

Council Members Present: Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Aldermen Bill Durrence, John Hall, Tony Thomas, Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Van Johnson, and Estella Shabazz.

Melissa Carter, Chief Budget Officer, opened the workshop by addressing questions from Day One of the Budget Workshop, including how would the proposed fire fee affect Housing Authority tenants (staff have confirmed HAS rent is capped at 30% of personal income including vouchers) and that the Local Option Sales Tax projections were too conservative (staff have bumped those projections up to 3.5% growth to reflect an additional growth of \$264,600).

There was then additional discussion about the effects of the proposed fire fee on seniors, low income residents, and HAS units, as well as the hardship fund, implementation of the fee, and discounts to the fee.

Alderman Bell raised an issue from the First District related to a private lot on West Gwinnet Street near Stiles Avenue related to property maintenance issues. City Manager Rob Hernandez updated Council on the status of the lot as it moves through the legal system (Recorder's Court). Alderman Johnson provided an update related to neighborhood activity and asked for the City Attorney's guidance. Attorney Stillwell responded that he will look into it.

Alderman Thomas suggested all homeowners get a 20% discount from the proposed fire fee for taking advantage of the City's free smoke detector program.

Chief Budget Officer Melissa Carter recapped discussion from Day One of the Budget Workshop, including various budget options (reductions, additional revenue, enhanced budget, fire fee assessment options).

Ecological Planning Group (EPG) consultants discussed the proposed fire fee assessment scenarios and the impact on single-family residential (with and without a millage rate rollback), as well as the proposed fire fee annual rate, and revenue then generated (ranging in a revenue increase from \$-780,000 to \$+24,420,000). Council then discussed how the revenue generated could be utilized.

Alderman Foster brought up the idea of transferring the Civic Center to the International Trade and Convention Center. City Council briefly discussed this and determined it needed more discussion at a later date.

EPG recommended Council consider the reductions and enhancements they wanted to make and then come back to the revenue options to see what would fund them. There was discussion regarding how much money was necessary for the budget and the formulas/models were run in different scenarios. Council then began discussing items they would like to restore to the budget or add as enhancements.

Alderman Durrence suggested the City Manager provide a brief description of enhancements. City Manager Hernandez asked each Chief to describe their enhancements. Fire Chief Charles Middleton and Police Chief Joseph Lumpkin discussed public safety's proposed enhancements that relate to both fire and police. Chief Development Officer Heath Lloyd provided a review of the proposed enhancements related to infrastructure. There was extended discussion by Alderman Thomas regarding engaging with local businesses to improve our medians and gateways. Chief Community Services Officer Taffanye

Young discussed neighborhood revitalization enhancements. Council discussed bidding out the Clean Team proposal (pressure washing sidewalks on a schedule) and the idea of civic responsibility for caring for the areas in front and in back of your property and business, in addition to the need for additional sidewalks in some districts. Chief Young also discussed economic strength and poverty reduction enhancements. City Council discussed proposals related to youth and poverty enhancement. Alderman Johnson stated he would like to see every City employee make a living wage of at least \$15.00/hour. Chief Financial Officer David Maxwell discussed an enhancement necessary to achieve an AAA bond rating. Chief Operating Officer Marty Johnston discussed additional enhancements related to good government.

Alderman Miller raised the issue of police e-ticketing and asked for an update from the City Manager. City Manager Hernandez said that it is tied to the larger records management system which currently is unfunded.

Alderman Johnson raised the issue of marijuana and simple possession tying up police and court resources from doing the things police need to do. He discussed wanting to look into what the City could do to address this issue through an ordinance. Alderman Johnson said he wants to consider it before the end of this year. Alderman Foster stated he wants to request feedback from the key leaders in the community, including the district attorney, sheriff, and other municipalities. The City Manager said he would put a workshop on the calendar.

The Mayor adjourned the workshop for lunch.

The Mayor called the meeting back to order.

Council Members Present: Mayor DeLoach, Aldermen Durrence, Hall, Thomas, Bell, Miller, Foster, and Johnson

Based on the discussions of Day One and Day Two of the Budget Retreat, Budget Officer Melissa Carter discussed a scenario including \$13.9 million revenue from including a 70% cost recovery for fire services with a 1 millage rate rollback, based on a \$240 fire service fee prior to any discounts, including a freeport exemption (not including a full phase-out in 2018). It does restore some reductions from the preliminary budget (not all), plus some new enhancements.

Alderman Johnson asked for clarification on the proposed Savannah Renaissance program and how it fits the strategic goal of economic strength and poverty reduction. City Manager Hernandez stated he felt it was the best fit there. Alderman Bell said opportunities to address poverty includes many things not just work, and the earlier we start with children the better, as we are providing them the necessary starting skills to be able to compete with their peers, graduate and go successfully into the workforce. Council had some discussion about the specific reductions and enhancements.

Alderman Durrence asked about the encroachment fees and asked for it to be reviewed, but overall is generally comfortable with the proposed budget. He has questions about the two positions the Police Chief mentioned that we would dependent on the County for, the records systems analyst and the latent fingerprint examiner, if they were not funded. The various positions needed in the Police

Department were then discussed. The RMS and Captain positions were added, and the Encroachment fee was removed from the proposed budget.

Alderman Foster discussed the Savannah Renaissance Project and reminded Council that nothing would be spent until an agreement was in place with the School District.

Alderman Thomas stated he felt strongly about the cold case unit being proposed, as they show our commitment to solving crimes in this community. Alderman Miller doesn't disagree but has trouble balancing that against the Fire Department cuts.

Alderman Foster asked for the City Manager to provide midyear updates to allow for another chance for amendments at the midpoint. There was additional discussion of Fire Department by Council.

The City Manager asked for full consensus from Council to move forward preparing a proposed budget. Alderman Johnson stated he is not okay with the current plan. He would like to not fund the proposed Savannah Renaissance program and fund the proposed Fire Department reductions instead. Alderman Durrence asked staff for options. City Manager Hernandez asked for a few minutes for staff to review. Council then discussed various options.

The City Manager stated he felt he had enough direction to move forward as he has enough consensus from Council to put together a proposed budget to bring back to Council on December 7th. City Council agreed.

Alderman Miller asked for clarification regarding social and cultural contributions. City Council agreed the social services and cultural contributions have all been put back in the proposed budget.

The City Manager reminded Council they have another workshop on December 7th, during which they will hear about the other funds, and two public hearings.

Mayor DeLoach adjourned the meeting.