



CITY OF STATESBORO
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 2, 2025

Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

6:30 PM

A Public Hearing was held on September 2, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 50 East Main Street, to solicit input from the public on the proposed 2025 millage rate of 8.625 for property taxes.

Present were Mayor Jonathan McCollar, and Council Members: Tangie Johnson, Paulette Chavers, John Riggs (via zoom), 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, IT Support Specialist Alan Schleder, other city staff, news media, and members of the public.

1. Call to order
2. Public Hearing to solicit input on the proposed 2025 millage rate or property taxes.

A motion was made to open the public hearing.

RESULT:	Approved (Unanimous)
MOVER:	Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr
SECONDER:	Councilmember Paulette Chavers
AYES:	Johnson, Chavers, Riggs, Barr
ABSENT:	Councilmembers: Ginny Hendley

City Manager Charles Penny presented the City of Statesboro Fiscal Year 2026 operating budget. The objectives for this year's budget is to retain and recruit exceptional employees with an emphasis on public safety. The budget highlights show a 6% total expense decrease due to less transfers and an 8% increase in general fund expenses. Mr. Penny highlighted the city compensation and benefits that includes the continuance of pay for performance, and no increases to employee health benefits. Current and future opportunities are to position Statesboro for growth in the region and to keep the pay plan up to date. Some of the concerns and unknowns are that nearly 25% of the total assessed property in Statesboro are tax exempt and we are still dealing with labor market challenges. Mr. Penny shared a graph comparing property tax millage rates with other communities around the state. The graph shows Statesboro somewhere in middle at 8.625. The current rates for Bulloch County are 11.350, the Board of Education at 10.400, and a proposed rate for the City of Statesboro of 8.625. While the city has experienced growth the tax base is small than that of the county which means it generates less revenue per mill than that of the county and board of education. Mr. Penny reviewed the General Fund and Fire Fund highlighting that the General Fund budget is 62.7% for salary and benefit costs. The police department budget is funded out of the General Fund and is \$12,665,715. In addition, the Fire Fund transfer from the General Fund is \$3,200,000. Property tax collection is about 12% of the total budget. The estimated increase on a homestead exempted home with a \$250,000 value would be approximately

\$66.25. We continue to have increased cost and if we roll the millage rate back, we will be reducing the revenue we have coming in, which would make it difficult to continue to provide the services our citizens have come to expect. Based on that staff recommends maintaining the current millage rate of 8.625.

No one spoke in favor of the request.

Phillip Morgan a resident of South Edgewood Drive spoke against the millage rate because of all the increases that are taking place with the Board of Education and the Bulloch County Commissioners. He stated his property taxes have doubled from last year to this year and because of that has caused his mortgage to increase.

Connie Moody a resident of Whitesville spoke against the millage rate stating it may cause people to lose their homes. Ms. Moody asked if taxes would go back down once the new revenue starts coming in.

Mayor Jonathan McCollar stated that since he has been in office the City of Statesboro has raised the millage rate twice. Each year the cost of the market is going up tremendously. During COVID there were supply chain issues and the cost of materials and labor have increased. The City of Statesboro works to maintain the current millage rate. Mayor McCollar stated that there will be an opportunity during the November election to vote for the Float Local Option Sales Tax (FLOST) which would allow the City to roll back the millage rate providing relief to property owners. The concerns that have been raised here tonight is what is happening across the board and the city is partnered with Action Pact to provide support for those individuals who are struggling to pay their utilities and rent and/or mortgage. We have to think long term in our role we are not looking at Statesboro today we are looking at Statesboro ten, twenty, thirty years down the line. We need to do the thing that is most responsible to ensure the stabilization of our community.

A motion was made to close the public hearing.

RESULT:	Approved (Unanimous)
MOVER:	Councilmember Paulette Chavers
SECONDER:	Councilmember Tangie Johnson
AYES:	Johnson, Chavers, Riggs, Barr
ABSENT:	Councilmembers: Ginny Hendley

Councilmember Paulette Chavers stated we are not increasing our millage rate we are maintaining our millage rate.

Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr shared that she agrees with Councilmember Chavers and that we are pleased that staff has guided us to hold the millage rate but we do understand taxes are going up because the property values have gone up. Higher property values are nice when you are trying to refinance to get more money out of it or when you are ready to sell but if you are trying to stay there you are having to pay more taxes in the same house. So we understand it is a net increase but we are holding the line.

3. Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn.

RESULT:	Approved (Unanimous)
MOVER:	Councilmember Paulette Chavers
SECONDER:	Councilmember Tangie Johnson
AYES:	Johnson, Chavers, Riggs, Barr
ABSENT:	Councilmembers: Ginny Hendley

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk