savannah City Government
SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES
COUNCIL WORK SESSION &
CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING
January 18, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

Present: Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

Aldermen: Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Van Johnson, II, Tony Thomas (arrived at 10:20 a.m.), Bill Durrence, John Hall, Estella Shabazz

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney

William Shearouse, Assistant City Attorney

Jennifer Herman, Deputy City Attorney

Mayor DeLoach called the meeting to order.

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Pension Plan Update](#)

David Maxwell, Chief Financial Officer, introduced Jeffrey Williams, VP and Consulting Actuary of Segal Consulting, who presented a PowerPoint Presentation on the City of Savannah's Pension Plan. During the presentation Mr. Williams gave a summary of the 2017 Actuarial Valuation results, recommended contributions for 2018, and the improvements of the market and actuarial values. He explained that the purpose of a pension plan is to determine the recommended contributions the City of Savannah, Airport Authority and the Metropolitan Planning Commission need to make. To determine the contribution needed to keep the plan funded on its current path they certify the plan is being funded in conformity with the Georgia Public Retirement Systems Standards Law and they are providing an annual update of the plan's funding status. The valuation determines the contribution for the following calendar year. The recommendation contribution for 2018 is \$10,331,820 which is 8.69% of the projected payroll which is a slight increase from last year numbers. The funding status improved from 79.21% to 80.21% on a market basis and on actuarial basis it improved from 81.3% to 81.56%.

Alderman Miller asked Mr. Williams to clarify the difference between market value and actuarial value numbers and is it good, bad or national average. Mr. Williams stated they are above national average. The difference between the market value and the actuarial value are gains and losses that are not yet recognized. The actuarial value is recognizing gains and losses over a 5 year period. The

actuarial valuation is a snap shot of the year.

David asked Mr. Williams to explain the funding ration. Mr. Williams stated there is 80% of liability in the funds. Liability is \$431 million and the actuarial assets is \$351 million, this is 81.5.6% of the accrued liability. The City does not have 100% of liability in assets at the moment. The goal is to get to 100% but most plans do not get to 100%. There are no concerns for the City at the moment because the City always contributes the recommended contribution.

Alderman Miller stated to clarify, if everyone who is a member of this plan took their funds out right now it would cost the City \$431 million and then they will be \$80 million shy? Mr. Williams stated everyone is not eligible to take their funds out. That is not the employee contribution part, it is the benefits they are earning which they pay out when that employee retires. The City is in great shape. Alderman Miller asked what is the goal. Mr. Williams replied the goal is ultimately 100%. Most plans can go their entire existence without getting to 100%. Retired employees are getting paid without any issues and they are being replaced by younger employees who are also contributing. He reviewed the public fund survey that National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA) publishes every year. It revealed that the City of Savannah is doing better than the average 121 funds that are in the survey.

Alderman Bell asked what funds are driving the financial. Mr. Williams replied primarily state funds or large local systems. He will also provide the listings.

Alderman Johnson asked Mr. Williams what is his experience as it relates to multipliers. Mr. Williams replied there are some funds that cap the plan at 30 or 35 years and there are no multipliers after that. They have other funds where there are less multipliers. Some employees can put in 30 years which is a full career and earn their pension; they could also stay employed a little longer to get a little more. The employers who don't cap funds stay in the worse shape. Alderman Johnson expressed his concerns about losing employees who have an extensive amount of institutional knowledge because they cannot accommodate them after they have reached the cap. Mr. Williams stated people come in at different ages. The 2017 valuation stated the average new employee starts at 34 years old so their 30 year career will be at the age of 64. As far as multipliers, it can be increased but it will be a charge. Alderman Johnson asked how can they address the millennials that come and don't stay long. Mr. Williams explained the pros and cons when employees leave. He stated for the fund it is a gain because they work and put money into the fund; however, depending on the amount invested in training it is a loss to the City.

City Manager Hernandez addressed Alderman Johnson's comments regarding the younger workforce and the potential needs for a defined contribution plan.

Alderman Miller asked about transitioning to a 401K plan for future employees. Mr. Maxwell provided the pros, cons, costs and benefits of the current plan. He explained how the current plan is inexpensive and it provides a good benefit to the employees. They would have to continue to pay the \$80 million unfunded liability plus any contribution they would make to the new defined contribution plan if they changed plans. The benefit ratio will not be as good because they would be losing the disability, survivor's benefits and other benefits that are built into the plan.

City Manager Hernandez stated they have to look into the possibility of offering a defined contribution as an option. As Alderman Johnson pointed out, the workforce of today and tomorrow is highly mobile. To some a defined benefit plan does not entice them.

Mr. Maxwell reminded Council of the 457 plan that is offered by the City. When an employee leaves they can take the funds they contributed and what the City contributed with them. If they switch to a defined contribution plan, when the employee leaves they would only get their contributions and the interest.

Alderman Foster asked for a comparison to the City of Jacksonville. Mr. Williams replied the City of Savannah is in much better shape.

Mayor DeLoach asked what is the average time frame an employee stays with the City to get the full contributions. Mr. Maxwell replied with how vesting works after five years.

Alderman Bell asked how many people are on the plan. Mr. Williams replied at the end of 2016 approximately a total of 4,200 active and retirees.

Alderman Thomas asked how is the City's plan compared to Macon. Mr. Williams replied he is not sure but he can look into it.

[2. Marijuana Proposal](#)

 [Savannah Marijuana Proposal.pptx](#)

Alderman Johnson presented a PowerPoint Presentation on Reducing the Penalties for Simple Possession of Marijuana in the City of Savannah. This proposal is also an opportunity: to increase positive outcomes for employment, education and housing; to address inequities in our criminal justice system; and to offer drug treatment assistance to those who want it. This proposal is not to legalize marijuana or express an official opinion on the legalization of marijuana. As of today, marijuana remains illegal in Georgia. It is not an attempt to circumvent judicial discretion. Alderman Johnson reviewed what other jurisdictions are doing regarding marijuana penalties, as well as current Georgia law and penalties. Clarkston and Atlanta, Georgia have reduced fees and eliminated jail time. He reviewed SCMPD arrest statistics for simple possession of marijuana, as well as an analysis of the time and costs for those arrests, including officer time, jail time, indigent defense lawyers, and bond costs. He proposed that possession of 1 ounce or less as a misdemeanor, as a singular violation, now punishable with a \$150 citation (to accentuate the fact that it is still illegal), it would only be applicable in the City of Savannah limits, and second and subsequent citations to be determined by the Court. Alderman Johnson discussed social justice, and though black and whites use marijuana at the same rate, blacks are arrested at a higher rate. This is a major opportunity to address this disparity and for public relations. The \$150 fine is an opportunity to designate a portion to a drug treatment facility or program for treatment and rehabilitation.

Alderman Hall asked about drug testing for employment and how does this help them. Alderman Johnson stated this is unrelated. This addresses issues that have happened in the past. If you present yourself for employment and you fail a drug test, that employer has the right not to hire you.

Alderman Miller stated he wants to make sure they are actually helping people, and asked to hear from the Police leadership. Incoming Interim Police Chief Revenew came forward to discuss the issue and addressed the burden of these types of charges, but mentioned that sometimes individuals are identified through ancillary charges. Chief Lumpkin addressed the workforce issues of marijuana use. He thinks the police will use this ordinance if it is passed, because it makes sense to them in terms of police costs and jail costs.

Alderman Bell asked about the treatment components and what has been done to help the individual. Alderman Johnson replied they have done what they could do to help them succeed, but it is not their responsibility to make them succeed. He doesn't want to minimize that this is still illegal, and the fee is an opportunity for treatment.

Alderman Thomas asked about a parental notification for children under the age of eighteen. Sheriff Wilcher said a 17 year old is considered an adult and 16 year olds are juveniles. Mayor DeLoach suggested part of the citation mandate that parental notification is made. Sheriff Wilcher stated possession of marijuana is illegal, and his deputies will uphold that law. 17 year olds are legal adults and 16 year olds are juveniles and are handled accordingly. Ten hours is the maximum for a misdemeanor for jail time at the Chatham County jail.

Alderman Shabazz asked for clarification if the County Sheriff will follow a new City ordinance. The Sheriff confirmed they would arrest for marijuana possession. Alderman Johnson clarified the ordinance would apply to our police department. Sheriff Wilcher confirmed that his powers are throughout the entire County of Chatham.

Alderman Foster asked if this would create an increase in marijuana use and sale within the jurisdiction. Alderman Johnson said they have been working with the City Attorney's office and they have a draft ordinance when they are ready for it.

Alderman Bell asked for the draft to be distributed.

[3. Public Safety Update](#)

 [011818 Public Safety Update.pptx](#)

Assistant Chief Robert Gavin from the Savannah-Chatham Metropolitan Police Department (SCMPD), provided a Public Safety update. He reviewed Part One Crime Analysis, Technology Update, Youth and Community Outreach, and Recruiting and Retention. Assistant Chief Gavin's review explained the City of Savannah crime statistics only, which have decreased but they are still working on driving them down additionally for 2018. He then provided a review of statistics for the total jurisdiction, including unincorporated Chatham County.

Mayor DeLoach asked for clarification on the shoplifting statistics, due to the store's involvement. Chief Lumpkin replied the rules require them to report that number even if the store's policies affect arrest rate.

Assistant Chief Gavin discussed the clearance rate for 2017. Alderman Miller pointed out the 80% clearance rate for homicides was very high. Assistant Chief Gavin responded that good communication has been key, and they have been doing additional cold case work. Chief Lumpkin said they have one of the best homicide units he has ever worked with. Aggravated violence, including domestic violence, has increased. One of the focuses for 2018 is to bring more resources to domestic violence and to try to get people

out of the cycle of violence.

Alderman Shabazz asked for additional information regarding domestic violence and rape categories. Chief Lumpkin provided an explanation of domestic violence and aggravated assault. He further explained how the cases were cleared and clearance is tracked. Assistant Chief Gavin and Chief Lumpkin then provided a comparison of the SCMPD clearance rate to national data.

Assistant Chief Gavin reviewed technology initiatives including the new use of DNA testing in gun cases. They have completed 20 cases, and the defendant's DNA was found in 15 cases. Chief Lumpkin stated Savannah is a model for best practices and new technology with this new process. They are also working with Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), Records Management System (RMS), and Real Time Crime Center. These are technologies they are working with and working towards through budget requests. For Youth and Community Outreach, Assistant Chief Gavin discussed efforts to get officers out of their cars to connect with community members. He reviewed several of the programs they are working on, including the Explorers Program, Police Athletic League Summer Camp, Juvenile Officer Program, Pumpkin Painting with Police, Roll Calls in the Streets, Coffee with a Cop, National Night Out, reading to students (Chief Lumpkin has done a lot of reading to students and pushed this down in the force), and The Law and Your Community program for parents.

Alderman Shabazz stated she would like to see more of these programs emphasized through their resources, television, and the website. National Night Out has been a good avenue to see a significant number of the community come out with a lot of the officers at the same time. Coffee with a Cop is also a good event but they need to let the community know that they are doing other programs as well. They need to have more engagement so they could have more participation from the public.

Alderman Bell asked if the Community Oriented Policing was formalized and if we require our officers to spend a specific amount of time out of their car during patrol. Assistant Chief Gavin said officers are trained for community engagement and patrolling outside of the car. Some precinct commanders and shifts may have that ability, for proactive policing, but police officers are moving from one call to another and they may not always have that opportunity. Bicycle and foot patrols have been increased to help and enhance public/police communication.

City Manager Hernandez reminded City Council of Berkshire's recommendations for staffing regarding interaction, which will start being implemented this year with the budget.

Alderman Miller reiterated that people want to see and know their officers, and Council is being asked for bike and foot patrols. Assistant Chief Gavin stated they are increasing and training for those patrols, and they are gearing up to get more officers out on those patrols in 2018.

Alderman Thomas asked about the horses. Assistant Chief Gavin replied they have been downtown during the daytime. Chief Lumpkin stated they have three riders, and the demerger has caused some staffing issues with riders. There are morale and satisfaction issues. Alderman Thomas stated he wants to have that unit fully staffed. Chief Lumpkin replied it is hard to document their productivity over the years. Alderman Thomas stated that unit brings perception, good feeling, and is a morale booster for citizens.

Alderman Hall asked about motorcycle units and speeders in neighborhoods. Assistant Chief Gavin replied the traffic unit is going to be boosted in 2018 once we get through the demerger process, resulting in a higher visibility.

Assistant Chief Gavin reviewed the planning for the MARC Center (Multi-Agency Resource Center). He discussed the importance of mentorship with at-risk children to enhance factors and reduce risk factors. They encourage officers and community members to become mentors to reduce future crime numbers. They are working with the One Mind program to get all officers trained to deal with mental health and increase their connections with the mental health community in Chatham County and Savannah.

In 2017, they hired 77 new officers and 74 resigned; of the 74 who resigned 13 were retirements and 33 were terminated. Their retention numbers were somewhat affected by the demerger. The actual rate of hire is 11.7%. Assistant Chief Gavin reviewed the classes in progress and the monthly applications received.

Alderman Shabazz stated the Caught Doing Good program should be more emphasized so people can begin to develop a different mindset. As officers are transitioning out of the academy and on to the street, their attitude should be more professional and they need to work with them to treat the citizens with more respect. Alderman Johnson replied they are trying to change a culture of police, and they want to make sure people are treated with respect and value.

Alderman Bell thanked Assistant Chief Gavin, and thanked Chief Lumpkin for his work on pushing the MARC forward.

[4. Savannah Police Department Transition Update](#)

[011818 Savannah Police Transition Update.pptx](#)

Daphanie Williams, Management Services Coordinator with the City Manager's Office gave an update on branding, facilities, vehicles, staffing and the 911 Center as it relates to the Savannah Police Department (SPD) transition. SPD officers will continue to wear their existing uniforms. The only change will be the accessories, which include shoulder patches, badges, hats, tie clasps and collar brass. They have received most of the accessories and it is projected that all of their items will be in by the end of February. SPD facilities will operate using a four precinct model. They will continue operations of the existing facilities of Southside, Central, as well as the Downtown facilities. They will begin operation of a new Eastside precinct at 2250 East Victory Drive as a result of the demerger. They have finalized a lease agreement, and the necessary renovations have been completed. IT has installed all of the necessary networks and to date they are waiting on IT to finalize the programming that is necessary.

Alderman Thomas asked what is the status of the Southwest Substation. City Manager Hernandez replied they were considering leasing some space in the factory outlet located at 204 and 95. Unfortunately, they were not able to get an agreement with the property owner, and as a result the City rescinded their offer and is in the process of looking for alternative sites. The City Manager's preference is to use publically owned property.

Ms. Williams continued, the lease agreement for Great Dane has also been finalized and renovations for that facility will begin soon. City Manager Hernandez interjected, the only renovations they will do is painting and replacing carpet at their expense but it gets offset by the rent. Ms. Williams proceeded, several different departments will relocate to that location as well. As for the Eastside location, they plan to start the moving process next week.

In regards to vehicles, last year the approval for 55 marked SUVs and all other units have been received. Outfitting and stripping are underway. They expect to have 20 of the 55 vehicles ready by the end of the month and the remaining will be ready mid-February. On the agenda today there is a purchase of 117 vehicles. Only 82 of those vehicles are related to the demerger and the remaining purchase is for the replacement of existing units. If approved they are expecting to have all of the units ready by May.

For the 2018 Budget they have funding for 536 sworn and 94 civilian officers. Currently they have 569 sworn and 91 civilian officers which total 660 officers. City Manager Hernandez addressed the overage in the sworn category; they have 32 people who are going through the official certification process. They will be carrying those additional positions in an over hired status. Once these individuals are cleared to go out on the streets on their own they would meet the attrition requirements.

Ms. Williams went on to review the 911 center. She stated Chatham County will take over full responsibility of the 911 center starting on July 1, 2018. The County Commissioners approved their plan back in December. They are currently working with them through the conversion to come up with a transition plan. There is also an item on the agenda to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the County so they could address those responsibilities.

5. SCMPD Citizen Advisory Councils

This item was not discussed.

6. Executive Session: Real Estate, Personnel, Litigation

Upon motion of Alderman Durrence, seconded by Alderman Miller, and unanimously carried Council went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Litigation, Personnel and Real Estate.

Upon completion of this session, a motion was made to come out of Executive Session by Alderman Durrence, seconded by Alderman Thomas, and unanimously carried.

7. City Manager's Briefing / Council Meeting Agenda Items for January 18, 2018

City Manager Rob Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of January 18, 2018. The agenda can be found online and will be made a part of the permanent record.

There being no further business, Mayor DeLoach declared this Work Session adjourned.

The video recording of the Work Session can be found by copying and pasting the below link in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=94FzKBE9JF3r>

Luciana M. Spracher, Acting Clerk of Council

