

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF RICHMOND COUNTY
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN RE: GENERAL PRESENTMENTS OF THE GRAND JURY] JANUARY TERM, 2022
]]

ORDER DIRECTING PUBLICATION OF THE
GENERAL PRESENTMENTS OF THE
GRAND JURY

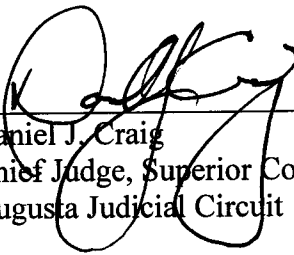
2022 MAR 16 AM 9:07
HALL COUNTY CLERK
RICHMOND COUNTY, GA

The Court has received the Grand Jury's General Presentments in open court and has delivered said presentments to the Clerk of Superior Court for filing. Upon recommendation of the Grand Jury, and pursuant to OCGA §15-12-80, it is now:

ORDERED that the General Presentments of the January Term of the Richmond County Grand Jury shall be published once in the legal gazette for Richmond County, the Augusta Chronicle, and the reasonable charges for said publication shall be paid out of the county treasury upon the certificate of the undersigned judge; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the General Presentments shall be posted on the official website of Augusta, Georgia, according to past practice.

It is SO ORDRED this 15th day of March, 2022.



Daniel J. Craig
Chief Judge, Superior Court
Augusta Judicial Circuit

TO: The Honorable Daniel Craig
Judge, Superior Court

FROM: Richmond County Grand Jury
January Term 2022

DATE: March 15, 2022

RE: Grand Jury Presentment


Filed in office this 15th day of
March, 2022
Elizabeth
Deputy Clerk

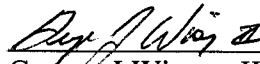
We, the members of the Augusta-Richmond County Grand Jury for the January Term 2022, having been duly sworn by the Honorable Ashley Wright on the 18th day of January 2022, submit our presentment on the 15th day of March, 2022, our last day as an official body of the Grand Jury.

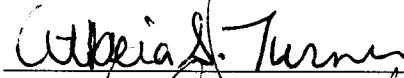
To discharge our sworn duties, as prescribed by the laws of the State of Georgia, we met on eight (8) dates during our term and acted upon Bills of Indictments presented to us by the District Attorney's Office.

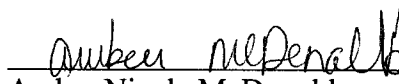
A Sub-Committee was formed to inspect the Charles B. Webster Detention Center and Finance Department. The applicable report is attached.

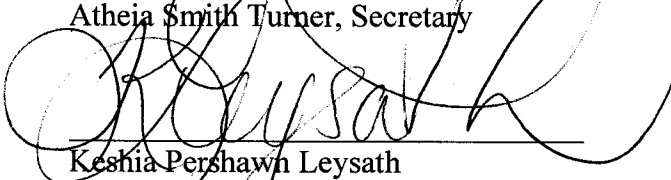
The Grand Jury respectfully submits this Presentment on the 15th day of March 2022 and requests that it is published.

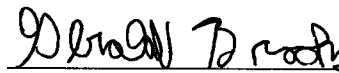

Marina McGruder, Foreperson


George J. Wisner, II, Asst. Foreperson

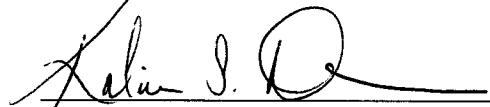

Atheja Smith Turner, Secretary


Amber Nicole McDonald

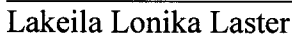

Keshia Pershawn Leysath

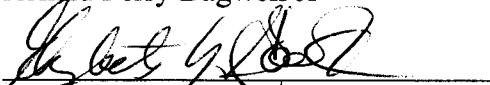

Gerald Thomas Brooks Jr

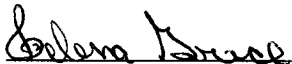

Jerryline M Griffin


Katrina Sharee Dunn



Ronald Perry Bagwell Jr


Lakeila Lonika Laster



Elizabeth Y Cook


Selena Antoinette Grice

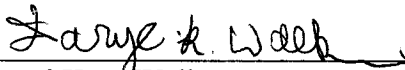
John Robinson Jr



Tiffany Lafonne Butler



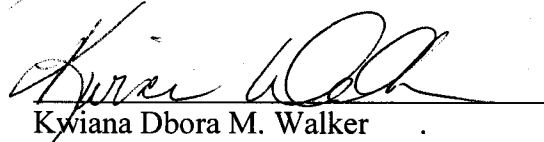
Ted Alan Fulcher



Daryl Kent Walker

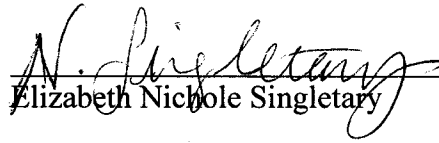


Carneskie Lewis



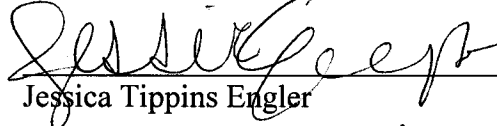
Kwiana Dora M. Walker

Laura McCarron Pareizs, Alternate

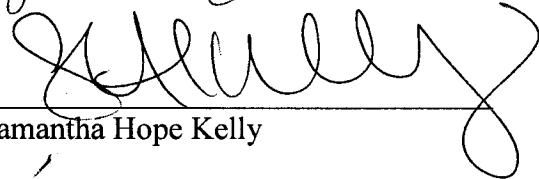


Elizabeth Nichole Singletary

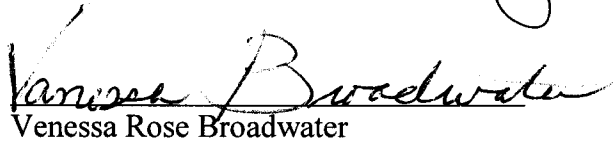
Gene Edward Malone Jr



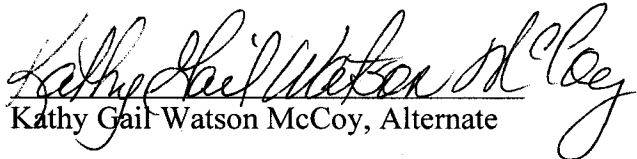
Jessica Tippins Engler



Samantha Hope Kelly



Venessa Rose Broadwater



Kathy Gail Watson McCoy, Alternate

Arneisha R Smith, Alternate

Inspection of the Finance Department by a Grand Jury Sub-Committee conducted March 1, 2022

On March 1, 2022, a Grand Jury Sub-Committee toured Augusta-Richmond County's Finance Department with its Finance Director Ms. Donna Williams, CGFM. We found Ms. Williams to be welcoming and very knowledgeable about the department's operations.

We were shown several internal processes that ensure checks and balances are in place to deter the mishandling of government funds. For example, external audits are conducted yearly per Georgia guidelines. The 2021 calendar year audit is pending the award of the next three-year contract (with two one-year extensions), and is required to be completed and filed within 180 days the close of the fiscal year. In the last three years, there have been no findings of mishandling and the external audit results have consistently been declared to have a 'clean opinion' status/rating. Ms. Williams expressed confidence that the Finance Department was diligent in ensuring that all funds were being accounted for correctly and appropriately, and all audits are available online for public review.

The Finance Department follows the Secretary of State's guidelines for records retention, and they even have records from the 1980's on microfiche. Ms. Williams described how, on occasion, these documents have come in handy. We found that while only the current year's records are maintained in the Finance Department's offices, the rest of its records are boxed by year and safely stored in an offsite facility.


We also learned how the Finance Director and other city officials were selected for their positions: the City Administrator makes recommendations, and the Augusta Commission makes the final appointment. Ms. Williams shared her concerns about maintaining good staffing overall, and we found that it is a constant challenge for the Finance Department to find and keep adequately experienced employees. This appears to be an industry-wide concern caused by high retirement rates and a limited pool of potential, qualified new personnel to hire from nationwide.

At the conclusion of our tour, we felt confident that the Finance Department was being operated efficiently and within the guidelines of the State of Georgia.

Grand Jury Recommendations:

- Invest now in local training and education to ensure a well-qualified work force will be sufficient to meet the county's anticipated needs.
- Complete a salary analysis for key positions in the Finance Department using the CSRA as it's benchmark workforce to determine if current department salaries are in a competitive range to retain personnel.

Respectfully submitted by members of the Grand Jury,

 , Foreperson