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CITY OF STATESBORO  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 21, 2023

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Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

3:30 PM

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A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on February 21, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 50 East Main Street. Present was Mayor Jonathan McCollar; Council Members: Phil Boyum, Paulette Chavers, Venus Mack, 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 Information Officer Layne Phillips.

### **1. Presentation on Hotel, Motel Tax**

Becky Davis President/CEO of the Statesboro Convention and Visitors Bureau gave an overview of how they use the lodging tax for the community of Statesboro. The Statesboro Convention and Visitors Bureau's primary focus is to bring people to Statesboro by promoting events, attractions, dining and lodging. In addition to being a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) the Statesboro Convention and Visitors Bureau is also a Regional Visitor Information Center. Visit Statesboro is open six days a week to assist visitors and locals and partner with Georgia Southern University to facilitate the Museum on Main. Visit Statesboro is a local resource for new comers, realtors, business and job recruiters, as well as meeting space for various local committees. They also provide the home and marketing efforts for the Statesboro Main Street Farmer's Market and the year round market to go.

Dr. Tyler Reinagel, Associate Vice President of Economic Development at Kennesaw State spoke with Mayor and Council about the Statesboro Hotel-Motel tax. Hotel-Motel tax is a completely local function the state does not have a hand in collection and remittance of it. A percentage of these revenues goes towards restricted spending for the promotion of tourism, conventions, and trade shows and has to be expended by a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) that is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization. Restricted funds can be used for community wide tourism advertising, social media and internet marketing campaigns, radio/television commercials, soliciting convention/trade show contracts, and supporting/operating a convention facility. However they cannot be used to pay for the event itself. Another way restricted funds can be used is for Tourism Product Development (TPD) which is brick and mortar project or investment that will enhance the visitor experience.

Statesboro currently received six pennies for every dollar, three pennies are unrestricted, two and a half pennies are restricted and must be expended by an eligible DMO for TCT, and the last half penny is restricted to Tourism Product Development. Dr. Reinagel presented a break down comparison of Statesboro's current 6 % value verses a potential 8% value. The process for increasing the percentage of Hotel-Motel tax begins with the adoption of a resolution by the local government making that request to the legislative delegation. Next members of the legislative delegation would have to introduce it to the general assembly. Once it is passed and signed by the governor an ordinance would need to be adopted by the local government establishing the new tax rate.

## **2. Quarterly Financial Report**

Director of Finance Cindy West presented the second quarter financial report of Fiscal Year 2023, 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 are down slightly due to Cares Act funding the city received last year. Ms. West also reviewed the SPLOST distribution is trending about the same as last year and the TSPLOST distribution funds are higher than FY 2022. The Hotel/Motel tax revenue is trending higher than in FY 2022.

## **3. Auditor's Report 2022**

Richard Deal with Lanier, Proctor and Deal presented the highlights of the Fiscal Year 2022 City Audit. The City had a 13% increase in total assets and a 4% decrease 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 11% and there was a 6% increase in total expenses. Total revenues for governmental activities increased by 6% these revenues include ARPA, TSPLOST, and SPLOST. The General Fund balance represents 46% percent of our annual expenditures and transfers out. This puts the City in a strong financial position with the general fund. 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.

## **4. Public Safety Report**

### **a) Fire Department**

Statesboro Fire Chief Tim Grams began his presentation with the Statesboro Fire Departments 2022 accomplishments which include the promotion of 7 individuals to Company and Chief Officer positions, all operational personnel achieved 240 hours of training, the addition of another certified fire investigator, designed and began manufacturing 2 new fire apparatus, and the receipt of \$40,000 in grant funding. Next, Chief Grams presented the 2022 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 1.935%. The Statesboro prevention division provided numerous public safety events and conducted over 1500 fire inspections, implemented virtual fire inspection program, installed over 500 smoke alarms and replaced 26 batteries in smoke alarms. Chief Grams concluded his presentation with the Statesboro Fire Departments community outreach stating department personnel donated hundreds of canned goods and money to the Statesboro Food Bank. They also participated at the Fair, First Fridays, Farmers Market and the Chili Cook-off and on Memorial and Veterans Day they placed crosses on the Bulloch County Courthouse lawn.

### **b) Police Department**

Police Chief Mike Broadhead began his presentation with an overview of 2022 statistics for the Statesboro Police Department. The training hours for officers in 2022, averaged 197.1 hours for sworn officers and 50.8 hours for civilian employees. The records unit at the Statesboro Police Department sent out 4329 records. Chief Broadhead reviewed the stats for use of force stating of the 1295 arrests 19 involved the use of force. He also reviewed the top five vehicle crash locations in the city and each one of the sites involves Veterans Memorial Parkway and vehicle crash numbers decreased by 4.24% from the previous year. There were 41,897 individual call for service which is a 6% increase from 2021. There were 4,622 police reports done and 3,644 citations given. Chief Broadhead reviewed the stats for violent crime, property crime, crimes committed with a

firearm, and stolen firearms from vehicles. Lastly Chief Broadhead shared that there are 41 locations on the Fusus system with a total of 660 cameras.

## **5. Annexation Procedure**

City Attorney Cain Smith presented a proposal procedure for governing body and public notice of receipt of annexation petitions. Georgia code requires that a notice of annexation petitions be given to the County and the School Board within 30 days of receipt. The county then has a 45 day period in which they can file an objection to the proposed annexation. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in annexations petitions that will draw a lot of interest from the public. As such staff recommends that notification of receipt of an annexation petition be made to Mayor and Council the same time notice is given to the County and School Board. In addition Mayor and Council would acknowledge receipt of petition at the subsequent council meeting and direct the City Clerk to certify that the petitioner is the legal owner(s) of record according to data maintained by the Bulloch County Tax Assessor. Alternately, staff could be directed to abstain from sending notification to the County and School Board until Mayor and Council have acknowledged receipt and the City Clerk has certified the petition.

After council discussion staff was directed to proceed with the first option of notification and to place this item on the consent agenda.

## **6. Historical Marker for Statesboro**

Adrienne McCollar with the Statesboro-Bulloch Remembrance coalition thanked Mayor and Council for the opportunity to be here today and city staff for their guidance in this process. The goal for today is to get authorization to place a marker memorializing the nine known victims of lynching in Bulloch County. The Remembrance Project in partnership with the Equal Justice Initiative is dedicated to creating opportunity to make space for conversations that advance truth, healing and justice around racial violence, terror, and its legacy. We do this by community education and by being intentional about broadening the coalition.

Dr. Patrick Novotny shared the history of the Jaeckel Hotel, when it opened its doors in 1905 it represented a sequence of events that goes back as early as 1886 with the lynching of Jake Braswell to the lynching of Kennedy Gordon in 1901 as well as the tragedies in 1904 the opening of the doors of the Jaeckel Hotel in 1905 to 1906 the arrival of the first district A&M. The hotel opened its doors in 1905 welcoming visitors to our town and that's the spirit that we see with the location of the marker placement. The City of Statesboro, City Hall, welcomes newcomers every day to our downtown and to our city and thanks to this marker newcomers and visitors will now be able to learn parts of the painful past but also about progressive past, present and future commerce and education.

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Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

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Leah Harden, City Clerk