

**SPECIAL CALLED COUNCIL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2006**

A special called joint meeting of the Statesboro City Council, the Bulloch County Board of Commissioners and the Bulloch County Board of Education was held on Monday, September 11, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. at Thompson's Pond House, 16710 N. Old River Road, Statesboro, Georgia. Present were Mayor Bill Hatcher, Council members Joe Brannen and Tommy Blich, Chairman Garrett Nevil, Commissioners Walter Gibson, Bill Smith, Jan Tankersley, Roy Thompson, and Anthony Simmons, Board of Education members Kenny Stone, David Ball, Edwin Hill, and Susan Riley. Also present were City Manager George Wood, City Clerk Judy McCorkle, County Manager Tom Couch, County Clerk Evelyn Wilson, Board of Education Superintendent Jessie Strickland and Board employees Charles Wilson, Diane Bath, Mary Henley, and Sheryl Jones and Statesboro/ Bulloch County Chamber of Commerce Director Peggy Chapman.

**OPENING REMARKS**

County Manager Tom Couch opened the meeting stating the purpose was to give everyone the opportunity to share information and ideas and to promote and improve our quality of life. He expressed appreciation to Commissioner Roy Thompson for the use of his pond house for the meeting and asked him to give a brief history of the facility. Commissioner Thompson said the property consisted of 350 acres that was purchased in 1985. He described the buildings on the property and stated he makes the property available to host events at no charge.

**UPDATE FROM BULLOCH COUNTY**

County Manager Tom Couch gave an update on Bulloch County stating they are facing financial challenges due to revenue erosion, cutbacks in funding and continued pressure from unfunded mandates. He stated that the SPLASH Park had been successful and work would begin on the Ag arena in a couple of months. He said SPLOST is important and would fund capital items to help core services.

**UPDATE FROM BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Superintendent Jessie Strickland showed aerial photographs taken by Ellis Wood of the new Southeast Bulloch High School. She stated the Bulloch County Schools were experiencing unprecedented academic achievement and growth and the largest accreditation (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools for System Accreditation) ever is upcoming.

Chief Financial Officer Charles Wilson gave a facilities update. He stated the Statesboro High School project will be bid next month. Southeast Bulloch will move into their new facility within another month and Statesboro High School should be completed in 18 – 24 months. Nevils Elementary is scheduled to be completed in a year. The need at this time is to address mobile units and existing elementary schools.

Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Diane Bath stated on September 12, 2006 the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on

Accreditation begins a three day accreditation process. She said this is an external group with the Chair from Kentucky. Of 130 school systems in Georgia only 80 have all schools within the system accredited.

Assistant Superintendent in charge of Human Resources Sheryl Jones reported there were 8,630 students in the Bulloch County School System last year and 8,997 this year. Five new teachers were hired with three more in the budget. She said they are requesting waivers for class size. Statesboro High School has an enrollment of 1,500 students and the new school will accommodate 2,000.

#### **UPDATE FROM CITY OF STATESBORO**

City Manager George Wood gave an update on the City of Statesboro. He stated there would be a work session to discuss placing red light cameras in the City and he commented on the continued growth including the addition of two new hotels, a proposed shopping center on Veteran's Memorial Parkway across from Toyota and new student housing complexes under construction. He stated this requires utility expansions and the City has worked with the County on extending these lines out into the County. Mr. Wood said the projected completion date for the new police station is next July. He gave an update on the Savannah Avenue project at Highway 80 and said the City would also be discussing changes in occupation taxes at the work session and will be working with the County on the comprehensive plan update.

Mayor Bill Hatcher expressed his appreciation for the "can do" spirit of the people and stated the willingness to work together and solve problems was evident in the SPLOST negotiations this spring. He encouraged the group to continue to have these meetings quarterly.

#### **UPDATE FROM THE STATESBORO/ BULLOCH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Peggy Chapman commented on the professional leadership of the community and said talking to each other is the best thing you can do. She stated the Chamber has had the busiest year ever in retail and big developers. She said there is a possibility of a new grocery store, East Georgia College is looking for a site to build a campus here and utilities are going in the 300 acre site bought last year by the Development Authority but more land is still needed.

#### **BULLOCH COUNTY**

Chairman Garrett Nevil said all entities have much in common with growth and growing pains and we need to be smart and efficient and, exercise good leadership. He said the county issued over 500 building permits this year and with this growth is the need for better highways, traffic control, schools and more facilities. He stated the well to fund this is not a bottomless well and the challenge to us is to work together in the most efficient manner or there will be the need to raise taxes to a level where it won't be pleasant to live in Bulloch County.

## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

In closing remarks County Manager Tom Couch told the group they want to meet “frequently enough to establish relationships but not frequently enough to ruin them”. He expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Bill Smith for his 14 years of service to the County that will end in December.

No action was taken and the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.