



JULY 11, 2024 10:00 a.m. - SPECIAL MEETING, WORKSHOP, and CM'S BRIEFING
CITY GOVERNMENT
OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The special called meeting, work session, and City Manager's briefing was held at **10:03 a.m.**, in Council Chambers. **Mayor Johnson** called the meeting to order, acknowledged that Ald. Alicia Miller Blakely experienced death in her family, so she will not be present with us today, and he asked everyone to keep her in their thoughts and prayers. Mayor Johnson then recognized **Ald. Kurtis Purtee** to offer a prayer.

PRESENT:

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
 Alderwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1
 Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2
 Alderwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3 - Vice Chair
 Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4 - Chairman
 Alderwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5 - Mayor Pro Tem

ABSENT:

Alderwoman Carolyn H. Bell, At-Large, Post 1
 Alderwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2

ALSO, PRESENT:

Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd
 Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams
 City Attorney Bates Lovett
 Clerk of Council Mark Massey

Special Meeting Agenda Items

[1. Public Hearing on 2024 Property Tax Millage Rate](#)

[Exhibit 1: 2024 Notice of Property Tax Increase.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: 2024 Tax Digest and Five Year History.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson announced we are combining the workshop and the public hearing. He announced the City Manager is on training leave and Assistant City Manager Heath Lloyd is serving in his place. Mayor Johnson advised public comment will be received pursuant to State law, following the City Manager's presentation. Another opportunity for public comment will be received today at 6:00 p.m. The final opportunity for public comment will take place in two weeks on July 25th during the regular city council meeting at 2:00 p.m.

Mayor Johnson requested to hold an executive session to discuss litigation issues, following the public hearing regarding the millage rate.

Mayor Johnson advised a budget is a moral document which talks and speaks to priorities. Two times per year we have the opportunity to discuss issues related to the budget: the millage rate; and the actual budget. This Council has chosen to use growth to fund growth. We have spoken regarding our desire not to raise the millage rate. Under a quirky State law which requires the city to advertise a hearing, in this case due to a 9% calculation above the rollback rate, the City Manager is proposing a flat (or the same) millage rate.

Assistant City Manager made a presentation which included the following:

- The City experienced a lightening strike earlier in the week which impacted the live streaming/filming of the meetings.
- Fiscal Year 2024 Millage Rate
 - Property Tax Millage Rate, over many years
 - Millage Rate Valuation
 - Property Tax Revenue
 - 2024 Millage Rate Utilization
 - Drainage - \$3.5M
 - Transportation Safety Improvements (Vision Zero) - \$2.0M
 - Public Safety Compensation Adjustment - \$1.6M
 - Millage Rate Setting Timeline
 - Public Hearing #1 - July 11, 2024, 10:00 a.m.
 - Public Hearing #2 - July 11, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
 - Public Hearing #3 - July 25, 2024, 2:00 p.m.
 - Adoption - July 25, 2024
 - 2023 Planned Projects
 - Millage Rate 12.2 \$7,862,438
 - Victory Drive Drainage Improvements (Springfield Canal) - \$3M
 - Liberty City Improvements (Springfield Canal) - \$862,438
 - Montgomery Crossroads (Hayner's Creek) - \$4M

Mayor Johnson thanked the City Manager and team for allowing us to maintain a low millage rate, and fund needed services with growth. He explained the difference between millage rate and valuation. Property values are going up, and the City of Savannah is not the only taxing entity in town. Other taxing entities include the County, the School Board, and Chatham Area Transit. Even though the City is maintaining the millage rate, taxes could increase based on value/valuation and/or one of the other taxing entities. While we don't control valuation, we control the millage rate which we are maintaining at the current level.

Ald. Purtee:

- Public Safety across the board increases (5%), recruitment and retention, and the market study (citywide staff for FY2025 budget).

Ald. Leggett:

- Current millage rate (12.2 mills). Rollback rate (11.196 mills). Assistant City Manager Lloyd advised that the current rate is requested to be maintained in order to fund investments in drainage, transportation safety, and public safety.
- Making this investment gives us the opportunity to show the public we are doing a lot in good faith for the quality of life.

Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz:

- Thanked Team Savannah. We are gonna use growth to fund growth. She is happy drainage is at the middle of the table, on behalf on the entire West of Savannah. She agrees that we should take these small projects one at a time, until we are able to have SPLOST dollars available to address the drainage and other infrastructure needs.
- Agreed to keeping the millage rate flat at 12.2 mills, along with prioritizing drainage, transportation safety, and public safety.

Mayor Johnson read a prepared statement regarding the setting of a millage rate, and it's impact to property owners within the city/state.

Mayor Johnson declared the public hearing opened. He then asked members of staff and the media to raise their hands.

No speaker(s) present.

Written comment(s) received:

- Holly Shaw and Ron Weaver - OPPOSED

Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Ald. Palumbo and Ald. Lanier. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0-2. Ald. Bell was not present for the vote, and Ald. Miller Blakely was absent.

Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to conduct a closed executive session for purposes of discussing litigation, seconded by Ald. Wilder Bryan and Ald. Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0-2.

There was no action taken during the Special Meeting, Workshop, and City Manager's Briefing. Mayor Johnson adjourned the workshop at 11:20 a.m.

The video recording of the Special Meeting, Workshop, and City Manager's Briefing can be found by copying and inserting the link below in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=BlhqwiVadzGpN5wH>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

