

CITY OF STATHAM

MINUTES

Statham City Hall

327 Jefferson Street, Statham, GA 30666



WORK SESSION – October 6, 2022

6:30 P.M.

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

Roll Call: Mayor Piper and Councilmembers Penn, Krause, Venable and Patterson were present. Councilmember Thrasher arrived at 6:34 p.m.

Also present: City Accountant April Stephens, Chief Underwood and Captain Nichols. Amanda Wilkinson, Auditor with Bates Carter, was also present for the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Piper led the Pledge, and thanked all veterans and their families.

REPORTS

1. **Finance Department:** The City Accountant provided the finance report for September 2022.

Auditor Amanda Wilkinson was available for questions about the FY21 Audited Financial Statements or FY21 Budget Adjustments. Council inquired on the final process of the FY21 audit after it had been accepted by the council and inquired on when the FY22 audit will begin, and asked about the “Omitted Statement,” in which the auditor explained. Ms. Wilkinson provided highlights to the Mayor and Council, and City Accountant April Stephens reiterated and commented that the auditing team and City staff have completed five years’ audits in just the last two years, which is an exceptional accomplishment. Mayor Piper stated when he took office January 2020, the City was, at that time, five years behind in audits, and as soon as the Council accepts the FY21 audited financial statements, that we will officially be caught up. The FY22 audit is due to the DCA December 31, 2022, and although it’s probably not feasible to have it finished by that date, it won’t be long after the new year before it is completed, and the City can begin to apply for state grants again.

2. **Police Department:** The police department submitted their September 2022 report.
3. **Public Works Department:** Mayor Piper briefed the Council on public works activities.

Councilmember Venable inquired about potholes on Atlanta Highway and asked they be filled. He also inquired about the community center projects and the sound system to be purchased. Mayor Piper stated we are awaiting on additional quotes for the community centers repairs and maintenance, and that the public works department had repaired several potholes throughout the City, and more cold patch needs to be purchased.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Building Permit Fee Schedule: To adopt an updated building permit fee schedule.

Councilmember Krause asked to see the current building permit fee schedule, and April Stephens stated it is on the website and may be viewed there. Councilmember Venable also wanted to compare the current fee schedule to the proposed fee schedule. Councilmember Patterson inquired about the fence permit and asked for a description of what types of fences it included, and City Accountant April Stephens responded. April Stephens also stated that Bureau Veritas prepared the proposed fee schedule in its entirety, and Mayor Piper stated the proposed fee schedule would be more in-line with other municipalities.

2. Baba Sai, Inc. Alcohol License Extension: To approve Baba Sai, Inc., Niko Patel, applicant and owner, a two (2) month extension ending December 31, 2022, for the selling date of licensed products for the purpose of building construction. Per the December 21, 2021 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, a condition for approval of the alcohol license application stated in the event building construction was delayed, the applicant must return to Council and ask for an extension of the selling license. Prior to year ending 2022, Baba Sai, Inc. will apply for their alcohol license renewal for the year 2023 and requests a two (2) month extension for the selling date of licensed products for the purpose of building construction completion ending April 30, 2023.

Applicant Niko Patel was present for the meeting. Councilmember Venable asked Mr. Patel to provide an update on his project and overview of his request, in which he provided. April Stephens explained in detail the reason for the request and stated the City's Alcohol Ordinance indicates a length of time to sell licensed products, and due to Mr. Patel's building process and setbacks, an extension request to obtain his alcohol license is required. Councilman Venable asked Mr. Patel about the wine tasting events, and he stated that wine tasting events gives the ability to a customer to know the product before purchasing it, provides them knowledge of different wines, and the details of how it is made. Mr. Patel also stated he would like to have these tasting events once per week, and in the near future after opening, would like to host education classes, parties and other types of events as well. Councilman Patterson asked about the tasting limits, and Mr. Patel stated there is no limit set by the state, but by the city instead. Councilman Patterson also asked about monitoring these tasting events, and Mr. Patel stated he has designated staff for these events.

3. Update Facility Rental Rates: To approve a new rate schedule for rentals of City facilities, and tier rates based on location of residency. The updated rate schedule includes a 50% off discount for nonprofit, government, or veteran organizations. Based on research of rental applications, 86.11% of all facility rental agreements live outside of the city limits of Statham. For comparison purposes, between the years 2011-2013, the rental fee for 8 hours, all facilities, (Community Center, Hillman-Rainwater, Robert Bridges Park) was \$200.00 for inside city residents and \$425.00 for outside city residents. Between the years 2014-2016, the rental fee for 8 hours, all facilities, was \$200.00. Between 2017-2022, the rental fee for 8 hours was \$200.00 for the Community Center, and \$100.00 for Hillman-Rainwater and Robert Bridges Park. The proposed rates are as follows: \$250.00 for inside city residents for the Community Center, and \$400.00 for outside city residents; for Hillman-Rainwater and Robert Bridges Park, the fee for inside city residents is \$150.00, and \$250.00 for outside city residents.

Councilmember Krause asked for the wording to be changed about the allowance of alcoholic beverages. Councilmember Venable stated he would prefer that non-city residents carry the burden of the increased rental cost and not Statham Citizens. City Accountant April Stephens stated she would reflect that in an updated application. Councilmember Patterson inquired on how the deposits were handled, and April Stephens informed Council of the procedure. Councilmember Krause asked about hiring someone to monitor events, and April Stephens stated that would require an additional increase in fees to offset that expense but could be looked into.

- 4. O-22-05 Approval of an Amended FY21 Budget Ordinance:** *First reading.* To approve an amended FY21 Budget Ordinance. Per the City's auditor Bates Carter, an additional budget adjustment has been proposed to cover the effect of the adjustment to General Fund expenditures from the SPLOST adjustment.

No comment.

- 5. Acceptance of an Amended the FY21 Audit:** To accept amended FY21 audited financials due to adjustments in SPLOST activity.

No comment.

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.**

No Executive Session.

CITIZEN INPUT

Dwight McCormic – Inquired about the tree removal at Casto's, and the Mayor informed him that the cost of the removal is included in the project scope and did not come out of the Tree & Beautification Committee's budget.

Cheryl Venable – Made comments about alleys and the culvert near her home. She commented about City transparency and provided ways on how the City could improve monitoring community centers.

Kurt Bogenrieder – Requested the Mayor to step down.

MINUTE APPROVAL

1. September 20, 2022 Regular Meeting (submitted to Council on September 22, 2022).

Councilmember Krause made a motion to approve the September 20, 2022 minutes. Councilman Patterson seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Venable asked about scheduling a Called Meeting prior to the Regular Meeting on October 18, 2022 to accept the FY21 Audited Financial Statements and FY21 Budget Adjustments. Council agreed to hold a Called Meeting on Tuesday, October 11, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

City Accountant, April Stephens, read a letter that was written from Statham resident Becky Harrison praising the Police Chief and his officers as well as Mayor Piper for their dedication to Statham's citizens and putting together such a great team.

ADJOURN

At 8:07 p.m., Councilmember Krause made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Penn seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.