



MAY 25, 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 4:32 p.m. Mayor-Pro Tem Dr. Shabazz recognized Alderman Purtee to offer a 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
 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. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Update](#)

[Exhibit 1: Diversity Equity and Inclusion Update.pdf](#)

PRESENTED by City Manager Melder and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer F. Takeshia Brown.

Following are some of the questions and comments from members of the City Council:

- Alderwoman Miller Blakely asked for the racial makeup of the forty diversity champions mentioned in Strategies and how they were selected, and has the poverty level dropped. Ms. Brown will supply the information.
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan asked if there were any roadblocks and what is the diversity in supervisory positions as it relates to females. Ms. Brown supplied the information.

- Alderman Purtee expressed concern with equity as it relates to aging and disability. Ms. Brown indicated diversity included all aspects of the City's population.
- Alderwoman Lanier and Ms. Brown discussed stakeholders, workforce culture, policy analysis, and the recent census in regards to low wealth individuals being under counted.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter expressed concern to City Manager Melder for the City's policies as it relates to diversity, equity and inclusion. City Manager Melder indicated Ms. Brown presented some of the policies in the presentation and staff continues to improve the City's policies on an on-going basis. Alderwoman Gibson-Carter expressed her concern for the leadership at the City needs to show more diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Mayor Johnson and City Manager Melder responded to Alderwoman Gibson-Carter's concerns and expressed the City's on-going efforts to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion for all City departments and for all City Districts. Mayor Johnson indicated the City needs to engage an outside consulting firm to conduct an independent study to heighten the development of diversity, equity and inclusion in the organization
- Alderwoman Wilder-Bryan discussed the initiative for women and the staff luncheon celebrating women in leadership roles.
- Alderwoman Miller Blakely expressed concern about a prior disparity study and the outcome of it. Mayor Johnson indicated the prior administration decided to go in a different direction. Alderwoman Miller Blakely stated to City Manager Melder she was not invited to the luncheon celebrating women in leadership roles. City Manager Melder indicated the luncheon was established for City staff members.
- Alderwoman Lanier stated she was not invited to the luncheon and asked City Manager Melder for the total cost of the luncheon. City Manager Melder will send Council Members the information.
- Alderwoman Gibson-Carter expressed her concern for the City's standards in leadership. She is concerned with equity in staff salaries, economic opportunity for external partners, and for economic opportunity and fairness in the purchasing department. She discussed the City's lack of equity, diversity and inclusion in dealing with internal as well as external partners.
- Mayor Johnson stated there still exists a fundamental failure for some members to distinguish the role of Council (government) versus City management (administration). He further stated the City is not perfect and can use improvement, but there needs to be recorded data and external examination. He thanked Ms. Brown for the presentation and thanked the staff of the City for the service offered to the public. For every negative experience, most assuredly, there will be twenty positive experiences where staff gave an outstanding service.

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

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

Not Presented.

Mayor Johnson adjourned the Workshop at 5:57 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=aHxsGBLwDqZuiNSO>

Mark Massey, Clerk of Council

Date Minutes Approved: _____

Signature: _____