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**SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT  
SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 – 2:00 p.m.**

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the regular meeting of the City Council was held via Zoom video communications at 2:00 p.m. Mayor Johnson requested Alderman Nick Palumbo to introduce Bishop Stephen Parkes, Bishop-Elect of the Diocese of Savannah, who provided 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, 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

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

[1. Adoption of the Regular Meeting Agenda for September 10, 2020](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to adopt/approve the regular meeting agenda for September 10, 2020 as presented, Alderman Palumbo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

[2. Approval of Minutes for the Special Meeting re: Personnel held on August 26, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.](#)

[Agenda Plus - DRAFT Minutes\\_August 26, 2020 City Council Special Meeting.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #2, #3 and #4, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[3. Approval of Minutes for the Work Session and City Manager's Briefing held on August 27, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #2, #3 and #4, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[4. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting held on August 27, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.](#)[Agenda Plus\\_RM-DRAFT MINUTES\\_August 27, 2020 City Council Meeting.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #2, #3 and #4, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**PRESENTATIONS**[5. Appearance by Lauren Heldreth of Turn the Towns Teal to Announce September as National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month](#)

PRESENTED by Mayor Johnson to Ms. Lauren Heldreth. Ms. Heldreth thanked the Mayor and Aldermen for the recognition. She presented information and awareness regarding Ovarian Cancer. She further indicated an annual test is not automatically administered, so a request for a CA-125 blood test should be requested. Ms. Heldreth lost her mother due to ovarian cancer two years ago. Next week teal-colored ribbons will be tied around trees at Forsyth Park to bring awareness to this type of cancer. Symptoms will be listed on the ribbons and it will promote further discussion on the disease.

Mayor Johnson thanked Ms. Heldreth for bringing awareness to the issue.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter thanked Ms. Heldreth for bringing awareness to the issue. She further indicated if caught early enough this cancer can be overcome, and individuals affected can go on to live productive, healthy lives. The teal color is shared with "rape and sexual violence" advocacy work. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked Ms. Heldreth to continue with this campaign.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked Ms. Heldreth to repeat the name of the test that women should request. Ms. Heldreth responded it is the CA-125 blood test which is used to diagnose ovarian cancer. This test is not done through a physical or a gynecological exam.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked Ms. Heldreth and others for bringing awareness to this cause within our community.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mayor Johnson requested a point of personal privilege regarding the following matters:

- Sickle Cell Awareness Month (September) - He is wearing red accordingly.
- Suicide Prevention Awareness Month (This Week) - 10th leading cause of death in the US. In 2018, 48,344 Americans died by suicide. In 2018, an estimated 1.4 million suicide attempts. It is highest among middle-aged white men, but all demographics are catching up. In 2018, men died by suicide 3.56 times more than women. On average, there are 132 suicides per day. In 2018, firearms accounted for 50.57% of all suicide deaths. In hard times like now when people are isolated and alone, he is bringing awareness to this issue and push information out, the Suicide Awareness Hotline is 800-273-8255.
- Tomorrow is September 11th, the largest, single, deadliest incident and terrorist attack in the human history of the United States, including for firefighters and law enforcement officers. 343 firefighters and 72 law enforcement officers were killed, 2977 fatalities and over 25,000 injuries, plus at least \$10 billion worth of infrastructure and property damage.

Mayor Johnson asked for a moment of silence in honor of those who were victimized and those who are still suffering in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

**CONSENT AGENDA** - (This section shall include all routine items for which it is anticipated there will be no debate or requests for public input. Any Alderman can remove consent items for discussion or separate consideration.)

[6. Authorize the City Manager to Execute Modification No. 1 to the 311 Software Agreement with SHI International, Inc. in the Amount of \\$22,800 \(Event No. 7598\)](#)[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - 311 Software Licenses.pdf](#)[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - 311 Software Licenses.pdf](#)

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter moved to approve item #6, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked the City Manager about the modification request for additional licenses. The City Manager provided this is for additional licenses needed for an upgrade of the 311-system, creation of a smartphone app which allows the user to take pictures of a service need, Geo-tag it with a date of when it was taken, and provide updates to the citizen or councilmember. You will be able to see service requests by district or for the entire city, to include the date(s) filed, how long it took to complete or the current status of it. Thereby improving communication between the public, staff and councilmembers. The twenty-one licenses are for water and sanitation staffers and councilmembers.

Alderman Palumbo extended kudos to Daphanie Williams for her work on the project, since the beginning of the year. As a historic city, our 311 program was also one of the first and it is time for an update and an overhaul. Since the beginning of the year, he stated we have been working on this overhaul. This program is run inside City Hall by our own employees. The 311 Department is one of

the best and one of his favorite departments in the City. The additional licenses will help to give the department a technical leg-up. Alderman Palumbo looks forward to this coming online very soon, and having a demo for the City Council.

[7. Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Agreement for Well Maintenance with Woodrow Sapp Well Drilling for up to \\$60,750 \(Event No. 7616\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Well Maintenance.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Well Maintenance.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #7, #9, #10 and #11, Alderman Leggett and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[8. Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Agreement for a Credit Card Processing System with Windcave, Inc. in the Amount of \\$35,000 \(Event No. 8051\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Payment Processing System.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Payment Processing System.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve item #8, Alderman Leggett and Alderwoman Miller Blakely seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked the City Manager about the new credit card processing system for the five parking garages. The City Manager advised this is an enhancement to the current system to increase automation, as a result of theft experienced a few years ago and a recommendation from consultants that were hired. The new system provides backup, should the power go out, and for processing of credit cards. This is an annual fee paid for by the parking fund.

[9. Authorize the City Manager to Procure Water Meter Testing Equipment and Software from Mars Company in the Amount of \\$74,165 \(Event No. 8052\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Water Meter Testing Upgrade.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Water Meter Testing Upgrade.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #7, #9, #10 and #11, Alderman Leggett and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[10. Notification of an Emergency Purchase of Repair Services to Water Treatment Equipment with GEA Mechanical in the Amount of \\$39,018.04 \(Event No. 8043\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Repairs to Water Treatment Equipment.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Repairs to Water Treatment Equipment.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #7, #9, #10 and #11, Alderman Leggett and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[11. Notification of an Emergency Purchase of Repair Services for the Landfill Compactor with Tractor and Equipment Company in the Amount of 36,290.68 \(Event No. 8015\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Landfill Compactor Repairs.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Landfill Compactor Repairs.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #7, #9, #10 and #11, Alderman Leggett and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### PURCHASING ITEMS

[12. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for Leachate Pumping and Hauling Services with ED Trucking for up to \\$468,000 \(Event No. 7839\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Summary - Leachate Pumping and Hauling Services.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Funding Verification - Leachate Pumping and Hauling Services.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve item #12, Alderwoman Lanier and Alderwoman Miller Blakely seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Johnson advised funding is being provided from the sanitation fund. 144 bids were sent out and the City only received one.

The City Manager pointed out this contract is a 100% DBE Prime Contract and local.

#### SAVANNAH AIRPORT COMMISSION

[13. Approval to Procure a Nutanix Server System from CDW-G in the Amount of \\$74,734.51](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Document - Nutanix Server System.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #13 through #19, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[14. Approval to Procure Taxiway Light Fixtures and Connection Kits from Allen Enterprises, Inc. in the Amount of \\$62,395.95](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Documents - Taxiway Light Fixtures.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #13 through #19, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[15. Approval to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with the Vaquer Firm, LLC for Local & State Governmental Affairs in the Amount of \\$60,000](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Documents - Local and State Governmental Affairs.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #13 through #19, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[16. Approval to Execute an Agreement with JSM Associates for Design and Construction Administration Services in the Amount of \\$39,386](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Documents - Design and Construction Administration Services.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #13 through #19, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[17. Approval to Procure Professional Services for Street Lighting Installation from Georgia Power Company in the Amount of \\$40,832](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Document - Street Lighting Installation.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #13 through #19, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[18. Approval to Procure Two Full Size SUV's from J.C. Lewis Ford in the Amount of \\$84,345](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Document - Full Size SUV.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #13 through #19, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[19. Approval to Execute a Contract with Comfort System's USA for Chiller Maintenance in the Annual Amount of \\$55,848](#)

[Exhibit 1: Purchasing Document - Comfort Systems USA.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Document - Basis of Award Evaluation.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Purchasing Document - Proposer Tab.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Purchasing Document - The SACK Company.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 5: Purchasing Document - Johnson Controls.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve items #13 through #19, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ALCOHOL LICENSE HEARINGS

[20. Approval of a Class E \(Beer, Wine\)\(By the Package\) Alcohol License to Bobby Singh of Mike's Time Saver at 3713 Montgomery St. \(Aldermanic District 5\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Mike's Time Saver.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Mike's Time Saver.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Mike's Time Saver.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Mike's Time Saver.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson opened the Alcohol License Hearings, Items #20, #21 and #22.

a. Alderwoman Lanier moved to close the hearings for Items #20, #21 and #22, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #20, #21 and #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[21. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\)\(By the Drink\) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales to Yumiko Seo of Miyabi Japanese Steak and Seafood at 200 Eisenhower Drive. \(Aldermanic District 4\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - Miyabi Japanese Steak and Seafood.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - Miyabi Japanese Steak and Seafood.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - Miyabi Japanese Steak and Seafood.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Miyabi Japanese Steak and Seafood.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson opened the Alcohol License Hearings, Items #20, #21 and #22.

a. Alderwoman Lanier moved to close the hearings for Items #20, #21 and #22, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #20, #21 and #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[22. Approval of a Class E \(Beer, Wine\)\(By the Package\) Alcohol License for Sudhir Patel of BMD Convenience Store at 3830 Ogeechee Road \(Aldermanic District 1\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Checklist - BMD Convenience Store.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Density Map - BMD Convenience Store.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Alcohol Reports - BMD Convenience Store.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - BMD Convenience Store.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson opened the Alcohol License Hearings, Items #20, #21 and #22.

a. Alderwoman Lanier moved to close the hearings for Items #20, #21 and #22, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #20, #21 and #22, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ZONING HEARINGS

[23. Amend Section 7.14 Alcohol Overlay of the Zoning Ordinance to add New Alcohol Overlay Districts for Convenience Stores and Package Stores, Petition of Bridget Lidy on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen, Districts 2, 3, and 4 \(File No. 20-003804-ZA\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Staff Report](#)

[Exhibit 2: Redline to Section 7.14 of the Zoning Ordinance .pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Proposed Ordinance Revisions to Section 7.14 of the Zoning Ordinance.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Survey Data.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson opened the Zoning Hearings for Items #23 and #24.

Speaker(s):

- Bridget Lidy, Director of Planning and Urban Design (petitioner)
- Candra Teshome, Planning and Urban Design (petitioner)
- Carolyn Davis, 12 Mathis Street off Wheaton Street (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Gail M. Larry, 10 Wagner Street off Wheaton Street (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Tracey McCloud, 14 Wagner Street (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Meaghan Gerard, 1928 E Henry at Pennsylvania (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan thanked the speakers for supporting the Overlay.

Also received in writing:

- Felix Maher, President of Victory Heights Neighborhood Association (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Trina Brown, Bronson Skidaway Properties (Alternative Recommendations)

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to close the hearings for Items #23 and #24, seconded by Alderwoman Lanier. The motion passed unanimously.

[24. Amend the Zoning Map to Include New Alcohol Overlay Districts for Convenience Stores and Package Stores, Petition of Bridget Lidy on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen, Districts 2, 3, and 4 \(File No. 20-003804-ZA\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Staff Report](#)

[Exhibit 2: Proposed Waters Avenue Area \(AD-5\)](#)

[Exhibit 3: Proposed Skidaway Road Area \(AD-6\)](#)

[Exhibit 4: Proposed Pennsylvania Avenue Area \(AD-7\)](#)

[Exhibit 5: Proposed Wheaton Street Area \(AD-8\)](#)

[Exhibit 6: Proposed E. DeRenne Avenue Area \(AD-9\)](#)

[Exhibit 7: Zoning Map Ordinance](#)

Mayor Johnson opened the Zoning Hearings for Items #23 and #24.

Speaker(s):

- Bridget Lidy, Director of Planning and Urban Design (petitioner)
- Candra Teshome, Planning and Urban Design (petitioner)
- Carolyn Davis, 12 Mathis Street off Wheaton Street (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Gail M. Larry, 10 Wagner Street off Wheaton Street (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Tracey McCloud, 14 Wagner Street (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Meaghan Gerard, 1928 E Henry at Pennsylvania (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan thanked the speakers for supporting the Overlay.

Also received in writing:

- Felix Maher, President of Victory Heights Neighborhood Association (SUPPORTS Overlay)
- Trina Brown, Bronson Skidaway Properties (Alternative Recommendations)

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to close the hearings for Items #23 and #24, seconded by Alderwoman Lanier. The motion passed unanimously.

#### ORDINANCES - FIRST AND SECOND READING

[25. Amend Section 7.14 Alcohol Overlay of the Zoning Ordinance to add New Alcohol Overlay Districts for Convenience Stores and Package Stores, Petition of Bridget Lidy on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen, Districts 2, 3, and 4 \(File No. 20-003804-ZA\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Staff Report](#)

[Exhibit 2: Redline to Section 7.14 of the Zoning Ordinance .pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Proposed Ordinance Revisions to Section 7.14 of the Zoning Ordinance.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4 - Survey Data.pdf](#)

After the first reading was considered the second reading and a request that an ordinance be placed

and passed upon its adoption, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to approve Items #25 and #26, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[26. Amend the Zoning Map to Include New Alcohol Overlay Districts for Convenience Stores and Package Stores, Petition of Bridget Lidy on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen, Districts 2, 3, and 4 \(File No. 20-003804-ZA\).](#)

[Exhibit 1: Staff Report](#)

[Exhibit 2: Proposed Waters Avenue Area \(AD-5\)](#)

[Exhibit 3: Proposed Skidaway Road Area \(AD-6\)](#)

[Exhibit 4: Proposed Pennsylvania Avenue Area \(AD-7\)](#)

[Exhibit 5: Proposed Wheaton Street Area \(AD-8\)](#)

[Exhibit 6: E. DeRenne Avenue Area \(AD-9\)](#)

[Exhibit 7: Zoning Map Ordinance](#)

After the first reading was considered the second reading and a request that an ordinance be placed and passed upon its adoption, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to approve Items #25 and #26, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### RESOLUTIONS

[27. Resolution to Adopt the Canal District Master Plan](#)

[Exhibit 1: Canal District Master Plan.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Canal District Playbook.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Canal District Master Plan Resolution.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson announced Item #27 is postponed.

#### REAL ESTATE ITEMS

[28. Approval to Sell a Portion of City Right of Way Fronting 10421 Abercorn Street to the Adjoining Property Owner – Petition #180073](#)

[Exhibit 1: Map - Vaden Surplus.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Agreement - Storm Water Drainage Easement.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Map - Storm Drainage Easement.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Map - Vaden Surplus.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson announced Item #28 is postponed, as requested by the petitioner per the City Manager.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

[29. Approval of a Plat for a Major Subdivision - Highlands Falls Phase 7](#)

[Exhibit 1: Plat Highland Falls Phase 7](#)

Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Item #29, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed 8-1-0, with Alderwoman Gibson-Carter voting no.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked who is the builder for the project. The City Manager did not know, but indicated he can find out.

Alderwoman Lanier advised she received a call from the builder, but she will allow the City Manager to do his due diligence. Upon request from Alderwoman Gibson-Carter, Alderwoman Lanier advised she received a call from Mr. Wardlaw, as the builder.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter indicated she believed that if persons contributed to one of the campaigns pursuant to ethics, the Council member would not vote on that item. She suggested Mr. Wardlaw contributed to some Council members' campaigns.

Mayor Johnson indicated that whoever contributed to campaigns is disclosed in campaign documents, and does not preclude Council members from participating in the vote.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated the City Council needs to have read into the record by the Clerk when people who do business with the City have contributed to Council members' campaigns. The City Attorney advised that is not the rule, although he talked with Alderwoman Gibson-Carter about making that modification to the Ethics Ordinance six months or so ago. Those donations are a part of public record, so there is no need to add that step during this hearing.

Mayor Johnson advised all of our disclosures are now available online and more readily accessible from the Clerk's office. We are required two times during non-election years to provide documentation regarding people and companies who have donated to (us) the campaigns. They are matters of public record. The ethics is in the disclosure for anyone who wants to see it, by virtue of the public record.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter suggested we revisit this matter. A lot of times our citizens do not have direct access to the technology, or they are not capable of searching and identifying these documents. She and the City Attorney discussed this issue in great detail. Reading these

matters into the record forgoes favoritism or special interests. Maybe she can propose this subject to her colleagues in the future.

Mayor Johnson asked the City Attorney to perfect the record by advising if the City Council is proceeding within order. The City Attorney replied yes. Upon a request to the Clerk if this is his assessment as well, the Clerk of Council replied yes that's correct.

[30. Report on Round 1 and Round 2 CARES Act Funding Through SBAC](#)

[Fact Sheet - SBAC COVID-19 Recovery Loan Program 03192020.pdf](#)

PRESENTED for informational purposes.

The City Manager reported the SBAC online portal for submitting applications for Round 2 CARES Act Funding closed on September 8, 2020 at 5 p.m. It was opened for eight days and during that period local business submitted 430 applications online, with a total of about \$7 million. While the City of Savannah never thought they could help every business, the numbers show the amount of need in the community.

There will be specific guidance to provide a more deliberate attempt to help fund, assist, and offer relief for certain distinct business populations:

- minority businesses (at least 50% owned and controlled by an ethnic minority);
- businesses within neighborhood revitalization areas, like community development block grant (CDBG) areas, which there are 34 census track areas within the City that qualify; and,
- (micro) businesses with five or fewer employees.

For each of the businesses described above, a business can receive a maximum of 3 points, one point each for the separate categories.

There will be one bucket for businesses who receive all 3 points for each of those categories, and a final general business bucket which will be available to any of the remaining businesses.

The City Manager does not believe the City can support all of the businesses that applied. He estimates being able to assist an additional 80-100 businesses, and it will take the total level of support to approximately 150 businesses, with its COVID-19 Relief Program.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely inquired about the amount of funding to be received in Round 2 and if it will be similar to Round 1. The City Manager replied no. Three documents will be provided: the City of Savannah business license; the business (federal) tax return; and, an expense and profit/loss statement. SBAC will follow federal guidelines and apply a federal formula by taking the total expenses for the year, divide it by 12 to get an average monthly expense, then multiply that number by 2.5 for two and half months of expenses. This formula was used for Round 1 and will be used for Round 2. The amount provided in Round 2 will be up to \$20,000.00, based on actual average monthly expenses, times 2.5. Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated she cannot vote to approve this (Resolution) because of several calls from members of the community who feel this is not fair and they are not getting the same privileges the 1st Round received. Alderwoman Miller Blakely spoke to SBAC representatives Tony Riley and Victoria Saxton, and she is concerned about the process used. She will be voting no on this resolution.

Mayor Johnson advised they are not asking for a vote, this is just a report made by the City Manager as requested by the City Council.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated from talking to the SBAC, some of the reported information is inaccurate, but she will be talking back to them. She did not like the way the process took place.

Mayor Johnson stated he does not think any of us were happy with the previous process and we are asking the City Manager now to be much more specific and intentional.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz stated it is now 2:58 p.m., and she was hoping and praying today that this Council would be celebrating a record today.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter advised the City Manager her understanding is that a lot of the directives for these allocations came from City Hall. She asked how much SBAC made in fees from the \$2 million in CARES Act funds.

Under the agreement the Council approved, the City Manager advised SBAC received 3% of the fees, approximately \$60,000.00.

Mayor Johnson advised he has sent correspondence to SBAC. He thinks they need to make right on this as well, making this amount of money for paying off debt. He does not think this is what was intended either.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter indicated this is the point she was getting to, and doing so will free up additional money to allocate for small businesses.

The City Manager continued, once the State of Georgia releases the second round of CARES Act Funding for local governments, an agreement between the City and SBAC will come back to Council at a future meeting. Because the revolving fund totaled \$1.6 million and lessons have been learned, the Council can consider a different scenario with the next distribution from the State of \$8.5 million. He has talked to the Mayor about changing the current 80/20 split, and allow the Council to consider a 50/50 split. The ratio will bring the number to \$4.25 million for the community, and \$4.25 million for the organization. This scenario will be at Council's discretion at a future meeting.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked who determined the \$50,000.00 level for businesses. The City Manager referenced the SBAC's existing revolving loan program which deals with employment, utility needs, rent, improvements and PPE (personal protection equipment) needs. 32 businesses made a loan request for up to \$50,000.00, based on 2.5 months of the average monthly expenses. Each of the businesses took on a risk for a loan that they would be responsible for paying back, \$1500/month or close to \$18,000/year, along with providing personal guarantees. Loans had to be paid back or it fell back on the owners of the businesses or they put up personal equipment as collateral. This is where the \$50,000.00 came from.

With regard to the loan amount, SBAC is charging various interest rates for different categories. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter questioned the SBAC rates in comparison to the federal interest rates. In comparing the classification of minorities given earlier against the demographics of the City's population, they are debatable. She hopes to see in the next round people who really need the support the most, regardless of the location or the racial makeup. We will have to just trust the City Manager's judgement.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked if SBAC has confirmed the agencies that will receive Round 2 Funding, since it closed on September 8. The City Manager replied no. They are going through the applications now to qualify them, and SBAC will match them up with the CDBG distressed areas/zones which will likely take some time. Ethic background was provided within the application, and there is qualification for the micro business classification. 430 applications will need to be reviewed. The City Manager further indicated, depending on funding availability, the agencies will know if they are a recipient within two weeks. There will have to be some sort of lottery, since we have more applications than available funding. Alderwoman Miller Blakely indicated she would like to be present when the lottery takes place.

The City Manager indicated they will probably put names in a barrel, the old-fashioned way to select or identify the recipients, until they reach the maximum available in each of the four categories he mentioned, based on the available amount of money.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated that we can increase the funding to allow more persons/businesses to benefit.

The City Manager responded for every dollar you increase for the businesses, you must reduce the allocation for individuals assisted through United Way. His last count for assistance through United Way was 1100 individuals at a rate of \$800,000.00. If the City staff had not recommended the strategy to use public safety for reimbursement, there would have been no way for the City to take advantage of funding through the CARES Act, nor spend \$7.56 million within three weeks. There are only qualified expenses, under the terms set by the State of Georgia, including the September 1st deadline.

Mayor Johnson stated the HEROS Act is important to us because the money only went to the City of Atlanta directly from the Federal Government. We get our funding from the State government and therefore have to play by the State's rules.

The City Manager advised the Governor met with GMA (Georgia Municipal Association) and ACCG (Association of County Commissioners of Georgia) yesterday. An announcement about Round 2 will be forthcoming. We expect a check within the next couple of weeks.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated the problem is how the information is being disseminated, inconsistent details being shared, and the funding differences between Round 1 and Round 2. She has been told the applications were different as well. She recommended fine tuning the messaging which goes out to citizens and business owners.

Mayor Johnson advised we are being extremely intentional with information sharing through media, social media, and news reports. Businesses must demonstrate they have a loss, and grants are based on the amount of the loss. This process was a requirement during the First Round. Profit/loss statements must be submitted to prove how COVID-19 impacted the business, comparatively. The grants are based upon COVID-related loss of income from March to August, and it must be demonstrated.

Alderman Palumbo spoke personally about the impacts of COVID-19 and how trying it is for a small business. The process for funding from the federal government cannot be made up as we go along. They chose not to apply for a loan because he did not want to apply any collateral or put his house



up. Every business for the most part has been at a crossroads with respect to what goes on with the economy. He was not willing to take on anymore risks than he had to, without knowing how long the crisis would last. So he understands the frustration. If he knew that grants were coming in the future (Second Round), he would have loved to apply for one of the loans in the First Round. You don't know what you don't know. When situations change, the best we can do is adapt and overcome. So many qualifiers are out there (what you can get, when you can get it, and how you receive it) depends on the size of your business, how long you have been in operation, how you operated before the crisis, damages you incurred, and can you demonstrate it. You must open up all of your books to the federal government, and you must sign a lot of releases. It is not an easy process. I am happy we can help take care of this at the local level, because having to go to the SBA through the federal government is as difficult as it can get. Let's push through as best we can to help small businesses, which is the backbone of our economy and the backbone of Savannah.

Mayor Johnson stated this is not a debacle, this is a blessing. In dealing with the Mayors across the country and across the state, no other City has done as we are able to do. We are able to use our CARES Act funding to help with evictions, mortgage assistance, and rental assistance in the most trying times in our life. We were able to do that. We have small businesses that hire people that live in our communities, and we are able to be a blessing to them during these very hard times. We can't help everybody. There are some people out there who desperately need the help. Because of the rules of the money, we cannot help them. The fact of the matter is we are helping businesses, we are helping people, and we do the best we can, recognizing we cannot help everybody. This is what Savannah Strong is.

Hearing no objections, Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 3:17 p.m.

The audio 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=cOAPMY4qcV0h>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

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

Initials: \_\_\_\_

