




---

**MARCH 10, 2022, 11:00 A.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 11:00 a.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

**Workshop Agenda Items**

[1. Savannah Police Department Public Safety Update \(Continued from February 24, 2022 Meeting\)](#)

PRESENTED by Police Chief Roy Minter as a continuation from the February 24th Work Shop presentation, Savannah Police Department Public Safety Update. Chief Minter gave a brief summary of the presentation.

Council Members asked questions and made comments. Chief Minter responded and/or answered questions and discussed Council Members concerns:

- What does the City need to do differently, or tell the public, to boost moral and have better success in recruiting and maintaining officers? Concerned with addressing accountability of officers and community engagement (Alderman Leggett).
- With respect to the Vision Zero Resolution approved at the February 24th meeting, how will the police support this initiative especially with regard to traffic? (Alderman Palumbo).
- Since the police department operates on a beat system, are all the beats covered 24/7? (Mayor Johnson).
- Concerned with gun violence and deaths within public housing areas of the City. What is the police doing to fight crime in those areas? Concerned with officers leaving and making the police department grossly understaffed (Alderwoman Gibson-Carter).
- Applauded all officers in Savannah. How many officers are leaving? How can the Council help to retain officers, what is the corrective action plan to retain officers, and how are you dealing with morale within the police department? (Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan).
- City Manager Melder, Human Resources Director Grant and Police Chief Minter are currently working on a program to retain employees.
- Since crime is a public health issue, officers living in neighborhoods might help decrease crime (Alderwoman Lanier).
- Residents are requesting more police presence during events. Are certain police assigned for special events? Consider using retired officers for events. Are officers being paid for additional duties, are we using local colleges and universities for recruitment, and are the starting salaries sufficient? (Alderwoman Miller Blakely).
- Peer pressure, poor education, low economic status, substance abuse and neglectful parenting are major contributors toward crime and violence. These are the issues that need to be addressed to solve crime issues. (Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz).
- Suggested the use of an employee engagement survey to identify problem areas (Alderman Purtee).

Mayor Johnson thanked Chief Minter and the entire Savannah Police Department for their service.

This presentation and the original February 24, 2022, PowerPoint presentation is on file in the Clerk of Council's office.

[2. Housing Savannah Update: The City's Investment in Affordable Housing at Work](#)

PRESENTED by Housing & Neighborhood Services Director Martin Fretty and Planning & Urban Design Director Bridget Lidy. Also present were Chatham County Board of Assessors representatives, including Chief Appraiser Roderick Conley, Supervisor Carol Osborne, Deputy Chief Appraiser - Administration Corey Gillenwater, and Deputy Chief Appraiser - Operations Stacey Scott.

Following the presentation, there were discussions, some in question format, from Council. Happy Birthday was extended to Mr. Fretty by Council Members.

Some topics and questions were discussed and answered/explained by Mr. Fretty, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Conley, and/or Mr. Gillenwater:

- What is the age when seniors are totally exempt from paying property taxes? (Alderwoman Miller Blakely).
- A campaign or presentation for residents regarding all elderly and disability tax exemptions was recommended (Alderwoman Gibson-Carter).
- The contact information for the Chatham County Tax Assessors office: 912-652-7271; and Homestead Exempt office: 912-447-4856 (Ms. Osborne).
- Expressed gratitude to Mr. Fretty and his department for making housing affordable in all the districts throughout the city and look forward to upcoming projects with the \$19.1 million allocated in the City's 2022 Housing Savannah investments and workplan (Alderman Leggett and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan).
- Asked for the forced multiplier opportunities and how it's calculated. Also, has Mr. Fretty ever seen this level (\$19.1 million) of investment in housing (no). How can the City partner with Chatham Area Transit to integrate affordable transportation into the City's affordable housing strategy? (Alderman Palumbo).
- Asked for the definitions of affordable housing; workforce housing; and income based housing (Mr. Fretty and City Manager Melder explained). Asked when will the City start using income based housing for affordable housing (Alderwoman Miller Blakely).

Mayor Johnson thanked the panel of presenters. He added the Savannah Housing Authority will come and make a presentation to Council; and the Housing Savannah Task Force are committed to making housing available, accessible and affordable for the residents of Savannah.

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

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 1:06 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=K30jyfqDoUb>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

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

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

