



**APRIL 24, 2025 - 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 **12:34 p.m.**, in the SCCPSS Board of Education Room located at the Eli Whitney Administrative Complex, 2 Laura Avenue, Building G. **Mayor Johnson** called the meeting to order. **Alderman Purtee** offered a prayer.

**PRESENT:**

- Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
- Alderwoman Carolyn H. Bell, At-Large, Post 1
- 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 - Vice Chair
- Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4 - Chairman
- Alderwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5 - Mayor Pro Tem
- Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

**ALSO, PRESENT:**

- Chief Community Services Officer Taffanye Young
- Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams
- Deputy City Attorney Jennifer Herman
- Interim Deputy Clerk of Council Gwendolyn Jones
- Assistant to Clerk of Council Renee Osborne

**Workshop Agenda Items**

- [1. 100 Days of Summer](#)  
[042425 100 Days of Summer 2025 Council Workshop Final.pdf](#)

Chief Community Services Officer Taffanye Young opened the meeting with the 100 Days of Summer which included a variety of presentations. The other presenters were: Stuart Miller Director of Cultural Resources, Kerri Reid Senior Director of Human Services, Nick Roberts Director of Recreation and Leisure, Fire Chief E. Kitchen, Police Chief L. Gunther, and Aurelle Ross Communications Manager. Kick-off to the 100 Days of Summer opens on Friday, May 23rd at Daffin Park.

Mayor Johnson thanked Chief Young and the team for their presentations and stated that we put our money where our mouth is. We also recognize that public safety is a large responsibility. We are focused on investment and prevention. He also stated that in remembering his summers as a boy, that although it was unscripted, you learned a lot and came back to school better and different. He believed that we shifted our focus and it is all hands on deck. He made a mayoral request regarding the summer camps. The camps are not free, but paid for by the residents of the City of Savannah and the taxpayers; City of Savannah residents are prioritized. He does not want a single resident to have to pay for camps (especially the outdoor ones). He stated that we will work it out and that it is more important that we have every offering packed with kids from the City of Savannah. Mayor Johnson felt that the cost from doing so could be absorbed by the City. Even if it is \$100.00 each, he is hopeful that Council would support it. It would definitely add value if we can sponsor the camps and show the public that we can be trusted with their kids. Let's figure out a way for kids to be kids and just have fun.

Ald. Bell thanked Chief Young and all of the presenters who participated. She asked how Council could support the Team in getting the word out. She stated that light participation may be an indicator that the people have not been aware or informed. Ald. Bell stated that she is still "old school" but maybe we could post a card with the website on it. Chief Young stated yes and she liked the idea of cards because they are small to hand out (also showed an updated 2-sided flyer capturing all of the activities). Chief Young asked for help as well while they try to recruit summer lifeguards. Ald. Bell asked if the working hours for lifeguards were flexible (Yes). She also asked about lifeguard training (when and how).

Ald. Miller Blakely thanked the team and the Mayor, and she agreed that it is important to have full camps and that they would not have to pay. Ald. Miller Blakely's concern is about swimming pools. She asked for an update regarding the Brock and Shuman pools (which belong to the Board of Education). She heard that citizens feel that it is the City's fault that those pools will not be open.

Mayor Johnson shared the names of the four pools in the city from east to west. They are Bowles C. Ford, Tompkins, W.W. Law, and Daffin Pools. The Mayor stated that five lifeguards are needed to operate a pool and Chief Young agreed. The Mayor stated that it should be a back-to-basics approach and "do what we can do well". Some of the pools that have been mentioned by citizens are not owned or maintained by the city.

Ald. Miller Blakely asked about adult pool monitors and adult school assistants. What age group are you speaking about? (18 and up). You all are doing awesome. On the Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement, which neighborhoods are they referring to? How can other neighborhoods get involved? Are there any on the Southside? She stated that she would provide the contact information for the neighborhood association president, because that area could use a lot of help. Ald. Miller Blakely also thanked the Fire Department and the Police Department and said that she would promote it on her Tuesday night podcast. She stated that because of these activities we could be saving lives.

Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked the Team and staff for all of the presentations. She appreciated the 100 Days Summer flyer and stated that it was a great tool. She also thanked the Chiefs from FD and SPD for continuing the focus on the young women in the community. Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz asked the public to please take advantage of any of the programs where you can get involved. The City is doing all that it can to increase the number of females in these industries which are predominantly male oriented. She echoed the sentiments of Ald. Miller Blakely, Chief Young, and Mayor Johnson, in clarifying the pool situation, in addition to our responsibilities. She stated that she is glad that the information is being publicized regarding reaching out to the school board. She thanked Nick Roberts for bringing light to the city since he arrived and for the increase in the programming and staff, as well as engaging the public into the area of fun, health, and recreation. She thanked the team in the Cultural Arts Department and stated that it is a really good thing.

Ald. Wilder-Bryan said to the Mayor that the citizens need a return on their investment and thanked the Mayor for entertaining the idea of covering the cost of the camps for the kids and working parents. She shared that she knew two brothers that were Savannah lifeguards who

grew up to became attorneys. Ald. Wilder-Bryan referenced the 100 Days flyer, stating that there were 14 places listed for Teen Nights, but none on the agenda for the Eastside (all in District 1). She stated that she would like to see the Parking Lot Parties in District 3 at the park. She asked about the monies used for the cheerleading camps and would like more concentration placed on the girls' teams. She asked that the police department, fire department, and other departments offer some classes about bullying; anything we can do to eliminate that type of negative behavior, we need to be in front of that. Ald. Wilder-Bryan thanked all the teams for their presentations, time, effort, and energy.

Ald. Leggett stated that the ONSE Program and the Savannah Impact Program are very vital programs that work within our communities. He suggested that parents whose kids need mentoring or summer activities to utilize those programs to assist during the summer months. He thanked Chief Young for the investment at W.W. Law. He stated that a lot is happening at W.W. Law and he is excited about the new leadership. With many people returning, he wants to utilize that community center as much as possible. He stated that the pool at the Delaware Center will be turned into a splash pad. Damage sustained to the pool will cost more to repair than to modify it, so that seniors and kids can still use it to keep cool during the summer. He quoted, "give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; but if you teach a man to fish, you can feed him for a lifetime". He asked if we have thought about teaching our young people how to fish at Daffin Park. With the investment of 700 fish into the pond (the State of Georgia also provided fish) and that it would be a good way to bring young people out to the pond, help them to obtain fishing licenses, and teach them how to fish. Ald. Leggett expressed his appreciation to all the teams for making the extra effort by going out into the community and giving opportunities to young residents to do something different in their lives.

Ald. Lanier thanked and shared appreciation for all of the presentations and the work that they are doing for all of the children. She would like for the Summer Lunch in the Park to make a stop in District 1/Westside (formerly called the Free Lunch Program) based on the demographics and economics of the area. She stated that it was a poor comment to state that we are not in the pool business, because we are in the business of the whole child. She shared that she learned to swim because of one of the local programs and we need to offer these same opportunities for the young people now as much as we can. City of Savannah taxpayers paid for those pools/facilities. There was an intergovernmental agreement between the school board and the City of Savannah that worked for some time but that agreement is no longer in place. It is important to look at the benefits as to why these pools are important to the well-being of youth and are exposed to the opportunities for learning how to swim. It has benefits to physical health, mental well-being, social skills, safety skills, and confidence building, to name a few. Ald. Lanier has discussed the possibility of using the SPLOST infrastructure dollars with City Manager Melder for pool funding. She also asked that we not forget the children of the Highlands. The population has increased on the western edges of the city and they do not have a summer program for youth engagement. Lost jobs, food, assistance and accessibility to programs have been cut and we need the water to cool everyone off this summer.

[2. Closed Executive Session Regarding Personnel, Real Estate, and Litigation](#)

No executive session was held.

[3. City Manager's Update](#)

There was no update.

There was no action taken during the Workshop. Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

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

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

The video recording of the Workshop can be found by copying and inserting the link below in your url:

<https://www.youtube.com/@cityofsavannah/videos>

