



SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

APRIL 8, 2021 – 10:30 a.m.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the City Council Work Session and City Manager's Briefing was held via Zoom video communications at 10:30 a.m.

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

Aldерman Detric Leggett, District 2

Aldерwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Aldерman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

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

Aldерman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

OTHERS PRESENT:

Acting City Manager Michael B. Brown

Assistant City Manager Health Lloyd

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Personnel and Real Estate \(10:30am - 11:30am\)](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to close the Work Session to conduct a Closed Executive Session regarding Personnel and Real Estate, seconded by Aldерwoman Miller Blakely and Aldерman Leggett. The motion passed unanimously.

The Closed Executive Session began at 10:32 a.m.

(PERSONNEL) The Mayor and Aldерman first met with City Attorney Lovett to discuss his performance evaluation, then they met with Clerk of Council Massey to discuss his performance evaluation.

(REAL ESTATE) The Mayor and Aldерman discussed real estate matters as presented by the City Manager.

Aldерman Palumbo moved to exit/close the Executive Session, seconded by Aldерwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously.

There were no votes taken and the Executive Session ended at 11:46 a.m.

The Work Session continued in open session at 11:48 a.m.

[2. Discussion regarding Appointment of Hearing Officer\(s\) Pursuant to the Unlawful Discrimination Ordinance \(begins at 11:30am\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Ordinance - Unlawful Discrimination.pdf](#)

Discussed by the Mayor, Aldermen and Alderwomen. City Attorney Lovett informed Council, it will be at their discretion how many members will serve on the Board; Attorney Lovett suggested three (3) members.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter recommended five (5) members; Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderwoman Miller Blakely agreed. There were no objections by Mayor or other Aldermen/Alderwomen to the five (5) members.

Mayor Johnson requested five (5) names for consensus from Council. Council Member agreed to appoint six (6) members. The following names were submitted for appointment:

1. Tony Center - Alderman Purtee
2. Joseph Ervin - Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan
3. Gwendolyn W. Fortson - Alderwoman Miller Blakely
4. Nancy DeVetter - Mayor Johnson
5. Joe Steffen - Alderwoman Gibson-Carter
6. Anne C. Westbrook - Alderman Leggett

Alderwoman Miller Blakely questioned the \$50.00 fee for anyone filing a complaint. Attorney Lovett responded, an option was included if an applicant could not afford the fee, it would be waived. Alderwoman Miller Blakely questioned the applicants fines, \$500.00 first offense and \$1,000.00 second offense; she asked if the City could legally fine at those amounts. Attorney Lovett answered, yes it is similar to the City's ordinance violations.

[3. Drainage](#)

[Exhibit 1: Presentation - Drainage.pdf](#)

Acting City Manager Brown gave a brief background of the stormwater management system followed by a PowerPoint Presentation which included Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd.

During and following the Presentation:

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked if the improvements in the system included the residents in West Savannah, Carver Village/Flatman Village; they are still experiencing flooding. Mr. Brown explained there were improvements but more improvements are needed. Mayor Johnson indicated some of the plots in the area are a basin and slope downward so the pumps would not be able to access the water for removal. Alderwoman Lanier shared her investigation of the area; there are numerous ditches and faulty grading in the area which need to be addressed. The pumping boxes are in place for the removal of the water, but the old ditches and land grading maintenance will need to take place before the flooding issue can be addressed.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked about the Canal District and Springfield Canal District and where the water rafting section will be, and how will it affect the area residents. Mr. Brown identified the area and explained how the City is working to avoid flooding.

Alderwoman Lanier reported residents concerns about the old plans pertaining to West Victory Drive and Georgia Department of Transportation's (DOT) plans to build a wall. The residents would like the updated plans for their review and she asked if this will be part of the upgraded system. Mr. Lloyd stated the projects are connected and he will work with Georgia DOT for a copy of the modified plans and current status. He will share that information with Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz commented most of the stormwater management drainage presentation dealt with the Eastside. She has advocated for eight to nine years in reference to the Springfield Canal. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz identified the Westside of Savannah and feels the presentation shows the omission of drainage work in the Springfield Canal area. She would like to see the City pursue federal dollars to cease waste water issues on the West Side. Mr. Lloyd identified the current pumping station and indicated there are additional pumping stations in the design stage of planning for the Springfield Canal.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz urged Council and staff to be mindful of the needed infrastructure throughout the City and using funds such as SPLOST dollars for drainage issues. She emphasized the need to focus on drainage issues along the Springfield Canal, and encouraged Council to focus the next SPLOST dollars for Springfield Canal drainage and Springfield Basin improvements.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely has concerns for the retention pond off Middleground and Largo Roads; if this retention pond is closed how will it affect the Southside. There may be problems such as the Westside is currently experiencing. Mr. Brown indicated improvements have been made. Mr. Lloyd

discussed the ordinance by which development cannot increase the flood waters; every development must do mitigation onsite or make sure it does no harm to the neighbors. He added, in discussions with Hunter Army Airfield to close the retention pond, the City will need to make sure they do no harm when it comes to increasing the drainage in the neighborhoods. Mr. Lloyd indicated the City will not impact the drainage on the Southside, he will develop and distribute to Council a graph showing an overview of the area. Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated she would like to see the City put more emphasis on Southside drainage; i.e. Largo ditches filled with debris.

While visiting Westside neighborhood residents, Alderwoman Miller Blakely was told the City assesses a charge to residents to clean out ditches. She asked if this charge was included in the water billings. Mr. Lloyd answered, the City does not charge, but there are private ditches in some of the neighborhoods. He asked Alderwoman Miller Blakely to send him pictures of the area in question and he will follow-up with the residents.

Acting City Manager Brown indicated the City is working to improve drainage and infrastructure; the City is committed to doing so throughout the City. The Slide Presentation will be posted on the City's webpage for public viewing. He suggested getting more money into SPLOST for drainage improvement projects; thereafter, the City will need to generate revenue to maintain the new pump stations.

[4. Fleet Services Agreement](#)

[Exhibit 1: Presentation - Fleet Lease Equity Agreement.pdf](#)

Not Presented/Discussed.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the work session at 1:16 p.m.

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=QdWs1p3I9Mtu>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Initials: ____

