



FEBRUARY 24, 2022, 4:00 p.m. - WORKSHOP and CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

CITY GOVERNMENT

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The work session and City Manager's briefing was held at 4:04 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Purtee to offer an invocation.

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

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

Mayor Johnson discussed a shooting that occurred the previous evening on Augusta Avenue. A young man lost his life. Mayor Johnson thanked the Georgia State Patrol, Savannah Police Department and Savannah Fire Department for their prompt response and offers of CPR. Mayor Johnson reported, it was over twenty minutes before Chatham EMS appeared on the scene. He requested City Manager Melder to investigate and respond back to Council on the Chatham EMS response times. Mr. Melder reported he is sending letters on response times to Chatham EMS and Chatham County management.

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Savannah Fire Department Public Safety Update](#)

[Savannah Fire Department Update 2.24.22.pptx](#)

PRESENTED by Fire Chief Derik Minard. Also present were Assistant Fire Chief Handy, Assistant Fire Chief Kitchen and other members of the Savannah Fire Department (SFD).

Following the presentation, there were discussions, some in question format, from Council that was addressed by Chief Minard. Some but not all of the listed topics below were discussed:

- Council Members praised and commended the fire department on their rapid response to last evening's fatal shooting on Augusta Avenue.
- The number of African American (48) and female (2) firefighters. The need for the fire department to do better in recruiting African Americans and females (Alderman Miller Blakely).
- The types of medical training firefighters receive and how many have EMS training (150) (Alderman Leggett).
- The reasoning for the high increase in EMS calls (200%, mainly due to opioid abuse, cardiac arrest & violent crimes) (Alderman Palumbo).
- Concerned with the health and safety of residents at Stillwell Towers and keeping the firefighters safe (Alderman Gibson-Carter).
- Asked if Council can give more support to the fire department, if so, how (Alderman Lanier).
- Requested the City Manager to investigate establishing a station in the far west side of Savannah (Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz).
- Inquired if the fire department still conducts home inspections on a regular basis (yes) (Alderman Miller Blakely).

Mayor Johnson thanked Chief Minard for the presentation, and the entire Savannah Fire Department for their bravery in protecting the residents of the City.

The PowerPoint presentation is on file in the Clerk of Council's office.

[2. Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement Update](#)

[Office of Neighborhood Safety & Engagement 2.24.22.pptx](#)

PRESENTED by Director of the Office of Neighborhood Safety & Engagement (ONSE) John Bush.

Following the presentation, there were discussions, some in question format, from Council. Some but not all of the listed topics below were discussed and answered/explained by Mr. Bush:

- Council Members commended Mr. Bush for the many years he has served the residents of Savannah. His experience, community relationships, neighborhood involvement and positive engaging interaction with Savannah youth were praised by Council Members.
- Concerned with who will fill his shoes in the community (Alderman Miller Blakely).
- Asked for the target age group (12-36) and school grades (Junior High). Relationships with Chatham County public schools and attending neighborhood association meetings. The start date of the ONSE (January 18, 2022), statistics of crime by district and working with partners on youth programs. Interacting with DFACS and establishing a quarterly report for the City Manager who would share the report with Council (Alderman Leggett).
- Read a list of organizations within the community Mr. Bush should partner with to identify younger violence interrupters (Alderman Wilder-Bryan).
- Requested more information concerning the forty-nine trainers within the community (Mr. Bush explained the trainers will be crisis intervention specialist, police, social worker, etc.) (Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz).
- Requested information on the two additional positions and their responsibilities for the ONSE. (Program Analyst and Program Coordinator, Mr. Bush described their duties). Would like Mr. Bush to identify what is needed to eradicate or minimize gun violence (Alderman Gibson-Carter).
- Discussed guns on the street and making people accountable for lost or stolen firearms. She has concerns with the boarding houses and illegal activities. Recommended a pilot program working with youth and suggested Mr. Bush attend the meetings with staff around the entrepreneurial center/plans and trash pick-up. There needs to be an urgency behind the issue of our youth dying on the street (Alderman Lanier).

The PowerPoint presentation is on file in the Clerk of Council's office.

[3. Savannah Police Department Public Safety Update](#)

[Savannah Police Department Update 2.24.22.pptx](#)

PRESENTED by Police Chief Roy Minter. A 2021 report of crime statistics and data was presented.

Because of time constraints, Mayor Johnson recommended Council Members send questions in writing from now until next Thursday, March 3rd to Chief Minter. The questions will be addressed on March 10, 2022, at the work session.

The PowerPoint presentation is on file in the Clerk of Council's office.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 6:04 p.m.

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

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=I8QY5vyh59yS>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

