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**MAY 12, 2022, 12:30 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 12:30 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a prayer.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding

Alderman Keshia Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1

Alderman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

Alderman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1

Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2

Alderman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3

Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman

Alderman 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. Homelessness Discussion](#)

[Exhibit 1: Homelessness Council Presentation 05122022.pptx](#)

Mayor Johnson thanked Team Savannah for their work on Savannah Gardens allowing an additional 84 units of affordable housing in the community. He introduced City Manager Melder to address homelessness in the city.

City Manager Melder discussed all aspects of homelessness and thanked the city partners for their support and recommendations. He outlined some of the strategies that will be implemented to address the homelessness challenges in the city.

Mr. Melder introduced Chief of Community Services Officer Taffanye Young, and Housing & Neighborhood Services Director Martin Fretty as the presenters. He informed Council there is an item (Resolution) on the agenda of great importance in addressing the homelessness issues facing the city. This is not a new entity, it is a framework to make sure all stakeholders have a voice in addressing the issues. He thanked the Continuum of Care Board for adopting the Interagency Council on Homelessness as their governing structure.

Whereupon the presentation was made.

Mr. Melder recognized Chatham-Savannah Authority for the Homeless Director Jennifer Darsey who thanked Mayor, and Council for their support and the opportunity to participate as a stakeholder in addressing homelessness in Chatham/Savannah. Continuum of Care Board Chairman Karen Quinn and Katrina Bostick were also in attendance. City Manager Melder also thanked Chatham County who began this effort years ago to address homelessness.

Following the presentation, there was discussion as it relates to the information received, suggested recommendations, and possible support for the homelessness solutions in the city:

Mayor Johnson thanked Council for saying homelessness is wrong and making it a priority. The Resolution on today's agenda allows the city to move forward and he is asking for approval.

- Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked for the number of day shelters in the city and requested 'Come As You Are Ministry' day shelter on Skidaway Road be included as they need resources and assistance.
- Alderman Purtee remarked homelessness is all over the city and there will be opportunities for improvement.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter stated the city is moving in the right direction; however her referrals have not been successful. She cited a particular woman with children who needs assistance and asked staff and/or a local agency to follow-up with assistance.
- Alderman Palumbo pledged his commitment and welcomed partnering with other municipalities in Chatham County. Other jurisdictions have homeless persons who are filtering into Savannah, so a partnership would work for all involved.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz is happy to have the guidance of City Manager Melder who has experience in dealing with homelessness. The delivery system will provide a source of service/action for the homeless that includes smaller nonprofits who are currently providing services.
- Alderwoman Lanier expressed appreciation for the work being done, but there is a missing item 'place making'. Local planners have been negligent in providing services to many communities. Savannah being a historic city, the character of neighborhoods should be considered when putting services in place. She suggested having two (2) leaders; a low wealth area person and a high wealth area person. Alderwoman Lanier recommended placing community residents on the Board.

Mayor Johnson concluded by stating City Manager Melder will represent the citizens of Savannah on the Board.

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

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 1:34 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=U0uMY1sYc6Yf>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

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

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

