
SAVANNAH CITY GOVERNMENT SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING JULY 9, 2020 – 2:00 p.m.

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the regular meeting of the City Council was held via Zoom video communications at 2:00 p.m. Mayor Johnson requested Alderwoman Bernetta Lanier to introduce Reverend Dr. Clarence Teddy Williams, moderator of the Political Action Committee for the Berean Missionary Baptist Association and pastor of the Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church, who provided the 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

OTHERS PRESENT:
City Manager Pat Monahan
City Attorney Bates Lovett
Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Date: Jul 09 2020 (2:00p.m.)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

[1. Adoption of the Regular Meeting Agenda for July 9, 2020](#)

a. Alderwoman Miller Blakely moved to reconsider and rescind Item #7 of the June 25, 2020 Council Meeting, Alderwoman Gibson-Carter seconded. There was no vote on the motion. Mayor Johnson tabled the motion until the end of the meeting.

Later in the meeting:

City Manager Monahan introduced Mr. Kenton Griffin from Griffin and Davis via Zoom video. Mr. Griffin gave an overview of the formation of his business, projects assigned and the Savannah address.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely visited Mr. Griffin's office address, 35 Bernard Street and did not see his business listed. There was no office and none of the individuals on site knew of his existence. She called his Norcross, Georgia office location and experienced the same. Alderwoman Miller Blakely advised Mr. Griffin that he was not listed as a DBE on staff' list. Mayor Johnson asked Mr. Griffin, if he walked over to 35 Bernard Street, would he find a Griffin and Davis physical office within the building. Mr. Griffin indicated that he used the space as needed and agreed to come and meet with the Mayor and Aldermen and discuss his qualifications and recent projects.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter expressed concern with staff not doing a thorough job of examining the DBE's qualifications. She asked Mr. Griffin if he was registered with the Secretary of State and the other cities where he has worked. Mr. Griffin replied, Atlanta, LaGrange, Union City, and City of East Point.

Mayor Johnson asked if he had a 2020 Business License. Mr. Griffin stated, he believes the license has expired, but was unsure of the current status and will check and get back to staff.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter thanked the citizens who brought this situation to the attention of Council Members.

Alderman Palumbo reported that the Secretary of State has Mr. Griffin's company listed as active. He also asked Mr. Griffin about the type of space he has at 35 Bernard Street. Mr. Griffin answered, he had dedicated office space, but for the past three months he uses the space on an as needed basis.

City Manager Monahan described Griffin and Davis as a DBE company existing since 2015, with an address at 35 Bernard Street. He is taking Mr. Griffin at his word that he leased space at 35 Bernard Street up until COVID-19, then leases space on an as needed basis. Mr.

Monahan asked Council if they would like to proceed with rescinding the vote of the June 25th meeting and locate a different DBE or give staff an opportunity to verify Griffin and Davis' 2020 Savannah Business License and location.

Alderman Palumbo has concerns with inadvertently penalizing a business

due to the physical presence of being in an office versus using an office on an as needed basis (virtual office).

Alderwoman Lanier has concerns with contractors using shadow DBE's. The original intent of a local DBE is to have the revenue earned put back into the local economy. The staff should do a better job of scrutinizing the qualifications of local DBE's.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz asked the City Manager to have Mr. Dominiguez's Office of Equal Opportunity do a better job of qualifying DBE's and MWBE's and scrutinize the prime contractors more closely. Mayor Johnson asked City Attorney Lovett if Alderwoman Miller Blakely's June 25, 2020 motion, Item #7 could be held to the next Council Meeting to allow staff an opportunity to investigate fully the definition of a local DBE and Griffin and Davis' status of 2020 business license and office location. Attorney Lovett stated yes it can be held. Mr. Lovett stated he could have discussions with Hussey Gay Bell and DeYoung to make sure they are in agreement with Council's decisions. His father worked for Hussey, Gay Bell and DeYoung for forty years and his current brother-in-law owns the company. We can make sure that Hussey, Gay Bell and DeYoung have no concerns with a stay or tabling of the decision until this issue is fully vetted.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely expressed her intent to have her name removed from the motion of Item #7 on June 25, 2020 meeting in light of the questionable status of Griffin and Davis. Mayor Johnson explained to Alderwoman Miller Blakely that her name would still remain on the initial motion regardless of any action taken, but Council could vote to rescind the motion.

Mayor Johnson asked the Clerk of Council if the City Council is required to vote on reconsideration today or maintain the current status.

Citing Robert's Rules of Order, Mr. Massey explained the body can only reconsider the previous action taken at the previous meeting at the subsequent meeting. Council can vote up or down, to approve the matter. If the body so desires, there would be a subsequent motion to approve or deny.

Mayor Johnson expressed he would like to vote to reconsider and not to rescind until the City Manager has an opportunity to investigate the issue. Clerk of Council Massey explained the vote to rescind only rescinds the vote you took on June 25th. It does not stop the body from making a subsequent motion to approve this matter. Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated she wanted to remove her vote but the majority might not want to remove their votes.

There are two motions, one to reconsider and one to rescind. The body can vote to reconsider the motion, a motion can be made to rescind, and

then a subsequent motion to approve or deny by the body.

Mayor Johnson explained the Council would act on Alderwoman's motion to reconsider today giving the City Manager two weeks to complete his due diligence and the Council can vote on the item at the next Regular City Council Meeting.

Mr. Massey explained, since Council has discussed Item #7 from the June 25th meeting in detail, the motion has been reconsidered, the only motion needed is the rescind portion of the original motion.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter made a subsequent motion to rescind the vote of Item #7 from the June 25, 2020 meeting, Alderwoman Miller Blakely seconded. The motion failed, 4-5-0. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz, Alderwoman Gibson-Carter, Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Lanier voted yea. Mayor Johnson, Alderman Leggett, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan, Alderman Palumbo and Alderman Purtee voted no.

Mayor Johnson asked the City Manager to complete his due diligence and report back to the Council his findings, possibly through a work session. If needed, the item will be placed on the Regular Meeting Agenda for a vote from the Mayor and Aldermen. The City Manager will not execute the contract, he will suspend the contract until the matter comes back before Council in two weeks.

b. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve the Regular Meeting Agenda for July 9, 2020, Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2. Approval of Minutes for the Work Session and City Manager's Briefing held on June 25, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3, and #4, Alderman Leggett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[3. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Meeting held on June 25, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3, and #4, Alderman Leggett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[4. Approval of Minutes for the Emergency Special Called Meeting held on June 22, 2020 at 1:00p.m.](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2, #3, and #4, Alderman Leggett seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Johnson expressed condolences on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen to the family of Kimberly Chappell-Stevens, Mayor Pro-Tem of the City of Thunderbolt.

CONSENT AGENDA - (This section shall include all routine items for which it is anticipated there will be no debate or requests for public input. Any Alderman can remove consent items for discussion or separate consideration.)

[5. Authorize the City Manager to Execute the Renewal of an Annual License Agreement for NEOGOV Software with Governmentjobs.com, Inc. in the Amount of \\$39,659.41 \(No. 7921\)](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #5 and #6, Alderman Palumbo seconded. The motion passed, 8-1-0, with Alderwoman Blakely voting no.

[6. Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Annual Contract for Commercial Irrigation Services with Turf Services, Inc. for up to \\$60,000 \(No. 7810\)](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #5 and #6, Alderman Palumbo seconded. The motion passed, 8-1-0, with Alderwoman Blakely voting no.

PURCHASING ITEMS

[7. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Construction Contract for Improvements to Stratford Park and Sections of Augusta Avenue with Johnson-Laux Construction, LLC \(State Contract\) in the Amount of \\$384,667.70 \(Event No. 7922\)](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #7 and #8, Alderman Palumbo and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed, 8-1-0, with Alderwoman Gibson-Carter voting no.

[8. Authorize the City Manager to Execute Contract Modification No.1 for Street Repair and Resurfacing with Savannah River Utilities Co. in the Amount of \\$290,000 \(Event No. 7496\)](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #7 and #8, Alderman Palumbo and Alderwoman Lanier seconded. The motion passed, 8-1-0, with Alderwoman Gibson-Carter voting no.

SAVANNAH AIRPORT COMMISSION

[9. Approval of Host Airport Sponsorship for the F. Russell Hoyt National Airports Conference \(NAC\) in the amount of \\$55,000](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #9 through #12, Alderman Palumbo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[10. Approval to Amend the Premium Renewal of the 2020 – 2021 Airport Liability Insurance Program with USI Insurance Services in the amount of \\$37,266](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #9 through #12, Alderman Palumbo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

[11. Approval of a Supplemental Agreement with Crawford, Murphy & Tilly \(CMT\) for Additional Design Services for the Rental Car Facility Improvement Project in the amount of \\$323,433](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #9 through #12, Alderman Palumbo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Approval to Execute a Logo Licensing Agreement with Travel & Leisure in the amount of \$34,000

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #9 through #12, Alderman Palumbo seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ALCOHOL LICENSE HEARINGS

13. Approval of Class C (Liquor, Beer, Wine)(By the Drink) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales and Class E (Beer, Wine) (By the Package) to David Folsom for The DeSoto at 15 East Liberty Street. (Aldermanic District 2)

Mayor Johnson opened the alcohol license hearing.

Clerk of Council Mark Massey announced he had not received any comments from the public.

a. Alderman Leggett moved to close the hearing, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Alderman Leggett moved to approve Item #13, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCES - SECOND READING

14. Approval to Amend Sections 8-3351 General Development Standards, 8-3353 Definitions–Multi Family Residential, and 8-3353 Definitions–Stacked Townhouse of the Zoning Ordinance for the Eastern Wharf Planned Development, Petition of Harold Yellin on behalf of PMC SRL, LLC, Aldermanic District 1, File No. 20-001996

Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Item #14, Alderwoman Miller Blakely seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Approval to Rezone 65.28 Acres of Property on Stillwood Drive and Cedar Grove Avenue (Savannah Country Day School), District 6 (File No. 20-000090-ZA)

Alderman Purtee moved to approve Item #15, Alderwoman Miller Blakely seconded. The motion passed, 8-0-1, with Alderwoman Gibson-Carter away from the video during the vote.

RESOLUTIONS

16. A Resolution Authorizing the Modification of a Promissory Note Between the City of Savannah and the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) to Create the Interest-free Period and the Payment-free Period

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #16, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

17. A Resolution Confirming the Mayor's Emergency Declaration on June 30, 2020

Mayor Johnson explained in detail the reason for the Emergency Declaration on June 30, 2020 mandating the wearing of masks in public. The rise of COVID-19 cases has risen drastically in the coastal communities. After discussions with the City Attorney the decision was made to mandate the wearing of masks. Cities across the State of Georgia are now following suit and mandating the wearing of mask. Mayor Johnson is asking Council to approve the Emergency Declaration with the following amendments:

- asking trolley tour participates to wear masks
- asking walking tour participates to wear masks
- the fines are up to \$500 for individuals, determined by the courts (first given opportunity to comply)
- the fines are up to \$1,000 for businesses, determined by courts (first given opportunity to comply)
- exceptions for individuals with medical issues, children under age of ten, in car, eating, drinking and walking or exercising alone outside

Alderman Miller Blakely has concerns for tourists not wearing masks. Could the City post signs at City Hall to notify tourists that masks are required. Mayor Johnson complied and informed Council that the Civic Center is testing for COVID-19 for residents in their cars averaging over five hundred people per day.

There were discussions with the Aldermen expressing their satisfaction with Mayor Johnson's leadership and his stance on the protection of the public during COVID-19.

Alderman Gibson-Carter asked about reestablishing hazard pay for workers, i.e. Greenspace, Sanitation, Police, Fire, etc. Mayor Johnson explained the prior hazard pay was due to the shelter-at-home order that is no longer in effect.

Alderman Purtee discussed the importance of police, fire and emergency personnel in the City and the need to consider these front-line employees for hazard pay. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz agreed with the hazard pay for employees.

Alderman Lanier agreed with Alderman Gibson-Carter and Alderman Purtee on reestablishing hazard pay for staff and asked for equity in testing. She recommended a walk-up testing site at the Civic Center.

The City Manager will present options on hazard pay at the July 23rd meeting. He indicated that paying hazard pay will cost one million dollars per month.

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #17 with stated amendments, Alderman Lanier seconded. The motion passed

unanimously.

CITY ATTORNEY ITEMS

18. Settlement #1

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to approve Item #18, a settlement for a lawsuit brought by a Savannah citizen, Mr. Leon Blake, pertaining to an injury when a large limb fell from a sweet gum tree in a City owned park, in the amount of \$150,000.00, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS

19. Personnel Discussion

At 4:09 p.m., Alderwoman Lanier moved to recess to conduct a closed Executive Session pertaining to personnel and litigation, Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The Executive Session began at 4:20 p.m.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN

Upon a motion/second to close the Executive Session, Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 5:51 p.m.

Announcements:

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz announced the 98th birthday of Reverend Matthew Southall Brown, Sr., retired pastor of St. John Baptist Church on Thursday, July 16th. A car caravan will meet at 10:00 a.m., Saturday, July 18th, on Hopkins Street, to drive by his house for a birthday drive-by celebration.

The audio recording of the Council Meeting can be found by copying and inserting the below link in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=e6WhnaVhn0Hx>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: July 23, 2020

Initials: mm