

**Columbus Consolidated Government  
Council Meeting Agenda Item**

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Councilors
<b>AGENDA SUBJECT:</b>	<b>2020 Legislative Agenda</b>
<b>AGENDA SUMMARY:</b>	Approval is requested of the resolution for the 2021 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.
<b>INITIATED BY:</b>	Isaiah, Hugley, City Manager

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**Recommendation:** Approval is requested of the resolution for the 2021 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.

**Background:** Each year elected and appointed officials of the Columbus Consolidated Government develop a list of issues important to the citizens of Columbus that requires action by the Local Legislative Delegation. Once approved, a meeting will be held with the Delegation to explain the rationale behind these issues and to solicit their support. The Hometown Connection and Legislative Agenda meeting will be held on October 29, 2020.

**Analysis:** Staff, elected and appointed officials were asked to present issues they felt were important to the operation of city government. Research and justification for these issues were presented to the City Manager and a list was prepared for presentation to the Mayor/Council.

**Financial Considerations:** The City is expected to receive additional revenues if many of the issues are passed by the Georgia General Assembly.

**Recommendations/Actions:** Approve those resolution, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.

# COLUMBUS CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

## 2021 PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

### 1. **NON-PARTISAN PRIMARY BALLOTS FOR ALL LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS INCLUDING CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting to amend state law to provide that all local elected officials, including constitutional officers, be elected on non-partisan primary ballots. *(Request of Councilor John House/Carry Over From Previous Years)*

#### **Explanation:**

This would allow the voter the opportunity to vote on all local elected officials without having their choices limited by the party selection of candidates for state and federal elective office.

### 2. **COUNTY SPECIAL LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX MAINTENANCE RESERVE:**

The Columbus Council is requesting that the legislative delegation consider amendments to the County Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax imposed by Part 1 of Article 3 of Chapter 8 of Title 48 of the official Code of Georgia Annotation to allow consolidated governments to expend up to 5% of the tax levied to be spent for future maintenance of the capital outlay projects approved by the referendum levying the tax. *(Request of Councilor John House/Carry Over From Previous Years)*

#### **Explanation:**

Previous capital outlay projects in the Columbus Consolidated Government have demonstrated that when tax funds are expended on significant capital infrastructure, a maintenance reserve would greatly assist in improving the useful life and efficiency of such facilities and allow the better and more timely upkeep of projects built with taxpayer funds.

### 3. **MILITARY RETIREE STATE TAX EXEMPTIONS:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting that the legislative delegation support efforts to exempt military retiree pay from state income tax in order to attract military retirees to Columbus, Georgia as recommended by the Greater Columbus, Georgia Chamber of Commerce. *(Request of Councilor John House/Carryover From Previous Years)*

**Explanation:**

- Exempt Military Retiree Pay From Georgia Taxes.

- Ø Of the five states bordering Georgia, four do not tax military retiree pay.
- Ø Border cities are at a competitive disadvantage to attract veterans to area.
- Ø Consider a transition by beginning with an exemption to those military retiring in 2018, then work back each year until all are captured.

**4. INTERSTATE 14:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is advocating support to include specific funding in the state budget for this D.O.T. Project, for an extension of I-14 to and through Columbus, Georgia and take any appropriate legislative action concerning this highway extension. (*Request of Councilor John House/Carryover From Previous Years*)

**Explanation:**

Interstate 14 is under construction in Texas and first officially opened on January 26, 2017 near Killeen, Texas. There are several benefits to have I-14 run through Columbus, Georgia to include Interstate Connection, Strategic Military Impact and Enhanced Economic Development. If extended to Columbus, Georgia, I-14 could run along J.R. Allen Parkway/Sam Wellborn Highway (Highway 80) with little modification of the current parkway. This Council desires that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly support an extension of I-14 to and through Columbus, Georgia and include specific funding in the state budget for this D.O.T. Project and take any other appropriate legislative action concerning this highway extension.

**5. THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting the local legislative delegation support HB 347 or similar legislation to amend OCGA Section 48-7-40.33 so as to shorten the original performance period from the current 12 months to 18 weeks; reduce the spending threshold from \$500,000 to \$100,000 in the aggregate during a taxable year; and further clarify parameters that define tier one and tier two counties in said legislation so as to provide additional allowance for the applicable incentive. (*Request of Councilor Judy Thomas and Executive Director of the River Center for Performing Arts/Carryover From Previous Years*)

**Explanation:**

The Council supports amendment to OCGA Section 48-7-40.33 or legislation similar to HB 347 which provides better incentives such as spending thresholds and tax credits for musical or theatrical production companies in Georgia.

**6. RECIPROCAL SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY:**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting that the local legislative delegation encourage all possible legislative actions which would encourage negotiations with Alabama and other neighboring states to provide that the laws of each State would be amended to provide for reciprocal sovereign immunity so that local governmental officials carrying out duties and operating vehicles in neighboring States would have the same or similar sovereign immunity protections that they have under Georgia Law. (*Request of Councilor John House*)

**Explanation:**

Currently, CCG officials, including law enforcement who take vehicles into adjoining states are not protected by Georgia sovereign statutes. Given the proximity to Alabama, and the particular provisions of Alabama law on the subject this creates a significant risk that influences decisions with respect to both emergency and routine business duties which may be most efficiently carried out by driving across state lines. Hopefully, the General Assembly, with the guidance of the State Attorney General, will consider a Resolution to study this issue and enter into discussions with Alabama and other adjoining states where it would be beneficial to Georgia local governments.

**7. SALES TAX ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY USER SAFEGUARD (POINT OF SALES DATA):**

The Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting that the legislative delegation introduce legislation amending O.C.G.A. § 48-2-15 to allow Georgia cities access to tax information as needed when local governing authorities finance or tax officials have need of said tax information in the discharge of their official duties. (*Request of Mayor Pro Tem Gary Allen/Carry Over From Previous Years*)

**Explanation:**

Currently, counties may request by resolution and receive only “information included on the vendor’s sales tax certificate.”

## **8. HOSPICE ADMINISTRATORS:**

The requirement to be a health care professional or health service administrator is very limiting in the choice that hospices have when hiring administrators. There are many qualified candidates who have backgrounds that would suit them to successfully lead a hospice; some in other areas of health care and some in completely different fields. Leadership qualities can be found in many areas and this requirement excludes qualified candidates. *(Request of Councilor Jerry Pop Barnes/Carry Over From Previous Years)*

### **Explanation:**

The Council supports legislation to amend or remove requirements for the hiring of hospice administrators in compliance with State of Georgia Hospice Rules – Version 4.0 Section 0802, 290-9-43-08.(2).

**A RESOLUTION  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**WHEREAS**, in recent primary elections, Muscogee County and Georgia voters were forced to choose a particular primary ballot for local races, including constitutional officers, and were not able to vote for other such candidates listed on another primary party ballot; and,

**WHEREAS**, this Council desires that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly amend the state law so that voters can choose a non-partisan primary ballot for races of all local elective officers, including constitutional officers.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:**

We hereby respectfully request that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce statewide general legislation at the 2021 Session to allow voters to choose a non-partisan primary ballot for races of all local elective offices, including constitutional officers. Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the council of Columbus, Georgia, held the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members of said Council.

Councilor Allen voting	_____.
Councilor Barnes voting	_____.
Councilor Crabb voting	_____.
Councilor Davis voting	_____.
Councilor Garrett voting	_____.
Councilor House voting	_____.
Councilor Huff voting	_____.
Councilor Thomas voting	_____.
Councilor Tucker voting	_____.
Councilor Woodson voting	_____.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra T. Davis, Deputy Clerk of Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor

**A RESOLUTION**

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE LOCAL LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE COUNTY SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX (SPLOST) TO ALLOW THAT CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENTS MAY ALLOCATE UP TO 5% OF THE TAX LEVIED TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE REFERENDUM**

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council have identified the significant burden placed on the Columbus to provide for ongoing maintenance of CCG facilities which may be financed as SPLOST projects; and,

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly could amend Section 48-8-111.1 to provide that a consolidated government may use up to five percent of the tax levy as a maintenance reserve fund for newly approved SPLOST projects thus enabling the timely upkeep of those facilities and prolonging their useful lives and efficiency.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:**

We hereby respectfully request that the Local Legislative Delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation at the 2021 Session to amend O.C.G.A 48-8-111.1 so that a maintenance reserve fund not to exceed five percent of the authorized tax levied would become a permitted use of funds levied pursuant to the SPLOST authorized by Part 1 of Article 3 of Chapter 8 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated when a consolidated government is imposing the tax.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the council of Columbus, Georgia, held the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Barnes voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Crabb voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Davis voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Garrett voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor House voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Huff voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Thomas voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Tucker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Woodson voting \_\_\_\_\_.

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Sandra T. Davis, Deputy Clerk of Council

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B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor

**A RESOLUTION**

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE LOCAL LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION INTRODUCE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD ALLOW AN EXEMPTION SIMILAR TO THAT IN ALABAMA FROM STATE INCOME TAX FOR MILITARY RETIREES.**

**WHEREAS**, this legislation will allow Columbus, Georgia to remain a competitive economic hub that continues to attract military families and retirees to our community; and,

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council have discussed issues important to the efficient operation of the Columbus Consolidated Government and the quality of life for its citizens; and,

**WHEREAS**, this issues requires action in the 2021 General Assembly Session.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

We hereby respectfully request that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assemble introduce legislation at the 2021 General Assembly that would allow an exemption similar to that in Alabama from state income tax for military retirees to maintain Columbus, Georgia as a competitive economic hub that continues to attract military families and retirees to our community.

\_\_\_\_\_

Introduce at a regular meeting of the council of Columbus, Georgia, held the 24th day of October 2017, and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members of Council.

- Councilor Allen voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Baker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Barnes voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Davis voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Garrett voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Henderson voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Huff voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Thomas voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Tucker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Woodson voting \_\_\_\_\_.

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Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

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B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor



**A RESOLUTION  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**WHEREAS**, Interstate 14 is under construction in Texas, and first officially opened on January 26, 2017 near Killeen, Texas; and,

**WHEREAS**, the community of Natchez, Mississippi and communities in Louisiana are taking action to make an extension of I-14 a reality in their jurisdictions; and,

**WHEREAS**, if extended to Columbus, Georgia, I-14 could run along J.R. Allen Parkway/Sam Wellborn Highway (Highway 80) with little modification of the current parkway; and,

**WHEREAS**, I-14 will connect a significant number of military installations, seaports, major cities, and large highways to each other, and Columbus and Ft. Benning should share in this significant extension; and,

**WHEREAS**, this Council desires that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly support an extension of I-14 to and through Columbus, Georgia and take any appropriate legislative action concerning this highway extension.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLOVES:**

We hereby respectfully request that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly support an extension of I-14 to and through Columbus, Georgia and take any appropriate legislative action concerning this highway extension. Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

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Introduced at a regular meeting of the council of Columbus, Georgia, held the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Baker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Barnes voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Davis voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Garrett voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor House voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Huff voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Thomas voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Tucker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Woodson voting \_\_\_\_\_.

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Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

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B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor

**A RESOLUTION**

**NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 347 (LC 43 1239ER) was introduced at the 2019 Georgia General Assembly to provide for better incentives such as spending thresholds and tax credits for musical or theatrical production companies in Georgia; and,

**WHEREAS**, this Council supports legislation similar to HB 347 which amends OCGA Section 48-7-40.33 so as to shorten the original performance period from the current 12 months to 18 weeks; and,

**WHEREAS**, this Council supports legislation similar to HB 347 which amends OCGA Section 48-7-40.33 so as to reduce the spending threshold from \$500,000 to \$100,000 in the aggregate during a taxable year; and,

**WHEREAS**, this Council also seeks a further clarification of the parameters that define tier one and tier two counties in said legislation so as to provide additional allowance for the tax incentive,

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:**

We hereby respectfully request that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly support HB 347 or similar legislation to amend OCGA Section 48-7-40.33 so as to shorten the original performance period from the current 12 months to 18 weeks; reduce the spending threshold from \$500,000 to \$100,000 in the aggregate during a taxable year; and further clarify parameters that define tier one and tier two counties in said legislation so as to provide additional allowance for the applicable incentive.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the council of Columbus, Georgia, held the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Baker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Barnes voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Davis voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Garrett voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor House voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Huff voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Thomas voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Tucker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Woodson voting \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor

**A RESOLUTION  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE LOCAL LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION SUPPORT LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS THAT WILL ENCOUAGE NEGOTIATIONS WITH ALABAMA TO PROVIDE FOR RECIPROCAL SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY.**

**WHEREAS**, officials of the Columbus Consolidated Government including local law enforcement officers who carry out official duties and take vehicles across the State line into Alabama are not protected with the immunity that they have when carrying out their duties and operating official vehicles within the State of Georgia; and,

**WHEREAS**, the proximity of Columbus to the State of Alabama has created situations where Columbus officials have had to carry out parts of their official duties or render mutual aid outside of the State; and,

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly, with the assistance of the State Attorney General, will need to negotiate with Alabama to reach satisfactory terms of reciprocal sovereign immunity which can then be adopted by each State’s legislature.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:**

We hereby request that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly support legislative efforts that will facilitate the negotiation and legislative adoption of provisions governing reciprocal sovereign immunity between the State of Georgia and the State of Alabama.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmation vote of \_\_\_\_ members of Council.

- Councilor Allen voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Baker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Barnes voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Davis voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Garrett voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor House voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Huff voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Thomas voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Tucker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Woodson voting \_\_\_\_\_.

**A RESOLUTION  
NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE LOCAL LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION INTRODUCE LEGISLATION THAT WILL GIVE COMPLETE SALES TAX DATA TO COUNTY TAX OFFICIALS, COUNTY COMMISSIONS AND CITY COUNCILS, EXCEPT CONFIDENTIAL INCOME AND EXPENSE INFORMATION, SO THAT LOCAL OFFICIALS MAY HAVE THIS INFORMATION TO USE FOR PLANNING AND BUDGETING PURPOSES.**

**WHEREAS**, county tax officials, county commissions and city councils need access to state sales tax data in the possession of the Georgia Department of Revenue for planning and budgeting purposes; and,

**WHEREAS**, under OCGA Section 48-2-15, currently counties may request by resolution and receive only “information included on the vendor’s sales tax certificate.”

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:**

We hereby request that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce legislation that will give complete sales tax data to county tax officials, county commissions and city councils, except confidential income and expense information, so that local officials may have this information to use for planning and budgeting purposes.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Introduced at a regular meeting of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, held on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmation vote of \_\_\_\_ members of Council.

- Councilor Allen voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Baker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Barnes voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Davis voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Garrett voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor House voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Huff voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Thomas voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Tucker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Woodson voting \_\_\_\_\_.

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Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

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B.H. “Skip” Henderson, Mayor

**A RESOLUTION**

**NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**WHEREAS**, this Council desires that the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly consider amendments to or removal of requirements for the hiring of hospice administrators in compliance with State of Georgia Hospice Rules - Version 4.0. Section 0802, 290-9-43-.08(2) which states:

"The hospice administrator shall be:

- (a) A health care professional licensed to practice in this state who has at least one year of supervisory or management experience in a hospice setting; or
- (b) An individual with education, training and experience in health service administration who has at least two years of supervisory or management experience in a hospice setting,"

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA HEREBY RESOLVES:**

We hereby respectfully request that the local legislative delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce statewide legislation that will amend or remove the requirement for hospice administrators to be a health care professional licensed to practice in Georgia with at least one year of supervisory or management experience in a hospice setting; or an individual with education, training and experience in health service administration who has at least two years of supervisory or management experience in a hospice setting.

Let a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Clerk of Council to each member of the local delegation to the Georgia General Assembly.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the council of Columbus, Georgia, held the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020 and adopted at said meeting by the affirmative vote of \_\_\_\_\_ members of said Council.

- Councilor Allen voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Baker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Barnes voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Davis voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Garrett voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor House voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Huff voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Thomas voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Tucker voting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Councilor Woodson voting \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandra T. Davis, Clerk of Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
B.H. "Skip" Henderson, Mayor