



JULY 27, 2023, 10:00 a.m. - SPECIAL CALLED MEETING - PUBLIC HEARING
CITY GOVERNMENT
OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

The Special Called Meeting was held at 10:03 a.m. Mayor Johnson offered the prayer.

PRESENT:

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
Alderwoman Kesha Gibson-Carter, 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
Alderman Nick Palumbo, District 4, Vice-Chairman
Alderwoman Dr. Estella Edwards Shabazz, District 5, Mayor Pro-Tem

ABSENT:

Alderman Kurtis Purtee, District 6

ALSO, PRESENT:

City Manager Joseph A. Melder
Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams
City Deputy Attorney Jennifer Herman
Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox

Special Meeting Agenda Items

[1. Public Hearing to Receive Comments on the 2023 Property Tax Millage Rate. The proposed millage rate of 12.20 mills for 2023 is unchanged from the final rate for 2022.](#)

[Exhibit 1: 2023 Notice of Property Tax Increase.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: 2023 Tax Digest and Five Year History.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson gave a brief background of the millage rate history. He explained the State requirements for public hearings and for calculating the millage rate. This is the second of three public hearings. Citizens will be allowed two minutes for each comment.

City Manager Melder and staff recommended maintaining the current 12.2 millage rate. This would generate \$7.8 million for the establishment of a stormwater projects fund to be used for the following three drainage projects:

1. Victory Drive near Ogeechee Road
2. Springfield Canal in Liberty City (along Vasser Street)

3. Hayners Creek (Montgomery Crossroads area)

City Manager Melder asked Council Members to be mindful of the City's growth and the drainage needs, not only for now, but in the future.

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing.

Speaker(s):

- Clinton Cowart – OPPOSED
- LaRay J. Benton – OPPOSED
- Ben Adams – OPPOSED
- Roshida Edwards – OPPOSED
- Gwen Glover – OPPOSED
- Tammy Stone - OPPOSED
- Mariela Orellana – OPPOSED (she volunteers weekly in Cuyler-Brownsville neighborhood and expressed the residents need funding for repairing homes)

Written comment(s):

- Richard Kenyon – OPPOSED
- Mary Beckmann – SUPPORTED re stormwater fund
- Karen Butch – SUPPORTED re stormwater flooding
- Graham Zrostlik – SUPPORTED re infrastructure
- Scott C. Anderson (Ardsley Park – Chatham Crescent Neighborhood Association) – SUPPORTED re stormwater fund
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely requested the addresses of the citizens who sent in written comments. Mayor Johnson indicated the address and/or emails were included in the public comment packets sent to Council.

Mayor Johnson and City Manager Melder explained the benefits of citizens applying for the Stephenson Day Exemption, Senior Exemptions, and Military Exemptions as it relates to property value. Mayor Johnson indicated the Galvin Foundation recently established a one million dollar fund specifically for residents of Cuyler-Brownsville for repairing their homes.

Alderwoman Miller Blakely requested information on how residents of Cuyler-Brownsville can apply for funds from the Galvin Foundation for home repairs. Mayor Johnson replied, residents can contact the City's Housing Department.

Alderwoman Lanier stated a notice was posted for citizens to attend the public hearing today to comment on the 2023 property tax millage rate. The notice she read did not say citizen's statements were incorrect or they would receive a lecture. Alderwoman Lanier apologized to the citizens who felt they were chastised or ridiculed.

Mayor Johnson asked Deputy City Attorney Herman if the public hearing was carried out according to law (yes).

Mayor Johnson adjourned the public hearing.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Special Called Meeting at 10:50 a.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=MY2ScNSh6v2NNYbp>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____