



CITY OF STATESBORO
WORK SESSION MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

4:00 PM

A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on September 21, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers, 50 East Main Street. Present was Mayor Jonathan McCollar; Council Members: Paulette Chavers, 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. Absent was Councilmembers Phil Boyum, Venus Mack and John Riggs.

Proposed use of ARPA Funds

City Manager Charles Penny presented a proposal for the use of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds the City of Statesboro is eligible to receive. So far the City received 6,153,110.50 in July and a second round of funding is to be received in 12 months for a total of \$12,306,221.00. Proposed uses for the first round of funding include Housing rehabilitation in the target area of Johnson Street neighborhood, housing rehabilitation in scattered sites throughout the city, water and sewer infrastructure, food insecurities, and loss revenue. The housing rehabilitation will be administered by the Department of Planning and Development. The city will contract with a consultant in order to implement the program. Work will occur in distressed census tracts, in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) neighborhoods, and in the City adopted redevelopment areas. The goal is to initiate this program no later than the end of the first quarter of 2022. The infrastructure portion of the funds will be administered by the Department of Public Utilities. The intent of the program is to extend water and sewer to neighborhoods not currently served such as Fox Lake, Oliffe Street, Oakcrest, Ramblewood and Merrywood. The funds used for food insecurities will be a joint project with Bulloch County to relocate the Food Bank and will be contingent upon the facility being located within city limits. Loss revenue funds will be used to cover any revenue loss due to the pandemic. The city will host public meetings presenting how we plan to use these funds and to receive input from citizens for further ideas on the use of these funds. After the public meetings, we will come back to you for full approval of the uses.

Proposal for Overhaul of Zoning Ordinances

Director of Planning and Development Kathy Field reviewed with Mayor and council the scope, age and intent of the zoning ordinance, which includes the sign ordinance as well as the subdivision ordinance. The purpose of the zoning ordinance is facilitate orderly and harmonious development and to regulate the density of population and intensity of land use. This ordinance is over 40 years old and in need for an update so new planning tools and concepts can be incorporated into it. The process for making updates to a zoning ordinance takes approximately two years, due to the number of stakeholders, the amount of policy decision/changes that will impact future development patterns within the city and the amount of legal review. The sign ordinance's intent is to maintain safe and efficient flow of traffic through the city, enhance the protection of property values, and control the proliferation and placement of signs. An update to this ordinance would include new technologies definitions, increase administrative approvals, protect the historic nature of the City Center/Historic Crossroads of downtown, and enhance the aesthetic visual environment of the city. Lastly the intent of the Subdivision ordinance is to encourage development, assure adequate provision of safe and convenient traffic access, promote connectivity, assure the provision of public open spaces, and assures

conformance with the City’s Comprehensive Plan. Updates to this ordinance will improve development standards, remove ambiguous references and provide specific language for each condition, and will enhance the residential development patterns within the city. A contract proposal will be brought forward for consideration to help with this ordinance update.

Utilities: Cost of Service Discussion

Director of Public Utilities Steve Hotchkiss presented the study history of water and sewer rates for the City of Statesboro. July of 2016 the base charge for water and sewer was increased but the last increase for consumption was done in 2013. When these adjustments were made, no formal analysis was performed to accurately determine the cost to provide these services. A formal review of our rates and fees will ensure our rates are competitive and ensure our rates are fair for the various customer classes that we serve. The city received a proposal from Raftelis a national utility and local government management and financial advisory firm. The study consists of an analysis budgets, financial reports, master plans, account data, current rates and trends. Raftelis develop and recommend appropriate user rates and rate class(es) and identify rate-setting methodology. They will also develop a financial plan for the fund that includes target reserve levels, infrastructure replacement debt service, and operations and maintenance. The cost to perform the study is \$36,050.00 and takes approximately three months to complete. Once the study is complete staff and Raftelis will present a final report and recommendation for implementation.

EDA Grant Application for Creek on the Blue Mile

Director of Planning and Development Kathy Field stated there is an opportunity for grant funds from the EDA through their Economic Adjustment Assistance Program. This grant helps communities devise and implement long-term economic recovery strategies who have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Nationally this program is allotted \$500 million dollars. The expected award is somewhere between \$500,000 and \$5,000,000. Although there is no deadline for submitting applications EDA recommends applications be submitted no later than March 31, 2022. The application will be for the “Creek on the Blue Mile” project and will be similar to the ARPA grant application. If funds are awarded they must be obligated by September 2022 and the period of performance ends September 2027.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk