



February 14, 2019 - City Council Workshop

Savannah City Government

SUMMARY/FINAL MINUTES

COUNCIL WORK SESSION & CITY MANAGER'S BRIEFING

February 14, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Eddie DeLoach, Presiding

Aldermen: Carol Bell, Julian Miller, Brian Foster, Bill Durrence, John Hall, Tony Thomas (arrived at 10:20 a.m.), Estella Shabazz (arrived at 10:20 a.m.), Van Johnson, II (arrived 10:35 a.m.)

Rob Hernandez, City Manager

Jen Herman, Interim City Attorney

Bret Bell, Assistant to the City Manager

William Shearouse, Assistant City Attorney

City Manager Hernandez welcomed everyone to the meeting and briefly reviewed the agenda.

Workshop Agenda Items

[1. Savannah Business Opportunity Annual Review and Goal Setting](#)

[Exhibit 1: Savannah Business Opportunity Update End of Year - 2018.pdf](#)

Manny Dominguez, Director Office of Business Opportunity, stated he will briefly go over some of the key dates, key changes and enhancements over the last few years that led to this point. He stated he will also look at the first year of the Savannah Business Opportunity (SBO) program, and make recommendations for 2019 goals. The SBO Program launched in January 2018, a resolution was adopted in February 2018 setting an 18% Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal. Enhancements were made to the program in September 2018 when a 10% local DBE goal was implemented that essentially requires winners of City contracts to meet or exceed 10% participation by local DBEs. In addition the definition of good faith effort was expanded to make it a little stricter, and at the direction of Council a simple process was created to reinstate some of our previous DBEs into the new DBE program. Mr. Dominguez continued stating they have done a huge amount of outreach in the lead-up and implementation of the program, to get participants and everyone acquainted by holding more than one hundred different sessions and those efforts have continued. He stated two things that have occurred since August are the launch of the Small Business Contract Financing program in partnership with SBAC. Currently SBAC is still looking for our first loan through that program. The loan provides up to \$150,000 in loans for those who have contracts with the City. In December, a breakfast was held specifically for MWBEs, providing an opportunity on site for them to fill out an affidavit acknowledging that they still meet the requirements of the program allowing them to grandfather in to the new one which has been very successful. The goal at the end of the year is to get everyone to switch over to the new program.

Alderwoman Bell stated she thinks it's very important during the 2 p.m. Council meeting today that point is repeated, because the City has been criticized severely for dropping the individuals that were under the MWBE program when the switch to the new program was made. She stated the special effort to pull in women and minorities under the old program and the incentive to encourage them to reenlist would appeal to the public.

Mr. Dominguez added anybody who was in the previous MWBE program and still meets those requirements simply needs to visit the Office of Business Opportunity and fill out a one page affidavit stating that and they will be grandfathered in.

Mr. Dominguez continued the presentation providing Council with a brief overview of the numbers through the end of 2018. He stated there was some success midway through the year which has continued. He reviewed the prime contracting level first stating at the prime contracting level for local companies regardless of race and gender those percentages have increased from 12% to 25% in 2018. He clarified that the numbers for 2016-2017 are MWBE numbers as that is the program the City had at that time. Mr. Dominguez stated although percentage numbers from 2017 to 2018 decreased, the actual dollar amount increased tremendously. He continued stating when you look at local DBE, the percentage that went to disadvantaged skyrocketed from 4% to 28% over the last two years, and far exceeds combined dollars. At the sub-contractor level, those numbers have continued to increase over the last three years. These are the companies who are doing the various different components of the projects. These companies have participated at a 29% level which is \$20 million. He stated that number could decrease, but the City has had a couple of major projects that did helped to include the arena, which is helping those numbers.

Mayor DeLoach stated we have to focus on percentages not dollars.

Mr. Dominguez replied yes, we had a major, record number year, and dollar wise the City has purchased more than it has in the past, so yes looking at the percentages is critical.

Alderman Foster asked if these are all City contracts. Mr. Dominguez replied yes, that's industry standard. There are a lot of things that don't get any goal, because there is no way to meet those goals.

Alderman Bell asked if the agenda item for today is about setting the goal for this year. Mr. Dominguez replied yes. She then asked if he was being overly conservative setting the goal at 20%?

Mr. Dominguez replied he will discuss the methodology later in the presentation.

He stated he did want to highlight the various groups, including African American, Local, and Non-Local companies. He stated the majority of contracts went to African American owned local firms which equated to over \$7 million. He briefly reviewed the Arena Project stating it did not set a hard minimum and allowed the market to determine the DBE percentage.

Mr. Dominguez then reviewed the methodology for goal setting recommendation. He stated the recommended data sources according to the Department of Transportation are:

- GDOT Contractor Directory
- GDOT UCP Directory
- Previous MWBE and DBE participation
- DOT national DBE goal of 10%
- City of Savannah 2016 Disparity Study

He stated taking all that into account the City's average for the last few years has been 16%, and the goal last year was 18%. Mr. Dominguez stated the key is to set a goal that is consistent not just with last year, previous years or trends but to set one that is defensible and aggressive. He stated with that being said the recommended goal for 2019 is a 20% overall DBE goal with a 10% local DBE (LDBE). He concluded stating he believes this will give us a realistic and aggressive goal as it is important to set a high bar, because you don't want to run the risk of frustrating contractors with unachievable goals that don't reflect our community.

Alderman Miller stated he has some concerns because this City is very hard to do business with and he continually runs into contractors who don't want to do business with the City. He stated the City's goal is 18% now and we are far exceeding that goal. He stated the State recommends 20% but would be happy with us bringing in DBEs from Atlanta. He continued stating we keep tightening the noose making it harder to do business with the City. He concluded by asking if the 18% is already working why is it being adjusted to satisfy the State.

Mr. Dominguez replied the State isn't setting this goal, they only set the methodology for how goals should be set. He added this recommendation is coming from staff.

Alderman Miller replied you don't deal with the contractors, other departments do, and we have so many projects that are held up because we don't have the contractors to do them. He concluded stating he thinks the City is setting itself up for failure.

Mayor DeLoach stated he was a small businessman and still is. Over the years his ability to get some of those jobs was because he learned to do business in a manner that made him a better business because he worked with a government that required him to do things that he wasn't doing in order to get the jobs he wanted. He stated that is what makes better business and better business people. It's the nature of contractors to complain, the fact is if the dollars are there they will come and build. If they fall by the wayside so be it and some will. He continued stating 99% of the time we are better off as a community because we have quality people to do business with. The only way to get the opportunity is to develop on the outside with the government to improve your quality and understanding of how to do contracts and then move to the private sector which is an advantage to small business owners regardless of race. The reason you have fewer and fewer now is because of the requirements of the insurance industry and the bonding requirements.

Alderman Foster added plus there is more work than workers.

Alderman Bell stated her concern is on the methodology for goal setting. She asked should some consideration be made for the anticipated development work the City expects to be letting, especially since these are annual goals. She concluded stating setting a goal of 20% is setting staff up to look really good.

Mayor DeLoach stated at 30-32% that number doesn't mean anything to a contractor, for a contractor 20% is a very difficult number to get to when bidding contracts and you have to look for people to plug in to your contract and sometimes the pie has 25% or 10% or 15% as you plug them in, but that person that's bidding has to get to 20% which is hard.

Alderman Shabazz thanked Mr. Dominguez, staff and the City Manager for the overall management of this pilot project/situation with DBE in my legislation that we did pass to move from MWBE and to look at the DBE to see if it is worthy to move forward versus the MWBE program that we have been doing in the past. She stated the overall achievements and goals have been moving forward in a positive way. The City has been working extremely hard on outreach to bring more DBEs on board. She continued stating we are moving in a good direction and is glad to see the 20% and what we've done. Alderman Shabazz continued stating it is not an easy thing for the contractor because contractors have to work hard and prove themselves. The City has increased the DBE pool and asked City Manager Hernandez and Mr. Dominguez for a breakdown of the 2018 work. She concluded stating she agrees with the City Manager and Mr. Dominguez on the 20% and it shows that the City cares.

Alderman Hall stated we are moving the needle down on our poverty rate and keeping money local where it should be kept. He concluded by commending staff for doing a fantastic job and keeping this momentum going.

City Manager Hernandez stated this relates to Item 11 on the Council agenda.

[2. 863 Acre Conservation Tract in New Hampstead](#)

[Exhibit 1: Map of Easement and Plat.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Conservation Easement and Declaration of Restrictions and Covenants.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: 863 Acre Conservation Easement - Presentation.pdf](#)

City Manager Hernandez stated staff tentatively plans to introduce this item on the February 28th Council agenda.

David Keating, Director of Real Estate Services, stated the purpose of the Real Estate Department is places for Savannah's future. He stated they are bringing before Council today a potential place for Savannah's future. It is a donation from the Figure 8 Company, and is an 863 acre tract which is encumbered by a conservation easement which has some pros and cons which staff wants to make Council aware of. Mr. Keating stated it is actually three subtracts which are divided by roadways at the New Hampstead project, the biggest parcel is about 600 acres, and then 130 and 128 acre parcels. The vision for the tract could include fishing, hiking trails, wildlife sanctuary, greenspace, timber production (this is a former timber tract), that could be used to help offset operating costs. There are two five acre sites that are reserved so the City could build some facilities like a nature center, a lodge, or forest related passive recreational uses. He stated donations may be free but ownership isn't.

Mr. Keating listed the pro's and con's which include:

Pros

- Large tract for conservation, wildlife refuge, and passive recreation
- Public benefits
- Green space
- Trails, fishing, hiking, etc.

- Biodiversity enhancement
- Future timber sales could help offset O&M costs

Cons

- Unbudgeted start-up costs to the City
- Forestry management
 - Fire breaks, brush burn, etc.
- Security and policing
- Perpetual conservation easement (i.e., limited uses allowed) - the site does not allow active recreation, like ball fields and other civic buildings like fire stations and service centers.

Mr. Keating continued stating staff asked the Georgia Forestry Commission to help evaluate this opportunity. They helped to draft a land management plan with land types which include:

- **Harvest / Thin Timber**
 - Provide income
 - Improve health of remaining trees
- **Replant after Harvest**
 - Requires a clear-cut, chemical spray, and seeding
- **Protect**
 - Protect wetlands in conservation area
 - Promote habitat for wildlife
 - Prevent hunting, dumping

Alderman Durrence stated he understands these are hypothetical numbers but wanted to make a few points. First a tree farm is not a forest, secondly he asked if the estimated amount in year three (2021) was a net profit or before maintenance costs. He stated the reason for the question is because our forest service is notorious for leasing at below market rates, and he wants to make sure the City isn't subsidizing someone and that they are paying the cost for what it entails.

Mr. Keating replied this is not a net number so there are costs that would have to come out of that and the timber market could change. He stated these are just estimates to show Council that there are costs involved and some revenues.

Alderman Durrence stated these numbers are not reliable.

Alderman Miller stated he would like to see a more detailed breakdown of the expenses and revenues. He stated a forest fire could wipe out all this, and he can't see us doing the forestry business. He asked what the tax revenue be if the City didn't accept it.

Mr. Keating replied the current owner encumbered the property with a conservation easement, it has no future development potential, and therefore it would not generate a lot of tax revenue.

Alderman Miller stated he would like to know what would be the tax revenue if we did not accept this.

Cealan Clifford, Real Estate Services, stated this property is encumbered by an easement which prohibits several substantial uses but does provide a lot of opportunities to provide a public benefit and be a benefit to the City. Ms. Clifford reviewed the conservation do's and don'ts which include:

Do's

- Two 5 acre building zones allowed for limited uses
- May construct pervious trails
- May construct wildlife observation stands
- Conduct forest management

- Enhance wildlife habitat

Don'ts

- No impervious roads or driveways can be developed
- No land disturbance or mineral extraction
- No disturbance of wetlands, except that grasses may be mowed

Ms. Clifford briefly reviewed partnership opportunities that were researched which include: Georgia Forestry Commission; United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service; Georgia Conservancy; Georgia Department of Natural Resources; Ducks Unlimited; and North American Land Trust.

Mr. Keating stated the bottom line is a donation is a generous opportunity for the City of Savannah to own and control a large tract to preserve greenspace and provide rural recreation opportunities. But ownership comes at a cost, and the Real Estate Services Department will need +/- \$200k over next two years to initiate forest management and stabilize the tract.

Alderman Thomas: How long are these easements for?

Mr. Keating: They are perpetual.

Alderman Thomas: Would we be able to create new trails?

Mr. Keating: Yes.

Alderman Thomas: Fishing was discussed as an option, where are the bodies of water located?

Mr. Keating showed water in the old burrow pit on the 605 acre lot.

Alderman Thomas: Where are the two, five acre sites are located? Mr. Keating showed Council on the map.

Alderman Thomas: Can picnic areas be established? Mr. Keating: Yes, it can be done.

Alderman Thomas asked about timber rights. Mr. Keating showed timber stands on the map.

Alderman Thomas stated it's definitely enticing, because it would be something that is unique and not offered and there are tourists that would come to do this if it was planned and designed right. He stated on the list of partners he noticed Georgia Southern wasn't listed as a partner and mentioned that they have a forestry program and would be a natural partner for the City to reach out to since they are local now. He concluded stating for him it reminds him of the Ebenezer Retreat, there are opportunities to create something like that on a smaller scale for groups to come to.

Alderman Shabazz stated this property is located in the 5th District, and she has had an opportunity to tour and see the acreage. She asked Mr. Keating to repeat his comment about this being the third largest landholding.

Mr. Keating stated the Airport is the largest, then the Landfill on Dean Forest Road, and this would be the third largest.

Alderman Shabazz stated this would be great for this new development and all of the City residents. She continued stating it will have a great tax base around this property, as New Hampstead is going to be a fantastic place to live, play, and work. She concluded stating she is 100% in agreement with what has been presented. Ownership has never been free, and we need to look for the necessary funds in our budget.

Alderman Johnson stated he is always excited about donations, but has learned donations are rarely free. He asked about the reality of the City's current situation, as this is about new land and committing an amount based on a bunch of variables that we don't control and looking at his area and what he's trying to get accomplished for years with security cameras and increased SPD patrols, and road maintenance, we need to temper

our excitement about what could be with what is. He continued stating the money has to come from somewhere, and it's hard to justify spending the money when we are still not taking care of areas in the home bases.

Alderman Bell stated she would like to reiterate the Alderman's comments, and asked how the City can afford this with the actual reality of all the other needs across the City.

Alderman Miller stated if we have this greenspace area here does it help us in other areas where we may be removing greenspace, is there a balance that he isn't seeing. Mr. Keating replied certainly preserving greenspace helps when losing in other areas but he isn't sure if there is an equation or ratio.

Alderman Miller stated we have the Bacon Park Forest, do we have all that security there? Mr. Keating replied he will have to research that.

Alderman Foster stated he is opposed to this, and the City does not need to take this on. We don't do this, it's a permanent conservancy and there are other parties that will do a better job.

Alderman Shabazz asked what other folks could do this. Alderman Foster replied there are other national, state conservancy groups, there are other groups that could take that on, and the City doesn't have the money and experience.

Mayor DeLoach stated a private company could buy it and require you to pay to walk in that gate, and it can be taken over by someone else and closed to the public. Alderman Foster asked who owns the property right now. Mayor DeLoach replied these developers can sell it to anyone they want to.

Alderman Miller stated he is having a hard time finding the downside to that. Mayor DeLoach stated the people around it wouldn't be able to go in to it, and we could be locked out of there.

Alderman Thomas stated there are two five acres parcels for development, and asked what can be built on them. City Manager Hernandez stated he will get that information to Council next week. Alderman Thomas stated 19 years ago the City had an opportunity to accept a piece of property that the sitting Council didn't want because there was no vision. Last year the City purchased it when we could have had it for free, it was put on the table and the same arguments were made. It was the Windsor Forest Community Pool that connects to the Windsor Park that was recently developed. The former City Manager Michael Brown didn't want it because it was abandoned by the association that was running it.

City Manager Hernandez stated the opportunity to protect such a large parcel of land are few and far between, it's a chance of a lifetime to protect valuable land for future generations of citizens to come. He stated he believes there is a public benefit to ensure that parcel of land is transferred to public ownership, that's not to say the City should own it. He continued stating a parcel this large is really beyond the City's expertise as it is more than we can handle. He recommended reaching out to both the County and the State to determine if this is something that they would be interested in. He stated we could receive the property and do a long term lease with the State to be used as a State Park as they do a much better job of operating these types of recreational areas than we do. He suggested as a compromise that the City consider owning the property and working with the State and County entering into a long-term lease for them to operate it as a County or State park.

Mayor DeLoach stated the parcel that is separated needs to be attached so there is continuous movement for trails.

Mr. Keating stated they are working on a donation of that to the City which is about 50 acres for active recreation.

Ron, Figure 8 representative, stated in 2006 a water and sewer agreement was signed when this property was first developed. Part of that agreement required them to donate that land to the City which will connect the acreage. He concluded stated the little area above the lake will also be an active area, not subject to the conservation easement.

Alderman Foster asked if there was any discussion of donating to other trusts. Ron stated he agrees with the City Manager's suggestion to donate the land to the City and the City in turn work with others, at least that way the City will control it.

Alderman Shabazz stated she governs for the people. So, as we move forward, this information we are seeing it for the first time, and we are hearing pros and cons, and how we can reach out to the State. She continued stating nothing is concrete at this time to get in to the ownership and maintenance, but the good thing is we are having a conversation about it. She concluded stating she doesn't want people to get confused about this presentation.

Alderman Johnson stated he thinks the City Manager's suggestion is thoughtful and appropriate.

City Manager Hernandez stated staff will reach out to both the State and County to determine if there are any opportunities to partner with them and we can make acceptance contingent on a long-term partnership.

Alderman Johnson asked what the wildlife out there is. Ms. Clifford replied it does not provide for a good quality habitat for wildlife but it provides for the opportunity of gopher tortoises, indigo snakes, ducks, woodpeckers that rely on long leaf pine.

Alderman Johnson suggested reaching out to Fort Stewart.

Alderman Thomas reiterated the suggestion of reaching out to Georgia Southern's Forestry program.

3. 4th Quarter / Year-End Public Safety Report and 911 Update

[Exhibit 1: 911 Transition Update.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: 2018 Savannah Fire Rescue Annual Review.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 3: 2019 Savannah Police Department Annual Review.pdf](#)

Presentation will be given at a later date.

4. Fire Department Organizational Assessment

[Exhibit 1: Savannah Fire Department Organizational Assessment - Presentation.pdf](#)

[Exhibit 2: Savannah Fire Department Organizational Assessment - Final Report.pdf](#)

Daphanie Williams, Special Projects Coordinator in the City Manager's Office, stated on May 24th of last year Council approved a recommendation to retain the University of Georgia's Research Foundation to do an organizational review of the Savannah Fire Department. Dr. Paula Sanford is here to present her findings, she specializes in public budgeting and finance and has done many similar studies as this.

Dr. Paula Sanford stated the study was started in the summer of 2018 and recently finalized the fourth report. She stated the bulk of the data was collected in the summer of 2018, and writing occurred in the fall. The last report was finalized last month.

Ms. Sanford stated the purpose of the report was to:

- Determine ways for the department to improve effectiveness
- Determine if there were opportunities for efficiency (ways to save money)
- Consider best practice
- Result which was four separate reports addressing:
 - General organizational review
 - Personnel (moral, climate survey)
 - Efficiency/ISO
 - EMS (what needs to be considered, impacts on department)

Ms. Sanford stated the methodology included:

- A review of relevant operational and financial documents.
- Interviews with senior staff (17 members including Chief, assistant and battalion chiefs, and fleet, etc.)
- Focus groups with employees which were randomly selected.
- An anonymous workplace climate survey of employees which was sent to everyone in a link with a web-based survey. There was a 79% response rate.
- A review of comparable departments to include Columbus, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina (both ISO I departments - Charleston has a port and tourism industry and was particularly good. Both provide EMS but Charleston doesn't transport.)

Ms. Sanford provided Council with a brief review of the Fire apparatuses, including an engine (pumper) (provides water to a fire), fire ladder (aerial), quint (combined engine and ladder), and heavy rescue (used for rescue).

Ms. Sanford provided a background on Savannah Fire:

Current status:

- 15 stations
- 336 authorized stations (318 certified firefighters)

Departments:

- Operations - responds to calls
- Logistics - administrative arm (fleet, equipment maintenance, training, fire investigations, etc.)
- Emergency management – emergency call services

Ms. Sanford showed Council a map with a breakdown of stations, battalions, and types of companies.

She then provided general findings stating the City can feel secure with the Fire Department because it is well run. She stated the general organizational review looked at some efficiency savings and organizational improvements. The ISO rating and accreditations shows it is a very good department. She continued stating the Savannah Fire Department is effective in core missions, fire suppression, rescue and fire prevention. She added that the response times match the comparable departments, at four minutes. The response time starts with the initial call to 911, and the department was able to make up lost time. She stated there were opportunities for improvement, which will be discussed with options for Council to consider.

Organizational review for operations include:

- Funding for the Marine Company: a marine company is best practice when you have a large body of water. Everyone cannot afford best practice, there is a balance between risk management and cost services. Best practice would state with a river with boats a marine company is needed. She suggested the City work with the Port Authority or any authority that receives the service for free to help offset the cost to reopen it.
- Battalion Chiefs are stretched in finding time to work with training for their companies, particularly for inter-company training. A research professional that is not a fire fighter to help oversee training.
- Skill-based pay for specialized skills like hazmat, etc., would help morale

Alderman Foster asked if the comparable departments do this. Ms. Sanford replied some do and some don't.

Alderman Bell asked for a clarification on the comment that battalion chiefs are not available to participate. Ms. Sanford stated the battalion chiefs are available some but would like to be more available for training.

Mayor DeLoach asked what is the anticipated ratio. Ms. Sanford replied she heard from every battalion chief that they are swamped with paperwork and they need administrative help.

Curtis Wallace, Assistant Chief, stated programs are managed at the battalion level and they have to respond in the field.

Logistics options include:

- Permanent Assignment to Training: currently a one year assignment; some people are born trainers and some aren't and suggest they become permanent assignments for those who are skilled at training and can then improve the program as it develops.

Alderman Bell asked what the comparable cities are doing. Ms. Sanford replied they have permanent trainers.

- Capital Maintenance of Fire Stations: it is low, for 15 stations there is only about \$33,000 a year that is invested on average for the last 3 years. Work with Budget Office and your Capital Improvements Project group on a long-term solution to maintain the City's assets. The newer stations are quite nice but you have some stations that are not quite so nice.

Alderman Hall asked what is the typical age of those stations that are not so nice. Ms. Sanford replied you have some from the 1940s-1960s, and one that is literally in a trailer.

Mayor DeLoach asked if the \$33,000 was for the total for all 15 stations. Ms. Sanford replied yes.

Mayor DeLoach asked who is responsible for maintenance. City Manager Hernandez replied it falls under Real Estate Services.

- Exhaust Filtration Systems for Stations: varies dependent on proper ventilation, diesel is a carcinogenic, some systems meet standards and some do not, investment in the safety of firefighters
- Contracting for fleet maintenance: looked at the length of time an apparatus is out for regular maintenance and repair, the average is 54 days, the median was 42 days, when a vehicle or apparatus is out it's relying on reserves which are older and less reliable. She suggested having a contractor who can work on fire apparatus to reduce amount of time the apparatuses is down.

Alderman Miller asked if she was suggesting rather than sending apparatuses to the City garage contract out. Ms. Sanford replied if the City can't reduce the time, it needs to find a way to do it quicker. She stated there is a replacement policy that meets best practice and you buy good apparatuses. She stated she did not look into why it is taking so long because she didn't look at fleet maintenance operations.

Alderman Hall asked if these are major repairs. Ms. Sanford replied it could be but that also is standard maintenance, as the median is still over one month.

Fire Prevention options include:

- Elevate Fire Prevention from Division to Department so it directly reports to the Chief (currently under Logistics), includes Fire Investigations (reports to Logistics), including Internal Investigations (reports to Chief). It needs to be made cleaner. Fire Prevention includes Fire Inspections and Investigations (now Fire Prevention).
- Include PIO within Fire Prevention, because it is prevention and performs outreach activities, instead of a direct report to the Chief, consolidate community outreach activities
- Administrative Secretary, this unit does not have any administrative support, inspectors could then do several hundred additional inspections a year (fire marshal's office)

Community Outreach options include:

- Expand Child Fire Safety Education by visiting more schools
- Expand Social media presence, example YouTube channel for fire safety training, recruitment, to help control the City's message, Instagram account, community outreach and education and recruitment
- More partnerships with non-profit organizations, for example Red Cross for blood pressure checks

Ms. Sanford discussed findings related to personnel. She stated the SFD is facing substantial morale and cultural challenges in many areas. Pay, promotions, discipline, transfers, communication, and support for senior leadership. Firefighters are dedicated to serving the public and are loyal to fellow firefighters.

She then provided Council with options for personnel which include:

- Management training regarding discipline, how to be fair, ensure consistency across the department, training for diversity
- Class and Comp study will be very important, education and communication is very important, if you don't communicate the importance of the study and dispel rumors
- Amend the promotion process, not just higher education, but factor in experience
- Improve Employee recognition internally

Ms. Sanford also provided findings for ISO and Efficiency providing a review of opportunities. She stated the City should find savings in reduction in personnel, eliminate companies, analysis was based on a minimum of 90 fire fighters a day. She stated the challenge is balancing risk and service cost.

Alderman Thomas asked what is current staffing. Ms. Sanford replied 86.

Ms. Sanford stated she was specifically asked to look at the impact of having a maximum of three people in the company. She stated they do not make recommendations but she does not recommend reducing the number of fire fighters to three per company; keep it at four people.

She suggested closing the standalone rescue company Station 7 and combine the ladder rescue company at Station 2.

City Manager Hernandez replied this is the option we implemented as part of the FY2019 budget. Alderman Miller expressed his concerns with the staffing level and station locations.

Alderman Thomas made a comment about staffing level.

City Manager Hernandez replied UGA was not asked to do this at any predetermined staffing level they were asked to look at areas that needed to be covered and make recommendations based on the resources at stations that were currently in service and then options would be developed from that point.

Alderman Thomas expressed his concerns about the thought process of management.

City Manager Hernandez and Council discussed Engine 16. Alderman Miller stated Ms. Sanford has presented an option based on the assumption that Engine 16 was still operational, which would be a second elimination.

Ms. Sanford continued the presentation discussing efficiency options which include the closure of Station 12 Ladder Company. The Engine Company would become a quint which is an estimated savings of \$915,758 with an assumed agreement with Pooler.

City Manager Hernandez discussed the options and impacts on budget and service levels.

Ms. Sanford continued efficiency options discussing the restructure of the Hazmat 2 Company (single position) from 24-hour shift to an 8 hour shift, which is a reduction of one or two shifts. Maintain the Hazmat Battalion Chief, and remaining employee(s) would focus on commercial inspections/record keeping. This is an estimated savings of \$76,025 - \$146,050.

The final efficiency option is a service reimbursement. Work with tax exempt public authorities to receive PILOTs for benefit of fire and rescue services (contribute payments in lieu of taxes, to help fund the Marine Company).

Ms. Sanford reviewed the possibility of SFD providing EMS and options which include:

- Current Apparatus
 - Wear and tear on apparatus
 - Use existing firefighters
 - Appropriate for low-volume call areas

It will require additional capacity, it will increase 20,000 calls, 250% increase in call volume, 60% in Battalion 1.

- Quick Response Vehicle (QRV)
 - Pick-up truck with extras
 - \$120,000
 - 2 – person unit
 - Appropriate for high-volume call areas

At least 1 QRV, Battalion 1 area, reduce risk of call overlap. The estimated cost for a QRV and EMS is \$718,661. Remaining calls respond with current companies. Depending on volume and times of calls, may need second QRV (cost approx. \$608,000).

Ms. Sanford stated other considerations include:

- Implementation plan
- Chatham County Emergency Services agreement
- Training for Chatham County 911 center employees
- Impact on SFD community outreach
- Hire permanent EMS trainer
- Impact on employee compensation
- Impact on ISO
- Support from employees

Alderwoman Bell asked Chief Revenew if he had an opportunity to review the study. He stated he did and believes Ms. Sanford did an excellent and comprehensive study. He stated career advancement is troublesome, as this is a flat organization. He continued stating we are doing a lot with a lot less than comparable organizations. Some of the things she has talked about we are already working on, like morale and the fire safety training house which needs a lot of repair. He concluded stating they are currently working on getting social media pages up and running, and there has been communication especially about the class and comp.

Alderman Foster asked do other departments staff with four. Chief Revenew replied he doesn't know, but Pooler does have dedicated fleet for fire.

Alderman Johnson asked about the \$7,000 needed for the fire safety house. He stated he is sure Council can find that. Chief Revenew stated it is loaned out to the schools for fire training. Alderman Johnson stated the first way to improve morale is to take reports seriously and creating a plan of implementation. Chief Revenew agreed with Alderman Johnson.

City Manager Hernandez sated staff will report back on a quarterly basis on implementation of the recommendations. He stated the next step will be for management to prepare a response with steps for implementation.

5. Litigation, Personnel, Real Estate

Upon motion of Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Durrence, and unanimously carried Council went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Real Estate, Litigation and Personnel.

Upon completion of this session, a motion was made to come out of Executive Session by Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Durrence, and unanimously carried.

6. City Manager Agenda Review

City Manager Rob Hernandez presented the City Manager's Briefing of the agenda items for the Council Meeting of February 14, 2019. The agenda can be found online and will be made a part of the permanent record.

There being no further business, Mayor DeLoach declared this meeting of Council adjourned.

The video recording of the Work Session can be found by copying and pasting the below link in your url:

<https://savannahgovtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=p2IVsm5BTUI0>



Luciana M. Spracher,
Acting Clerk of Council