



OCTOBER 13, 2022, 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 12:02 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a prayer.

PRESENT:

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
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

ABSENT: Alderwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1

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 First Program Enhancements](#)

[Exhibit 1: Savannah First Enhancements Presentation.pdf](#)

PRESENTED by Mayor Johnson, City Manager Melder, Economic Development Director Manny Dominguez, Business Opportunity Manager MaRonda Lumpkin-Lotson, and Purchasing Director Johnnie Coker.

Mayor Johnson briefly explained the Savannah First Program which started as a year-long pilot. City Manager Melder introduced the presenters: Economic Development Director Manny Dominguez, Business Opportunity Manager MaRonda Lumpkin-Lotson, and Purchasing Director Johnnie Coker.

Following the presentation, City Manager Melder thanked the presenters. Mayor and Council asked questions and offered comments:

- Mayor Johnson thanked the presenters, City Attorney Lovett and City Manager Melder as the quarterback. He spoke about timing as it relates to the pandemic and how the program continued moved forward. Mayor Johnson discussed use of sub-contractors and the shortage in Savannah. He offered information on adding an advocacy piece for areas not covered in the Savannah First area.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked presenters. She applauded the staff on streamlining the application process. She encouraged "free" training programs for new and existing business owners, and for offering virtual classes.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked Mr. Coker when using FEMA during emergency situations, how can local businesses participate as a FEMA business. Mr. Coker answered businesses should go to the website and register as a local business.
- Mayor Johnson added, the importance of an emergency declaration is to allow for emergency purchases. Local business owners need to register before an emergency happens (now) to be called during the emergency situations.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely expressed that she was elated (happy & thankful) about the page reduction of the application. She asked how was the amount of \$5 million or greater determined, and can the amount be lowered (possibly \$2 million) for the mentor/protege program. Mr. Dominguez answered, other similar programs were considered, but the amount could be lowered (the program can be reviewed at 6-month intervals). Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked how will businesses be paired/selected for the mentor/protege program. Each vendor is provided a list to select a protege. Ms. Lotson added, there is one protege to one mentor.
- Alderwoman Lanier thanked presenters for their work and information. She asked if the proteges will receive a certification at the end of the program. Mr. Dominguez answered, no, the goal is the relationship.
- Alderwoman Lanier asked, in capturing data, how were different racial groups identified. Mr. Dominguez answered, the named minority & disadvantaged groups were identified by using Federal and State guidelines. In the construction industry, Alderwoman Lanier stated there are instances where a white female was used as a figure head. How will you identify those deceptions. Ms. Lotson stated there will be constant engagement with the businesses including site visits. If there are any deceptions, it will bear out.
- Alderwoman Lanier asked will a start-up business need to complete 1-year to qualify (yes). She stated the staff is doing a great job and she looks forward to greater things in the future.
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan thanked the presenters and stated the Council appreciates staff making the process easier for local businesses. The team has been proactive not reactive. She thanked them for their service.
- Mayor Johnson stated he was scared at first, but Council had been bold in their actions and courage. He thanked Council and staff for making these programs better.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated the entrepreneur center will help to establish businesses. Will the Center help new businesses find work? Ms. Lotson explained the many programs available at the entrepreneur center to new businesses for getting established. Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked will the new business be provided a list of vendors to solicit business. Mayor Johnson indicated this is the reason for the advocacy piece, to have an independent third party available to new businesses and help them succeed. The City can only do so much. Savannah First does not mean Savannah only.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 1:24 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=Ik8ojQydDpx>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

