



MARCH 23, 2023, 6:30 p.m. - CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

CITY GOVERNMENT

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The regular meeting of the City Council was held at 6:32 p.m. Mayor Johnson recognized Aldерwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan who introduced Bishop Jermaine Oliver, Pastor of New Life Resurrection Church, to offer the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

PRESENT:

- Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
- Aldерwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1
- Aldерwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2
- Aldерwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1
- Aldерman Detric Leggett, District 2
- Aldерwoman Linda Wilder-Bryan, District 3
- Aldерman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman
- Aldерwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5, Mayor Pro-Tem
- Aldерman 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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

[1. Adoption of the Regular Meeting Agenda for March 23, 2023.](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to adopt/approve the agenda as amended to postpone/continue Agenda Items #11 and #13, regarding 1800 East 63rd Street, as requested by the petitioner to the April 27, 2023, City Council Meeting, seconded by Aldерman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[2. Approval of the Minutes for the Work Session and City Manager’s Briefing Held on March 9, 2023, at 12:00 p.m.](#)

[Exhibit 1: WS DRAFT MINUTES_March 9, 2023 City Council Workshop.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2 and #3, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[3. Approval of the Minutes for the Regular Meeting Held on March 9, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.](#)

[Exhibit 1: RM DRAFT MINUTES_March 9, 2023 City Council Regular Meeting.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #2 and #3, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

PRESENTATIONS

[4. Proclamation Designating the Month of March as Muscular Sclerosis Education Awareness Month.](#)

Mayor Johnson took a moment to send condolences and prayers to the family of Revenue Department cashier, Dominique Mechell Sterling, who passed on March 18, 2023. Services will be held over the weekend.

Condolences and prayers were sent to the family of Dr. Jessica Miller Mullinex, daughter of former Alderman Julian Miller, who passed within the past few days; and to the family of Ella Louise Hammond Sims, Savannah State University Professor and long-time companion of Commissioner Bobby Lockett, who passed on March 21, 2023.

Mayor Johnson took a moment of personal privilege and asked attendees for a moment of silence in memory of those who recently passed.

PRESENTED by Mayor Johnson to representatives of P.R.Y.M.E.2 and M.B.H.M., Mobilizing & Balancing Health Management, Inc.

Ms. Geneva Golden, representing P.R.Y.M.E.2, accepted the proclamation and thanked Mayor and Council for the recognition. Ms. Golden announced there will be a Walk for Muscular Sclerosis on April 1, 2023.

[5. Proclamation Recognizing the Month of March as Habitat for Humanity Women's Build Month.](#)

PRESENTED and read by Mayor Johnson to Jessica Leavitt, representative of The National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC), Coastal Georgia Chapter #380. Ms. Leavitt accepted the proclamation on behalf of NAWIC and thanked Mayor and Council for the recognition. As a partner with Habitat for Humanity, Ms. Leavitt invited volunteers to come out and help with the two remaining build days. More information is available on the Habitat web page.

Alderwoman Lanier cited the motto "Girls play house, and women build them". Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked the NAWIC for continuing to lift up the banner for women in the construction industry. This allows the younger generation of women to know the building and construction industry is open for their participation and career goals.

[6. Appearance by a Representative of the by the Ardsley Park/Chatham Crescent Garden Club and Recognition of their Generous Donation of \\$11,985 Towards the Enhancement of the Solomon and Guekenheimer Parks \(Aldermanic District 4\).](#)

PRESENTED by Mayor Johnson, and READ by Alderman Palumbo, to garden club representatives Trish Lawrence, Arleen Vieira, and Park and Tree Director Gordon Denney. See Item #19.

Ms. Lawrence accepted the Resolution on behalf of the fifty-member Ardsley Park/Chatham Crescent Garden Club, and thanked Mayor and Council for the recognition. The Garden Club is celebrating it's fifty-year anniversary this year. April 22, 2023, is the annual fund raiser, Tour of Homes. The public is invited. Contact Ms. Lawrence for tickets.

Mr. Denney accepted the donation and thanked the Ardsley Park/Chatham Crescent Garden Club. The donation will free-up City funds and allow for additional projects across the City.

For public knowledge, Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked for the locations of Solomon and Guekenheimer Parks. Alderman Palumbo indicated Solomon Park is located on 50th Street at Harmon Street, and Guekenheimer Park is located at Battey and 45th Streets.

[7. Appearance by and Recognition of Brittni Evans, the Miss Savannah 2023 Competition Winner. \(Item postponed\)](#)

NOT PRESENTED (postponed).

ALCOHOL LICENSE HEARINGS - (CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF ALL ITEMS IN THIS SECTION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE)

- [8. Approval of a Class C \(Liquor, Beer, Wine\) \(By the Drink\) Alcohol License with Sunday Sales to Raghav Sapra for The Drayton Hotel, a Hotel Located at 7 Drayton Street Between East Bay and East Bryan Streets in Aldermanic District 2.](#)
- [Exhibit 1: Checklist - The Drayton Hotel.pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 2: Density Map - The Drayton Hotel.pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 3: Alcohol Documents - The Drayton Hotel.pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - The Drayton Hotel.pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 5: Security Plan - The Drayton Hotel.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson took a moment of personal privilege to introduce friend and former Mayor of Augusta, Hardie Davis. They were in the class of 2006, Leadership Georgia. Mayor Davis has served in the Georgia House and Senate, and recently completed eight years as Mayor of the City of Augusta. Mayor Johnson recognized Mayor Davis for supporting the citizens of Savannah for the consecutive years when evacuation was necessary. Mayor Davis welcomed Savannah residents to the City and churches of Augusta. Mayor Davis thanked Mayor, Council, and the citizens of Savannah for the recognition and wished the City future success.

Mayor Johnson declared the alcohol hearings open for Items #8 and #9.

No speaker(s).

- a.** Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to close the alcohol hearings for Items #8 and #9, seconded by Alderman Leggett and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.
- b.** Alderman Leggett moved to approve Item #8, seconded by Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

- [9. Approval of Class E \(Beer, Wine\) \(By the Package\) Alcohol License to Mital Patel for Marathon, a Convenience Store Located at 329 East Montgomery Crossroads Between Edgewater Road and Aegean Avenue in Aldermanic District 4.](#)
- [Exhibit 1: Checklist - Marathon.pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 2: Density Map - Marathon.pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 3: Alcohol Documents - Marathon.pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 4: Measurement Report - Marathon.pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 5: Security Plan - Marathon.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the alcohol hearings open for Items #8 and #9.

No speaker(s).

- a.** Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to close the alcohol hearings for Items #8 and #9, seconded by Alderman Leggett and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.
- b.** Alderman Palumbo moved to approve Item #9, seconded by Alderwoman Miller Blakely and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

ZONING HEARINGS

- [10. Map Amendment for Gregory Polster \(Agent\) on Behalf of Polster Commercial Holdings, LLC to Rezone ~0.76 Acres Located at 11903 Middleground Road \(PIN 20782 02005\) from B-L \(Limited Business\) to OI-E \(Office Institutional-Expanded\) Aldermanic District 6 \(File No. 23-000305-ZA\).](#)
- [Exhibit 1: MPC Recommendation Packet for 11903 Middleground Road \(File No. 23-000305-ZA\).pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 2: Maps for 11903 Middleground Road \(File No. 22-000305-ZA\).pdf](#)
- [Exhibit 3: Draft Ordinance for 11903 Middleground Road \(File No. 23-000305-ZA\).pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson declared the zoning hearing open for Item #10.

Speaker(s):

- Marcus Lotson, MPC representative. MPC recommended approval.

Written comment(s) received:

- Jennifer Lee Crumpton – IN SUPPORT

Alderman Purtee moved to close the zoning hearing for Item #10, seconded by Alderman Leggett and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0. (See #13)

- [11. Map Amendment for Robert McCorkle \(Agent\) on Behalf of Richard G. Mika and Savannah Health Services, LLC to Rezone ~20.5 Acres Located at 1800 East 63rd Street \(PIN 20104 30014 and a portion of 20105 10008\) from RSF-6 \(Residential Single Family-6\) to RMF-2-20 \(Residential Multi-family-2-20 units per acre\) Aldermanic District 3 \(File No. 22-004421-ZA\). \[ITEM POSTPONED TO APRIL 13TH AT THE REQUEST OF THE PETITIONER.\]](#)
- [Exhibit 1: MPC Recommendation Packet for 1800 East 63rd Street \(File No. 22-004421-ZA\).pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Maps for 1800 East 63rd Street \(File No. 22-004421-ZA\).pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: Concept Plan Version 1 \(File No. 22-004421-ZA\).pdf](#)

[Exhibit 4: Draft Ordinance for 1800 East 63rd Street \(File No. 22-004421-ZA\).pdf](#)

Aldерwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to postpone/continue Items #11 and #13 to the April 27, 2023, City Council Meeting, as requested by the petitioner, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0. (See Item #1)

Written comment(s) received:

- Thomas Pigage, Jr. - OPPOSED

ORDINANCES - FIRST AND SECOND READING - (CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF ALL ITEMS IN THIS SECTION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE)

[12. Map Amendment for Gregory Polster \(Agent\) on Behalf of Polster Commercial Holdings, LLC to Rezone ~0.76 Acres Located at 11903 Middleground Road \(PIN 20782 02005\) from B-L \(Limited Business\) to OI-E \(Office Institutional-Expanded\) Aldermanic District 6 \(File No. 23-000305-ZA\).](#)

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After the first reading was considered the second reading and a request that an ordinance be placed and passed upon its adoption, Alderman Purtee moved to approve Item #12, seconded by Aldерwoman Miller Blakely, Aldерwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Leggett. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[13. Map Amendment for Robert McCorkle \(Agent\) on Behalf of Richard G. Mika and Savannah Health Services, LLC to Rezone ~20.5 Acres Located at 1800 East 63rd Street \(PIN 20104 30014 and a portion of 20105 10008\) from RSF-6 \(Residential Single Family-6\) to RMF-2-20 \(Residential Multi-family-2-20 units per acre\) Aldermanic District 3 \(File No. 22-004421-ZA\). \(ITEM POSTPONED TO APRIL 13th AT THE REQUEST OF THE PETITIONER.\)](#)

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[Exhibit 4: Draft Ordinance for 1800 East 63rd Street \(File No. 22-004421-ZA\).pdf](#)

Aldерwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to postpone/continue Items #11 and #13 to the April 27, 2023, City Council Meeting, as requested by the petitioner, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0. (See Item #1)

PURCHASING ITEMS - (CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF ALL ITEMS IN THIS SECTION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE)

[14. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for the Purchase of Badger Tablets from Badger Meter, Inc. in the Amount of \\$96,441. The Revenue Department has an immediate need to upgrade its meter reading handheld devices to ensure accuracy, transparency, and accountability in the meter reading process for services provided to the citizens of Savannah. \(Revenue\)](#)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Badger Tablets.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Badger Tablets.pdf](#)

Aldерwoman Gibson-Carter asked City Manager Melder if the equipment will be used in conjunction with the previous AMI reader equipment purchased by the City. City Manager Melder replied, the AMI readers do not require an actual meter reader, it is cellular based and the information can be pulled as water happens. These readers are badger products and will help advance the meter reader technology.

Aldерwoman Gibson-Carter discussed the many issues residents have/are facing due to water meter readings and complimented City Manager Melder on opening his office and the revenue department for residents to contact in regards to their concerns with water billing; however, Aldерwoman Gibson-Carter has concerns for the changed billing cycles and the addition of an administrative/late fee (\$50.00). In addition, Aldерwoman Gibson-Carter has concerns for senior citizens applying for discounts and having to go to 3025 Bull Street, Senior Citizens, Inc. building, to acquire the form and then present the completed form to the revenue department. Aldерwoman Gibson-Carter asked to make the process easier for senior citizens. She also asked when the new meter readers will arrive. City Manager Melder indicated the AMI readers have arrived. Staff will use a phased approach for installing AMI readers and several more investments will be made to update 50,000+ water meters across the service area. He stated that this is a several year updating process. City Manager Melder will keep Council informed of the updated installations and the pilot program that is in progress. City Manager Melder explained the City has given residents a timeframe for paying the \$50.00 administrative fee and the revenue department will work with residents on paying down water bill charges (payment plans). For the senior citizens discount, City Manager Melder will work with Interim Revenue Manager Dr. Jennifer Blalock in streamlining the process.

With the new equipment, Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan expressed concerns of how this will effect the sixty day cycle. City Manager Melder indicated it will not effect the time-line for meter readings. The City bills bi-monthly, with 9 billing cycles, ranging from 40+ to 60 days. Billing cycles are posted on the bills.

City Manager Melder clarified, fee schedule updates are presented to Council annually for consideration. The fees are associated with rate payers, not tax payers.

Mayor Johnson indicated the City operates/provides utility services for residents and must remain solvent. Funds are required to maintain a water and/or sewer system, this will avoid any future problems.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter moved to approve Item #14, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

15. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for an Accounting Software Upgrade from MHC Software Holdings, Inc. in the Amount of \$86,100. The Finance Department is requesting this software upgrade to provide an additional software module for document self service (DSS) for City employees and retirees. (Finance)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Accounting Software.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Accounting Software.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #15, #17, and #18, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

16. Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Annual Contract for a Learning Management System with Cornerstone OnDemand in the Amount of \$104,259. This contract provides education, professional development, and learning pathways for all City of Savannah employees, to include regulatory and compliance trainings, professional development and growth training, and educational advancement. (ITS)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Learning Management System.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Learning Management System.pdf](#)

Alderwoman Lanier expressed support of digital learning for continued education. The City is moving in the right direction making the modules accessible to employees. As the City embarks upon learning modules, there have been certain demeaning treatment of residents in marginal and low wealth areas on the West side; employees in the field are rough and gruff with residents. Elderly residents are fearful of interacting with employees. Alderwoman Lanier recommended a module to teach staff how to interact and serve vulnerable communities. Alderwoman Lanier indicated the staff of the 311 office are very good in dealing with vulnerable communities. Residents have shared their pleasure with Alderwoman Lanier on the 311 staff's interaction and service.

Mayor Johnson indicated when budgets are decreased, the first segment omitted is training; however, the City was fortunate enough to maintain training for its employees. He agrees with Alderwoman Lanier especially as it relates to explicit bias, the inclusion, diversity and equity goals set by Council can be utilized with training modules for staff.

Alderwoman Lanier moved to approve Item #16, seconded by Alderman Leggett. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

17. Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Annual Contract for Barracuda's Cloud-Based Email Archive System from SHI International in the Amount of \$78,000. The Department of Innovation+Technology Services uses the Barracuda message archive system to provide critical service for email filtering with advanced threat protection. This service scans and protects incoming and outgoing emails to sure that accidental or intentional malicious data is not introduced into our environment. This cloud-based service protects the integrity of the network and systems that the Innovation+Technology Services supports. (ITS)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Barracuda Cloud-Based Email Archive System Renewal.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Barracuda Cloud-Based Email Archive System Renewal.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #15, #17, and #18, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

18. Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Contract for Well Maintenance Services with Layne Christensen (LOCAL) in an Amount Not to Exceed \$175,000. The well maintenance services will be utilized to service City wells for preventive maintenance and repairs including video inspection, flow testing, and repairs to well pumps and casings. Five wells are pulled on a cycle for complete inspection and maintenance and repairs. (Water Supply & Treatment)

[Exhibit 1: Funding Verification - Well Maintenance.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Purchasing Notes - Well Maintenance.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Items #15, #17, and #18, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

RESOLUTIONS - (CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF ALL ITEMS IN THIS SECTION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE)

19. A Resolution Accepting the Donation of \$11,985 from the Ardsley Park/Chatham Crescent Neighborhood Association Garden Club.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan moved to approve Item #19, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderman Leggett. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

[20. A Resolution Accepting the Donation of \\$100,000 to the Savannah Fire Department from the Proper No. Twelve founded by Conor McGregor.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Resolution for Proper No 12 Donation to Savannah Fire Department](#)

Mayor Johnson stated he hung out with Conor McGregor during the St. Patrick's Day celebration, and Mr. McGregor was impress with the celebration. Mayor Johnson challenged Mr. McGregor, he declined, but he donated \$100,000.00 to the Savannah Fire Department from his Proper No. Twelve Brand. Fire Chief Elzie Kitchens displayed the check and expressed appreciation for the donation from Mr. McGregor.

Mayor Johnson recognized and thanked Fire Chief Elzie Kitchen and staff for assisting in the emergency last evening in The Highlands until EMS arrived an hour later.

Mayor Johnson and City Manager Melder thanked Fire Chief Kitchen, Police Chief Gunther, the Sanitation Department, Special Events, Film & Tourism and all participating staff for an exceptional successful St. Patrick's Day celebration. Thank you Team Savannah!

Mayor Johnson moved to approve Item #20, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz and Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

AGREEMENTS

[21. Approval of a Water & Sewer Agreement with Teal Lake Development, LLC for Teal Lake SD Phase 2. This is for a development consisting of 42 single family homes in the Teal Lake service area.](#)

[Exhibit 1: Water & Sewer Agreement - Teal Lake SD Phase 2.pdf](#)

Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to approve Item #21, seconded by Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan and Alderman Palumbo. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked the Revenue Department staff present to stand for recognition. Council thanked the Revenue Department staff for their service.

Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan thanked Mayor Johnson for recognizing Dominique Sterling. Mike and Janice Sterling are personal friends.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter announced 'The Jewel in You' organization, bringing awareness of domestic & sexual violence, will host a 5K race at Lake Mayer on March 25th, registration opens at 8:30 a.m. and the race begins at 9:00 a.m. March is colon/rectal cancer month, all individuals over the age of 40-45 should have an examination.

Alderwoman Gibson-Carter announced Jenkins High School young men who signed for college today: Joshua Gasdon attending Allen University, Josh Pridgen attending Northern Illinois University, Troy Smith attending Shaw University, and the last will be announced by the Alderman of District 2.

Alderman Leggett announced his son, KeShon Leggett, accepted the call to Savannah State University. Alderman Leggett thanked everyone sending condolences and prayers to his family on the death of his Grandmother on Sunday. The funeral will be on Saturday morning.

Mayor Johnson announced public notice is given, some Council Members will be attending the National League of Cities (NLC) Conference in Washington, DC.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Regular Meeting at 7:35 p.m.

A video recording of the Regular Meeting can be found by copying and inserting the link below in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=554DOymsZ77y>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

