



CITY OF STATESBORO
COUNCIL MINUTES
FEBRUARY 18, 2025

Regular Meeting

50 E. Main St. City Hall Council Chambers

5:30 PM

1. Call to Order

Mayor Jonathan McCollar called the meeting to order

2. Invocation and Pledge

Councilmember Tangie Johnson gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ATTENDANCE

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Jonathan McCollar	Mayor	Present	
Tangie Johnson	Councilmember	Present	
Paulette Chavers	Councilmember	Present	
Ginny Hendley	Councilmember	Absent	
John Riggs	Councilmember	Present	
Shari Barr	Mayor Pro Tem	Present	

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

Mayor Jonathan McCollar announced a presentation of an award by United Way to the city of Statesboro. Carey Cassidy, Executive Director of the United Way of Southeast Georgia recognized the City of Statesboro as the largest employee campaign in the entire community, 184 employees raised \$50,756.00. She presented an award to Co-Charis of the United Way Campaign Fire Chief Tim Grams and Police Chief Mike Broadhead.

3. Public Comments (Agenda Item):

Cole Davis signed up to speak on agenda item #8 regarding SUB 25-01-02 stating his family lives off Teresa Drive in Bel Air Estates and that his concern is not the development itself but with stormwater runoff and the possible flooding of the surrounding properties.

Helen Rosko signed up to speak on agenda item #8 regarding application SUB 25-01-02 Boro Land Consultants & Burbank Point to develop the 43 acre lot with 53 planned houses off Beasley road. She stated she echoes similar sentiments and concerns of her husband Cole as well as concerns with the enforcement of development regulations.

4. Consideration of a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda

A) Approval of Minutes

- a) **02-04-2025 Council Minutes**
- b) **02-04-2025 Executive Session Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda.

RESULT:	Approved (Unanimous)
MOVER:	Councilmember John Riggs
SECONDER:	Councilmember Shari Barr
AYES:	Johnson, Chavers, Riggs, Barr
ABSENT:	Councilmember Ginny Hendley

5. Consideration of a motion to revoke, suspend, or maintain the massage parlor license for Lisa’s Therapeutic Massage in accordance with City Ordinances 18-141 and 18-143 due to allegations of illegal acts being performed there.

Michael Classens representing the licensee spoke against the suspension of the massage parlor license.

A motion was made to suspend the license for an additional two weeks until the first meeting in March.

RESULT:	Failed: 2-3 (Mayor Jonathan McCollar broke the tie)
MOVER:	Councilmember John Riggs
SECONDER:	Councilmember Shari Barr
AYES:	Riggs, Barr
ABSENT:	Councilmember Ginny Hendley
NAYS:	Councilmember Tangie Johnson Paulette Chavers & Mayor Jonathan McCollar

A motion was made to suspend the license until the disposition of the underlying criminal matter is completed.

RESULT:	Approved: 3-2 (Mayor Jonathan McCollar broke the tie)
MOVER:	Councilmember Paulette Chavers
SECONDER:	Councilmember Tangie Johnson
AYES:	Johnson, Chavers, Mayor McCollar
ABSENT:	Councilmember Ginny Hendley
NAYS:	Councilmember John Riggs & Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr

6. Public hearing and consideration of a motion to approve: APPLICATION V 25-01-01: Richard Williams requests a variance from Section 2.2.9 of the Unified Development Code in order to continue operating a vehicle repair shop in the MX (Mixed Use) district at 1321 Northside Drive East (Tax Parcel# S39 000097 000).

A motion was made to open the public hearing.

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

Director of Planning and Development Kathy Field stated that staff recommends approval of this application with the condition that all construction must be reviewed and approved by the city. At a regularly scheduled meeting of the planning commission on February 4, 2025, the commission recommended approval of this request with staff conditions.

No one spoke for or against the request.

A motion was made to close the public hearing.

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

A motion was made to approve with staff conditions APPLICATION V 25-01-01: Richard Williams requests a variance from Section 2.2.9 of the Unified Development Code in order to continue operating a vehicle repair shop in the MX (Mixed Use) district at 1321 Northside Drive East (Tax Parcel# S39 000097 000).

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

7. Public hearing and consideration of a motion to approve: APPLICATION V 25-01-03: Whitfield Signs requests a variance from Table 2.5.3-C of the Unified Development Code in order to place a 520.5 square foot sign on a building located at 152 Northside Drive East (Tax Parcel # MS84 000003A001).

A motion was made to open the public hearing.

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

Director of Planning and Development stated staff recommends denial of this application, due to the excessive square footage of signage proposed. At the regular scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission on February 4, 2025 the commission recommended denial of the request.

Katie Brown with Whitfield signs spoke in favor of the request. She stated that on December 30, 2024 they submitted updated drawings to go along with the variance application that was slightly smaller than the original request. The modified square footage is approximately 25 percent larger than the aggregate square footage allowed under the UDC. Ms. Brown asking to have a larger sign because of where it is located.

No one spoke against the request.

A motion was made to close the public hearing.

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

A motion was made to defer this application for a month and have it go back before the planning commission.

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

8. Consideration of a motion to approve: APPLICATION SUB 25-01-02: Boro Land Consultants & Burbank Point requests a Preliminary Subdivision PLAT for an R-15 (Single-Family Residential) subdivision on approximately 43.31 acres of property on Beasley Road (Tax Parcel # MS91 000010 002).

A motion was made to approve APPLICATION SUB 25-01-02: Boro Land Consultants & Burbank Point requests a Preliminary Subdivision PLAT for an R-15 (Single-Family Residential) subdivision on approximately 43.31 acres of property on Beasley Road (Tax Parcel # MS91 000010 002).

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

9. Consideration of a motion to approve Resolution 2025-05: A Resolution to adopt the second amendment to the fiscal year 2025 budget for each fund of the City of Statesboro, Georgia, appropriating the amounts shown in each budget as expenditures/expenses, adopting the several items of revenue anticipations, and prohibiting expenditures or expenses form exceeding the actual funding appropriated.

A motion was made to approve Resolution 2025-05: A Resolution to adopt the second amendment to the fiscal year 2025 budget for each fund of the City of Statesboro, Georgia, appropriating the amounts shown in each budget as expenditures/expenses, adopting the several items of revenue anticipations, and prohibiting expenditures or expenses form exceeding the actual funding appropriated.

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

10. Consideration of a motion to approve an award of contract to Gilbert & Associates to provide grant writing and administration services for the FY2025 Community Development Block Grant.

A motion was made to approve an award of contract to Gilbert & Associates to provide grant writing and administration services for the FY2025 Community Development Block Grant.

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

11. Consideration of a motion to approve an award of \$47,136.00 to the Coastal Regional Commission for rural transit grant matching funds toward the purchase of four (4) additional transit buses. This purchase is paid from TSPLOST funds.

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

12. Consideration of a motion to approve an award of contract in the amount of \$48,390.00 to Hero Hauler LLC for solid waste collection management software. This project will be paid for by Solid Waste Collection operating revenue.

A motion was made to approve an award of contract in the amount of \$48,390.00 to Hero Hauler LLC for solid waste collection management software. This project will be paid for by Solid Waste Collection operating revenue.

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

13. Other Business from City Council

Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr stated in response to the allegation of an ethics violation the mayor appointed three members of council to an investigative committee. The committee met in small groups of two with the City Attorney. The members of the investigative committee were Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr, Councilmember John Riggs, and Councilmember Tangie Johnson. The findings of the committee are as follows:

Findings of Fact:

1. Paulette Chavers improperly voted on an item involving Agape Worship Center on January 28, 2025 in violation of Section 2-125 as her brother Donald receives over \$5,000 annually from Agape.
2. City Attorney Cain Smith advised Councilwoman Chavers in error that she could vote on the item. The City Attorney has since better familiarized himself with the ethics section.
3. Councilwoman Chavers withdrew her vote on the item via email on January 29, 2025.
4. The item still carried on a 3-0 affirmative vote with Chavers' vote withdrawn.
5. The vote was unintentional and inconsequential.

Recommendations:

1. That the complaint against Chavers be dismissed as moot as the offending vote was properly and timely withdrawn.
2. That the ethics section and recusal process be reviewed at the City Council retreat.
3. That the City Attorney review every agenda moving forward for possible conflict of interest issues and continue to advise Mayor and Council on conflicts.
4. Council members should continue to consult with City Attorney regarding potential conflicts in advance and during the course of the meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr stated that the committee had a second voting issue they looked into regarding Councilmember Ginny Hendley. The findings of the committee are as follows:

Findings of Fact:

6. It was discovered that Councilwoman Hendley failed to properly recuse herself from vote on issuance of alcohol licenses on January 28, 2025.
7. Hendley holds an alcohol license and had agreed not to vote on alcohol items when issued. Hendley did not actually vote, but her lack of recusal resulted in an affirmative vote.
8. The matter passed 4-0 with Hendley counted as a yes vote.
9. That the vote was unintentional and inconsequential.

Recommendations:

5. That the ethics section and recusal process be reviewed at the City Council retreat.
6. That the City Attorney review every agenda moving forward for possible conflict of interest issues and continue to advise Mayor and Council on conflicts.
7. Council members should continue to consult with City Attorney regarding potential conflicts in advance and during the course of the meeting.

A motion was made to accept the findings of the investigative committee.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Shari Barr announced that the City of Statesboro and the Tree Board invites everyone to come out and celebrate Arbor Day over at the Food Bank on Miller Street this Friday at 4:00 pm.

Mayor McCollar announced that next Tuesday February 25, 2025 at 7:00 pm he will be delivering the State of The City Address at the Averitt Center and invites everyone to come attend.

14. City Managers Comments

City Manager Charles Penny reviewed with the Mayor and Council items in their FYI packet, the DRI on the Old Register TAD, the Chamber of Commerce has taken to public support for the SPLOST referendum that is on the ballot March 18th. Mr. Penny stated those funds are important to the work we do each and every day. It helps us purchase capital and equipment. Another item in the FYI packet is a memo on the spring concert series which begins on April 10, 2025 at 7:00 pm with The Tams, April 17th is The Breakfast Club, May 22nd is The Royals, May 29th is Liquid Pleasure, June 12th is We Got the Beat, and June 26th is Kids Superfly Tribute Band.

Mr. Penny also shared that Director of Public Utilities Steve Hotchkiss announced his retirement from the City of Statesboro effective in June of this year. Steve has worked for the City for 35 years and one of the things he identified is what y'all did for the retirement if the changes had not been made he would have had to work one more year before he could retire.

City Manager Charles Penny read a memo he wrote to the Mayor and Council in reference to his recommendation on the Fire District as follows:

“Mayor McCollar and Council, the Chairman of the Bulloch County Commissioners would like a decision in reference to their proposal to serve the Fire District submitted to the City on January 30, 2025 by February 17, 2025 by the close of business. The Bulloch County Commissioners voted to cancel the Fire District Agreement effective July 1, 2025 at their December 3, 2024 Board meeting, and I was informed by the Interim County Manager on December 4, 2024. I acknowledged receipt of the letter on December 4 and advised her I would be recommending the City Council accept the decision of the Commissioners and they would be responsible for fire services in the district effective July 1, 2025. On December 5, 2024, I received a second email which the Interim Manager stated “I do not believe the intent of their vote was not to take responsibility of the fire service in the Fire District as of July 1, 2025, but to negotiate another agreement.” At the Fire District Committee Meeting on January 30, 2025, the Commissioners through the Bulloch County Fire Chief laid out the terms to split the Fire District without any discussion with the Statesboro Fire Chief. My recommendation is not to accept the plan presented by the Bulloch County Fire Chief.

The City recognizes the Fire District is the responsibility of Bulloch County and we consider it an honor and a privilege to have been able to serve the citizens and businesses of the Fire District for more than 47 years as noted in the 2022-2023 Bulloch County Budget. The additional millage rate of 2.70 is to pay for the increased fire service from the City. Citizens and businesses are paying for the availability of fire service from a Class 2 fire department and not on a per call basis. It is better to have it (the service) and not need it, than to need it and not have it. As of this year, the funding from the additional millage rate is \$2.3 million. In addition to the primary response in the 5 mile Fire District, the City also responds to all fire calls in Bulloch County outside of the Fire District as a part of the automatic aid agreement. Funding from the county equals 30 percent of the total Statesboro Fire Department budget. The Fire District is 96 square miles and the City of Statesboro is 16.1 square miles of the District. The Fire District is 83 percent of the area served by Statesboro Fire Department. Bulloch County is 689 square miles.

We are supportive of Bulloch County having an excellent Fire Department and wish them nothing but the best as they continue to grow and develop.

As we have grown and served the Fire District, we have not taken any action without consultation with Bulloch County. When the 5 year agreement was reached, it was through meetings and discussions. As we have received increased funding and added employees, Bulloch County has been informed. There is no question the City built our budget based upon receiving funding from Bulloch County for serving the 5 mile district. Statesboro has commitments to our personnel which we must and will fulfill. If we had been offered the opportunity to discuss our concerns with the Interim County Manager and the Bulloch County Fire Chief, we would have shared those details with them.

The Chairman of the Bulloch County Commission has now asked for a counter offer. I do not recommend acceptance of the proposal to split the fire district. The City is willing to serve the district for one final year under the current terms of the agreement, and since the County will be assuming responsibility of the Fire District going forward, I would recommend allowing the County to build stations within the 5 mile district. If the County accepts this offer, I would recommend the City consider automatic aid for at least one year to assist with the transition. If the County would like to continue with automatic aid beyond July 1, 2027 terms would need to be negotiated with the City.

I advised the Interim County Manager on Friday, January 31, 2025 the City Council would discuss this matter at our City Council retreat on March 14-15, 2025. If the County cannot wait until we have had sufficient time to evaluate the full impact of these actions, then I recommend you accept the decision of Bulloch County at the December 3, 2024 meeting to terminate Fire District Agreement effective July 1, 2025, at which time the Statesboro Fire Department will be responsible for fire protection in the City limits only, and Bulloch County will have the responsibility for the remainder of the county. The City would respond in the Fire District on a mutual aid basis only upon the termination of the Fire District Agreement.”

A motion was made directing City Manager Charles Penny to make a counter offer to the County that the City will serve the Fire District under the current contractual conditions for one additional year.

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

15. Public Comments (General):

Ainsle Smith along with fellow cadets in the Eagle Battalion, Georgia Southern University’s Army ROTC program shared with Mayor and Council about the 2025 Freedom Runs fundraisers they will be hosting on April 19, 2025. Proceeds from the fundraiser will go to fund the MSG Christopher Decker Memorial ROTC Scholarship. Marcus Toole with Habitat for Humanity shared information he learned from his recent trip to Habitat on the Hill in Washington D.C.

16. Consideration of a Motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss “Personnel Matters” in accordance with O.C.G.A 50-14-3(b).

At 7:22 pm a motion was made to enter into executive session.

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

At 7:33 pm a motion was made to exit executive session.

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

17. Consideration of a Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk