



AUGUST 11, 2022, 2:00 p.m. - CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY GOVERNMENT
OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The regular meeting of the City Council was held at 2:00 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Aldерwoman Wilder-Bryan who introduced Reverend Timothy Sheppard, Pastor of Central Missionary Baptist Church in Thunderbolt, to offer the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

PRESENT:

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
 Alderwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1
 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

ALSO, PRESENT:

City Manager Joseph A. Melder
 Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams
 City Attorney Bates Lovett
 Clerk of Council Mark Massey
 Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

[1. Adoption of the Regular Meeting for August 11, 2022.](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to adopt/approve the agenda, seconded by Alderwoman Lanier and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed, 8-0-1 with Alderwoman Gibson-Carter not present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2. Approval of the Minutes for the Special Called Meeting \(Public Hearing regarding 2022 Property Tax Millage Rate\) Held on July 28, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Draft Minutes - July 28, 2022 City Council Special Meeting.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3 and #4, seconded by Alderwoman Miller Blakely, Alderwoman Lanier and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[3. Approval of the Minutes for the Work Session and City Manager's Briefing Held on July 28, 2022, at 4:30 p.m.](#)[Exhibit 1: Draft Minutes - July 28, 2022 City Council Workshop.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3 and #4, seconded by Alderwoman Miller Blakely, Alderwoman Lanier and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[4. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Meeting Held on July 28, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.](#)[Agenda Plus RM DRAFT MINUTES July 28, 2022 City Council Regular Meeting.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3 and #4, seconded by Alderwoman Miller Blakely, Alderwoman Lanier and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

PRESENTATIONS[5. Appearance and Recognition of Truist Bank's Donation of \\$15,000 into the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund](#)

Mayor Johnson introduced Community Housing Services Agency Executive Director Anita Smith-Dixon.

Ms. Smith-Dixon introduced two members of the Community Housing Services Agency's (CHSA) Board, Mr. Chad Jacobs of Truist Bank and Ms. Sherry Butler of WellsFargo Bank. She thanked both Mr. Jacobs and Ms. Butler for serving on the Board and contributing towards building better affordable housing communities in Savannah.

Mr. Patton Dugas, Mr. Chad Jacobs and Ms. Stephanie Johnson of Truist Bank presented the City with a check for \$15,000.00 for the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund. Mr. Dugas thanked Council Members for the opportunity to participate in the affordable housing efforts in Savannah.

Ms. Butler presented the City with a check for \$20,000.00 for the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund. Ms. Butler expressed WellsFargo's appreciation to be a partner with the City in building affordable neighborhoods and helping homeowners with needed repairs.

Mayor Johnson thanked Truist and WellsFargo Banks for their donations and Ms. Butler for serving on the Savannah Housing Task Force. He also thanked Ms. Smith-Dixon for her work through CHSA.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #5 and #6, acknowledging the donations from Truist and WellsFargo Banks, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[6. Appearance and Recognition of Wells Fargo Bank's Donation of \\$20,000 into the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund.](#)

Mayor Johnson introduced Community Housing Services Agency Executive Director Anita Smith-Dixon.

Ms. Smith-Dixon introduced two members of the Community Housing Services Agency's (CHSA) Board, Mr. Chad Jacobs of Truist Bank and Ms. Sherry Butler of WellsFargo Bank. She thanked both Mr. Jacobs and Ms. Butler for serving on the Board and contributing towards building better affordable housing communities in Savannah.

Mr. Patton Dugas, Mr. Chad Jacobs and Ms. Stephanie Johnson of Truist Bank presented the City with a check for \$15,000.00 for the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund. Mr. Dugas thanked Council Members for the opportunity to participate in the affordable housing efforts in Savannah.

Ms. Butler presented the City with a check for \$20,000.00 for the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund. Ms. Butler expressed WellsFargo's appreciation to be a partner with the City in building affordable neighborhoods and helping homeowners with needed repairs.

Mayor Johnson thanked Truist and WellsFargo Banks for their donations and Ms. Butler for serving on the Savannah Housing Task Force. He also thanked Ms. Smith-Dixon for her work through CHSA.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #5 and #6, acknowledging the donations from Truist and WellsFargo Banks, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[7. Appearance and Recognition of Team Savannah Staff, Daniel Clayton, for Rendering Aid to Save a Citizen on July 20th, 2022.](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Melder to Daniel Clayton of the Water Resources Department. Mr. Clayton received the City Manager Impact Safety Award for his outstanding service to save a life. While driving in a city vehicle, he was the only motorist to stop and assist a mother & father in getting their son to the hospital while having a seizure.

Mayor Johnson, City Manager Melder and Council thanked Mr. Clayton for his service and for representing the City in a positive light.

ALCOHOL LICENSE HEARINGS - (CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF ALL ITEMS IN THIS SECTION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE)

[8. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\) \(By the Drink\) Alcohol License to Shannon L. Blaney for The Neener Neener Tiki Lounge, a Bar/Lounge at 13015 Abercorn Street between Apache Avenue and Middleground Road in Aldermanic District 6.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - The Neener Neener Tiki Lounge.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - The Neener Neener Tiki Lounge.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - The Neener Neener Tiki Lounge.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - The Neener Neener Tiki Lounge.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan - The Neener Neener Tiki Lounge.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 6: Good Neighborhood Agreement - The Neener Neener Tiki Lounge.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

No speaker(s).

a. Alderman Purtee moved to close the hearings for Items #8 through #15, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

b. Alderman Purtee moved to approve Item 8, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed, 8-1-0. Alderwoman Miller Blakely voted no.

[9. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\) \(By the Drink\) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales to Julie L. Richter for Fairfield Inn & Suites, a Hotel at 135 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard between West Oglethorpe Avenue and Zubly Street in Aldermanic District 1.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Fairfield Inn & Suites.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Fairfield Inn & Suites.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Fairfield Inn & Suites.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Fairfield Inn & Suites.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan - Fairfield Inn & Suites.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

No speaker(s).

a. Alderman Purtee moved to close the hearings for Items #8 through #15, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

b. Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Items #9 and #10, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[10. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\) \(By the Drink\) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales to Julie L. Richter for Aloft Savannah Downtown Historic District, a Hotel at 512 West Oglethorpe Avenue between Ann Street and Martin L. King, Jr. Boulevard in Aldermanic District 1.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Aloft Savannah Downtown.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Aloft Savannah Downtown.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Aloft Savannah Downtown.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Aloft Savannah Downtown.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan - Aloft Savannah Downtown Historic District.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

No speaker(s).

a. Alderman Purtee moved to close the hearings for Items #8 through #15, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

b. Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Items #9 and #10, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[11. Approval of a Class H \(Sample\) Alcohol License to Dayna Lee for Savannah Wine Institute, a Wine School at 602 East Henry Street between East Broad Street and Atlantic Avenue in Aldermanic District 2.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Savannah Wine Institute.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Savannah Wine Institute.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Savannah Wine Institute.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Savannah Wine Institute.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan - Savannah Wine Institute.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

No speaker(s).

a. Alderman Purtee moved to close the hearings for Items #8 through #15, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

b. Alderman Leggett moved to continue Items #11, #13, and #14 to the September 8, 2022, meeting as requested by staff, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[12. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor\) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales to Gary Gordon for 520 Wings, a Restaurant at 2705 Bull Street between West 43rd Street and West Victory Drive in Aldermanic District 2.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - 520 Wings.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - 520 Wings.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - 520 Wings.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - 520 Wings.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan - 520 Wings.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

No speaker(s).

a. Alderman Purtee moved to close the hearings for Items #8 through #15, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

b. Alderman Leggett moved to approve Item #12, seconded by Alderwoman Gibson-Carter and Alderwoman Miller Blakely. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[13. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\) \(By the Drink\) Alcohol License to Lawrence W. Brown, Jr. for Fat Tuesday's, a Bar/Lounge at 19 E. Bay Street between Drayton and Bull Streets in Aldermanic District 2.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Fat Tuesday's Bay Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Fat Tuesday's Bay Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Fat Tuesday's Bay Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Fat Tuesday's Bay Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan - Fat Tuesday's Bay Street.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

No speaker(s).

a. Alderman Purtee moved to close the hearings for Items #8 through #15, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

b. Alderman Leggett moved to continue Items #11, #13, and #14 to the September 8, 2022, meeting as requested by staff, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[14. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\) \(By the Drink\) Alcohol License to Lawrence W. Brown, Jr. for Fat Tuesday's, a Bar/Lounge at 427 East River Street between Lincoln and East Broad Street Ramps in Aldermanic District 2.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Fat Tuesday's River Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Fat Tuesday's River.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Fat Tuesday's River Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Fat Tuesday's River Street.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan - Fat Tuesday's River Street.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

No speaker(s).

a. Alderman Purtee moved to close the hearings for Items #8 through #15, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

b. Alderman Leggett moved to continue Items #11, #13, and #14 to the September 8, 2022, meeting as requested by staff, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[15. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\) \(By the Drink\) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales to Matthew Garappolo for Colleagues and Lovers, a Restaurant at 4523 Habersham Street between East 61st and East 62nd Streets in Aldermanic District 4.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Colleagues & Lovers.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Colleagues & Lovers.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Colleagues & Lovers.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Colleagues & Lovers.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan -Colleagues and Lovers.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

No speaker(s).

a. Alderman Purtee moved to close the hearings for Items #8 through #15, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

b. Alderman Palumbo moved to approve Item #15, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[16. Approval of a Class E \(Beer, Wine\) \(By the Package\) Alcohol License to Mehul Patel for Diamond Food Mart, a Convenience Store at 3017 Bull Street between West 46th and West 47th Streets in Aldermanic District 5.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Diamond Food Mart.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Diamond Food Mart.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Diamond Food Mart.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Diamond Food Mart.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Security Plan - Diamond Food Mart.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the hearings open for Items #8 through #16.

Speaker(s).

- Ardis Wood, made additional recommendations for the owner. Remove rust from sign, remove all litter on the grounds, and maintain property to standards approved by the City.
- Judee Jones, representing the City – ABC
- Mehul Patel, applicant, acknowledged Ms. Wood's request.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked Mr. Patel to maintain his business up to the standards of other properties in the area as requested by Ms. Wood (Mr. Patel agreed).

Alderwoman Lanier thanked Ms. Wood for being a conscientious citizen by patrolling the community, especially recognizing the rusted sign. Hopefully, this will prompt staff and residents to be mindful that other areas of the city (with rusted signs and cyclone fences) need repair.

Mayor Johnson recommended consistency and asked City Manager Melder to direct staff to revisit the policy concerning city property, First Things First, and make sure it is equitable across the City. Mr. Melder indicated Code Compliance was notified of the sign and there will be a workshop in coming months on the new initiatives/actions in the code compliance department, due to the current administration recommendations.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked City Manager Melder if the business location was in an alcohol overlay district. Ms. Jones indicated the location is not in the alcohol overlay district.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz advised residents to monitor their areas and report to 311 any irregularities. Also, she recommended residents considering a new business venture in the 5th District to complete their due diligence before purchasing property to make sure the business will not be in the alcohol overlay district.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #16, seconded by Alderwoman Lanier and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

PURCHASING ITEMS - (CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF ALL ITEMS IN THIS SECTION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE)

[17. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Modification No. 1 for Janitorial and Floor Care Services for Sanitation with Jani-King of Savannah \(LOCAL\) in an Amount not to Exceed \\$12,478. This modification is needed to provide additional janitorial services to the Sanitation Headquarters in Garden City, GA. \(Sanitation\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Sanitation Janitorial.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Sanitation Janitorial.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #17 through #23, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[18. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract Modification and Renewal Adobe Contract Licenses with CDW-G in an Amount not to Exceed \\$35,875. The City utilizes subscriptions with Adobe Software to provide services and applications that give subscribers access to a collection of software used for graphic design, video editing, web development, photography, and document editing on a cloud-based platform. \(ITS\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Adobe Licenses.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Adobe Licenses.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #17 through #23, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[19. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for Tiburon Automated Reporting System \(ARS\) with Central Square Technologies, Inc. in an Amount not to Exceed \\$171,524. Under this contract, maintenance and support will be provided for the ARS and LawRECORDS system and software. This software provides mobile CAD and record management functions to support the daily operations and job functions the Savannah Police and Savannah Fire Departments. \(ITS\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Tiburon Automated Recording System.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Tiburon Automated Recording System.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #17 through #23, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[20. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract to Procure Hardware and Support to Upgrade the Data Center that Supports All on Premise Technology Systems and Services from Dell in an Amount not to Exceed \\$349,596. The Innovation and Technology Services Department will use this purchase to upgrade/replace existing infrastructure devices \(including but not limited to servers and storage equipment\) that have reached capacity and/or are no longer under warranty. \(ITS\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Dell Data Center Upgrade and Technology Systems.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Dell Data Center Upgrade and Technology Systems.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #17 through #23, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[21. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract to Rent One Knuckle Boom Truck and Two Roll-Off Container Trucks in the Amount of \\$265,680 from Heil Environmental in Care of Big Truck Rentals. This will allow the residential refuse division to provide weekly curbside pickup of bulk items and large debris removal following an emergency event and the two roll-off container trucks will be used by the refuse disposal division and commercial disposal division until the knuckle boom trucks and roll-off container trucks previously ordered come in. \(Fleet\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Equipment Rentals.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Equipment Rentals.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #17 through #23, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[22. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract to Procure Five 15-Passenger Vans from National Auto Fleet c/o Auto Fleet Alan Jay Fleet in the Amount of \\$209,050. The vans will be used by the Office of Neighborhood & Engagement Services \(ONES\), Recreation Services Division, Senior Services Division, and the Recycling & Litter Division. The van for ONES will be a FY22 fleet addition and the vans for Recreation Services, Senior Services, and Recycling will be replacing units 6614, 0615, 0713, and 0715, which are scheduled replacements and are no longer economical to maintain. \(Fleet\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - 15-Passenger Vans.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - 15-Passenger Vans.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #17 through #23, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[23. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for a Two-Year Mower Lease Agreement with John Deere c/o Greenville Turf & Tractor in an Amount not to Exceed \\$246,458. The lease agreement will provide 23 mowers to the Fleet Department for two years. \(Fleet\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Leasing of Mowers.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Leasing of Mowers.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #17 through #23, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[24. Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Annual Contract to Transition from a Primarily Manual Water Meter Reading Process to an Advanced Metering Infrastructure \(AMI\) System with Badger Meters, Inc in the amount of \\$5,268,358. \(Water Distribution\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - AMI Meters.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - AMI Meters.pdf](#)

City Manager Melder gave a brief description and explanation of the importance of the new automatic water meter reading system and how it will save the City manpower and revenue. Residents will now have accurate readings of water usage on a regular timetable. There will be no disruption of service to residents during the process.

Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Item #24, seconded by Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed, 8-1-0. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter voted no.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter supported this major purchase during the budget process, but since the City made a similar automated process purchase for the revenue department, residents are experiencing unread meters, water bills are projected and not actual, and billing cycles changed without notifying the public causing late fees and penalties. In addition, several people experienced negative interactions with revenue management staff without any response when questioned by Alderwoman Gibson-Carter. For this reason, she cannot support nor trust management staff to be responsible for over a five million dollar purchase.

City Manager Melder assured Alderwoman Gibson-Carter the management staff and leadership across this division are more than capable and professional of managing the purchases. He explained the decision to upgrade the system goes back to the 2017. Administration, management and staff have worked to achieve a more efficient process of reading the meters for accuracy and a consistent billing cycle. This modernization will allow the City to provide residents with a permanent solution to the current problems.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Mr. Melder to explain why neighborhoods are experiencing increased water bills of 2-3 times their normal bills in a rainy season where there is no lawn watering or washing of cars. She asked city management staff to be honest with the City Manager, so he can be honest with Council and residents that there was a mistake. Until there is acknowledgement of mistakes, there can be no solutions to the problems.

Mayor Johnson supported City Manager Melder's assessment that the present system was not working, and the reasons for the advanced meter reading system investment.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan read from the item summary, "There will be no direct charge to customers for this upgrade: customers will not notice any changes to their water service once the installation is complete. The benefits to customers include receiving timelier and more granular data available to better understand, monitor, and manage their water usage. Customers will have a portal allowing them to view their water and sewer usage on a web portal or mobile app." Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan thanked City Manager Melder for his solutions to solving the much needed water meter problems.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked City Manager Melder how many water meter readers are on staff and if any employees will lose their jobs when the new system is installed. Mr. Melder answered there was an increase of five meter readers this year, but there are approximately 50,000 direct read meters which are read every two months. This new system will modernize/upgrade 30% of the meters, and staff will continue to upgrade, until all meters are upgraded to the automated system. He explained the current meter reader employees will remain on staff, but be reassigned to new areas/responsibilities within the department.

Alderman Palumbo pointed out one distinction concerning this item, the investment is important to the public. This is a service, not a business. All the city's water services are held in the enterprise funds and Council/staff cannot use those funds for anything but water services. There is no profit, the objective is to provide services to the residents. In modernizing the system, residents will receive accurate updated service, thanks to the assistance of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds.

City Manager Melder added, more than \$4 million of ARPA funds will be used to modernize the system and residents will not have to pay for the upgrades. He reported the City received \$57 million in ARPA funds that will be used toward projects/improvements in the communities.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Mr. Melder for a monthly financial report for the local government expenditures and the City Manager's contracts under \$25,000. She wants to add a monthly or quarterly report on how the City is expending the \$57 million ARPA funds.

Mayor Johnson requested City Manager Melder to include Council when sending out the reports requested by Alderwoman Gibson-Carter.

SAVANNAH AIRPORT COMMISSION

[25. Approval of Advertising Placement in the Hilton Head Island and Bluffton Vacation Planners, in the Amount of \\$44,806.98.](#)

HEARD, after Item #7.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #25 through #29, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[26. Approval to Procure One 2023 Low Top Transit Van from J.C. Lewis Ford LLC of Savannah, GA, in the Amount of \\$51,822.64.](#)

HEARD, after Item #7.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #25 through #29, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[27. Approval to Procure One 2023 High Top Transit Van from J.C. Lewis LLC of Savannah, GA, in the Amount of \\$54,039.76.](#)

HEARD, after Item #7.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #25 through #29, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[28. Approval to Procure Services from ALTEL Systems Group Inc., for the Replacement of the Public Address Speakers in Savannah Square, in the Amount of \\$56,885.](#)

[Exhibit 1: SAV Renkus Heinz Upgrade Quote.pdf](#)

HEARD, after Item #7.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #25 through #29, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[29. Approval to Procure Installation Services and Equipment from Infax, Inc., for the Replacement of the Video Wall at the Visitor Information Center, in the Amount of \\$68,489.](#)

HEARD, after Item #7.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #25 through #29, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[30. Approval of a Corporate Partnership with Georgia Southern University for the Three-Year Period of 2022-2025, in the Amount of \\$120,000.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Savannah Airport Commission - GS Athletics Agreement 2022 through 2025.pdf](#)

HEARD, after Item #7.

Alderman Purtee recused himself from the vote, since he is employed with GSU.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Airport Commission representative Dawoud Stevenson if there was a similar agreement with Savannah State College (yes).

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item # 30, seconded by Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed, 8-0-1, with Alderman Purtee abstaining.

AGREEMENTS

[31. Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding Between The United States Attorney's Office, Southern District of Georgia, and The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah Regarding the Appointment of a Special Assistant United States Attorney \(SAUSA\) to the USAO to Further Local, State and Federal Interests Related to Violent Crime in Savannah.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Draft MOU Between USAO, SDGA and City of Savannah.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson gave a brief explanation for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the steps taken to achieve cooperation in appointing an individual to help the City of Savannah decrease issues associated with violent crime.

Speaker(s):

- Rick Ellison (wife, Margaret) - SUPPORTED. President of Retirees United For the Future (RUFF).

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan recognized Alderwoman Lanier who lost a son to gun violence. She expressed concern for all parents who have lost a child to gun violence in the City and thanked RUFF for their support of Item #31.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated this action grieves her heart because she never heard of this important item until she saw it on the agenda. She would like a better understanding of the total process and would have liked to contribute input. She has lost a brother to violent crimes and wish she at least received a phone call to participate in the development of the MOU. She feels citizens know more about items on the agenda than Council Members. Alderwoman Miller Blakely applauded the Ellisons for their efforts but she also would have like to be included in the meetings.

Mayor Johnson explained he sent Council Members a letter in May and has spoken publicly concerning the issue, and he asked the city attorney to elaborate on the MOU.

City Attorney Lovett summarized the MOU. The position is for the prosecution of violent crime in Savannah, it is for federal crime only. The individual will be housed in the US Attorney's office and will work with federal and state agencies. Attorney Lovett stated he was open to answer any additional questions.

Mayor Johnson stated the MOU is straight forward. Now is the time to take action and not continue to complain. Council Members can vote the item up or down. Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated she is not complaining about doing something about violent crime, she is complaining about not being included in the discussions.

Alderman Purtee stated Council Members receive the agenda almost a week before the meetings. There is every opportunity to review and meet with staff on any item prior to the meeting to get more information and ask any questions.

Alderwoman Lanier concurred with Alderwoman Miller Blakely. This is not a time to play politics, Council Members should be able to have input. So a better effort should have been made to inform all Members, otherwise it is unfair to constituents. She asked if the item was time sensitive. City Manager Melder stated if there is a delay, it only delays capacity to prosecute federal cases. Alderwoman Lanier says, this might be a good move, but she would like more discussion on the total aspects of the MOU with Council.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan stated that she felt the conversations were ridiculous. She further stated that she sits on a Council where she is excluded from a lot of things, but this item is too important to delay. Time is of the essence. It is time sensitive to the mother's of violent crime victims. Council Members receive agenda information in enough time to ask questions before the meetings. Lastly, she stated that this is about the crimes in Savannah. She wants more eyes on more cases to put criminals behind bars.

Alderman Palumbo stated he had no advance knowledge of Item #31, but he has absolutely no objection. He understands the importance of prosecuting cases when the justice system is backlogged.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter expressed concern for educating the public on Council decisions and how it will impact their lives. She explained and described the various crimes in the city and linked sexual assault crimes to other crimes throughout the city. She stated the majority of crimes in the city are not federal but state offenses. Item #31 is a personnel issue, the MOU is 1/3 about the individual that should be discussed in Executive Session. It also sounds like an individual has already been selected. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated black and brown citizens have issues with the justice system, so the City should not enter into an agreement lightly. She has compassion for individuals who have lost loved ones to gun violence, but this decision should not be based on emotions. A workshop on this topic would have helped Council to discuss and understand the MOU better. As an

At-Large Alderwoman, she is responsible for representing the entire City, so her voice must be heard wide and broad on this issue.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked City Attorney Lovett if there are any current best practices on this issue (the MOU being used is a draft from Austin, Texas); did the City meet/collaborate with our District Attorney Shalena Cook Jones (no, it is not for her office, it is for the US Attorney's office); and when choosing which cases, how will discretion work (it will be the US Attorney's office discretion). Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated it is unclear on how Savannah Police Department will determine if cases are federal, state or local.

City Attorney Lovett and City Manager Melder responded whatever agency is working the case will be working with those Prosecutors to determine how to best make the case. The MOU is an attempt to add capacity to the US Attorney's office to focus specifically on Savannah cases and move them through the system quickly. Mr. Melder says it is not the "cure-all" for violent crime, but it is a step in the right direction in controlling public safety. He is recommending approval by Council.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated she appreciates City Manager Melder's point of view, but she asked what is the City prioritizing and is this a relative tool when the majority of homicides and gun violence are not federal.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan called for the vote.

City Manager Melder acknowledged the City also sent the letter to District Attorney Jones. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked if there was a response. Mayor Johnson indicated there was a response and they met with District Attorney Jones. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter responded the City is in transition with leadership and asked if the police department was included in the discussions. Mr. Melder stated he met with Interim Police Chief Gunther. An outcome of more prosecutorial help is a good thing for all the public safety efforts.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated she has concerns with the City not focusing on strengthening internal departments, but the City working on strengthening their capacity with outer forces is a backwards approach. Individuals with experience working in the system and working with equity issues know the justice system, police departments and courts need work. To enter into an agreement that will impact many lives, criminals as well as victims, is irresponsible.

Alderman Purtee stated we are not clearing backlogs, that is the district attorney's job. In the last year or so, the City has focused on police issues, salaries, better benefits, and structure. Solving homicides means getting criminals off the streets that have guns. Police don't know if a homicide is federal related. The MOU is a tool the City can use to keep its residents safe. The information was given to Council in enough time to have discussions, and make a decision. It doesn't cost the tax payers anything. That is a big benefit to everyone.

Alderwoman Lanier addressed Mr. Melder and indicated this is clearly a personnel issue. She asked how will they measure the return on the investment. She shared how her son was killed by gun violence. Alderwoman Lanier expressed her desire to have the opportunity to discuss the MOU in advance. Looking at other studies is valuable information that encourages the City to make investments in this type of tool to impact the target age.

City Manager Melder discussed executive sessions as it relates to personnel. The executive session personnel discussions are specifically for the City Manager, City Attorney and Clerk of Council appointments by Council per the City Charter. All other personnel issues are under the authority of the City Manager except for practicing law (City Attorney authority). Mr. Melder asked Council to look at the overall approach to public safety in totality from athletic services & programs, neighborhood watches, parks, recreation & community centers, at-risk indicators, mental health services, and our city's police department. This is another added benefit toward public safety.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz remarked on the emails received by Council. Since June there has been over 40 emails informing Council of some type of violence. The number one strategic goal of the Council is public safety. It is important for the public to be informed of the current MOU before Council. If there is an opportunity to reach youth not involved in crime, then this item is a good tool.

Mayor Johnson discussed crime as it relates to the approval of the MOU. This is an opportunity for Council to make a positive meaningful move to eliminate crime in the city.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked for the cost which was missing from the MOU. The City will pay the salary and benefits of the individual not to exceed \$100,000.00. The administrative cost, office supplies, and investigative materials will be supplied by the US Attorneys office.

a. Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to approve Item #31, seconded by Alderman Palumbo and Alderman Purtee. The motion passed, 6-3-0. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter, Alderwoman Miller Blakely, and Alderwoman Lanier voted no.

Alderman Miller Blakely expressed concern for the MOU being like the federal crime bill passed years ago under President Clinton. Mayor Johnson indicated this is not a crime bill.

MISCELLANEOUS

[32. Approval for the Installation of a Historical Marker on Public Property Near 1 East Bay Street to Recognize the Fertilizer Industry in the South.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Signed Board Recommendation to City Council.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: HSMC Application for Historical Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Submittal Packet.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #32 and #33, seconded by Alderman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Purtee. The motion passed, 8-1-0. Alderman Gibson-Carter voted no.

[33. Approval of Major Subdivision Bradley Point Phase 12.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Plat - Major Subdivision Bradley Point Phase 12.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #32 and #33, seconded by Alderman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Purtee. The motion passed, 8-1-0. Alderman Gibson-Carter voted no.

[34. Approval of an Honorary Street Designation for "Raphael Warnock Way" Located on Cape Street within Kayton Frazier Homes for Senator Reverend Raphael Warnock.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Petition Packet - Raphael Warnock Way.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson identified the location of the street designation and gave a brief history of Senator Warnock's upbringing and family history in Savannah. The designation went before the Historic Sites & Monuments Commission and received unanimous support in honoring the son of Savannah. He thanked City Manager Melder, City Attorney Lovett, Director of Policy & Intergovernmental Affairs Joe Shearouse, Rev. Andrew Young and the Housing Authority of Savannah for their support in finalizing the designation.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz provided the name of Senator Warnock's publication, "The Divided Mind of the Black Church: Theology, Piety, and Public Witness" and the link to ancestry of black history/herstory. Savannah has names of streets residents have no idea who the people are. This is an opportunity to change some names of streets in recognition of black/brown people to give meaning behind the street names.

Alderman Gibson-Carter expressed concern and reminded Council this was an election season, especially since Senator Warnock is campaigning for reelection. The timeliness of naming the street in recognition of Senator Warnock is of concern to her. The area may be deserving, but there are other overriding issues (deplorable conditions and crime) in the housing units that need attention. Alderman Gibson-Carter expressed concerns for those residents advocating to rename a square after Susan B. Taylor for the past two years, and this designation is moved ahead in the process. On principle, she cannot support this Item.

Mayor Johnson responded to Alderman Gibson-Carter's concerns stating Senator Warnock has run for office the past three years, this is an acknowledgment to honor our Senator, it has passed all the necessary requirements by the Historic Sites & Monuments Commission. A meeting was held this week on the Susan B. Taylor naming and final steps must be completed. It must be approved by the Historic Sites & Monuments Commission. He encouraged Council Members to vote their conscience.

Alderman Wilder-Bryan remembered Senator Warnock speaking on his eleven siblings and being born and raised in public housing. Black history should be recognized every day in Savannah, and to say a Junior Senator was raised in Savannah's public housing is encouragement to other children in Frazier Homes.

Alderman Lanier recognized Senator Warnock's humble beginnings, but she asked what has he done to give back to his community. Alderman Lanier and Alderman Miller Blakely walked through Kayton Homes and spoke with residents and children who expressed a desire to have the large storage shed turned back into a gym to get the children off the streets. The Aldermen reached out to the Housing Authority and Commissioner Larry 'Gator' Williams (the Commissioner was in support of restoring the gym) for assistance in getting the storage shed turned back into a gym with no success. Alderman Lanier stated she reached out to get assistance on saving the Weeping Time property, even going to Washington, DC for assistance. However, when talks of removing the overpass on MLK began, the Junior Senator was very involved. She ended by saying 'let's give honor where honor is due'.

Mayor Johnson stated the storage facility (gym) in Kayton Homes is owned by the Housing Authority. Mayor Johnson and City Manager Melder have met with representatives of the Housing Authority to discuss renovation of the storage facility and learned it would take approximately \$3 million to return the facility back into a gym. Mayor Johnson had conversations with Secretary Fudge who plans on a

Fall visit to Savannah to work with the City and Housing Authority on public housing issues. However; at this time, Council is deliberating on the designation of naming a street.

Alderman Leggett reported a recent meeting to name the square in honor of Susan B. Taylor. He also acknowledged Mayor Johnson has met with the committee this week and was informed of final steps to rename the square. Alderman Leggett indicated there are a few issues that need to be addressed for the Historic Sites & Monuments final approval, but the committee will resolve those issues soon.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to approve Item #34, seconded by Alderman Leggett. The motion passed, 6-3-0. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter, Alderwoman Miller Blakely, and Alderwoman Lanier voted no.

Mayor Johnson thanked Council and Rev. Young for his attendance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

City Manager Melder introduced and welcomed two (2) new Team Savannah members: Takesha Brown, Diversity Equity & Inclusion Officer (previously worked at GSU), and Ron Feldner, Senior Director for Water Resources (former City Manager of Garden City).

Alderwoman Miller Blakely congratulated Latasha Barnes of Save Our Youth Savannah on receiving the honor of MLK Trailblazer. She stated how proud she is of all the youth going to college and back to school. Alderwoman Miller Blakely announced her grandson gave her her first great grandson.

Mayor Johnson announced and congratulated the Savannah Bananas on defeating the Wilson Tobs, winning the 2022 Coastal Plain League championship.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan announced the national monument of survivors of gun violence. Oga & LeRoy Williams lost their son, Dominique. Several organization will hold an event on Saturday evening at Dominique's World to memorialize local victims.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely thanked Mr. Prevatt for the Door Knockers and was pleased to announce they will be placed on every door in the Quail Forest neighborhood.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Regular Meeting at 4:19 p.m.

A video recording of the Regular Meeting can be found by copying and inserting the link below in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=HkyK2eRhAUzb>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

