



[Meeting Begins at 10:00 a.m.](#)

February 13, 2020 City Council Workshop

**SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT
SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES
COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING
February 13, 2020 – 10:00 a.m.**

The Work Session of the City Council was held at 10:01 a.m. in the 2nd Floor Media Room of City Hall.

PRESENT: Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

Alderwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1, Chairman

Alderwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Alderwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Alderwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

Alderwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5, Mayor Pro-Tem

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

OTHERS PRESENT:

City Manager Pat Monahan

Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd

Interim Chief Operating Officer Bret Bell

Assistant to the City Manager Daphanie Williams

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Deputy City Attorney Jen Herman

Assistant City Attorney Denise Cooper

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. He opened the floor for Councilmembers to speak regarding issues of concern.

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Discussion - Upcoming Working Sessions for Budget, Arena/Canal District, Workforce Housing, Airport Briefing](#)

- Mayor and Council discussed the District 5 Town Hall meeting and the topics presented to the public. Alderman Purtee expressed his concern for Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz's actions at the

meeting by calling out absent Aldermen and discussing Council Agenda items with the public. Other Members expressed their displeasure with items discussed at the Town Hall meeting without being present to voice their opinions.

Alderwoman Lanier pointed out that Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz had not arrived and the discussion should not continue without her present.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz, upon her arrival, made a statement and took time to address Members of Council on their displeasure regarding her representation to the citizens of District 5 at the Town Hall Meeting last evening. She outlined how the meeting was called, Members of Council she called and invited to the meeting, Council Members request for discussions with District 5 citizens, and the specific topics discussed at the meeting.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely reported for the record that Alderman Purtee agreed to vote for her for Vice-Chairman but he voted for Alderman Palumbo after a discussion with Mayor Johnson who encouraged him to consider diversity.

Mayor Johnson stated his integrity was questioned and he is setting the record straight. The rules of Council are outdated and he asked the City Manager, City Attorney and Clerk of Council to prepare an updated Rules of Council that was prepared and presented to Mayor and Council at the same time to review and research.

There followed discussions with the Mayor, Council, and City Manager Monahan concerning the Adoption of Rules of Council.

City Manager Monahan requested the Clerk of Council provide the following documents for Mayor and Council's review: Fulton County, Georgia Rules and prior City of Savannah Rules.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz requested the City Manager schedule a meeting or a retreat to work on how Council moves forward with Rules of Council.

City Attorney Lovett suggested Mayor and Council adopt the Proposed 2020 City Council Meeting Schedule on today's Agenda, Item #5, Attachment 2.

- Police Chief Minter updated Mayor and Council on the recent events and homicides throughout the City. Chief Minter shared information on the status of six gunfire cases and discussed the steps to work with the community and organizations to curtail the violence.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked if any proposals on resolving crime and any talking issues in a real way were presented to the City Manager; how many officers were on patrol in those areas where the crimes were committed; and, what is the Southside patrol schedule. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter proposed Chief Minter submit to the City Manager an immediate plan of action to curtail homicides.

Alderwoman Lanier shared that in 2004-2006 there was a Weed & Seed Grant Program on the Westside for consideration. There is a Community Oriented Police (COP) program that should be investigated for the communities. She asked Chief Minter to look into programs that will prevent crime, seed programs to prevent crime, and programs to improve quality of life in the neighborhoods.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely inquired if Chief Minter has reached out to the local high schools for recruitment of new police officers. She asked how many officers on the force were recruited from high schools.

There followed a discussion period with Mayor, Council Members and Chief Minter on long-term and short-term ways to eradicate crime in the City and methods to involve the communities and neighborhoods in establishing committees to divert violence.

Mayor Johnson asked Chief Minter to continue giving updates at Council Work Sessions until the crime/violence issue is under control.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter requested Chief Minter to supply real numbers with respect to the Charter, Section 3. 206, Commission for the poor.

[2. Legal Update](#)

[Exhibit 1: Legal Update Presentation.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson and City Manager Monahan discussed the Council requested work shops. Mayor Johnson suggested holding work shops on non-meeting Council days as special meetings. City Manager Monahan will work with Mayor and Council to start scheduling those work shops.

Mayor Johnson introduced City Attorney Bates Lovett for a legal update. Attorney Lovett introduced Deputy City Attorney Jen Herman and Assistant City Attorney Denise Cooper.

Attorney Lovett gave an outline of the responsibilities of the City Attorney's office including information on outside legal counsel used by the City. He briefly updated Mayor and Council on the status of eighty-seven cases currently handled by his office and the cost of settlement.

Alderwoman Lanier spoke in regards to contracting and nepotism within the City staff. She has recognized names and relationships and wanted to make a note of it on record.

[3. Bonding Public Projects Presentation](#)

[Exhibit 1: Bonding City Projects Presentation.pptx](#)

Presented by Robert James and Natalia N. Pearson-Farrer from Golden Holly James LLP, Jay Glover and Elise Lomel from PFM Financial Advisors LLC, and Jon Pannell from Gray Pannell & Woodward LLP.

Mr. James, Mr. Glover, Ms. Pearson-Farrer, and Mr. Pannell gave a brief outline of various municipal bonds, terminology, why municipalities use bonds, major participants in the issuance of bonds, bond ratings, market indicators and how bonds are sold.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz recommended the bond team come before the Council prior to making major decisions on projects that need to be bonded.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan questioned Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderwoman Lanier's decisions to decline affordable housing in their districts.

Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz stated it is the will of District 5 citizens not to have affordable housing on the Fairgrounds property.

Alderwoman Lanier stated that is incorrect, the files for the last fifteen to twenty years will show that she previously came before Council advocating for affordability to building wealth in no wealth communities by utilizing asset based economic development. She spent two and a half years at the University of Georgia getting certified as the only government certified person in Savannah with economic development from the Carver Institute of Government to be an expert in this area. The historical record will show that she was shut down by the former Council Members when she advocated for those no wealth communities. She is no longer the Community President but as a Council Member, she can now impact policy.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked if the City of Savannah has ever achieved a AAA rating. She inquired of the presenters if they had heard of the Rockingham Farm project.

Alderwoman Lanier asked if the City issued bonds to increase the availability of jobs which would decrease the City unemployment rate, would that increase the City's bond rating.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter suggested to City Manager Monahan that big ticket items should be introduced/discussed with Council prior to meetings. Going forward, she suggested the City Manager set policy to include Council on decision making for issuing bonds. She asked the City Manager if there are any current policies of when the City issues bonds.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked Mr. James how a citizens would purchase bonds. She stated the presentation was needed information for Council and more time should be allotted for descriptions, market information and how the City might use the bonds for projects.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan asked the City Manager if Tax Anticipated Notes could be used for funding programs within the City.

Alderwoman Lanier asked if you issued bonds through the Downtown Savannah Authority, is it for a particular capital project, and is that the only source of revenue or can there be multiple streams of revenue.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked what kinds of bonds could be used specifically for community centers, and programs.

[4. Rockingham Farms Presentation](#)

Not presented.

[5. 2020 Legislative Update](#)

[Exhibit 1: 2020 Legislative Update.pdf](#)

Not Presented.

[6. St. Patrick's Day Presentation](#)

[Exhibit 1: 2020 St. Patrick's Day Presentation .pdf](#)

Not presented.

[7. Special Events Ordinance Presentation](#)

[Exhibit 1: 2020 Special Events Ordinance Presentation.pdf](#)

Not presented.

[8. Litigation, Real Estate and Personnel](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to recess the meeting for a closed executive session regarding real estate, Alderwoman Miller Blakely seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The work session ended at 12:59 p.m.

The executive session began at 1:16 p.m.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to close the executive session regarding real estate, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The executive session ended at 1:50 p.m., thereby ending the work session.

[9. Review of Agenda](#)

Agenda not reviewed.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 1:59 p.m.

The video recording of the Council meeting can be found by copying and inserting the below link in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=Nar889zJADYA>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Initials: _____

