



MARCH 14, 2024 12:00 noon - 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 **12:04 p.m.**, in the 2nd Floor Media Room of City Hall. **Mayor Johnson** called the meeting to order and recognized **Alderman Purtee** to offer a prayer.

PRESENT:

Mayor Van R. Johnson, II, Presiding
 Alderwoman Carolyn H. Bell, At-Large, Post 1
 Alderman Detric Leggett, District 2
 Alderwoman Alicia Miller Blakely, At-Large, Post 2
 Alderwoman Bernetta B. Lanier, District 1
 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:

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

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Saint Patrick's Day Celebration/Festival Ordinance](#)

[Exhibit 1: St. Patrick's Festival.pdf](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Melder, Special Events, Film & Tourism Senior Director Susan Broker, Police Chief Lenny Gunther, and Deputy Fire Chief Jack McCutchen.

City Manager Melder indicated the information is related to St. Patrick's Day Festival and Parade activities, and City operations during the event. The City is expecting large crowds for the weekend with local hotels currently at or near capacity.

A variety of questions, concerns and comments followed about the St. Patrick's Day Festival and Parade. Below are some but not all of the topics discussed by City Council Members:

- City Manager Melder thanked all outside law enforcement and public safety agencies who are in the City to support SPD, SFD and other enforcement officers. All police and fire locations will be fully staffed during the festival. Thanks go out to the sanitation department and the City Marshalls for their hard work during the weekend to keep Savannah safe and clean.
- Ald. Leggett asked Police Chief Gunther if the SPD is partnering with revenue and code enforcement departments. Chief Gunther answered, yes, also partnering with state revenue teams. There will be a team monitoring cameras for any illegal activity including sex trafficking. Security measures are already in place and have started.
- Ald. Miller Blakely asked if sanitation workers will be compensated for their time. City Manager Melder indicated they will be paid time and a half. River Street hours and commercial delivery times were identified. Out of town camper rules and regulations during the celebration were explained.
- Ald. Wilder-Bryan expressed concern about the \$50 fine: who issues the fine, have they received proper training, how to identify whose trash. City Manager Melder explained code enforcement officers and City Marshalls are trained and will be located at various stations with radios to communicate any and all violations before citations are issued. Law enforcement officers will be in close proximity.
- Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz emphasized the ride share hub locations. She asked if there will be a shuttle at Savannah Mall, and if there will be parking for officials during the celebration. Ms. Broker indicated residents can check online for shuttle schedules, and there will be some city parking at the Visitor's Center.
- Mayor Johnson reiterated the importance of safety during the celebration. Exotic animals are not allowed and SPD will enforce the Ordinance of no exotic animals. Mayor Johnson inquired for the final count of last year's festival. City Manager Melder indicated the City is expecting tens of thousands, the hotels are at 90+%. Lessons learned over the years are to omit street vending, drinking, music, and eating. Having visitors inside the businesses makes for a more manageable situation. Ordinance changes have been very helpful in controlling the celebration.
- Regular Chatham Area Transit (CAT) routes are fare free, but CAT shuttles are \$5.00 per person. Vacation rentals will be enforced by SPD.
- Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz asked for the permit process for vendors. City Manager Melder encouraged residents to contact the Revenue Department, 912-651-6450, to inquire about obtaining a business license. She encouraged visitors to be mindful of State Patrol and Officers on the highway leading into Savannah.

City Manager Melder shared upcoming workshop topics:

1. March - Healthy Savannah & Step-Up Savannah (tentative)
2. April - Tourism Ordinance/Tourism Service Vehicles Homelessness Update
Homelessness
3. May - Safe Streets for All/Traffic Calming
2023 Street Resurfacing & Sidewalks Recap/FY24 Plan

Ald. Wilder-Bryan requested a workshop to discuss housing and loans for home repair programs. Mayor Johnson indicated information will be sent to Council Members requesting topics for future workshops.

Ald. Lanier recommended polling Council Members for availability prior to scheduling special called meeting dates.

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

At 1:24 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz moved to hold a closed Executive Session regarding real estate, personnel, and litigation, seconded by Ald. Miller Blakely, Ald. Wilder-Bryan, and Ald. Leggett. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

At 2:01 p.m., Ald. Leggett moved to adjourn the closed Executive Session, seconded by Ald. Miller Blakely. The motion passed unanimously, 9-0-0.

No action was taken during the Executive Session.

[3. City Manager's Agenda Review](#)

City Manager's Agenda Review.

There was no action taken during the Workshop and Executive Session.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the pre-meetings at 2:01 p.m.

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

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=gDvH4i3eZCqRcEaW>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____

