



CITY OF STATESBORO
COUNCIL MINUTES
NOVEMBER 03, 2020

Regular Meeting

50 E. Main St. City Hall Council Chambers

9:00 AM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jonathan McCollar called the meeting to order

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Councilmember Shari Barr gave the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDENCE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jonathan McCollar	Mayor	Present	
Phil Boyum	Councilmember	Present	
Paulette Chavers	Councilmember	Present	
Venus Mack	Councilmember	Present	
John Riggs	Councilmember	Present	
Shari Barr	Councilmember	Present	

Other staff present was: City Manager Charles Penny, Assistant City Manager Jason Boyles, Public Information Officer Layne Phillips, City Attorney Cain Smith and City Clerk Leah Harden

Public Comments (Agenda Item): None

Consideration of a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

A) Approval of Minutes

a) 10-20-2020 Council Minutes

b) 10-20-2020 Executive Session Minutes

A motion was made to amend the 10-20-2020 Council Minutes to include the reason why Councilmember John Riggs voted “Nay” on ordinance 2020-07 and to approve the 10-20-2020 Executive Session Minutes.

RESULT:

Approved (Unanimous)

MOVER:

Councilmember John Riggs

SECONDER:

Councilmember Paulette Chavers

AYES:

Boyum, Chavers, Mack, Riggs, Barr

ABSENT

Mayor Jonathan McCollar stated “Public Comments” will be held at this time instead of at the end of the meeting.

Public Comments (General):

A) Jeff Webster to speak regarding the Non-Discrimination ordinance.

Jeff Webster addressed Mayor and Council with concerns of the recently adopted Non-Discrimination Ordinance, stating the passage of this ordinance is discriminatory.

Public Hearing and First Reading of Ordinance 2020-09: An ordinance amending Chapter 2 Article II Division 3 of the Statesboro Code of Ordinances regarding the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. Amendments would rename the commission to One Boro Commission, increase membership to 12, and grant scope of authority relating to workforce development and violence prevention, as well as referencing duties created pursuant to adopted Chapter 80.

A motion was made to open the public hearing.

RESULT:	Approved (Unanimous)
MOVER:	Councilmember John Riggs
SECONDER:	Councilmember Shari Barr
AYES:	Boyum, Chavers, Mack, Riggs, Barr
ABSENT	

City Attorney Cain Smith explained the ordinance stating it would rename the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion to the One Boro Commission, increase membership from 8 to 12, and grant scope of authority relating to workforce development and violence prevention as well as referencing duties created pursuant to adopted Chapter 80.

No one spoke for or against the request.

A motion was made to close the public hearing.

RESULT:	Approved (Unanimous)
MOVER:	Councilmember Shari Barr
SECONDER:	Councilmember Venus Mack
AYES:	Boyum, Chavers, Mack, Riggs, Barr
ABSENT	

Councilmember John Riggs stated in section 2-59 violence prevention, where it has a list of stakeholders it needs to include the Bulloch County Sheriff’s Office, GSU PD, DEA, FBI and Georgia State Patrol.

Councilmember Phil Boyum asked to add the Family Violence Task Force.

There was discussion regarding the appointment of commission members. The chair of the commission will submit nominations to the City Clerk in addition the city will advertise applications for nominations on our website. Appointments will be made at the first meeting in December.

A motion was made to approve the first reading of **Ordinance 2020-09** with the addition of the above mentioned stakeholders in section 2-59.

RESULT:	Approved (Unanimous)
MOVER:	Councilmember John Riggs
SECONDER:	Councilmember Shari Barr
AYES:	Boyum, Chavers, Mack, Riggs, Barr
ABSENT	

Presentation by Police Chief Mike Broadhead to discuss the rise of violent crime in the City of Statesboro.

Police Chief Mike Broadhead stated at the last meeting he presented the last ten years of crime data and was asked to come back to present part two to include 2020 statistics. The violent crime data includes homicide, robbery, aggravated assault and rape. In 2020 we have had seven homicides, two of these were domestic disputes, one a dispute at a bar, one an interpersonal fight, and one was from a drug transaction, the last one has no designation due to a court gag order. If you go back two years from April 2018 to June 2019, we did not have a homicide for fourteen months. The first six homicides arrests have been made and have been turned over to the DA’s office. Two of these happened in the daytime five of them happened at night.

Conversely now on our statistics for 2020 through September 30th robbery is down 40% overall compared to this same period last year. Robbery with a firearm has decreased by 50% over that same period. Aggravated assault with a weapon is down 22% and aggravated assault with a firearm is down 5.26% over the same period last year.

Chief Broadhead presented a scatter map that showed the areas in which aggravated assaults occur. These crimes are committed generally around town but you can see a cluster at the very bottom of the map where Park Place apartments is located and the specific neighborhood around Park Place. We have some considerable difficulties in policing that area because of the way its set up which has been discussed with council before.

Shots fired calls are up. These are not the actual number of shots it is the actual number of reports. In 2020 there have been 252 through the end of September, 2019 had 141 and 2018 had 180. These calls include car backfires and fireworks violations that people are afraid were gunfire.

Mayor Jonathan McCollar stated he would like the dates these calls were made, because this is the first year fireworks were done at home and would like to see if there was a spike in the July timeframe.

Overall, violent crime is down nearly 20% as compared to the same time last year. April and May this year, we had very few calls. Everyone was at home afraid of the virus.

Chief Broadhead stated the question was asked, “What can we as a police department do to lower the levels of violence and effectively combat crime?”

Answer: We can conduct effective investigations into violent criminals so we can get them prosecuted and off the street. Chief Broadhead stated he has never worked with a group of detectives as efficient and good as the detectives we have in this community. So far, our detectives have charged 118 people, different offenders, with felony crime.

The Impact Team became operational during the summer of 2018. It is just four people. They spend most of their time doing surveillance, follow-up on drug crimes and drug complaints to see if they can build cases. Since 2018 they have seized 73 illegal firearms, served 60 search warrants and seized quantities of methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine,

marijuana, fentanyl, steroids, and MDMA. The impact teams' main focus is to drive out violent crime and robberies from multifamily housing. Investigations into gangs in our area are ongoing. The difficulty of these investigations is that under the Georgia law you have to prove not only is that person a gang member but also is the crime they are committing connected to the furtherance of the gang's activities. We work with informants trying to make those linkages of individuals. Gangs today are more like organized crime, these individuals are underground and it has become less about race-based gangs and more about money.

Chief Broadhead continued, "So where do we go from here?" We need to do effective analysis of crime trends, we need to improve our intelligence (Intel) led efforts and we need technology improvements. There is video surveillance all over town, but getting the video from some of the locations is difficult. It is not because they do not want to share it with us it is because they don't know how to access their system. A technology called Fusus, a program that takes individual surveillance video converts into one readable format, then sends it to the "cloud" where we could access it would be huge for us. Apartment complexes, retail outlets and other companies with surveillance around town would need to be on board with Fusus to make this possible.

Chief Broadhead stated the next question asked is "Am I content with the level of crime?"

Answer: I have gotten up every day for the past 30 years to fight crime. I have also worked on crime prevention, working with people who don't need to be in jail diverted into treatment programs, to work with youth to try to get them out of a life of crime. So, this question "am I content" the answer is absolutely not. I am not content with any crime which is why I do what I do.

The last question "Am I giving our officers everything that they need to effectively combat crime?"

Answer: When I first came to Statesboro the biggest issue was retention and recruitment of officers. We currently have 74 patrol officers. Our focus is on training. The average officer receives over 180 hours of training a year. Our officers are provided with great equipment and tools necessary to do their job effectively. We support our officers by providing staff with effective supervision at the line level, good guidance, supporting good decisions, empowering them to effectively use their discretion and supporting their decisions. We work with the community and local agencies such as the DA's office, Teal House, Safe Haven, and Bulloch County Alcohol and Drug Council.

Councilmember John Riggs stated the three posed questions came from me I know they sounded hostile toward the Chief; it's not hostility towards you it is hostility towards crime. I hope you didn't take it that way you are doing a fantastic job and I want to give you every implement you can use to combat this.

Mayor McCollar stated the reputation of the PD has gone up tremendously and we know that is due to your leadership, your patience with our local officers and patience with us. The Mayor also stated on Sunday he received a message from a local citizen praising, Captain Jared Akins.

Open Discussion on the need to hire additional police officers

Councilmember John Riggs open the discussion by asking how many uniformed patrol officers do we have?

Captain Carl Ramey stated we have 53 patrol officers.

Councilmember Riggs: How many are in CID?

Chief Broadhead stated we have 8 detectives and impact team associated operation K-9 unit and there's three there.

Councilmember Riggs: What is a typical night like? When does the nightshift start?

Captain Carl Ramey explained our shifts are designed to have a team starts at 4 pm and another team comes in at 9 pm. They typically work 10-hour shifts. That way they get an overlap of officers during those peak hours to address any concerns in the community and to be able to respond not only for the safety of the community but for the safety of the officers as well.

Councilmember Riggs: Of the seven murders we have had five of them were between 10 pm and 2 am something like that?

Captain Ramey: Yes

Councilmember Riggs: Are those the hours we have good overlap?

Captain Ramey: Yes, plus when we have major event we get the detectives and the Impact team out during those hours.

Councilmember Riggs: How many patrol cars on a shift?

We have six zones that are manned in addition to a group that works in an overlay to assist those and plus the sergeant and one lieutenant that is typically out there. As it stands it is a difficult task to provide coverage, but we do the very best as we can.

City Manager Charles Penny stated we need to be careful of the information we discuss at this time in a public setting. We do not want to give good intelligence information to folks that have bad intentions. Too much information out there can jeopardize the safety of our public. The important piece is that we do have an overlap in coverage.

Councilmember Riggs: Certainly, I do not want to tip our hand. How many gangs would you say we have in town?

Chief Broadhead: there are two we would consider ganged up groups of people, one is the gangster disciples and one is the Piru Blood Gang. There is a third group that is kind of a hybrid gang but I don't think we know enough about them to really tell you about that. But generally speaking it's those two other gangs.

Riggs: How many gang members do you think there are, or known gang members?

If I had to just give you a round number, I would say 40 is a rough estimation. Maybe 15 active at any given time.

Councilmember Riggs asked what are your suggestions to help with mental illness?

Chief Broadhead stated we had a former officer who left and became a licensed professional counselor. She can sign a 10-13 order through her training and education that allows her to hold an individual involuntarily with mental health issues. We have talked to her about coming back as a police officer. With her expertise, she could be our coordinator for those things involving mental health.

City Manager Charles Penny stated as we worked on this year's budget two officer positions were withheld in the final budget due to the pandemic. As we look at next year's budget we will look at these things again.

Discussion of the Open Container Ordinance adopted on June 16, 2020 and its impact.

Councilmember Phil Boyum stated he has lived in the downtown area for over 13 years. Usually when something happens downtown I am the one they call and reach out to and that's part of the nature of being a public servant who lives not too far from City Hall. We have had some issues downtown whether it be gun violence, guns shooting off or just trash. The owners of the restaurants and some downtown apartments have reached out to me with concerns about late night happenings, specifically after 11 pm. I want to suggest that we dial back the open container ordinance allowance from 1:45 am to 11 pm. The dangers of alcohol is prevalent in our community particularly among our young people. As policy makers when a rule is not working properly it is incumbent upon us to change those rules to fit the circumstances that are staring us right in the face.

We are trying to improve our downtown and encourage investments, which we've seen, and we've got some more coming. But if this is going to continue investors are not going to put their hundreds of thousands of dollars into downtown they will invest that money somewhere else. Right now this problem is running people out of downtown. Every one of us knows you have got to have people living downtown to create the foot traffic to support these businesses. I am open to some discussion but I will make a motion that we move that time back to 11 pm.

Councilmember Paulette Chavers stated she concurs with Phil we do need to have a thriving downtown. There was some type of meeting that transpired on Monday and I would have liked to have been a part of that meeting to hear your concerns. If I am supposed to help you especially if your business is in my district I want to help but if I am not there not at the table then I can't hear your concerns. So I am putting this out to the community, if your business is in my district I would like to be at the table when you are having these discussions so that I can better serve you. That is what I am here to do is to serve you.

Mayor Jonathan McCollar stated this change can be discussed further at the next work session with a motion to be on the council agenda. In the meantime the mayor requested from Chief Broadhead that a police car be present in the downtown area during the times of 11 pm to 2 am while we are going through the process.

Councilmember Shari Barr stated someone from the downtown area was present at the meeting to speak with their concerns as well.

Mayor McCollar asked if anyone would like to speak.

John Adams came forward and stated there are consistent problems on Saturday nights after 11 pm. There are crowds out and trash on the streets. Mr. Adams stated he has concerns for the safety of their guests and staff. Employees walking to their cars having to run back in because of gun activity.

Other Business from City Council:

Councilmember John Riggs stated why he is so adamant about more police officers and stopping crime. I lived in the same house since I was five years old. In 1988 when I started at Georgia Southern, we had six thousand students. When I graduated years later there were sixteen thousand. I always felt safe walking around in Statesboro. Our apartment complexes I do not feel safe. I would not go out to Park Place after dark. I appraise out there I go out there at least every six months I get to see what goes on out there. There was one shooting there at the Vault where I believe there was fifty shots fired. I don't want to go to a party like that and I don't want to send my child to a party like that. We need to do something about this. Number one we need more police officers. If there are six shots fired downtown and six officers show up, who is left to look at my side of town. I am concerned about my district. We need more police officers.

City Managers Comments: None

Public Comments (General) moved to the beginning of the agenda.

Consideration of a Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss "Personnel Matters" "Real Estate" and/or "Potential Litigation" in accordance with O.C.G.A 50-14-3(b)

No Executive Session was held.

Councilmember Shari Barr stated there would be an action agenda will be posted the following day of the Council meeting.

Consideration of a Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn.

RESULT:	Approved (Unanimous)
MOVER:	Councilmember John Riggs
SECONDER:	Councilmember Venus Mack
AYES:	Boyum, Chavers, Mack, Riggs, Barr
ABSENT	

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 am.