



CITY OF STATESBORO
WORK SESSION MINUTES
AUGUST 19, 2025

Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

4:00 PM

A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on August 19, 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, Paulette Chavers, John Riggs, and Shari Barr. Absent was Councilmember Ginny Hendley. 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.

1. Massage Establishments and Salon Ordinance

City attorney, Cain Smith presented to Mayor and Council the Massage establishments and Salon ordinance. Staff is proposing 2 new ordinances. One for massage establishment, which would be a revision of what we currently have, and the other for salons, that we currently don't have anything for. These ordinances will give us the legal framework to regulate these businesses to make sure they operate safely and legally without posing a threat to public health and safety. The massage ordinance is needed to help prevent illegal activity such as prostitution and human trafficking from operating under the guise of legitimate massage therapy businesses. The ordinance will allow the City to bring violations in front of the administrative judge. This ordinance will also allow the City to report to the proper State authorities about any violations. We have reviewed ordinances from Cobb County, Augusta, Kennesaw, and Savannah. Our ordinance will mirror the Cobb County Ordinance which was placed into effect in 2024, due to issues stemming from issues with Massage Establishments. Our ordinance has not been revised in a long time, and since then the state has amended the laws substantially concerning what we can and cannot regulate. The Georgia Board of Massage Therapy has been regulating the practices since 2019 and we need an ordinance that reflects that.

The proposal for the salons ordinance will include nail and hair salons. Statesboro needs a salon ordinance for a number of reasons related to public health, safety, and proper business regulation. While the State of Georgia has its own regulations for the cosmetology and barbering professions, a city-level ordinance allows Statesboro to enforce additional rules that are specific to its local community and business environment. The ordinance provides the City with a legal framework to regulate these establishments, ensuring they operate within the law and don't pose a threat to public health and safety. This ordinance will allow the City to bring violations in front of the administrative judge. This ordinance will also allow the City to report to the proper State authorities about any violations. While State law sets the baseline for the salon industry, a local ordinance gives the City of Statesboro the necessary tools to regulate the businesses within its city limits, ensuring they operate safely and legally. We are asking to present the first reading at the September 2nd meeting, we have them ready and in the meantime we are going to meet with stakeholders. Directive was given to bring back for 1st reading at the September 16th meeting after meeting with the stakeholders.

2. Local Distillery Ordinance

City attorney, Cain Smith presented with mayor and council the Local Distillery Ordinance. An investment group desires to construct a distillery, brewery, and restaurant facility in downtown Statesboro. Current local law does not allow for such a set-up, but state law does. The question before Mayor and Council is whether to direct an amendment to Chapter 6 in order to allow for a Local Distillery definition along the same lines as the

Local Brewery Definition. State law does allow for distilled spirits to be manufactured and sold from the producer to the customer. We would craft an ordinance that looks like the local brewery definition, but there are a couple of questions that I have if you all would want to move forward with it. Mainly the percentage of food sales that would be required, those type of questions, staff recommends 40% so it will go along with our pub definition, we do recommend an amendment to allow this. Direction was given to proceed.

3. Private Street Proposal

Assistant to the City Manager, Olympia Gaines presented Special services districts & private street policy update. The proposed ordinance and policy now sets the minimum threshold at 75% for homeowners to be in favor of creating a Special Service District (SSD) and requesting street improvements. In the next steps, staff will coordinate a public input meeting with the residents to discuss proposed ordinance and private street policy. A petition will be provided to the HOA representatives for distribution and collection of signatures from the homeowners. The process can only be initiated if the minimum percentage threshold is achieved within the specified 90-day timeframe. After the petition has been submitted to the city and signatures have been verified by staff, the request will then be presented to council for consideration. Homeowners will be required to pay an application fee to cover the costs of the assessment and any preliminary engineering fees at the time the petition is submitted. Consideration of the proposed SSD ordinance will be presented to Council for first and second reading once the initiating petition has been reviewed and signatures validated by staff. Once Council moves to adopt a resolution for the creation of the SSD, staff will proceed with subsequent steps to advance the request. At this time staff is not recommending that the proposed ordinance be considered by Council, we still need to look at a couple of things and see how that template works. Once we meet with the property owners to gauge support then we can proceed with recommendations with first and second readings at that time.

4. Brannen Street Corridor Study

Director of engineering Brad Deal, spoke to Mayor and Council about the Brannen St Corridor Study. What led to the study was Brannen Street being a major East-West street in the city with a lot of pedestrians and bikes. Over the years there were various complaints, and most of it does not have sidewalks. Mayor and Council was shown a map of the study area. When the study began a public engagement meeting was held on September 26, 2024 at the Statesboro YMCA. At this meeting we introduced the purpose of the study and gathered input on what residents would like to see included in this corridor in the future. A community survey was given to seek input on what residents would like to see included. The goals and objectives were safety, ensure the corridor is safe for all users at all times, connectivity, expand and connect the network of bike and pedestrian infrastructure, efficiency, and maintain roadway level of service as trip generation grows. Issues and Challenges include things such as dangerous intersection at South Main, no sidewalk or bike lane, connection to the Creek on the Blue Mile, Storm water drainage, limited or no lighting and so on. Improvement recommendations are divided into 5 segments; they include various improvements such as widening sidewalks, adding bike lanes, installing traffic calming devices, on Brannen Street and connecting roads. The next steps are City Council presentation, complete final report, engineering and design, and schedule for construction.

5. FLOST Proposed Referendum and Intergovernmental Agreement with Bulloch County

City Manager, Charles Penny, spoke to Mayor and Council about the FLOST proposed referendum and intergovernmental agreement with Bulloch County. House Bill 581 “Save the Homes Act” is a state law that was passed by the General Assembly and approved by Georgia voters in a statewide referendum, in 2024. The law changes several ad valorem tax provisions, establishes a new statewide floating homestead tax exemption, and creates a new sales tax option for local governments. The county called for a meeting and if we are interested in having the floating localized sales tax it would require an IGA and also a referendum on the November 4th ballot. The county and all municipalities must enter into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA), which outlines the rate, duration, distribution of funds, and ballot question. An IGA has been placed on the August 19th council agenda for consideration. Following the IGA, voters must approve the FLOST through a local referendum. A local referendum will be scheduled for November 2025. If FLOST is approved by voters

in November 2025, tax collection will start in January 2026. Distribution to jurisdictions (county, cities, or school board) will begin July 1, 2027. Mayor and Council were shown a homestead exemption & Tax comparison table. Staff recommend support for the IGA that will be on the council agenda.

6. Strategic Plan Review

Planning director, Justin Williams, spoke to Mayor and Council about the strategic plan 2025. Justin Williams gave an overview of the strategic plan and introduced Wincy Poon with GISP. The last strategic plan was in 2018. A strategic plan acts as a roadmap for responsive and progressive public services to enhance quality of life for all residents, businesses, and visitors. The process started in February with a kickoff meeting with staff, in March a public survey was published, in April public meeting #1 was held, in May public meeting # 2 was held, July a draft plan was completed and now in August the council work session. The plan components consist of economic & demographic overview, related plans & studies, community priorities & engagement, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis, strategic initiatives, and financing alternatives.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk