



CITY OF STATESBORO
WORK SESSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 18, 2025

Mayor & Council Work Session

50 East Main Street

4:00 PM

A Work Session of the Statesboro City Council was held on February 18, 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. 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. Absent was Councilmember Ginny Hendley.

1. Robotics Center Update – Ogeechee Technical College

Ogeechee Technical College's President Lori Durden spoke to Mayor and Council about the college and the work that they do in the community and also give an update on the Robotics center. Ogeechee Tech is part of the Technical College System of Georgia, our service delivery area is Bulloch, Evans and Screven County, but have students from all over the State of Georgia. Technical Education hit a record high enrollment for AY24, since 2008. Last year we served a little over 3,000 students, that's the highest student count since 2011. Our highest enrollment is Industrial Technologies at 1511, which include welding, electrical, HVAC, construction, of those 1500 students is about 700 students are enrolled in our program for an Associates of General Education, after students finish their associates degree they transfer over to Georgia Southern University. This is designed so students do not have to repeat courses and automatically accepted by any college or university. Last year we had 774 graduates and a little over 1300 awards. There are more awards than graduates is because sometimes students leave with a TTC and an associate's degree. We have a 99% placement rate, and a 97% job placement rate in field. We track the students as they leave to go out into the work field to make sure the skills we give them are useful. The majority of our students are female, we have students from 110 counties in Georgia, and a lot of students come from the Atlanta area or even outside of Georgia to enroll in our funeral service program. We have the only public funeral service/ funeral director program in the state of Georgia. The average students' age is 25, back before dual enrollment it was higher. Last year there was a little over 600 dual enrollment students. Ogeechee Tech remains at the top of the chart for Service Area Market Engagement since 2020 census. We have a robust economic development program, this is going to be your noncredit training, adult education which is our GED program, continuing education, and contract training. Last year we awarded over 2000 SACA credentials. SACA issues nationally recognized credentials. In areas like electrical, motor control, and welding. If a student walks away with a SACA credential that is recognized across the US.

The Georgia Industrial Systems & Robotics Training Center is going to be built on 301 South. After a lot of deductive cleaning, deductive alternates to get us in budget. We hope to start moving dirt no later than late March early April. This will triple our training space for our industrial systems program. This is about robots that are used in a manufacturing setting, anything that takes the place of a dirty or dangerous job and makes manufacturing more efficient are the type of robotics we are talking about. Lori Durden showed pictures of the outside as well as the floorplan of the building. If construction starts as planned we hope to take possession and start offering training in this building by the fall of 2026. Georgia Southern did an economic impact of this facility in its first year and we should have about a 14 million dollar impact once this facility is

up and running. March is our IGOT it's our give to Ogeechee Tech fundraising event and invite Mayor and Council to come and join us down at the Market on April 3rd from 6:30 to 8:30. It's about celebrating the partnership we have between us and the Statesboro community.

2. BEACON Presentation

Georgia Southern University's President Dr. Kyle Marrero introduced Sean Fox, with Pioneer has been helping to establish a website we are going to launch and show you today. Candice Bodkin is here from the Institute for Vibrant Communities, her and Jayce Sudweeks have been instrumental in developing the dashboard we will also introduce to you today and Annalee Ashley who is the VP for External Affairs Communications.

We began in fall of 2022 we had a 2 day workshop there was 18 members of our community gathered to address the fundamental questions how to do aid in our communities growth, ensuring that it will benefit everyone. This lead to the creation of BEACON designed as a trusted source of community information. Four task force were developed, workforce and education, community vibrancy, and communications. In the fall we had three different listening sessions in Portal, Brooklet, and Statesboro, getting community feedback about what was important. The seven entities that come together every month and give each other updates include City of Statesboro, Bulloch County Schools, Ogeechee Technical College, Bulloch County Government, Development Authority of Bulloch County, Georgia Southern University and Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber of Commerce. For us our purpose was to be a community information hub to be able to come together solve problems with verified data, clear information, and community empowerment. Our priority areas are Education & Literacy, Economic Opportunity, Health & Well-Being, Public Safety, Community Vibrancy, and Civic Health Index. Dr. Marrero showed Mayor and Council a mockup of the dashboard on the website. The power of information is going to be accessible for every citizen, the platform is designed to be user friendly, and we want to hear back from you as we launch this in the next month. Allowing anyone to easily find information concerning community initiatives, services and progress. As we grow we can know what to focus on and our goal is you as representatives of the city and our county representatives who have SPLOST funds and can say our dollars go to this, measure and show progress to grow a community that we desire.

3. Development Authority of Bulloch County

Benjy Thompson the executive director of the Development Authority of Bulloch County spoke to Mayor and Council on the strategic planning that the Development Authority has done. Our job is to provide economic opportunity for the citizens of this community. Traditionally we have done that through large business recruitment and manufacturing warehouses. We are starting to pivot a little bit since we have been pretty successful in the last 2-4 years with large business recruitment. The Hyundai Metaplant is a 3,000 acre site in the middle of 4 counties. We kicked off the site in 2014 and landed Hyundai in May 2022. The commitment from Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America (HMGMA) to Georgia and that site are to create 8,500 jobs and to invest at least \$7.59 billion dollars. Both of those are the largest economic development projects in the history of the State of Georgia, this was done in partnership with Bryan, Effingham and Chatham County. They started making cars in October. HMGMA and Suppliers that came along with Hyyndai have committed to create over 15,000 jobs and invest over \$10 billion in capital investment. Benjie showed Mayor and Council photos of the different supplier sites. Aspen Aerogels made the decision last week that they are not going to continue with their construction project in Bulloch County. The 250 jobs - \$325 million investment is probably not going to happen in Bulloch County. As an economic entity we protect the value that our community has given, we will get that investment back and the incentives that went into the project. We will have a great site at the interstate that we will market to somebody else. Over the course of the last 2 ½ - 3 years we have announced over 1,300 jobs and over \$770 million in investments. I wanted to mention to mayor and council are the water withdrawals to support the Hyundai Metaplant. Since the start of the year there was an appeal to the groundwater permits that Bulloch and Bryan Counties were going to use to provide water to the Hyundai

Metaplant. It was filled by the Ogeechee Riverkeeper, they asked Georgia EPD to look again at those permit applications. That appeal was settled in early January, there was a modification made in the permit application to require treated surface water be provided to the Hyundai Metaplant no more than 15 years after the start of that permit, also requiring fluoride testing annually. The Ogeechee Riverkeeper dropped their appeal after those changes were made. The permits are in place and the groundwater withdrawals can move forward.

The other development that has happened this year along with the requirement that surface water be made available to the metaplant, submitted in the amended state budget for FY 2025 a \$502 million project from the governor's budget to create a surface water solution that would primarily benefit the Hyundai Metaplant and also growth around the Metaplant. There will be a withdrawal from the Savannah River in Effingham County, that river water will be treated, there is a surface water treatment plant to be built in Effingham County, and the water will be moved from the treatment plant to the Hyundai Metaplant. The hope is that the amended budget will be passed by the legislator this week. This will take care of all the concerns that citizens have about the use of groundwater, the proposed timeline for that is by 2030.

The development authority, asked for some help from a consultant to develop a five year plan beyond what we have done over the last 3 years. We need to evolve in our mission we have been recruiting large business manufacturing and we will continue to do so. Our community and development authority now needs to turn focus towards things that benefit quality of life, and increase other parts of our economy that would like support. Things like professional services, retail and other amenities and want to target things that we want to come here. We will spend a lot of time on entrepreneurship, I would really like to see Statesboro and Bulloch County become even more of a college town, the development authority of Bulloch County focuses on things like entrepreneurship and some professional things. The ability to keep those graduates here as much as we can. The development authority is going to pivot more towards that over the next five years.

4. Public Safety Reports

Police: Police Chief Mike Broadhead shared with Mayor and Council an updated safety report starting off with the 2024 statistics for violent crimes. Homicides, Rape, Robbery and AG assault/battery, in 2022 we had an abnormal deep, and the last two years have returned to a more traditional number. Statistics allow you to take the emotion out of crime, in the rise of social media there are a lot commentary and emotion involved in crimes that we may have never had before. Property crime, thefts is on a 10 year decline and burglaries continues to decline as well.

The state requirement for training for sworn officers are 20 hours, our average officer as 173.4 hours. Our average for our nonsworn person is 24.4 hours annually.

Roadway Assist is a program that started about 18 months ago, this has been staffed 100% with college interns, and they carry gas to those that have ran out, they change tires, we also use them to respond to all of our private property crashes, because that is a civil problem, but they go out to make sure everyone is being peaceful. There are times when we send an officer out for a hit & run or dui. Most of the private property, fender bender accidents, we're handling with college interns, that's freeing officers up. They took a total of 2,206 calls, 536 private property crashes, 1,381 public property crashes and 289 motorist assists.

There was a total of 1,684 arrest made in 2024, less than 1% arrests involved use of force. There were 14 use of force incidents in 2024, 10,713 total arrests since 2018 and 120 (less than 1%) used force.

Patrol statistics include 45,508 individual calls for service, 4,328 citations given, 1,441 arrests made and 1,553 accident CRN's. The top five citations of 2024 are speeding, following too closely, failure to yield, obedience to traffic control devices and starting parked vehicle.

In 2024 there were 1,428 total crashes, top crash locations; Veterans Memorial Parkway at Fair Road, Veterans Memorial Parkway at Lanier Dr., Veterans Memorial Parkway at Northside Dr East, Veterans Memorial Parkway at South Main Street and Veterans Memorial Parkway at Brannen Street. Precision policing there are 71 Fusus sites, 54 flock tag readers, 100 flock gunshot detection sensors. Of the felony cases that we tracked 47 felony arrest were made due to the use of the flock technology. Records report there were 4.329 total records

sent out including, state videos, outgoing reports, superior videos, and state files. Last year we took on dispatching for the fire service we had 46,995 dispatched calls that includes 45,508 for police and 1,487 for fire.

Fire: Chief Tim Grams presented to Mayor and Council the 2024 annual report for the Statesboro Fire Department. Accomplishments include the completion of station 2 renovations, beginning the process to construct additional training facilities, we have acquired property for a third station, purchased two new aerial apparatus, introduced a peer counseling program to the department's health and wellness program, and received a total of \$3,271,152.30 in grant funding for 2024. Total calls for service are 1545 with 1091 being in the city, 398 being in the fire district and 56 being calls of service outside of primary response area. Average response time (dispatch to arrival) is 6 minutes & 8 seconds, average time on scene is 20 minutes & 11 seconds. Calls for service is about 45% false alarm calls, and I don't anticipate this number going down with the increasing number of housing. Chief Grams showed Mayor and Council a heat map for the calls of service area as well as a breakdown for calls for service by district, with the largest being district 2 with 28%. Statesboro fire related property loss (based on pre-incident assessed value) is 4.3% which is excellent. Mayor and Council were shown a graph with pre vs post incident values for 2024.

Training within the department, we had nearly 20,000 training hours in 2024. A chart showing the training hour breakdown also what was required by the ISO and what was completed by the firefighters was shown. The prevention division in 2024 over 1100 annual inspections were completed. We have had direct interactions with 3,913 groups, installed 56 smoke alarms in both the city and 5 mile district, over 1300 school visits, 2400 community events and conducted 63 station tours in 2024.

With community outreach we participated in numerous community events, continued partnership with the Therapy Spot assembling AMBUCS Mobility Bikes for special needs children, and worked with GSU on "Up In Flames" event on campus educating students the importance of fire safety.

Moving forward we hope to get the new aerial apparatus mid to late March, hoping to get a timeline for construction of station 3, working with consultants to study the feasibility of implementing a fire service fee, and continue to evaluate departmental services, processes, procedures and programs to ensure excellent service delivery is maintained.

5. Quarterly Financial Report

Director of Finance Cindy West presented the second quarter financial report of Fiscal Year 2025, reviewing revenues and expenditures in the General Fund, Fire Service Fund, Water/Sewer Fund, Stormwater Fund, Natural Gas Fund, Solid Waste Collection Fund and the Solid Waste Disposal Fund Revenues in the General fund is showing an increase over the prior year. Our expenditures are up due to the implantation of the pay plan. The fire service fund is up \$700,000 more this year compared to last year. Water and Sewer fund are up slightly from last year. Natural gas fund is up and solid waste collection fund is relatively flat. Ms. West also reviewed the SPLOST and TSPLOST collections stating both of these funds up from where we were this time last year. The Hotel/Motel tax revenue is trending higher than in FY 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:21 pm.

Jonathan McCollar, Mayor

Leah Harden, City Clerk