



SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

FEBRUARY 11, 2021 – 11:30 a.m.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the City Council Work Session and City Manager's Briefing was held via Zoom video communications at 11:30 a.m. Following the roll call, Mayor Johnson introduced Alderswoman Linda Wilder-Bryan to offer the invocation.

PRESENT: Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

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

Alderswoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Alderswoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Alderswoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

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

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

OTHERS PRESENT:

Acting City Manager Michael B. Brown

Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd

Assistant to the City Manager Joe Shearouse

Assistant to the City Manager Daphanie Williams

Sanitation Director Gene Prevatt

City Attorney Bates Lovett

Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Water, Sewer and Refuse Services - Part I: Service Provision \(Note: Part II - Financing and Billing will be discussed at a future workshop\).](#)

[Exhibit 1: Presentation - Water, Sanitation and Sewer \(Part I\).pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson outlined the water, sewer and refuse services as an educational process for Council as well as the residents. This will be a 3-part series: 1.) how the City provides the services; 2.) financing and billing; and 3.) COVID-19 permitting, an opportunity for a field trip to visit the water treatment facilities. Today's presentation will be Part 1.

The slide presentation was made by Acting City Manager Brown. Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd, Sanitation Director Gene Prevatt, Assistant to the City Manager Joe Shearouse, and Assistant to the City Manager Daphanie Williams were available to answer any questions. Mr. Brown will send a copy of the presentation to Council Members.

Following the presentation, there was a discussion, along with a question and answer session by Council.

Mayor Johnson thanked the entire sanitation employees for all the courageous work provided to the residents of Savannah.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter mentioned the sanitation employees working through the pandemic are one of the lowest paid in the City. Collection trucks have three to four men in the cab. Some consideration should be given to these essential workers for hazard pay.

With two hundred employees in sanitation and one hundred twenty-five in water, Mr. Brown stated those employees are paid by the rates. If we give them a raise, there would need to be a rate increase. The Council agreed to revisit a rate increase in June 2021, but employees raises and rate increases will go hand-in-hand.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely discussed the minimum wage being discussed by Congress to \$15/hour. If that happens, the City will need to adjust their minimum wage. Mayor Johnson discussed the State, Federal and living minimum wage. If the Federal Government decides to increase the minimum wage to \$15/hour, the City will have no choice but to increase their minimum wage. Alderwoman Miller Blakely suggest the City look at increasing the City's minimum wage now rather than wait. Mayor Johnson explained the Government is trying to raise the minimum wage to the \$13/hour livable wage amount. Mr. Brown stated this topic will be discussed during part two, financing and billing.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz has concerns with employees working in close proximity to contaminants. Those workers should be compensated. During the quarterly visits on the Budget some consideration should be made for an increase in salary.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated employees working from home can't be compared to sanitation employees working three to four in a cab. Council could authorize a raise now by foregoing the two interns in the Mayor and Aldermen/Alderwomen Budget. Going forward during the quarterly Budget reviews, she suggested the Council give due diligence to the individuals working on the frontline in hazardous conditions. Mayor Johnson recapped that during COVID-19 the number of cab workers were reduced and the City had to contract out sanitation to make sure garbage was picked-up on time. He reiterated, there are police and fire employees working in hazardous conditions during this pandemic who should be considered, if the City gives consideration to the sanitation employees. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has not furloughed, laid-off, dismissed any employees or raised any of the City's rates, something the City should be proud to admit. Mayor Johnson asked if, it is the will of Council to move forward with or without the two interns.

In reference to the other cities supplied with water, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked had the City of Savannah considered raising those water rates rather than increasing the rates for the residents of Savannah. Mayor Johnson indicated the Federal Government regulates the rates charged to other cities. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz suggested the City have more conversations with the Federal Government on water rates provided to other cities. Mayor Johnson asked Acting City Manager Brown to include those discussions in the financing presentation next week.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked if the two interns will be for the entire Council. Mayor Johnson recalled the topic during the Budget discussions and indicated the two interns are for Council, but Council can make any changes in the Budget during the quarterly Budget discussions.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked Acting City Manager Brown if the City provides water to the new manufacturing complex located off I-16 in District 5. Mr. Brown stated the City does provide water to that location.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the work session at 12:59 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=3T9Q58TMmgtR>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Initials: ____