



JANUARY 12, 2023, 12:00 noon - 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 12:01 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a prayer.

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

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. 2023 City Council Organizational Items](#)

Mayor Johnson indicated a memo would be sent to Council Members on topics for discussion during upcoming Workshops. Members were asked to respond within one week with preferences.

Mayor Johnson distributed a Salary Survey for Mayors and Council Members prepared by Clerk of Council Massey of local municipalities. Any changes approved by Council would be

accomplished by a Resolution.

Based on the research, the following is the proposed Council compensation and terms limits, effective January 1, 2024:

PROPOSED COUNCIL COMPENSATION

(Effective January 1, 2024)

Council

Current: \$25,000 (Annual)

Proposed: \$30,000 + \$5,000 (office/mileage expense)

Mayor

Current: \$57,000 (annual)

Proposed: \$65,000

TERMS

Term Limits: Maximum 3 consecutive terms in the same seat. Current Council members, if re-elected, would have 2 additional terms, effective January 1, 2024.

Staggered Terms: None recommended at this time.

Alderman Purtee announced staggered terms were discussed in community meetings in the 6th District and residents were in agreement with the Mayor. It creates an environment of freshness and renewal for Council and for community engagement. He recommends moving forward with the proposed compensation and term limits.

Alderman Palumbo recommended Council move forward with the proposal.

Alderwoman Lanier stated none are germane to her or the constituents she serves. During the visioning session, ADUs, duplexes, community benefits, inclusionary zoning, traffic calming, drainage, and fair housing council were the issues of concern for District 1. Any compensation she receives goes back into the community.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely recommended no increase in compensation for Council due to higher taxes and increases in City services to residents. She did request an increase in a mileage stipend.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz stated the compensation does not matter as she was called to serve the residents of the 5th District. She will agree to the term limits approved by Council.

Mayor Johnson indicated the City Attorney will prepare the documents to move forward with the proposed Council compensation and term limits.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter expressed her concern for Council's discussion of compensation and term limits. She feels there are more important issues to discuss, such as crime, homelessness, affordable house, etc.

In regards to travel, Mayor Johnson indicated Council receives \$85/per day, which is more than City employees receive. The chart below outlines the options for Council travel reimbursements.

The \$85/per day rate is more inclusive than City staff and it is recommended to maintain that rate for Council.

TRAVEL

1. Maintain an \$85-a-day rate.
2. Reduce the rate to the per diem rate afforded to City staff.
3. Receive per diem based on Federal regulations by location.

[2. Affordable Housing Partnership - Cuyler-Brownville Housing Initiative](#)

[01122023 Council Workshop - Galvan Presentation.pptx](#)

Mayor Johnson provided an overview of the affordable housing partnership with Galvan Foundation for the Cuyler-Brownville neighborhood. He recognized the contributions and

efforts of Community Services Director Chief Young, CHSA Executive Director Anita Smith-Dixon, and Housing & Neighborhood Services Director Martin Fretty. He endorses the project and asked Council for a unanimous approval.

City Manager Melder discussed Housing Savannah, Savannah Affordable Housing Fund, CHSA and how their combined efforts led to this opportunity. Along with Mr. Fretty, Chief Young, and Ms. Smith-Dixon, he introduced Housing Savannah Executive Director Laura Lane McKinnon and Housing Services Division Manager Tara Hicks as part of the team for the housing initiative in Cuyler-Brownville community.

City Manager Melder stated when the City contributed \$9 million in the Savannah Housing Fund it was the beginning of increased affordable housing across the board. Because of the Savannah Affordable Housing Plan, a nationally known agency, Galvan Foundation, took notice and started negotiations with the City on a partnership for affordable housing. The Galvan Foundation expressed interest in the Westside neighborhood of Cuyler-Brownville and offered funds for housing initiatives.

City Manager Melder introduced Galvan Foundation Vice President Dan Kent who has offered to answer any questions.

City Manager Melder is requesting the support of Council for the following:

1. A donation of \$1 million from the Galvan Foundation into the Savannah Affordable Housing Fund; and
2. the transfer of 19 vacant City-owned properties to the Land Bank Authority who will then sell those 19 properties to Galvan Foundation who will work with CHSA to develop affordable housing on those sites.

City Manager Melder introduced Housing & Neighborhood Services Director Martin Fretty for the PowerPoint presentation.

Following the presentation questions and comments from Council Members were heard:

- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan expressed concern for roofless people and the mentioned of a 25 person shelter. City Manager Melder indicated the shelter is not part of the plan, it was a project developed by Galvan Foundation at a different location.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely inquired about the suggestion brought to the City Manager early last year in a meeting with Senator Jackson and Lenwood Coleman. The project was similar and she asked the City Manager to reach out to Mr. Coleman. Mr. Melder will follow up.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely expressed concern relating to the housing reaching individuals in the neighborhood who need housing. She discussed another housing opportunity for residents that resulted in foreclosure due to having two mortgage payments (Dream Maker Program). Mr. Fretty explained in detail the Dream Maker Program.
- Alderman Palumbo expressed his excitement in the City finally receiving a plan for affordable housing after years of hard work. The City has the right partner to move forward with projects. He thanked everyone involved in the process.
- Alderwoman Lanier discussed the uphill battle that has faced the Westside neighborhood for years and expressed her thanks for being invited to the table when the Galvan Foundation expressed an interest in the Cuyler-Brownville Housing Initiative. Based on past programs, she feels its missing the community benefit strategic approach. The project is not resident/community driven.
- Mayor Johnson agreed with Alderwoman Lanier and indicated Housing Savannah, CHSA and residents were and continue to be engaged in the process.
- Galvan Foundation President Dan Kent thanked Council and staff for the open reception and related how the Foundation became interested in Savannah. The Housing Savannah Plan was the instrument that laid the foundation for Galvan Foundation Board to meet with staff to formulate a partnership.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked the Foundation and reviewed benefits of Galvan housing experiences. She indicated the 5th District welcomes the Galvan Foundation with any projects.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated there is a property on Middleground Road that the neighborhood would like affordable housing. She will discuss the property with Mr. Kent.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter asked if there are any personal ownerships of the taxable City-owned property by any member of the group. Mr. Kent indicated Galvan Foundation

is a non-profit agency and the property will be owned by the Foundation. She asked if there would be an opportunity for a pilot and how many affordable housing units will be available for residents. City Manager Melder indicated the partnership with the Galvan Foundation is starting off in a very responsible way with the \$1 million donation and the mix of single family and multi-family housing is still in the design process.

- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan commented that Mr. Fretty comes before Council and advocates for affordable housing opportunities and not market rate housing and the Galvan Foundation is committed to affordable housing in its partnership with the City. City Manager Melder indicated housing choice vouchers will be the way the Federal Government invests in affordable housing moving forward and landlords will not be able to discriminate based on the source of the income. The City wants to continue to increase the inventory of housing where the barrier of using housing choice vouchers is eliminated.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked if the properties on Lavinia Street brought before Council by Rich Ferguson for zoning to establish a community center is the same properties. Mr. Fretty, City Manager Melder and Mayor Johnson indicated, no.

The PowerPoint presentation is on file and available for viewing in the Clerk of Council's office.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 1:30 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=pkUv3OO3UJEK>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

