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CITY OF STATESBORO  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 20, 2024

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Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

3:00 PM

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A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on February 20, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 50 East Main Street. Present was Mayor Jonathan McCollar; Council Members: Ginny Hendley, John Riggs and Shari Barr. Absent Councilmembers: Phil Boyum and Paulette Chavers. Also present was City Clerk Leah Harden, City Attorney Cain Smith, City Manager Charles Penny, Assistant City Manager Jason Boyles and Public Information Officer Layne Phillips.

## 1. Quarterly Financial Report

Director of Finance Cindy West presented the second quarter financial report of Fiscal Year 2024, reviewing revenues and expenditures in the General Fund, Fire Service Fund, Water/Sewer Fund, Stormwater Fund, Natural Gas Fund, Solid Waste Collection Fund and the Solid Waste Disposal Fund. Revenues in the General fund is showing an increase over the prior year, due to the mileage rate increase, also an increase in our franchise fees, the license and permits issued and investment income. Ms. West also reviewed the SPLOST distribution is trending about the same as last year and the TSPLOST distribution funds are higher than FY 2023. The Hotel/Motel tax revenue is trending higher than in FY 2023.

## 2. Public Safety Report

### a) Fire Department

Statesboro Fire Chief Tim Grams began his presentation with the Statesboro Fire Departments 2023 accomplishments which include an aggressive recruitment strategy hiring and training 21 new firefighters, completing renovations to Fire Station #2, received 2 new fire engines, expanded the Health and Wellness programs as well as received \$2,173,171.68 in grant funding in 2023. Next, Chief Grams presented the 2023 statistics for Statesboro fire service. Calls for service include the City, Fire District and the outside primary response area. Other statistics include average response time, average time on-scene, number of overlapping incidents, and arson investigations. The national average of fire related property loss is 31% and the Statesboro fire related property loss is 7.98%. Training division, there was a total of 19,268 training hours in 2023. The Statesboro prevention division provided numerous public safety events and conducted over 1800 inspections, had direct interaction with nearly 2,000 citizens, installed over 300 smoke alarms and held 2 smoke alarm blitzes. The Statesboro Fire Departments community outreach have participated in the farmers market and the fair, they partnered with the Therapy Spot assembling mobility bikes for the children. Up in Flames got started back up after falling off the radar when COVID hit, and it was a great turn out and we expect it to be even bigger and better next year.

Chief Grams concluded his presentation stating that the additional fire station will continue to be a priority, that's only going to increase as we grow. They do anticipate an ISO evaluation in the next 2 years, they typically come around every 3-5 years and it has been 5 years. The Fire Department will

also be moving to a new reporting and data management system. Chief Grams also stated that they anticipate with all of the growth and construction that the technical rescue capabilities need to be enhanced, that we will be working on that. Councilmember John Riggs asked what a technical rescue is. Chief Grams stated it is anything such as high angle, trench collapse, structural collapse, it is the training that is needed for and after a disaster. It is very extensive training and includes 7 disciplines to be trained in.

**b) Police Department**

Police Chief Mike Broadhead began his presentation with an overview of 2023 statistics for the Statesboro Police Department. The training hours for officers in 2023, averaged 182 hours for sworn officers and 30.4 hours for civilian employees. Calls of service were a little over 43,000, citations were up, warnings were up, crashes were down, and arrest were up. The crash report showed the top 5 intersections; Veteran Memorial & Fair Road, Veteran Memorial & Northside Dr. E., Veteran Memorial & Lanier, Veteran Memorial & Brannen St, and Veteran Memorial & South Main Street .Chief Broadhead spoke on the Roadway assistance program they done over the summer. Roadway assistance is a program where they put interns in a work truck, THEY help officers with crash scenes, respond to private property crashes to help exchange information, helping people if they run out of gas or needed a tire fixed. This helped free up some officers from having to go on those calls. Last year they handled 265 calls and that was just a couple of guys working part time. It has been tremendously successful and it may be something we want to talk about with making it a permeant positon. Councilmember John Riggs asked how to get ahold of the roadway assistance, Chief stated you call like you would call for an officer, 911, and they will dispatch them out if they are on duty or will send an officer out. Councilmember Paulette Chavers asked if it was the permeant residents pushing crime levels or is it students or individuals just coming into city for a night? Chief Broadhead stated they have previously tried to find that out by address and it was mostly local people committing problems, patricianly crime related and not get calls of service. Mayor McCollar asked Chief of the crimes we are seeing, what percentage of these crimes are youth driven? Chief Broadhead stated about 70% the number one crime would be unlawfully entering cars. Mayor McCollar asked if 70% was all crimes or certain crimes. Chief stated if we say 21 and under then it would be 70% of all crimes. The dispatch center handled all of the 43,000 calls that came in, we have increased the dispatching center and since January have been dispatching for the Fire Department as well. Lastly Chief Broadhead concluded his presentation sharing that there are more than 40 locations on the Fusus system with access to over a 1000 cameras. Our Flock system we got a grant for about \$500,000 last year that we can start putting flock systems in. We have about 32 in the ground right now and some more we just got approval from GDOT to put in the right-of-way so that we can gather evidence of people driving by, such as putting a stolen license plate in the system and it passes by one of the flock systems the officers will be notified in their cars. Two of last year's homicides were solved with leads that were generated with the flock system.

**3. Utility Billing and Bill Pay**

Director of finance Cindy West presented the utility billing service conversion. Currently when customers receive their bill it is for water used 6 weeks to 2 months ago. Updating our billing schedule will mean the customers will be billed for the previous month of usage. It will take 10 months to implement the new system and require an additional 5 days of service to be added to every customers bill. Currently customers are being billed for 30 days, it is not a rate increase it is an increase in service days. This will help customers understand their bill better, and be able to catch problems faster, such as water leaks. This new billing will start on the April bill, and by January 2025 the customer should

be receive a bill for usage they had in December 2024. Director Cindy West also presented the ebox (electronic payment) that would allow for the City to receive the payment electronically the next day.

#### **4. Presentation of the FY 2023 Audit Report**

Richard Deal with Lanier, Proctor and Deal presented the highlights of the Fiscal Year 2023 City Audit. The City had a 10% increase in total assets and a 34% increase in total liabilities from the previous year. Liabilities include OPEB (other posted employee benefits), pension, and revenue bonds. The City's total net position increased by 10% and there was a 20% increase in total expenses. Total revenues for governmental activities increased by 13% these revenues include ARPA, TSPLOST, and SPLOST. The General Fund balance represents 35% percent of our annual expenditures and transfers out. Lastly, Mr. Deal reviewed the net position of SPLOST, TSPLOST, Proprietary Funds, Enterprise Funds, and Internal Service Funds. The bottom line, the City is in a good financial position.

#### **5. Personal Mobility Ordinance Presentation**

Director of Planning and Development Kathy Field stated a public hearing was held to get the publics input on the regulation of mobility devices. She then turned the presentation over to Caleb Rasicot with TSW to present a proposal for consideration as well as the findings from the hearing.

Caleb Rasicot with TSW reviewed a proposal on the regulation of personal mobility devices within the city. Personal mobility devices are items such as scooters, skateboards, hoverboards, segways, and toy vehicles, it does not apply to any medical device. The proposal includes a set of citywide standards that would apply to everyone with a device. Then come up with very specific standards for companies doing business in the city limits. Both standards are guided by Georgia State Law specifically Title 40 Motor Vehicles and Traffic. First amending part of the City code 78-9 roller skates and skateboards renaming it non-motorized devices, clarifying that it includes razor scooters and skateboards and prohibiting these devices on any public street, only operate on sidewalks, and allowing mayor and council to prohibit them from certain parts of the city. Caleb also recommends adopting by reference all the state of Georgia's requirements for bicycles. Also to set very clear standards for the operations of electronic scooters in the City of Statesboro. Allow them on roadways with a speed limit of 35mph or less, allow on bicycle lanes, trails, and only on sidewalks when the adjacent roadway speed is over 35mph and the sidewalk is wide open 5 ft. because of the American Disability Act they cannot recommend anything lower than that. Along with recommending max speed of 15mph, minimum age 15, under 16 years of age you have to wear a helmet. It is recommended that chapter 70 is amended by adding the additional standards of sharable dock less mobility devices. City Manager stated we would introduce it to council for the first reading at the second meeting in April and the second reading at the first meeting in May.

#### **6. Proximity Waivers for Central Business District**

City attorney Cain Smith presented the proximity issue in the Central Business District. As of now we have proximity requirements for on premises license, we don't allow pour license to be issued within a 100 yards of churches or educational facilities. Under the current code of ordinances council may grant proximity waivers for restaurants, pubs, and low volume establishments that are in the prohibited 100 yard halo. Local regulation makes it impossible to have bars and bars with kitchens throughout a large portion of downtown Statesboro due to the number of churches and educational facilities in our central business district. Options to council would be to eliminate this prohibition in all or part of CBD. Allowing kitchens to consider proximity waivers for bars with kitchens in the entirety of the CBD or

leave the ordinance as it currently stands. As of now we don't have a proposal, the options are; in the CBD you don't need waivers, we could allow waivers, or leave it the way it is. Direction was given to change the ordinance to Zetterower, MLK, Cherry, Hill Street proximity does not apply, and brought back to council for first reading at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in March.

4:46 Councilmember John Riggs left the meeting

## **7. Tree Grants**

Olympia Gaines discussed with Mayor and Council the tree rebate program. The program will do a 50/50 match of the property owners cost, not to exceed \$150. The property owner would have to meet certain conditions to qualify, funding would come from the tree bank, and there is a list of acceptable trees in the code of ordinances. Direction was given to move forward with the adoption of the policy at the next council meeting.

## **8. Presentation by the Youth Council**

Statesboro Village Builders Program Coordinator, LaSara Mitchell introduced a few members of the youth council who attended the Georgia Municipal Association Youth Forum in Atlanta. Chloe Jones, William Fry, Stephen Fry, Maryann Garcia, Scarlett Brikett. Each Youth member spoke about their experience and what they learned at the Youth Forum.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 pm

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Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

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Leah Harden, City Clerk