CITY OF STATESBORO
WORK SESSION MINUTES
AUGUST 18, 2026

Mayor & Council Work Session	50 East Main Street	4:00 PM

A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on August 18, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 50 East Main Street. Present was Mayor Jonathan McCollar; Council Members: Tangie Johnson, John Riggs, and Shari Barr. Also present was City Clerk Leah Harden, City Attorney Cain Smith, City Manager Charles Penny, Assistant City Manager Jason Boyles and Public Affairs Manager Layne Phillips. Absent was Councilmember Ginny Hendley.

1. Food Bank Presentation

Sheila Stewart-Leach, Executive Director of the Statesboro Food Bank reported that over the past three years, the Food Bank has provided 5.2 million meals to residents of Bulloch County and surrounding counties. She noted that approximately 30 percent of visitors come from outside the county, and that the Food Bank is actively working to secure funding from those neighboring communities to share the burden. She expressed gratitude for the City's continued support, including the installation of a bus stop shelter. The Sunshine Café, was highlighted as a key service. The café operates every day except Saturday and Sunday, serves between 300 and 500 individuals per week, and is staffed almost entirely by volunteers from local churches and civic organizations. Ms. Stewart-Leach indicated that the food bank currently serves between 3,400 and 3,500 families per month and that supporting documentation for all meal tallies is on file and available to council members in their packets.

The Food Bank has ongoing financial constraints and encouraged council members and everyone to consider personal or organizational contributions. The monthly food cost is $15,000 - $20,000.

The 2026 Class of Leadership Bulloch voted to contribute $50,000 toward the construction of a large awning over a 3,000-square-foot outdoor patio at the Food Bank, which now includes fans, lighting, and picnic tables. The project is complete and provides capacity to serve approximately 120 additional people during crisis events.

2. Quarterly Financial Report

Finance Director Cindy West presented the fourth quarter financial report for the fiscal year 2026 that just closed, noting that all figures are unaudited and that the audit process is underway.

General Fund: Revenues were higher than the prior year, driven by increased property taxes and insurance premium tax collections, with 98 percent of the budget collected. Expenditures were also higher, attributable to increased personnel costs and transfers to the fire department, with 98 percent of the budget expended.

Statesboro Fire Service Fund: Revenues exceeded the prior year due to transfers from the General Fund and loans from enterprise funds, with 96 percent of the budget collected. Expenditures increased correspondingly, driven by personnel costs and associated salary-related costs including retirement and workers' compensation.

Water/Sewer Fund: Revenues reflected a decrease, explained by the fact that SPLOST fund transfers to the Water/Sewer and Capital Projects funds had not yet been processed at the time of the report. Expenditures were relatively flat, with 100 percent of the budget expended.

Stormwater Fund: Revenues were lower than the prior year due to a large FEMA grant reimbursement received in FY2025 that was not replicated in FY2026, resulting in 71 percent of the budget collected. Expenditures were relatively flat.

Natural Gas Fund: Revenues increased due to higher commercial and industrial usage, with 92 percent of the budget collected. Expenditures were higher due to increased natural gas purchase costs tied to greater industrial and commercial demand, with 98 percent of the budget expended.

Solid Waste Collection Fund: Both revenues and expenditures increased, with revenues reflecting a rate increase for residential and commercial dumpster services. One hundred percent of the budget was both collected and expended.

Solid Waste Disposal Fund: Revenues declined compared to FY2025, which had included a $1.8 million FEMA reimbursement related to Hurricane Helene debris removal. The City is still awaiting approximately $1 million in additional FEMA reimbursement. Expenditures were also down, reflecting the absence of the hurricane debris removal costs in FY2026.
SPLOST and TSPLOST: Collections followed the same seasonal trend as FY2025, with a dip in the April–June quarter. Overall, the City collected $250,000 more in SPLOST and $429,000 more in TSPLOST in FY2026 compared to FY2025.
Hotel/Motel Tax: Collections were variable month-to-month. Total collections for FY2025 were approximately $1.58 million, compared to $1.57 million for FY2026—a difference of approximately $18,000 less than the prior year.

3. Street Renaming

Planning and Development Director Justin Williams presented a proposal to name an unnamed street running between East Vine Street and East Cherry Street after Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Anciaux, a French officer of the American Revolutionary War. A petition dated July 4th was submitted by Dr. Olga Amarie of Georgia Southern University. Lieutenant Colonel Anciaux was a French officer assigned to the area who was present at the Battle of Yorktown, subsequently settled in Bulloch County, and was granted 1,200 acres of land. He was also responsible for the naming of the Arcola Area, and he is buried in Statesboro. The Bulloch County Historical Society expressed enthusiasm for the proposal, and the Lieutenant Colonel was recently featured in Statesboro Magazine as a local hero.
Mr. Williams noted that because the street is currently unnamed and has no existing addresses, the standard multi-petitioner signature requirement would need to be waived by council, as no address changes would be required. The proposed name for the street is Nicholas Anciaux Lane.
Dr. Amarie, who was present at the meeting, addressed the council. She emphasized the historical and international significance of the naming, noting the 250th anniversary of the United States. She is in active correspondence with several of the Lieutenant Colonel's descendants—including a representative from the Society of the Cincinnati in the Atlanta area, and a descendant in Rhode Island—both of whom expressed enthusiasm about the recognition. Dr. Amarie also noted a letter of support from the French Honorary Council in the Savannah area. She shared additional historical context: Anciaux settled in Bulloch County in 1807, died in 1810 after only three years in the area, but his wife Lydia Richardson lived in Statesboro until 1838. Their daughter Eliza was married to Senator John McPherson Berrien, under President Andrew Jackson's cabinet.
Mr. Williams confirmed that a formal resolution will be brought forward to a future City Council meeting for official action.

4. Subdivision Incentive Program

Planning Director Justin Williams presented a proposal to update Chapter 62 of the City Code to create a revised Workforce Housing Incentive Program, replacing the existing Subdivision Incentive Program, which has not been practically usable since the adoption of the Unified Development Code rendered several of its referenced zoning districts are obsolete. The existing program requirements include mandatory natural gas installation at approximately $4,000 per lot, a $10,000 per-lot infrastructure contribution from city funds, minimum two-car garage requirements, and single-family detached housing mandates—make it poorly suited to current development needs and workforce housing goals.
The proposed updated framework would align the city with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the OneGeorgia Authority's workforce housing funding programs.
The city's participation would be structured around fee adjustments and in-kind contributions rather than direct cash outlays. Incentives could include waived building permit fees, water and sewer tap fees, expedited permitting, and appropriate zoning approvals. These contributions can collectively count toward a required 30 percent local match, which can be bought down to approximately 10 percent through documented commitments in a developer agreement, corresponding to roughly $250,000 in in-kind value against a maximum state award of $2.5 million.
All incentives are discretionary and require full City Council approval. No commitment is made until a council-approved developer agreement is executed. This structure gives the city an opportunity—generally unavailable through the standard zoning process—to negotiate the price point of housing units as a condition of receiving incentives.
The Mayor asked about minimum project thresholds, and staff clarified that the maximum award corresponds to approximately 61 units. Staff also confirmed that the state's funding requirements include a timeline for construction and delivery, and that developers must demonstrate financial feasibility independent of the award.
Council directed staff to bring a draft ordinance forward for adoption at the first City Council meeting in September.

5. Fire Inspections

Fire Chief Tim Grams introduced Division Chief of Prevention Services and City Fire Marshal Justin Taylor, who presented a proposal to adopt a third-party reporting platform for fire and life safety system inspections.

Chief Taylor explained that the proposed platform is an internet-based, cloud-hosted system that would centralize the submission and tracking of fire code compliance reports from third-party contractors who test and maintain fire suppression, alarm, sprinkler, and extinguisher systems. Currently, inspectors must track down reports submitted through various channels, which can be particularly difficult with franchises and chain businesses that store records offsite or at corporate headquarters. The new platform would allow contractors to upload reports electronically, and city inspectors could review them, identify deficiencies, and track resolution without manual follow-up.

Chief Taylor presented 2025 calendar year data: 1,354 annual fire inspections were conducted, of which 495 (approximately 37 percent) required at least one reinspection. Of 161 occupational tax certificate inspections, 63 (approximately 40 percent) required reinspection, which can delay business license issuance. A total of 1,069 fire code violations were noted during annual inspections, 163 of which (15 percent) related to fire alarm or sprinkler systems. Fire extinguisher violations accounted for 23 percent of all annual inspection violations with our occupational tax it brings it up to 38%.

Chief Taylor noted that the platform has no cost to the City or the Fire Department. Third-party contractors may be assessed a small fee by the platform provider to submit reports electronically, which contractors may or may not pass on to business owners. He noted that businesses are already required by law to test and maintain these systems, and that reinspection fees under the current fee schedule already create a financial incentive to ensure compliance upfront.

Chief Taylor recommended a November 1, 2026 implementation date. He noted that similar systems are already in use in Marietta, Covington, Savannah, Garden City, and Augusta. He also noted that the program would free up inspector time for first-time business inspections rather than reinspections. It was added that virtual inspections have also increased, from 41 in 2025 to 55 so far in 2026.

A council member asked whether any fire department personnel would be displaced as a result of the new system, and Chief Taylor confirmed no positions would be affected. Council expressed support for proceeding with implementation.

6. Transit Update

Civil Engineer Kierra Ahmed gave an update to the City's transit system. FY2024 was the first full year of transit service and there was enough ridership of to justify a request to expand from a four-bus to an eight-bus system. In FY2025, the system recorded approximately 21,000 riders, From January through June 2026, the system recorded approximately 9,600 riders with a monthly average of approximately 1,600. April 2026 was the highest ridership month at approximately 1,800. Based on current trends, staff projected total ridership for 2026 at between 19,000 and 20,000.

Several new bus shelter stops have been added, including at the Statesboro Food Bank (December 2024), the Social Security Administration office, and Newport Trace. A stop at the Visitor Center is planned as part of the Blue Mile project. She also addressed the need to refresh the current bus wrap design, noting it is beginning to fade and that the logo placement may need adjustment. The plan is to wrap new buses first and then replace the current fleet's wraps. Regarding vehicle replacement, the current four buses are approaching the five-year mark and the 150,000-mile threshold that triggers a replacement requirement. A 10 percent local match of approximately $70,000 has been estimated, and council had previously approved funding for this purpose. The replacement buses will be larger, accommodating 10 passengers plus 2 wheelchair positions.

City Manager Charles Penny added that operating with only four buses makes on-time performance difficult, particularly when a vehicle is pulled off route for a special pickup. Expanding to eight active buses is expected to improve reliability and increase ridership capacity.

7. Tasting for Package Store Report

City Attorney Cain Smith presented findings from research conducted following a June request by a business owner seeking permission to hold tasting events at a package liquor store.

The current local ordinance prohibits tasting events at package stores, although state law (O.C.G.A. § 3-15-1 et seq.) permits such events without requiring any additional state licensure. Staff surveyed approximately 16 peer jurisdictions and found that four—Dunwoody, Augusta, Savannah, and Columbia County—allow tasting events at package stores, while the remainder do not. Those that do allow them either charge a per-event permit fee or an annual ancillary license fee.

The state-level regulations governing such events should the City choose to permit them: a maximum of 52 tasting events per calendar year, one per day, not to exceed four hours each, held only during lawful alcohol sales hours, served only to consumers aged 21 or older, limited to one type of beverage per event, and subject to consumption limits of 8 ounces of malt beverages, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.

If council wished to move forward, the amendment would be a straightforward addition to Section 6-23 of the City Code, allowing package store licensees to host tasting events in compliance with state law, subject to a permit fee set in the City's schedule of rates, fees, and fines, or alternatively an annual ancillary fee.

City Staff recommendation was to leave the current ordinance unchanged, citing the City's young population and the presence of a recovery community as factors favoring continued restriction. The Mayor expressed agreement, stating he did not see it as a need. No motion was made, and council concurred with the recommendation to take no action.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:56 pm

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk