



July 19, 2018, City Council Workshop

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

July 19, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

Aldermen: Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Tony Thomas, John Hall, Bill Durrence, Estella Shabazz

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager

Jennifer Herman, Deputy City Attorney

ABSENT: Alderman Van Johnson, II, Brooks Stillwell, City Attorney, and William Shearouse, Assistant City Attorney

City Manager Hernandez welcomed Roy Minter, the City of Savannah's next Police Chief. He was accompanied by his wife, Ramona Minter. Council introduced themselves to the Minters.

Workshop Agenda Items

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

Interviews

The below applicants were interviewed for appointment to the **Coastal Workforce Investment Board (CWIB)**:

- Mark Corrigan
- Chavis Ferguson
- William (Bill) Stankiewicz

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

Coastal Workforce Investment Board (CWIB)

- Leigh Acevedo
- Earline Wesley Davis
- Chavis Ferguson
- Candace Mims
- William (Bill) Stankiewicz
- Paul Teague

Ethics Board

- Thomas Hersch - Mayor's appointee

Greater Savannah International Alliance (GSIA)

- Lynn Pitts

Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizens Advisory Committee - CORE CAC

- Christopher Middleton
- Deborah Sieg-Bowen

Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT)

- Alderman Bill Durrence

Chatham County/City of Savannah Landbank Authority

- Richard (Dick) Evans

Savannah Resource Recovery Development Authority

- Ty Stone

[2. Second Quarter Public Safety Report](#)

[SPD 071918 Council Workshop.pdf](#)

Chief Mark Renew, Savannah Police Department, provided Council with the Second Quarter Public Safety Report.

He reviewed the following:

- The Berkshire recommendations that have been completed and those that are still pending. Among those pending one item briefly discussed by Chief Renew was shift improvements. He stated he is pushing towards 12-hour shifts because the scheduling would allow for more officers to be on the street and it would coincide with neighboring municipalities. He stated there is no partnership like in the old days.
- 2018 ShotSpotter Results January – July 2018: 323 ShotSpotter Reports (1,128 total rounds fired)

YTD 2017: 1,013 ShotSpotter Reports (1,841 total rounds fired). He stated what's important about ShotSpotter to him is that only 26% of ShotSpotter alerts resulted in a 911 call. 74% (764) of Gunfire incidents were identified by ShotSpotter, and casings were collected in 20% of the incidents.

- Homicide Clearance Rate – he stated the City of Savannah is still above the National Homicide Clearance rate which is 64 percent.
- Traffic Fatalities YTD – still continue to be a problem. Twelve fatalities, four of which have involved pedestrians.
 - Alderman Durrence asked Chief Renew if he is seeing any additional citations related to the Hands Free Law that took effect July 1st. Chief Renew replied he will address that later in the presentation.

Chief Renew then reviewed the Homicide and Vehicle Fatality maps by district.

Alderman Miller asked about the homicide on Hurst Avenue. Chief Renew replied it was domestic related.

He then announced the ribbon cutting for the Northwest Precinct which will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m. located at 602 East Lathrop Avenue. Capt. Cary Hill is the Precinct Captain for that location.

Chief Revenew then reviewed the Marijuana Ordinance and Hands Free Law. He stated the Marijuana Ordinance comes down to officer discretion. It went into effect on July 1st in the City of Savannah. All officers have received training regarding the new ordinance. From July 1st through July 14th there have been 19 people cited under the ordinance.

The Hands Free Law became effective July 1st in Georgia. Officers have been providing violators with pamphlets regarding the new law and rewarding drivers for complying with hands-free brackets and movie passes. Officers have been giving warnings for the first 30 days for the first offense. From July 1st through July 14th officers issued 83 written warnings. He stated the Traffic Unit is aggressively warning drivers. Alderwoman Bell asked if it will be publicized that after 30-days tickets will be issued. Chief Revenew responded the message has been put out by Lt. Garvin, the Traffic Commander, that it will be a very aggressive enforcement after the 30-day period.

Chief Revenew continued with the presentation moving on to technology, discussing the following:

- Drones – primary uses include crash and crime scene documentation, search and rescue, and tactical operations.

Alderman Miller asked if the City currently has any drones. Chief Revenew replied we are working on it.

- Mobile Office Work Platform - allows for quicker response, establishes quicker incident command, CID can obtain search/arrest warrants remotely, remote communication with judicial officials. This was completed in April 2018.

Alderman Hall asked how many vehicles have been completed. Chief Revenew replied three.

- Enhancements including:
 - Police IT Plan: Working with a vendor to develop a plan that will help drive technology based decisions.
 - Data Management: Problem continues to worsen.
 - Records Management System: the existing RMS system is 11+ years old and lacks modern features and efficiencies.

Alderman Miller asked if the new system will include electronic ticketing. Chief Revenew replied yes, but one obstacle that needs to be worked through is the need to merge with other systems and migrate old data into the new system.

Alderman Foster asked what is the cost of the RM system. Chief Revenew replied the estimated cost is about \$3 million. City Manager Hernandez stated they are two different systems, one is records management and the other is data management. Chief Gavin briefly discussed the differences between the two systems.

Alderman Miller asked what the total cost would be. Chief Gavin replied approximately \$3.5 million. Mayor DeLoach asked if the City of Pooler has electronic ticketing, or other municipalities? Chief Revenew replied yes Pooler does and Garden City and Richmond Hill are two other municipalities that also have electronic ticketing.

Alderman Miller stated he has heard from the Recorder's Court Judges and the City has done a great job at stepping up traffic enforcement with a great response from the public. He stated however we are overwhelming the court system because everything has to be retyped into the system, which casues problems. Officers are on DUI cases for hours and it is dangerous being out there. He stated if there is a problem with the individual the officer immediately knows. Chief Revenew replied that the 911 Center is currently in transition, and everything has to play together as there is not a standard software which is where the problems are occurring trying to make everything integrate and migrating 24 years of data.

Chief Revenew reviewed statistics from the End Gun Violence Program. There was a 33 percent decrease in homicides in 2016 vs 2017, and a 45 percent decrease in 2017 vs 2018 (January 1st through July 16th). Additionally, there was a 43 percent decrease in non-fatal shootings in 2016 vs 2017, and a 44 percent decrease in 2017 vs 2018 (January 1st through July 16th).

Chief Revenew continued the presentation discussing the FY19 needs which include:

- - Records management system replacement
 - Departmental shooting range

Alderman Hall asked how that situation was resolved. Chief Revenew replied it hasn't been as the SPD is not allowed to use the range. They are currently utilizing other agencies ranges.

Mayor DeLoach asked Chief Revenew to expound on that. Chief Revenew stated the range is owned by the Sheriff who has asked that a mitigation fee be paid which is in the process of being resolved. He stated inter-governmental agreements and memorandum of understanding need to be put in place but at this point he has turned us away. Mayor DeLoach asked of this just came up this year. Chief Revenew replied just in the past couple of months. Mayor DeLoach stated he thought the City had interest in the gun range. City Manager Hernandez replied it is his understanding that the City owns the underlying land. Mayor DeLoach asked if the City can block the County from using it since the underlying land is owned by the City. City Manager Hernandez replied he doesn't think the City wants to be in the position to block anyone from using it and believes the issue is more between the County and the Sheriff. The City acknowledges that it is using the range and is happy to pay its fair share of using it. Mayor DeLoach stated we need to say what the problem is, he feels like the issue is being danced around. City Manager Hernandez replied there are some legal hoops that need to be resolved between the County Attorney and the Sheriff about who has the appropriate legal authority to enter into contract with the City.

Alderman Hall asked who owns the land. Alderwoman Bell asked if they pay us to use the land. City Manager Hernandez replied the City of Savannah owns the land and they do not pay us to use the land. Over time the County has made improvements to the land which is probably one of those deals handled by the appropriate people by a handshake and never codified or memorialized and now we are trying to figure out who is responsible. Alderman Hall asked if there is a deed to the land. City Manager Hernandez replied he does not know the appropriate answer to that question but according to our staff it is City property.

Alderman Thomas asked if there was ever a MOU when the capital improvements were made. City Manager Hernandez replied no agreement between the City and County can be located. Alderman Thomas stated so they can potentially make a claim to the land of adverse possession. Deputy Attorney Herman replied no. Alderwoman Bell stated if we legitimately own the land they would be considered leaseholder improvements. Alderman Thomas replied if the City had a lease that would be true but no paperwork can be found. Alderman Miller stated there are no squatter's rights on public property.

City Manager Hernandez stated about a year and half ago staff started working on title issues to clear transfer to the County.

Alderman Durrence stated if we do that can we use the range for free in perpetuity. City Manager Hernandez replied the Sheriff's request that the City help offset the cost of cleaning the range by removing the lead is reasonable. Whether the County is charged for using the land or not is a separate issue and discussion.

Chief Revenew stated this is for mitigating the land. City Manager Hernandez replied by law you are required to remove the lead for environmental reasons. Chief Revenew stated the SPD is going to continue to do its job and will get officers trained.

City Manager Hernandez stated the cost of the shooting range is approximately \$500,000 to start.

Chief Revenew continued with the FY19 needs:

- - Improved deployment of Patrol rifles - currently officers have to buy their own rifles (the cost of a rifle is about \$2,000)
 - Electronic timekeeping system
 - Records Management positions - people lost due to the demerger
 - Continue to remain competitive salary/benefits

City Manager Hernandez stated the City is embarking on an update to our pay and comp study which we will hopefully have for the 2019 budget process. Alderman Miller asked if there will be an estimate given for the FY19 needs slide. City Manager Hernandez replied it will be given as part of the 2019 budget process. Alderwoman Bell asked since the conversion for the 12-hour shifts isn't complete will that also be included in the 2019 budget process. City Manager Hernandez replied staff is looking at the option because one of the advantages of going to the 12-hour shift is a reduction in overtime. Alderwoman Bell asked Chief Minter if he has 12-hour shifts in his current City. He replied no, currently they are on 10-hour shifts.

Chief Revenew moved on to Youth and Community Outreach discussing the following initiatives: PAL; Roll Call in the Streets; Coffee with a Cop; National Night Out; MARC roll out shortly; and the reinitiating of the Citizens Police Academy, to name a few.

Alderwoman Shabazz asked if there is a schedule for Roll Call in the streets. Chief Revenew replied one has not been established, as they have pushed it out to the commanders. He stated if she or another member of Council would like them host one, let them know. He stated he thinks they are great and the turnouts have been great.

Chief Revenew briefly discussed recruitment and retention. He stated they are currently up, there are 17 recruits in the Academy.

Alderman Durrence asked when does the funding have to start being covered for the GOHS Heat grant and COPS grant. Chief Gavin replied the grants are three year grants and they are looking to reapply for them.

Chief Revenew briefly reviewed the sworn officer vacancies. He stated Captain Best retired last week. He also briefly reviewed the officer applications received.

Chief Revenew concluded the presentation recognizing and welcoming Chief Minter who will assume duties as Chief of the Savannah Police Department on August 27, 2018. He welcomed Chief Minter's wife, Ramona, to the City of Savannah, as well.

Alderman Miller asked did he see where the City is buying a horse today. Chief Revenew replied yes the Mounted Patrol is very important. Two horses recently went down due to age.

Alderman Miller stated he doesn't see very many motorcycles on the streets. Chief Revenew replied they are being used and being deployed all over the City. They are very important for escorts such as funerals. Alderman Miller replied he was thinking more along the lines of traffic control. Chief Revenew replied the issue was several officers were lost, six were just sent for training, three of which passed and graduated two weeks ago. He stated it is a very difficult course to pass.

Alderman Miller thanked Chief Revenew for the work he did as Interim Chief, because he understands he has to live within the guidelines of someone else. He stated he has done a great job and sees that he cares and hopes the City continues to find ways to work with him.

Chief Revenew stated the Savannah Police Department is really a great police department and he is proud to be affiliated with it. He stated it is one of the few CALEA agencies in the state that answers over 120,000 calls a year.

Alderman Hall asked Mayor DeLoach to have the new Chief come up and introduce himself to Savannah.

Alderwoman Bell stated over the past 2 years the Police Department has given stats on youth crime during the summer to Council. She stated the stats were for youth between the ages of 15-17 years of age with 2015 used as a base year. She stated over the years the numbers have decreased because of all the different programs held for youth throughout the city. She concluded stating she is anxious to see what the numbers look like this year with the collaboration of the MARC across all the agencies. Chief Revenew replied juvenile crime is definitely one of the SPD's focuses. He stated he believes it truly takes a village. He concluded stating partnership is everything and many studies have been done to ensure the best practices are being done.

City Manager Hernandez briefly updated Council on the transition of 911 and communications. He stated the County is responsible for any financial shortfalls in 911 this year. Council recently approved an amendment to the agreement delaying their operational takeover of the 911 Center until January 1, 2019. The County has completed a comprehensive study of the emergency communications system and facility and 911 program itself. The County used the same company the City used back in 2011. That document is providing the roadmap for improvements within the 911 Center and the 911 service itself. The County hired IXP to provide operational oversight during this period of transition. There is a contracted fulltime 911 director (Kelly Beaman). The Governor signed HB751, which overhauled the way 911 funds are collected, distributed and audited within the State, as it is now centralized and is now controlled by the State itself. City Manager Hernandez continued stating Mayor DeLoach was appointed by the Governor to sit on the board to look at 911 statewide. HB751 also required that 911 be a countywide service unless a municipality like Savannah operates its own. But Council made the decision that Savannah would join the countywide approach. The County established an Executive Advisory Board that is made up of the County Manager, City Manager, School Board, and a handful of other entities which will oversee the operation of the 911 Center and emergency communications. Under the Executive Advisory Board are various subcommittees which include: Recommendations Review Committee, made up of all the police and fire chiefs who are essentially responsible for the day to day operations and protocols of the 911 Center. Additionally, there are a variety of subcommittees under that as well, ranging from technology to law enforcement, firefighting and EMS services.

Alderman Miller stated we spent very little time discussing the tremendous reduction in crime and a great deal of time discussing whether or not the police are going to use the shooting range. He stated what's important is that the City has made some tremendous strides and it doesn't get discussed as often as other things.

Chief Minter stated he is excited to be in the City of Savannah and to have been selected as the new Police Chief. He stated he dealt with many of the items discussed on the FY19 needs list. He stated the City of Savannah is outstanding, beautiful and very welcoming. He continued stating there are some outstanding men and women serving as public servants that have been hit with a lot and they have an outstanding leader who has kept everything going on a higher level. He concluded stating his job is to make sure he doesn't mess anything up, and he is looking forward to serving the City of Savannah.

[3. Second Quarter Financial Report](#)

David Maxwell, Chief Financial Officer, presented the Second Quarter Financial Report.

Mr. Maxwell briefly went through some of the highlights of the report.

Property tax collections as it relates to delinquencies is running ahead. He stated the City went through an RFP process in 2017 and selected a new contract which is now in place for collections. He stated the sales on the Courthouse steps the first Tuesday of the month have been reinstated.

Regarding the blighted property levy, Council instituted this a couple of years ago for blighted properties to pay an additional millage rate to provide the City with funds to help clean those properties up. There are currently about 5 to 10 properties that have met that criteria.

Property taxes thus far have totaled \$26.985 million through the first six months of this year, compared to \$27.3 million for last year. We are currently at 43% of the budget collected. Mr. Maxwell stated he would like to see that around 50%, as the first installment billing is due in March and the next is done later in September. He stated there was a 4.3 percent growth in the digest from 2017 to 2018 and believes that number will increase when the second installment bills go out.

Alderman Miller asked if the first bill is mandatory or voluntary, is there is no penalty for not paying? Mr. Maxwell replied there is no penalty for not paying, but it is a cash flow issue for the City that allows us to have cash flow at the beginning of the year so a tax anticipation notice doesn't have to be issued to keep operations going. Mr. Maxwell stated there is a good collection rate from individuals that have an escrow because staff works directly with the mortgage processors. But there are no late fees or penalties until the second installment.

Mr. Maxwell stated revenues related to events in the City's squares and filming are up compared to last year, as well as building inspection fees.

He stated one of the items that is below where it was last year is the Chatham County Police reimbursement. Now that the departments have demerged, the only money the City will receive going forward will be funds for the CNT officers.

Mr. Maxwell did not go through the expenditure report, but stated if Council has questions they can be sent to him through the City Manager's office.

He also stated going forward this year there will be some changes related to the changes implemented with the repeal of the fire assessment and fire fund.

Alderman Miller asked about the decrease in funds for the vacation rental registration. Mr. Maxwell replied he believes initially when people sign up the cost is \$150 because staff has to go out and do an inspection and the renewal rate is less. Alderman Durrence stated the City won't get many new registrations because so much of downtown has already hit the maximum.

Alderman Foster asked if this is the portion the City receives on hotel fees. Mr. Maxwell replied this is the City's percent. Alderman Foster asked Mr. Maxwell to go through that process. Mr. Maxwell stated the City of Savannah receives six pennies on every hotel room that is occupied, three pennies go to the City's General Fund, two pennies go to the Convention and Visitor's Bureau which by law we are required to contract with a not for profit entity, and the final penny goes to operate a trade and convention center and that's split between the International Trade and Convention Center on Hutchinson Island and the Civic Center.

[4. Second Quarter SPLOST and Capital Projects Report](#)

[Capital Projects 071918 Council Workshop.pdf](#)

Heath Lloyd, Chief Infrastructure and Development Officer, introduced Marija Baumgartner, Special Projects Coordinator for Infrastructure and Development, who gave an overview and update of the Second Quarter SPLOST and Capital Projects Report.

Ms. Baumgartner stated there are currently 336 projects, managed by 54 project managers, which include 5 fulltime project managers, across the City working on projects along with other duties.

She stated a large majority of the projects fall under the water, sewer, public buildings, and parks and recreation categories.

Ms. Baumgartner then briefly gave an overview of the projects by status to include the following: conceptual/planning, design/pre-construction, implementation/construction, ongoing, complete, on-hold, inactive, and other.

Alderman Thomas requested a list of the 30 projects that are currently on hold.

Ms. Baumgartner then gave an overview of the Office of Capital Project Management which includes: 4 project managers and 1 vacancy (Ms. Baumgartner is serving as Acting Project Manager), 57 active projects, 6 projects on hold, and a \$73.5 million total project budget.

Alderman Thomas stated we have done a poor job of selling the number of projects we do yearly. He stated there are currently 57 active projects, there should be something being talked about every other day. He stated it can be divided up monthly and each one should have a monthly public roll-out, because people need

to know where this money is going. Alderman Thomas continued stating we need to do a better job of highlighting what these projects are and where we are going. He stated he doesn't know if the signage alone is good enough. He concluded stating each project should have some type of notification on it.

Mayor DeLoach stated that would be a good subject to discuss because he can't name more than two or three that he knows about.

Alderwoman Bell agreed. Alderman Thomas replied this is a great story. Mayor DeLoach asked how we can make this better.

Alderwoman Shabazz stated the ones that are seen ran repeatedly on the government channel can be named.

Alderman Thomas stated if there are 57 project out there were groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings done for any of them?

City Manager Hernandez stated Council's point is well taken. He reminded Council that the City now has an interactive tool on its website, and the quarterly report is published on our website. He stated some of these capital projects that may be included in the 57 that Ms. Baumgartner mentioned could be as routine as a roof replacement project. But when we have projects of significance we try to get the word out to the public that we are moving forward.

Alderman Thomas stated he doesn't mean to knock the Public Information Office but he believes the unsung heroes are the projects that no one knows we are even working on.

Alderwoman Bell stated it keeps them better informed so that they can inform their constituents while they are holding their monthly meetings.

City Manager Hernandez reminded Council that on a quarterly basis the monthly report is published on the website.

Alderman Durrence stated he doesn't think it would hurt to send Council the link as well as the media.

Alderman Thomas stated he's constantly in Charleston and almost every corner you turn there's a sign that says, "Your penny at work." We need to do a better job of that. He knows we have some small signs and a few big ones, but if it's a significant project the signs need to be put up.

City Manager Hernandez replied we are working on that. In addition they have a new campaign, "a penny adds up". He stated they are also going back and adding a penny icon to major projects that have received SPLOST funds.

Ms. Baumgartner continued the presentation briefly reviewing the CIP website.

Alderwoman Shabazz asked if the website is difficult to get to once you go to the City's website. Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager, replied it is under special projects (/savannahunderconstruction).

The website can be found by clicking the following link: <https://public.sagis.org/cip/>

Mr. Lloyd came forward to briefly discuss the 2018 projects, citywide and district specific.

He stated five priority projects for 2018 include: Sweetwater Fire Station (estimated completion September 2018); Cultural Arts Center (estimated completion October 2018); Bilbo Canal (estimated completion January 2019); Pennsylvania Avenue Family Resource Center (estimated completion April 2019); Central Precinct (estimated completion June 2019).

City Manager Hernandez recognizes there were some challenges to move projects.

Mr. Lloyd stated the vertical construction is beginning at the Central Precinct.

Mr. Lloyd then reviewed District specific projects including:

- - Alderman Johnson - District 1: Basketball court resurfacing (completed 6 courts); Brickyard is in the preconstruction phase; and the Grant Center is on hold.
 - Alderman Durrence - District 2: Central Precinct currently in the implementation/construction phase.
 - Alderman Hall - District 3: Treat Park is in the design phase; and Holly Heights is in the design phase.

- Alderman Miller - District 4: Atwood Park is in the design phase; and Sheridan Circle is in the design phase.
- Alderwoman Shabazz - District 5: Sylvan Terrace Passive Park has been completed; Cann Park sidewalks are in the design phase; and Leedsgate Gazebo is in pre-design.
- Alderman Thomas - District 6: Mohawk Park master plan has been completed; Veterans Park flagpole has been installed; and Windsor Park is in the construction phase.

Mr. Lloyd then reviewed the City Manager's projects:

- 3rd floor City Hall remodel for the Legal Department and Aldermen.

Mr. Lloyd reviewed FY2019 needs, including:

- Need to determine priority projects for Council that will help bring those projects to completion.

Alderwoman Shabazz commended City Manager Hernandez, Chiefs Lloyd and Young, and the Budget Director for moving this forward.

[5. City Council Agenda Review](#)

City Manager Rob Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of July 19, 2018. The agenda can be found online and will be made a part of the permanent record.

Executive Session

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

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.

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=b9TnPyh3TKZv>

Part Two:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=6GvSfOwUkYmZ>

Luciana M. Spracher, Acting Clerk of Council