



CITY OF STATESBORO
WORK SESSION MINUTES
APRIL 15, 2025

Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

4:00 PM

A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on April 15, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 50 East Main Street. Present were Mayor Jonathan McCollar, and Council Members: Tangie Johnson, John Riggs, and Shari Barr. Also present were 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 Councilmembers Paulette Chavers and Ginny Hendley.

1. Presentation by Roxie Remley Art Students

Georgina Osuna Diaz, Lead Art Teacher for the Art Adventures after school program at the Roxie Remley center next door to City Hall, expressed their love for the parks and trails in Statesboro. Georgina introduced several students Ella, Ben, Dillion and Rex to Mayor and Council. Ella spoke about what they envision for the park while Ben, Dillon, and Rex showed images of what the park looks like currently. Ella spoke about things that could be done to improve the park by adding playground equipment such as swings and a climbing structure as well as replacing the seating. Georgina stated they utilize the portion of the Willie McTell trail located behind Vyve, as it is close to our center and an easy place for parents to pick up their kids. Now, this after school program is focused on art education but we also go outside to enjoy the fresh air. Georgina stated that there is a table out there that needs replacement as it has been rusted out for some time. Lastly, Georgina shared artwork the students have been working on expressing their ideas of what the park should look like.

City Manager Charles Penny appreciated them bringing this to our attention and stated the City will make an inventory of the items that need to be updated and replaced along the trail and take care of it.

2. The Evolution of the Community Dashboard

Candace Bodkins spoke to Mayor and Council about the community dashboard. The dashboard would highlight some of the areas in the City and the County that we are doing well and areas that we may need to improve. When we talk to individuals about the things they like about their community or things they look for in places they want to live there are certain characteristics people often talk about such as good schools, safe neighborhoods, opportunities for recreation, etc. The idea of the dashboard came about, because people love dashboards they present a lot of data and can tell us about things we are interested in, what's happening at a specific point in time. Help us create a common focus on things that we think are important and how we might discuss those items. The dashboard is a process creating shared understanding about our strengths and weaknesses as a community. We met with people all over the community, to get the key areas of concern, what are constraints, limitations, etc. We talked to the hospital, the school board, Georgia Southern, we talked to anyone that does something related to supporting the community. From this we got areas of priority and facilitated several community conversations spread out across the county including Brooklet, Portal and Statesboro. We asked the community what are some things you like about living in Statesboro and Bulloch County, and with the

change coming what is most important to you. We created indicators around these key areas of education, literacy, economic opportunity, health and wellbeing, public safety and community vibrancy. Candace showed Mayor and Council some examples around literacy including 3rd grade reading proficiency across the various elementary schools. Portal has a big spike in the middle, we had the conversation of what was happening in Portal. People believed that the fact that they got a new principal was helping turn around those scores. Another part of this is that if something is working in Portal thinking about replicating these ideas in other schools. Trying to help people understand what these scores mean and not just in the particular reading area and what community resources are available if someone's children needs help in reading. Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, ALICE, these are folks that are full time employed that are above the federal poverty line and don't qualify for a lot of programs, but still don't make enough money to make ends meet, not saving and often times going without things such as routine medical visit, car maintenance, etc. This cuts across all sorts of racial lines, age, ethnicities, and religion that fall in our ALICE rate. We can look at the other counties around us and see how we compare in our region and in the state. Mayor and Council looked at the ALICE graph and discussed the city's poverty and ALICE rate and discussed how we compared to surrounding counties. Everything is publicly available and it will be updated yearly. The dashboard is a way to stay informed and build specific IQ of what we see as a community. The dashboard gives us this common language to begin conversations about issues that cut across the City, County, School board, Georgia Southern. Further discussion between Mayor & Council was had with Candace about the dashboard.

City Manager Charles Penny stated a press release was done about the City being recognized as being in the top 20 being considered for All American Cities of destination. Charles Penny wanted to take time to acknowledge Candace Bodkins and her team for all her teams' hard work so we could be in the top 20. Candace was asked to come back for further discussion. Mayor suggested doing something specific for this for the entire community.

3. Ribbon Cutting for the Youth Council Project on McTell Trail – 4:45 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 pm.

The Mayor, City Council and City Staff walked to the Dog Park area on the Willie McTell Trail for the Statesboro Youth Council's Grant Placement Project Ribbon Cutting.

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk