

CITY OF STATHAM

MINUTES

Statham City Hall

327 Jefferson Street, Statham, GA 30666



PUBLIC HEARING & WORK SESSION – September 8, 2022

6:30 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER -Mayor Piper called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Mayor Piper, and Councilmembers Krause, Patterson, Penn, Thrasher, and Venable.

Also present: City Attorney Jody Campbell, City Clerk Ashya Fambrough, and Police Department Personnel.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Mayor Piper led the Pledge of Allegiance and thanked all the veterans and their families for their service.

REPORTS

1. Finance Department
2. Police Department
3. Public Works Department

Mayor Piper provided a brief overview of the Finance and Public Works department reports. Captain Nichols reviewed the Police Department report. Councilmember Krause stated that the finance reports don't give the information that she is seeking and would like a Profit and Loss statement, bank statements for all accounts. Councilmember Venable requested that a Councilmember be added as a signer for checks and have full access to all bank accounts. Mayor Piper explained the city doesn't have a Profit and Loss statement as it is a government entity and will follow up with City Accountant April Stephens on the other requested items.

Councilmember Venable and Krause requested road repairs and grass cutting on Mulberry Street around Hayes Lakes, and along Atlanta Hwy, specifically near the warehouses.

PUBLIC HEARING

Councilmember Venable made a motion to open the public hearing. Councilmember Krause seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

1. **Tax Year 2022 Millage Rate:** The City of Statham has tentatively adopted a millage rate which will require an increase in property taxes for the 2022 tax year. The City of Statham anticipates the property tax levies will be set at 4.003 mills, which is a *19.92% increase from the proposed rollback rate of 3.338. A Tax Report from the City's Finance Department is available on the City's website or may be obtained by contacting Statham City Hall. *Based on the County's updated and approved tax digest received from the County Tax Commissioner

on August 18, 2022, the city's form PT 32.1 has changed, and the rollback rate is now 3.337 and tax increase 19.96%.

Mayor Piper read the item and opened the floor for discussion. It was reiterated the City's rate is still 4.003 mills. Councilmember Patterson agreed and added that it's based on home values.

At 6:51 p.m., Councilmember Patterson made a motion to close the public hearing. Councilmember Thrasher seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 1. Alcohol License Application:** *Tabled from the August 16, 2022 Regular Meeting.* Amaljose Enterprises, LLC, owner and applicant, Amal Jose, has applied for a City of Statham alcoholic beverage license for beer and wine retail package located at 2059 Atlanta Highway SE, Statham, GA 30666, Map and Parcel Number ST06A 099, also known as Statham Food Mart. This location has a current business and alcoholic beverage license for beer and wine, however, a change of ownership has prompted a new alcoholic beverage license application per the City's Alcohol Ordinance.
 - Mayor Piper read the discussion item and opened the floor to discussion. No comments.
- 2. O-22-04 Wine Tasting Events Ordinance:** *Tabled from the August 16, 2022 Regular Meeting. Third reading.* To amend the Code of the City of Statham, Chapter 4, "Alcohol," Article VI "Retail Package Sales," to add Section 4-163.
 - Mayor Piper read the discussion item and opened the floor to discussion. Councilmember Venable would like to have a discussion with a business interested in hosting wine tasting in the City.
- 3. Barrow County Water Purchase Contract Proposal:** To approve an updated wholesale water purchase agreement with Barrow County. This update includes clarifying information, and the costs associated with the agreement have not changed.
 - Mayor Piper read the discussion item and opened the floor to discussion. City Attorney Campbell explained that due to the typos he recommends that the council sign a new agreement. The rates and figures did not change.
- 4. Audit Engagement Letter FY22:** To approve an engagement letter for auditing services with Bates Carter for the FY22 financial audit. The cost for the audit is \$18,000.
 - Mayor Piper read the discussion item and opened the floor to discussion. Councilmember Patterson wanted clarification on the status of past due audits, and if the City would now be grant eligible. Mayor Piper stated City Accountant Stephens submitted a grant on September 08, 2022. Councilmember Venable requested the auditors be available at the either the October or November work session.

5. **O-22-05 Ordinance Amending the FY21 Budget:** *First reading.* To approve an FY21 Budget Amendment Ordinance; to maintain a balanced budget by department per Georgia law, the city is required to amend the following department budgets and their respectful line items to maintain a balanced department.

- Mayor Piper read the discussion item and opened the floor to discussion. Councilmember Venable requested reports per department on where they stand budget to date and an update on approved projects such as the roof replacement and parks.

6. **Well Development, Additional Site(s) Exploration:** Tabled from the May 17, 2022 Regular Meeting. To approve the Statham Water Department to continue the well development project adhering to the goals of Mayor and Council of water independence. Due to Well No. 3 not being the most viable at this time and capping site No. 3 at Hillman-Rainwater, City staff requests \$60,000 with a 15% contingency for well exploration of a potential three sites to include surveying and drilling per detailed in the attached letter dated April 5, 2022 from the water department's operator Jordan McDaniel. This approval also includes the Mayor's signature on agreement(s) with Ground-Water Services, Inc., the firm assisting the City with well exploration and development, in order to keep the project moving while personnel, contractors and equipment are on-site.

- Mayor Piper read the discussion item and opened the floor to discussion. Councilmember Penn requested information on if the owners of possible well locations were open to discussion. City Attorney Campbell stated he created a very rough estimate of cost of land acquisition for Councilmember Venable. Councilmember Venable will forward that email to the rest of council. Council requested an estimated timeline.

7. **Fiscal Year 2021 Audit Acceptance**

- Mayor Piper read the discussion item and opened the floor to discussion. No comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to the attorney-client privilege and as provided by Georgia Code section 50-14-2(1), a meeting otherwise required to be open was closed to the public in order to consult and meet with legal counsel pertaining to pending or potential litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions brought or to be brought by or against the agency or any officer or employee or in which the agency or any officer or employee may be directly involved and the matter discussed was **pending or potential litigation.**

Councilmember Krause made a motion to enter Executive Session. Councilmember Patterson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Executive session began at 7:19 p.m. and ended at 7:36 p.m. with Councilmember Penn making a motion exit Executive Session. Councilmember Venable seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

City Attorney Campbell stated that all discussions held in Executive Session are protected as Attorney/Client Privilege and that no votes were conducted during the session.

CITIZEN INPUT

- Kurt Bogenrider made a formal request for Mayor Piper to resign his position.
- Gayle Steed spoke on the financial report and having limbs trimmed on Price Street and upkeep of right of ways and ditches.
- Cheryl Venable spoke on the length of time between limb pick up requests and completion, maintenance of alleyways, increased homelessness in the city, and police presence for Halloween. Mayor Piper stated that the events application requested by the police department is a formality and that no charges would be attached to completing it.

MINUTE APPROVAL

1. August 16, 2022 Regular Meeting (submitted to Council on August 18, 2022).

Councilmember Patterson made a motion to approve the August 18, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes. Councilmember Venable seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-1 with Councilmember Trasher voting no.

ADJOURN

At 7:50 p.m., Mayor Piper asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Venable made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Krause seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.