



## SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT

### SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

#### COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

APRIL 22, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the City Council Work Session and City Manager's Briefing was held via Zoom video communications at 4:00 p.m. Following the roll call, Mayor Johnson recognized Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz to offer the invocation.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

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

Aldерwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Aldерwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Aldерwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

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

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Acting City Manager Michael B. Brown

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Chief Operating Officer Bret Bell

Sustainability Director Nick Deffley

Fleet Services Director Rafael A. Vega Martinez

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

#### Workshop Agenda Items

##### [1. Fleet Services Agreement](#)

Mayor Johnson wished everyone a Happy 'Earth Day'. The City is celebrating 'Earth Month'; the following presentation gives the City an opportunity to achieve its goal of an improved economy and environment.

Acting City Manager Brown, Chief Operating Officer Bret Bell, Sustainability Director Nick Deffley, and Fleet Services Director Rafael A. Vega Martinez presented the Power Point side presentation. Mr. Bell indicated the fleet agreement to be placed on the May 13, 2021 agenda.

Following the presentation, there were questions and discussions from the Mayor and Aldermen/Aldерwomen:

Alderman Palumbo is encouraged to see a newer updated fleet with electric vehicles.

Alderman Leggett asked if staff keeps a record of purchase and destruction dates of the current fleet vehicle. If the cars are taken to the auction for sale, and are the police driving the leased vehicles like race cars? Who would be responsible for destroyed vehicles, and what will happen to mechanical staff when the electric cars are fully established? Mr. Brown and Mr. Bell answered, City staff has worked hard over the past 3-4 years to improve driver safety; there has been marketable improvement with the City experiencing the lowest number of vehicle accidents last year. When retiring vehicles, the City sells the cars at auction, or for scrape. The City has a fairly strict pursue policy for police; Mr. Brown will prepare a report for Council Members. The City is responsible for destroyed vehicles which will be sold for scrape. The City has specialty vehicles that will always need mechanics, so the workforce will not be reduced. Mr. Bell indicated the City has a GPS device to track productivity and location of staff using fleet vehicles.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan asked how will the City make money from selling the 300 retired fleet vehicles, who will purchase the used cars, how many has the City sold and who is responsible for the fleet services. Mr. Bell indicated there is a market for all types of vehicles at all times; auctioning the vehicles over the internet and the GovSystem has made selling more advantageous. Mr. Martinez reported Fleet Services is responsible for the purchase and sell of the vehicles; he will prepare a report on the sale of vehicles and the amounts recovered and submit to Council. Any money recovered from the sale goes back into Fleet Services budget. She asked Attorney Lovett if the City has any liability when selling the vehicles. Attorney Lovett answered, no.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked about the reduced labor hours in the department and inquired if there will be any training for the mechanics when the new cars are purchased. She asked will the City pay for the training. Mr. Brown answered, the stated reduced hours is the equivalent of one full time person which the department can easily absorb. The City has a history of assisting mechanics in specialized training so all vehicles can be serviced; most mechanics are cross-trained for efficiency.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter questioned why the City approved over \$7 million earlier this year for gas and vehicles; why approve those inefficient vehicles when the City's goal is to be a clean energy community. Mr. Brown indicated, back in January there was an immediate fleet need, over time old vehicles will be phased out for clean energy cars. It will take five years to replace all the light duty vehicles. She asked if the City will spend the entire (nearly \$7 million) amount approved for fuel. Mr. Brown explained the amount was up to, and the City will only use what is necessary.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked about Item #9 on the agenda, purchasing automotive batteries for vehicles; she asked why the City purchased the batteries before the vehicles. Mr. Brown explained the staff needs to maintain the fleet which requires batteries; the batteries will be used as needed but they must be on hand for repairs. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter feels this is not the most efficient use of City funds to buy batteries to sit on the shelf. Mr. Brown explained the mechanics need to have automotive supplies on hand for repairs, so vehicles can be repaired and placed back in service. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Mr. Bell the cost of the fleet agreement. Mr. Bell answered, \$1.5 million per year to own. She asked Mr. Bell why he did not make the recommendation to own in relation to the \$10 million to rent and resurface the parking at the Arena. Mr. Bell answered it was the most cost effective way to provide parking at the Arena.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Mr. Deffley if the assistant for the department of Sustainability was hired. Mr. Deffley answered, he is completing the final round of interviews and expects to send an offer letter next week. She asked Mr. Deffley regarding the charging stations at Eastern Wharf, how many were provided by Georgia Power and how many provided by the City. The City provided eighteen total charging stations and Georgia Power provided all the infrastructure for the stations, which was the majority of the cost. Mr. Bell stated there were seven charging stations. She asked Mr. Deffley if staff is working with his office for priority of placement of the charging stations. Mr. Deffley answered, yes.

## [2. Recycling and Litter](#)

Acting City Manager Brown and Sanitation Director Gene Prevatt presented the PowerPoint slide presentation.

Following the presentation:

Mayor Johnson asked if it would be advisable to share the PowerPoint presentation with the Sustainability Taskforce to share information with the public and gauge suggestions for glass disposal. Mr Brown stated sharing the information is a good idea.

Alderman Purtee has concerns regarding the consistency of pick-up of recycling items on the Southside and the inadequate street sweeping. Mr. Prevatt stated there are challenges for being on time with the recycling pick-up; staff is working to make improvements. Mr. Prevatt will make inquiries concerning the street sweeping schedule and prepare a follow-up report.

Mayor Johnson asked staff to figure out a way to better communicate with residents on delayed trash, recycling and street sweeping schedule. If staff cannot make the scheduled pick-ups, residents should be notified. Mr. Prevatt indicated notifications are sent to residents when schedules are delayed, however Item #13, Route Optimizations and Management Software, on today's agenda will eliminate a majority of delays.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan thanked Mr. Prevatt and his staff for doing an outstanding job and the establishment of 'Rock the Block' programs in each District. She asked if staff takes advantage of submitting Federal grants to EPA. Mr. Prevatt's staff has submitted modest grants in education and outreach; they have not received major resources from grants. Since the establishment of recycling in 2009, the City has not received resources for the establishment of the program. Has the City received any revenue from recycling? Mr. Brown stated, in the beginning the City received \$15.00 per ton for recycling, now the City pays \$150.00 per ton. If the City doesn't pay, the recycling goes into the landfill. Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan recommended more resources and staff for the sanitation department.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan asked Mr. Prevatt if the new 311 system is capable of sending out robocalls concerning sanitation issues. Mr. Brown answered, the robocalls are used primarily for emergencies. She asked Mr. Prevatt what are the needs of the sanitation department. In the 2021 Budget, Mr. Prevatt submitted a service enhancement request for additional staff and trucks. Item #13, Route Optimizations and Management Software, on today's agenda will greatly improve the efficiency of customer services.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked Mr. Prevatt about the 33 staff members he mentioned. Mr. Prevatt stated the employees are in the recycling and abatement division: 1 director, 2 administrative assistants, 2 supervisors, 2 support staff, operators and sanitation workers which comes to nine crews in the fields. Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked how many temporary staff are part of the department. It varies depending on how many full-time equivalent positions are vacant. Mr. Prevatt uses local temporary employment agencies for staff to maintain customer service. Alderwoman Miller Blakely recommends hiring full-time staff to fill the vacancies in the sanitation department. Temporary staff do not take the initiative like full-time employees who fulfill assignments. Mr. Prevatt agreed. Mr. Brown reminded Council in November they voted not to increase sanitation fees. The sanitation department is experiencing a 15%-20% increase and need additional staff to accommodate the service needs. Council will be presented, in the future, with a request for a sanitation fee increase for additional resources and staff to meet the demand. Mr. Prevatt makes every effort to fill vacant positions with full-time staff, but there are instances when temporary staff is needed to fill the void for service demands; he would prefer employees who are invested in the community.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter thanked Mr. Prevatt and his staff for helping launch the litter program, '2 Legit 2 Lit'. She asked could there be efforts to involve the courts, probation department or sheriff's office in using offenders to help with litter clean-up efforts. Mr. Prevatt has used community service in the past but last year during COVID-19 the program came to a halt. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter requested Mr. Brown revisit the program.

In regards to glass recycling, Alderwoman Gibson-Carter has met Ms. Malena A. Glass, Owner of Lammergeier Glass Recycling, a local African American business. She asked Mr. Brown if the City was using a glass recycling company from South Carolina. Mr. Brown indicated the City is not working with any company for glass recycling. It's possible the City could develop a relationship with Lammergeier Glass Recycling, the challenge is getting the glass from the homes to the recycling center; the logistics would need to be worked out. Mr. Prevatt has contacted Lammergeier Glass Recycling; a system to collect glass from 25,000 homes will need to be discussed.

With the quarterly review of the City Budget, Alderwoman Gibson-Carter recommends an increase in salary for sanitation workers; the quarterly City Budget review will lend an opportunity for Mr. Prevatt to submit department requirements for the remainder of the budget year. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated, Council has no desire to increase taxes or service fees, rather adequately allocate resources to the most needed areas for employees needing it the most. She questioned a one million dollar, year-old software system to detect how residents recycled and the status of the system. Mr. Prevatt answered, the system never worked correctly; the City discontinued use. She asked how the staff measures recycling, what the data reveals, and are there any incentives. Mr. Prevatt answered, staff perform hard counts periodically which reveals 48% of residents participate with no incentives; there is no data per community/district, but the requested software system on today's agenda, Item #13, will provide software for specific data.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked how City staff can address tires being thrown on residents private property. Mr. Prevatt stated under State Law, the City cannot place tires in landfills; the City staff collects tires individually, at a cost to the City. Mr. Prevatt encouraged residents to report any person/vehicle tossing/throwing tires on private and/or City property. Neighborhood presidents have requested cameras and 'No Dumping' signs posted, Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Mr. Prevatt

how effective are cameras and signs. The City is in the process of posting 'No Dumping' signs on all dead-end streets and hot spots throughout the City, along with some cameras. Little has yielded any results but it will take time. Signs do not deter people, education and outreach is a helpful tool; get more residents aware and involved to address the tire issue.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter reminded Mr. Brown, she will follow-up with Lammergeier Glass Recycling, the probation/courts/sheriff's departments for assistance in litter pick-up, and establishing increases for sanitation workers during the City's quarterly budget review.

Alderman Palumbo discussed the issue of glass recycling; its not the pick-up from the residents, it's market demands. Instead of recycling, the City should upcycle glass and find providers who will utilize the glass as a viable material into the future. Alderman Palumbo suggested keeping the materials local. He will meet with Mr. Prevatt to discuss green waste in the landfill.

Alderman Palumbo suggested allowing more time for workshops and/or Council Members to have staff answer questions prior to the meetings to avoid delays in the meetings.

Alderwoman Lanier expressed the West Savannah residents appreciation to Mr. Prevatt and his staff for cleaning an area this week filled with debris since the last hurricane (2 years); and for the many cleaning events throughout the Districts. Pilot programs should be established to include residents in clean-up events and include education with the Sustainability Department. She discussed citizen information submitted on plastic initiatives, zero carbon and aluminum uses.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz expressed thanks to Mr. Prevatt, his staff and Ms. Carliss Bates for all the clean-up efforts in District 5. She recommended the City continue to put cameras and post signs for dumping violators. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz acknowledged and supports Alderwoman Gibson-Carter and Alderman Palumbo's efforts for sustainability and zero carbon.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan asked Mr. Brown to communicate with Chief Community Services Officer Taffanye Young regarding the grant submitted last year for the use of homeless individuals to help with City litter pick-up.

Mayor Johnson thanked the presenters and staff for all the hard work on behalf of the City. In the coming weeks, he will present to Council an option/opportunity on how to make a good investment in employees. In past years, different charities have assisted the City with clean-up, but COVID-19 prevented continuation; he is looking forward to reestablishing those relationships. In the near future, Mayor Johnson will introduce a volunteer program for citizens and businesses to significantly reduce the single use of plastic products.

Mr. Prevatt thanked the many staff members from Sanitation who contributed to the PowerPoint presentation.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the work session at 6:27 p.m.

Mayor Johnson ordered the Regular Meeting will begin at 6:40 p.m., in order to give staff time to prepare/readjust.

The audio recordings of the work sessions can be found by copying and inserting the below links in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=ZHo2Hq62yl4T>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_