



June 21, 2018, Council Work Session

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

June 21, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

Present: Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

Aldermen: Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Tony Thomas, Van Johnson, II (arrived at 1:00 p.m.), John Hall, Bill Durrence, Estella Shabazz (arrived at 10:50 a.m.)

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager

Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney

Jennifer Herman, Deputy City Attorney

William Shearouse, Assistant City Attorney

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Boards, Commissions and Authorities Interviews](#)

Interviews

The below applicants were interviewed for appointment to the **Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT)**

- Clinton Edminster
- Alfonso Ribot

The below applicants were interviewed for appointment to the **Savannah Airport Commission**

- Todd Freesemann
- Randy Houston

The below applicants were interviewed for appointment to the **Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)**

- James Hall
- Brian Harn

The below applicants were interviewed for appointment to the **Savannah Recreation Commission**

- LaQuanda Pridgen-Brown
- James Hall

Following the interviews Council came to a consensus to appoint the following as indicated below:

Aging Services Advisory Board - 2 (two) Terms

- Dr. Daniel Brantley
- Doris Cope

Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT) - 1 (one) Unexpired Term - Term ends July 1, 2020

- Clinton Edminster

Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizens Advisory Committee - 2 (two) Council members or their designee

- Alderman Bill Durrence
- Alderwoman Estella Shabazz

Cultural Affairs Commission - 1 (one) Unexpired Term - Term ends December 31, 2020

- Kristopher Monroe

Economic Opportunity Authority (EOA) - 1 (one) Unexpired Term - Term ends December 31, 2021

- Dr. Tamika M. Wright

Greater Savannah International Alliance (GSIA) - 3 (three) TERMS

- Andriana DeOliveira
- James Hall
- Alfonso Ribot

Historic Preservation Advisory Council - 1 (one) TERM

- Emily Forlenza

Keep Savannah Beautiful - 18 (eighteen) Terms

- Hallie Mobley Anderegg
- LaToya Brannen
- Tarcia Bush
- Emily Forlenza
- Nelson Gassman
- Pauline Haywood
- Lewis (Roy) Hill
- Robert Hunter

- Marysue McCarthy
- Trish McLeod
- Pamela Miller
- Jamie Parks
- Tammy Perkins
- Birgit Reiff
- Claire Sandow
- Jeanine Thompson
- Joe Wenum
- Deion Williams

Savannah Recreation Commission - 1 (one) Term

- LaQuanda Pridgen-Brown

Traffic Calming Committee

- **Mayor appointee**
 - James (Mickey) Rountree, Jr.
- **At Large Post 1 appointee**
 - Nelson Gassman
- **District 2 appointee**
 - Christopher Ryba

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) - 1 (one) Unexpired Term - Term ends December 31, 2019

- Neil Dawson

Council will vote on the below appointment during the regular Council meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Savannah Airport Commission - 1 (one) Term

- Todd Freesemann
- Randy Houston

[2. Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless](#)

Cindy Murphy Kelley, Executive Director of the Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless (CSAH), provided Council with an update and brief history of the CSAH. During the presentation Ms. Kelley informed Council there are 22 homeless camps in the area and they are deplorable. She stated she wants everyone to work together to address the issue and is hoping Council can assist with suggesting ways to get the County involved.

Alderwoman Bell asked Ms. Kelley from her perspective what would her collaborative ask of City Council. Ms. Kelley replied she would like Council to be the champions and possibly pull together a work group.

Alderwoman Bell asked Ms. Kelley if she has looked at best practices in other cities and if so she expects the experts such as CSAH to bring the suggestions to the table to facilitate the collaborative. She stated the lead needs to be taken by experts for better results. She concluded stating municipalities can't just throw resources towards the organization without a plan in place.

Ms. Kelley stated they have a list of best practices but they are hard. She stated it is their job to pull the key decision makers in the community together. The best practices they have are about changing the culture of how we do business in the area.

Alderman Hall asked how many people in the homeless camps are Savannahians and where are they coming from?

Ms. Kelley stated technically they are Savannahians, because the residency requirement is 30 days. Georgia is in the top five of incarceration states. The majority of individuals released end up on the coast, and we get a lot of those folks. She continued stating the vast majority are Georgians maybe not originally from Savannah. She stated some are traveling kids, but they don't generally stay. She concluded stating many of them have lived in the camps for fifteen years.

Alderman Hall asked is it that they choose that lifestyle or are the circumstances beyond their control?

Ms. Kelley stated we all have pride and none of them want to live that way but they realize because of past decisions they have no other option.

Alderman Hall stated we all care and want to know what can be done and how can we help. He concluded stating we want to know the best practices, and do something.

Ms. Kelley stated she can pull everyone together, and spend some time talking about solutions. She stated it will be difficult, which means other things are going to have to be a lower priority and that is going to be tough. She concluded stating efforts are going to have to be coordinated and all the efforts are going to have to be part of the solution.

Alderman Durrence stated he attended a housing symposium about two years ago where the speaker stated housing first makes it possible to solve so many other problems. The complication with that is that there are little resources. He asked Ms. Kelley how viable is it to have a consolidated camp with sanitation facilities and showers? And how much is the lack of visibility contributing to the increasing number of homeless issues?

Ms. Kelley replied she thinks it's contributing a great deal. She stated there was recently an issue with the camp next to Starland and they have been receiving calls about the area as it is slowing gentrifying and the density is increasing. She stated the individuals that are in the homeless camp under President Street bridge are more militant and if they (CSAH) tried to move them they would become more visible because they feel it's their place.

Alderman Foster stated he recently went on the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) website and its numbers differ from the numbers reported by the Homeless Authority and he is trying to understand why. He stated he keeps hearing the City does nothing but he went through the budget and the City has about \$200,000 allocated. He stated he also hears Chatham County does nothing, there are seven municipalities in the County and stated he agrees a meeting as a community for the County needs to be held to come up with a plan that works. He concluded stating everyone else needs to get involved because as far as he knows the City is the only municipality contributing to the CSAH.

Ms. Kelley stated the City contributes \$190,000. She stated as it relates to the comments about the numbers they are accurate. She stated they have to certify a person as homeless before they can be served, and they only count them one time. Ms. Kelley stated there are approximately 900 persons that are considered chronically homeless in our community.

Alderman Thomas stated there is a case study from the west coast about chronic homelessness. He briefly mentioned the million dollar man and asked how many kids are homeless in the community.

Ms. Kelley stated there are 1,300-1,400 homeless children but they do not count kids in schools that are homeless. She stated last year schools had 800 students that were homeless that were either couch surfing or living in pay-by-week hotels.

Alderman Thomas then stated the County is not participating and that needs to be public. He then stated the City contributes \$190,000 and asked what the total budget is and where the bulk of the money comes from. Ms. Kelley responded the total budget is \$2.2 million and all funds are government contracts which she briefly listed. Alderman Thomas stated the homeless issues in the City of Savannah is a serious issue and is also a public safety issue.

Alderman Foster asked if the HUD funds come through DCA. Ms. Kelley replied no. Alderman Foster then asked about the CDBG funds.

City Manager Hernandez replied the CDBG funds come through the City. Kerri Reed stated the total is \$2.8 million and CSAH receives about \$78,000.

Alderman Thomas asked Ms. Kelley what kind of budget she needs to tackle this issue. Ms. Kelley replied she's not sure the answer is growing the budget, although that would be great. She stated what they really need is a much stronger emphasis on collaboration, by tightening up non-profit sector because our agencies are very siloed, and inward looking. She stated she believes there needs to be fewer non-profit agencies. Ms. Kelley stated the City needs United Way to step up and have a stronger role in what are the critical things our community needs. She continued stating the funds that go to United Way need to be directed to go to the non-profits with the most critical needs as this isn't currently being done. She stated we need to figure out a way to get community members to think about it more broadly, and how to build an approach that when it's fixed we all benefit. She concluded stating we need to be more efficient and effective and a substantial housing fund is needed.

Alderman Thomas asked if there is any truth to the myth that other communities are chunking their homeless here. Ms. Kelley responded no, they come here, and there are some officers that drop them off.

Alderwoman Shabazz stated the cooperation from the County is needed as the County has been lax on so many situations related to our citizens. She stated the other cities are needed as well as this is not just a Savannah situation.

Alderman Miller stated Mayor DeLoach appointed him to the Homeless Authority, and he just recently had an opportunity to get in to it this week. He stated it is a complex multi-faceted situation. He stated they have limited funding, and a lot of strings attached to that funding. HUD requires that we focus first on the chronically homeless, and CSAH could easily spend all its resources on them. He stated we could help a lot more people but then risk the HUD funding. He continued stating a plan is needed to come out of this. If the plan is unknown then there is not a plan. He stated the plan needs to be more than asking for money. He stated a lot of people want to get involved and we need to parlay that in to an effort and decide how it will fit in to a plan. He briefly discussed the aggressive panhandling that is occurring. He stated the charge of the Homeless Authority is to come up with a plan and get everyone involved. He stated a plan is needed for affordable housing and that another issue is mental health. Alderman Miller stated CSAH will never get help from the County or anyone else without these things and if they don't inform them of what is needed, what they do and the benefits it has to them. He concluded stating when he attended the last meeting he asked if enough affordable housing units were in the City for approximately \$300, how much of the homeless population could be addressed. He stated Ms. Kelley informed him about 60 percent because many homeless individuals have an income, it's just small. He stated these are not trolls living under the bridges, they are people and we need a plan to figure out how to address helping everyone without having to shame people to do so.

Mayor DeLoach thanked Ms. Kelley for coming.

3. Real Estate, Litigation

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

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

4. 2018 Budget Amendments

Melissa Carter, Chief Budget Officer, stated the window to set the FY18 millage rate is getting close, it must be submitted to the State by August 1st. She stated before doing that staff and Council need to get to some type of finality on the adjustments to the FY18 budget, as well as the Revenue Ordinance in relation to the fire fee.

Ms. Carter stated staff provided Council with 5 options (A-E) for consideration. She then briefly went through each option.

Option A, which is the worst case scenario and only balances the budget for this year.

Option B, is basically status quo and sets the millage rate at 12.48 mills which is where it currently is.

Option C, is a half mill increase from 12.48 to 12.98 mills.

Option D, is a 1 mill increase from 12.48 to 13.48 mills.

Option E, is a 2 mill increase from 12.48 to 14.48 mills.

Alderman Durrence asked for clarification on the notation which indicated that there would be a decrease in reserves for Options A and B. Ms. Carter replied yes it is a draw from the capital reserve as well as the general fund unreserved fund balance for Option A only and Option B would be a draw from the capital reserve and no draw from the unreserved fund balance.

Ms. Carter continued stating staff is seeking Council's direction for the official millage rate to be set for FY 18. She stated Council's approval today will direct the City Manager to bring those related amendments to the applicable sections to the ordinances, as well as a final decision on the fire fee which would then direct staff to then proceed with holding the necessary meetings.

City Manager Hernandez stated a millage rate needs to be adopted by Council today so staff can prepare the necessary documents to proceed with the public hearing process.

Alderman Foster stated based on the City's budget hearings and process, there seemed to be unanimous agreement that we aren't doing the rollback, if we aren't doing the fire fee, so we seem to be starting with Option B. He ensured that everyone understood that grey boxes on the sheet provided by staff meant that those things would be funded.

City Manager Hernandez clarified the use of reserves under Option B.

Alderman Johnson inquired about the salary increases for employees. City Manager Hernandez replied that it's not factored in at all. Alderman Johnson expressed his concern about the fact that it was something that was promised and the fact that there are employees that make less than their subordinates. City Manager Hernandez replied that will be addressed through the pay and comp study and the \$600,000 in the wage adjustment reserve, which is still there. Alderman Johnson stated he just came from a Human Resources conference and this is the type of stuff that was discussed. He stated he is a professional that can help with that and a study is not needed to get it fixed.

Aldermen Bell and Miller stated he's working on the issue. City Manager Hernandez stated staff is moving forward with the study as there is a ripple effect but they are working on it.

Alderman Johnson replied that it's a ripple effect that could lead the City into possible legal issues.

Alderman Thomas asked for an explanation of enhanced right of way landscape services. City Manager Hernandez replied it is mowing City right of ways on a four week schedule versus a three week schedule. He stated there would be a reduction in the frequency citywide to at least every four weeks, if not every six weeks. He reminded Council that the maintenance of the City's squares come from a different funding source.

Alderman Miller stated he hopes this can be done without any type of millage increase, but as he looks at everything that would have to be cut he thought he would be able to do it, but realizes how painful it would be. He mentioned the SPLOST charges listed that would be cut and City Manager Hernandez stated that is something staff would like to reserve for 2019, as the \$2.1 million is one-time funds.

Alderman Miller asked about the elimination of the stormwater improvements. City Manager Hernandez replied that line item consists of two projects which are the rehabilitation of a pump station and prevention of stormwater cave-ins. Alderman Miller stated he understands there's reasoning for doing everything suggested but he would still like to get under 1 mill.

Alderman Thomas asked for an explanation of item 37. City Manager Hernandez replied the City contributes to the July 4th fireworks and holiday decorations downtown, which includes the tree storage and installation, and a variety of events throughout the year.

Alderman Johnson asked how the reductions will be prioritized. City Manager Hernandez asked if he was referring to that particular line item. Alderman Johnson replied yes. City Manager Hernandez replied it closes out that line item, and the City will not be contributing to the fireworks this year.

Alderman Thomas stated Council agrees there is a vast amount of people in the community that do not want the fire fee, but seriously there are some things that cities are expected to do. He suggested that Council look through the list to determine if there are cuts to other things that should be done to save others.

Alderman Johnson stated the City has been sustaining an unsustainable level of service, while all around the city others have been raising their taxes to fund their operations. He agreed with Alderman Miller stating as costs go up to do business the City has to be able to find ways to do that, some of which is internally by creating efficiencies and eliminating duplication.

Alderman Foster stated the City has not raised its millage rate at all in the past 10 years. Alderman Thomas stated we did, it was raised to balance the budget and lowered back in 6 months.

Alderman Miller stated he finds it interesting that when talks began about the elimination of the fire fee he began receiving calls about all kinds of things to include having a City archaeologist, which he thinks is a great idea. He stated when it comes to removing stumps and having more fireworks he believes his constituents will choose stump removal.

Alderman Foster stated we have 120 new police officers, which was \$12 million and requested by the public and that cannot be cut.

Alderwoman Shabazz asked for an explanation of item #7, stormwater improvements. City Manager Hernandez replied that is for the replacement and rehabilitation of a pump station on DeRenne and the elimination of cave-ins.

Alderwoman Shabazz asked about the closure of municipal swimming pools. City Manager Hernandez replied that will not occur in Options B-E.

Alderwoman Bell stated she does not want to disappoint the children during Christmastime when they cannot take a picture with Santa. She asked that some of those funds be restored.

City Manager Hernandez stated somehow the Christmas decorations have fallen on the City's lap and we are responsible for storage, erecting, decorating, and supplying additional decorations among other things. He stated two years ago there was community support, now the City is responsible and does not have the resources. Alderwoman Shabazz stated our partners need to step back up.

Alderman Miller again stated he would like to see the increase under a mill.

[5. Arena Design Services](#)

[Arena Design Presentation 062118.pdf](#)

City Manager Hernandez stated there is an item on the agenda for the Council meeting today recommending a contract award related to the Arena.

Pete Shonka stated he worked with the program management team to get an RFP together which was posted and nine responses were received. He stated a panel of City staff selected the three teams which were most qualified, and interviewed each. The team recommended awarding the contract to Perkins and Will. Mr. Shonka stated key team members are present today to present their qualifications to Council.

David Demecki, Principal Manager in the Atlanta office, stated he is looking forward to working with the City to create an extraordinary arena. He stated they are one of the larger architectural firms in the U.S. Mr. Demecki stated they will manage the project out of the Atlanta office utilizing the service of a small Savannah office which was started about a year ago.

Don Deffley stated they have done over 60 arenas around North America. They are known for doing mid-sized arenas similar to the City's. He stated it's a very large project, but it's really a redevelopment project. He stated they pride themselves on always delivering on time and on budget. He stated a key component of the new arena will be the ice rink. He stated it will be mixed use as that is a key component. Mr. Deffley stated they try to produce not only arenas that are highly functional, but arenas that are award winning. The most important aspect to them is the fans and patrons continually returning. He showed a picture of an Allentown, Pennsylvania project similar to the city's stating it is a mixed use and similar in size to what the City will have.

Mr. Demecki stated they have been nationally recognized for their urban design and landscape practices which will be a benefit to this project. He stated he understands working with neighborhoods and communities is an important aspect of the process.

Ernest Joiner stated this is a great team of consultants, with great local participation, as this is a large civil project. He stated each one of the major consultants has a DBE partner. He then introduced Chris Goode, architecture partner from Goode Van Slyke.

Mr. Goode stated one of their first projects was the Ralph Mark Gilbert Museum Project and the Savannah State University Freshman Living and Learning Center, and most recently the ABC/FOC television studios. He stated lately in terms of mentorship and collaboration they just finished collaborating with HOK on the Mercedes Benz project and Spellman and Portman on a hotel. Mr. Goode stated collaboration has been good to them and has allowed them to go from 20 to 30 percent to having our own projects. He concluded stating he is happy to be here and will be working with them in an integrated fashion, which means they will all be in a room together.

Mr. Joiner stated he wants this to be the City's project. He then briefly reviewed some metrics of success on similar projects. He stated they pride themselves on being cost effective and is very confident in the budget and that they can deliver a great arena for the City. Mr. Joiner concluded stating they pride themselves on change orders, they are below one percent in the industry which is excellent.

Mr. Demecki stated they love the site and it's a great opportunity to enhance the entire community and the adjoining neighborhoods. He stated they will concentrate on arrival, activate space, and design with a lot of revenue enhancements. He stated they try to design to the local community so it fits. Mr. Demecki concluded stating they will give the menu that fits the community, as they design bowls really intimately so it's an exciting place to watch. He stated it will be made very flexible, and want it to have the widest array of uses.

Alderman Johnson stated this will be the largest municipal project the City will ever have, and asked who their local partners are.

Mr. Joiner replied Hussey Gay Bell, on the civil side will assist with permitting and understanding the City's systems, Denise, public output, and Tonia Mandrell, landscaping. He stated there is also a Perkins and Will team member that lives and works fulltime in Savannah and they are thinking of growing the office.

Alderman Johnson asked if there are any minority women owned businesses. Mr. Joiner replied Denise and Tonia are both women owned and are both WBE's.

Alderman Johnson asked if there are any minority women owned businesses. Mr. Joiner replied Chris Goode's firm is minority owned and they have 25% of the architecture. He stated civil has two firms and structural has one minority and mechanical/electrical plumbing is using SL King which is also.

Alderman Johnson asked for a list of the MBE's.

Alderwoman Shabazz stated those are her concerns as well. She stated she sees the 22% DBE involvement, and asked who specifically locally is within the borders of the City of Savannah, as this is a very serious and deep concern of hers.

Molly Huhn, Purchasing Director, stated the information about the DBE subcontractors can be found in the agenda attachment.

[6. City Council Agenda Review](#)

City Manager Rob Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of June 7, 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 Council meeting can be found by copying and pasting the below link in your url:

Part One:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=UOym73sZ7ep6>

Part Two:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=qjg9ru7iilA>

Luciana M. Spracher,
Acting Clerk of Council

