



CITY OF STATESBORO
WORK SESSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 17, 2026

Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

4:00 PM

A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on February 17, 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, Paulette Chavers, 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. Quarterly Financial Report

Director of Finance, Cindy West presented the quarterly financial report covering through December 2026. For the General Fund, 68% of revenues have been collected, which is higher than the previous year due to increased taxes and license/permit fees. Expenditures were at 51% of the budget, slightly higher than the previous year due to increased personnel services, contract services, and supplies costs.

For the Statesboro Fire Service Fund, revenues showed an increase due to a loan from enterprise funds. Collections were at 51% of budget while expenditures were at 48%, remaining relatively flat compared to the previous year with only about \$100,000 more spent.

The Water and Sewer Fund revenues were higher than the previous year due to rate increases, with 46% of budgeted revenues collected. Expenditures were relatively flat at 47% of budget.

The Storm Water Fund showed a decrease of \$76,000 in revenues compared to last year, primarily due to the sale of assets in FY 2025 that did not occur this year. The fund had collected 12% of its budget. Expenditures were about \$55,000 higher than last year, with 54% of the budget spent.

Natural Gas revenues were up \$180,000 from last year due to increased commercial and industrial usage, with 35% of the budget collected. Expenditures were higher than last year primarily due to natural gas purchase costs, with 38% of the budget expended.

Solid Waste Collection had spent 50% of its budget, with expenditures up \$173,000 due to personnel costs, workers' compensation, overtime, and vehicle maintenance.

The Solid Waste Disposal Fund showed an increase of \$500,000 over last year in revenues from rate increases, tipping fees, and asset sales, with 46% of the budget collected. Expenditures were flat compared to last year at 46% of the budget.

SPLOST and T-SPLOST collections have decreased from last year, and the Hotel/Motel Fund was down by \$26,000 through December compared to the previous year.

2. Data Center Tour – Information Session

Director of Planning and Development, Justin Williams provided a recap of a recent data center tour that took place on January 22nd, which was attended by the Mayor, council members, and staff. The group visited multiple data centers in the Atlanta metro area and met with the Walton County Development Authority to discuss the Stanton Springs Data Center. They also met with Georgia Power representatives at the Georgia Experience Center to discuss power impacts.

The tour included visits to several facilities:

- An "edge" facility at 3200 Web Ridge Road (102,000 sq ft)
- A larger edge facility at 1001 Windward Course in Alpharetta (a converted commercial office building)
- The Meta Data Center at Stanton Springs Industrial Park (nearly one million square feet)

Key findings from the tour included:

- Modern data centers can reuse substantial amounts of water
- The facilities generated minimal noise (57 decibels at the highest measurement)
- Georgia Power has an extensive 18-month study process for data centers
- Grid capacity concerns are addressed through infrastructure upgrades paid for by the data centers
- Edge data centers are moderate in size and could potentially fit in vacant properties in Statesboro
- Data centers generate significant tax revenue with low service demands, aside from utilities

Justin recommended developing an amendment to the Unified Development Code to ensure appropriate regulation of data centers. Council members who participated in the tour shared additional insights, with the Mayor noting that data centers are essentially "the cloud" where digital information is stored, and there are already 164 data centers across Georgia.

Council members expressed concerns about the impacts on utilities, particularly power usage. It was clarified that Georgia Power requires data centers to build their own infrastructure upfront, with costs not passed on to existing customers. The potential economic benefits were highlighted, with estimates suggesting a data center could generate approximately \$2.5 million in annual revenue for the city through property taxes and Georgia Power franchise benefits. Staff recommends developing an amendment to the Unified Development Code, specifically to ensure that there is some regulation associated with data centers, where there are rules unlike some municipalities. We will be looking into the opportunity to be talking to some of our outside partners such as the TSW who helped us write the Unified Development Code, and looking at model ordinances that exist around the state.

Mayor McCollar asked that staff look to see if any municipalities or local governments that's putting in any language in regards to water recycling and water usage.

3. Development Authority of Bulloch County

Benjy Thompson, CEO of the Development Authority of Bulloch County, provided an update on the organization's activities and its new five-year strategic plan called "Forward Statesboro Bulloch."

Thompson thanked the city for its partnership and professionalism, highlighting how the development authority works with city staff on various projects. He noted that the authority's traditional focus has been on manufacturing and distribution, but their new strategic plan broadens this to include aerospace, professional services, retail, and other amenities.

The strategic plan has four main goals:

- Improve collaboration and communication with partners
- Support legacy business and plan for future growth
- Focus on livability assets to help the community evolve
- Encourage entrepreneurship, especially within the city

Thompson discussed the potential transfer of the city's retail professional (Alan Gross) from Georgia Southern to the development authority to enhance retail recruitment efforts. He emphasized that this arrangement would provide access to economic development resources and support the work already being done by entities like the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority.

Thompson also provided updates on industrial recruitment, noting that Hyundai's commitment to the region has increased from the original 8,500 jobs and \$7.6 billion investment to over \$10 billion, with plans to increase production from 300,000 to 500,000 vehicles per year. This growth is driving expansion of suppliers in Bulloch County, with commitments for over 1,300 jobs and nearly \$800 million in capital investment over the next 5-7 years.

He reported that three suppliers related to Hyundai had made payments in lieu of taxes, including \$551,000 to the county for fire district taxes and \$1.9 million to the Bulloch County School System. A recent manufacturing impact study showed that manufacturing provides a \$1.55 billion impact on the local economy.

The Mayor thanked Thompson for the development authority's work, noting that the poverty rate in Statesboro had decreased from 53% when the current administration began to 36% currently, partly due to job creation efforts.

4. Public Safety Reports

- Police

Police Chief Mike Broadhead presented the annual police department report, highlighting crime statistics that showed positive trends. Aggravated assaults had declined significantly in the past year, while robberies continued their decade-long downward trend. Homicide rates remained relatively steady over the past decade, with the exception of a spike in 2020 that mirrored national trends. For rapes, it is a difficult stat to track because the vast majority of legitimate rape are not reported, for lots of reasons. We saw an increase this year with 24 cases, we had an analyst go through these cases and see what is happening, and these are date rapes, particularly it goes along with education. Once women at the college learn what it means to be raped they are more open to reporting it. However, this number bounces around a lot.

Property crimes also continued to decline, with both thefts and burglaries showing downward trends. The department saw a reduction in firearms stolen from vehicles, with 27 taken in 2025 compared to higher numbers in previous years. All stolen firearms came from unlocked vehicles.

Officer training remained a priority, with the average officer receiving 194 hours of training in 2025, far exceeding the state requirement of 20 hours. A total of 88 sworn officers received training during the year.

The Roadway Assist program continued to be successful, with college interns handling 2,400 calls involving private property crashes, help stranded motorists, and traffic direction, freeing up officer time for other duties.

Use of force metrics remained low, with force used in approximately 1% of arrests. The department recorded 19 instances of force used during 1,700+ arrests in 2025. Chief Broadhead noted a shift from taser use to more hands-on techniques, partly due to officers' training in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and some reliability issues with tasers.

Traffic enforcement increased, with more citations and warnings issued compared to previous years, attributed to improved officer staffing levels allowing for more proactive policing. The top crash locations continued to be along the bypass, particularly at Veterans Memorial Parkway intersections.

The department's Flock camera system proved valuable, helping recover 30 stolen vehicles and providing evidence in robbery and homicide cases, leading to 44 felony arrests in 2025. Our records unit, just about everything we do in the State of Georgia is an open record. We have a person whose full time job is to fill these request, we burn tons of body cam, and dash cam for different sources. We get about 4 request a day, sometimes we get inundated from news sources, who want to see every arrest video you have, just to find something funny to publish and we provide it because it is required. Two years ago we took on dispatching for the fire department, this year 48,000 calls of service for police and fire.

- Fire

Deputy Fire Chief Bobby Duggar presented the annual fire department report in the absence of Fire Chief Tim Grams. He began by thanking the council for their support of the fire department.

Key accomplishments for the year included:

- Breaking ground on Station 3, expected to open in July
- Completing construction on a 1,500 square foot classroom at the training center
- Receiving a new Sutphen SPH 100 aerial platform
- Completing an ISO evaluation, with results pending (currently ISO Class 2)
- Participating in a 3-year FEMA study on health and wellness, with the department performing well
- Receiving \$591,525 in SAFER grant funding

The department responded to 1,390 total calls for service, with 1,174 within city limits, 180 in the five-mile district, and 36 calls outside the city. The average response time was 4 minutes and 28 seconds, better than the national average of 6 minutes. The department handled 204 overlapping incidents, representing 14.7% of all calls.

Most calls were false fire alarm related, with 153 actual fire calls and 94 rescue calls. Heat maps showed the highest concentration of calls around Georgia Southern, the north side of town, and the east side near Highway 80 and the bypass. The department protected property valued at over \$133 million, with only \$1.17 million lost to fire damage—less than 1% property loss, which is well below the national average of 2.8-3.1%, this is due to our staffing, and we carry 20 per shift, with some over hires as well to keep those going. That makes a difference and keeps our jobs going, more efficient and we can get to the fires faster as well as makes it safer for the members of the community as well as the firefighters. Training remained a priority with 19,774 total training hours completed, significantly exceeding the required 240 hours per firefighter. The department's prevention division conducted 1,385 inspections.

Community outreach was extensive, with 4,388 direct contacts, 139 smoke alarms installed, and numerous school visits and community events. The department participated in programs like the AmBucs project to build specialized bicycles for people with limited mobility, GSU's "Up in Flames" event, and "Homestead," which provided Christmas gifts to 42 seniors.

Looking forward, the department plans to:

- Continue working on the fire fee and service study
- Focus on recruitment and retention of personnel
- Reduce community risk through prevention and education
- Continue evaluating and improving department policies and services

The department was recognized for its efficiency and effectiveness in protecting the community.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 pm

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk