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AUGUST 24, 2023, 4:30 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 4:33 p.m. Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order and recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a prayer.

**PRESENT:**

- Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
- Aldерwoman Keshа Gibson-Carter, At-Large, Post 1
- Aldерwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2
- Aldерwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1
- 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

**ABSENT:**

- Aldерman Detric Leggett, District 2

**ALSO, PRESENT:**

- City Manager Joseph A. Melder
- Chief of Staff Daphanie Williams
- City Attorney Bates Lovett

## Deputy Clerk of Council Margaret Fox

## Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Homelessness Initiatives Update](#)[Exhibit 1: Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless Presentation.pdf](#)[Exhibit 2: Savannah-Chatham County Interagency Council on Homelessness Presentation.pdf](#)

Mayor Johnson welcomed all in attendance and introduced City Manager Melder.

City Manager Melder gave a brief outlined of the City's efforts in homelessness. He acknowledged ICH/CoC Board Chair Karen Gwen and Board Member Jennifer Davenport. City Manager Melder introduced Executive Director of Interagency Council on Homelessness Stephanie Kapel and Executive Director of Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless Jennifer Dulong for the presentations.

Following the presentations, there were comments and questions from Members of City Council.

- . Alderman Purtee acknowledged that Savannah is making strides in homelessness .
- . Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan stated it takes work to eliminate homelessness, it is a team effort and community partnerships are necessary. It has worked in the 3rd District and will work throughout the City.
- . Alderman Palumbo thanked Ms. Kapel and Ms. Dulong. He asked City Manager Melder the number of service providers. Mr. Melder indicated approximately seventy-eight agencies. Since this is the first time all partners have worked together, Aldermen Palumbo asked how can Savannah extend efforts for more partners. City Manager Melder indicated this is a regional issue. Residents can support efforts with donations.
- . Mayor Johnson indicated he was recently appointed to a task force by GMA and ACCG to lift up best practices in Georgia. People without a roof over their heads are still people and we need to show passion and compassion.
- . Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz thanked City Manager Melder, Chief Taffney Young and City partners for taking up the effort of homelessness. Mayor Pro-Tem Dr. Shabazz discussed the different avenues of funding used by the City to address the homelessness and congratulated the City on it's resourcefulness.
- . Alderwoman Miller Blakely expressed concern that the Dive was not mentioned as one of the agencies. City Manager Melder indicated the Dive is part of the system of providers used by the City. Alderwoman Miller Blakely recommends the City give the Dive grant funding. She asked Ms. Dulong the number in the street outreach program (eight for the County).
- . Alderwoman Lanier asked Ms. Kapel had any person serving on any boards or committees experienced homelessness. Ms. Kapel indicated currently one person has experienced homelessness and she is working to secured additional individuals. Ms. Kapel is working to secure residents to serve on the board or committees. Currently, all board and committee members reside in the City. Alderwoman Lanier and Ms. Dulong discussed the surveys included in the presentation regarding availability of shelter beds and unsheltered point in time count. Ms. Dulong explained how the street outreach team counted the homeless, including children and persons staying in abandon buildings. A discussion of prevention and prevention programming resulted in determining a lack of funding at this time.
- . Alderwoman Gibson-Carter expressed concern for the 190 shelter beds and their location. Ms. Dulong indicated the beds are throughout the City, she will provide Council will the information. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter discussed the homeless individuals previously living under the President Street bridge and how many of them were displaced after the fire. She expressed advocacy for those agencies who respond to her request when called for service of homeless individuals when grant funded agencies do not respond. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter recommended the City connect with the Board of Education as it relates to buses picking up

students living in hotel/motels. City Manager Melder agreed to speak with the Board of Education and will inform the Council of the next round of mini grants to local agencies.

The PowerPoint presentation is on file and available for viewing in the Clerk of Council's office.

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

[Exhibit 1: City Manager's Update.pdf](#)

1. City Manager Melder updated Council on Agenda Item #22, amendment of language for the Resolution creating the Savannah Waterfront Community Improvement District; and change the membership from seven members to five in align with State Law. City Manager Melder is asking Council to approve Code Compliance Director Cynthia Knight to serve with him on the Board representing the City;
2. City Manager Melder is request Council's approval on Agenda Item #23. An updated agreement to change the numbers with the Savannah-Georgia Convention Center Authority for hotel/motel tax in accordance with Georgia State Law; and
3. The City entered into a proposal to purchase and redevelop the Kiah House with partner The Galvin Foundation. The Savannah Historic Foundation selected the City of Savannah's application. City Manager Melder will bring an authorization for an agreement at the next City Council meeting for Council's consideration.

Mayor Johnson recessed the meeting until 6:40 p.m.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 6:15 p.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=c0tXgaa8BofWkDD>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

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

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

