



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Finance & Administration Council Committee

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

4:00 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL (ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE) CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

Present 4 - Joe Hafner; Charles Coleman; David McClain and Brian Emison

Absent 3 - Ann Williams; John Street and Anthony Coleman

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[MIN-25:091](#)

Minutes for the Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday, October 14, 2025.

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Brian Emison, seconded by Charles Coleman, that this matter be Passed . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Charles Coleman; David McClain and Brian Emison

Absent: 3 - Ann Williams; John Street and Anthony Coleman

4. NEW BUSINESS

[RES-25:160](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1500 DANNY DRIVE, PARCEL 01-144214-10600, OWNED BY KENVIN & TONYA LYLES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,220.80

Sponsors: Code Enforcement and Finance

Attachments: [01. 1500 Danny Notice of Violation.pdf](#)
[02. 1500 Danny Billing Request.pdf](#)
[03. 1500 Danny Demo Invoice.pdf](#)
[04. 1500 Danny Council Notice.pdf](#)

Chairman Joe Hafner said, I did mention it is a demolition that we did for a house that burned, and nothing was ever done to it.

Chairman Joe Hafner said, please let the record reflect that Councilmember Ann Williams is in attendance now.

A motion was made by Brian Emison, seconded by Charles Coleman, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Charles Coleman;David McClain and Brian Emison

Absent: 3 - Ann Williams;John Street and Anthony Coleman

5. PENDING ITEMS

6. OTHER BUSINESS

[COM-25:045](#)

NAIDC Report by Mark Young

Sponsors: Mayor's Office

Attachments: [NAIDC City Finance Committee 10-28-25.pptx](#)

Chairman Joe Hafner said, we'll listen to the NAIDC report from Mr. Mark Young from Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce, Jonesboro Unlimited and various other entities.

Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Mark Young approached the podium and said, how's everybody doing? Good afternoon. It's great to see everybody and appreciate you taking the time to allow me to visit with you today about our economic development and our efforts from all of our economic development partners. We'll talk a little bit about infrastructure, the importance of infrastructure. This is a third quarter report that I'm providing. I have a couple slides from the second quarter as well, that I think are important to mention, and so this is one of those. Back in the summer, we held a groundbreaking for a water line extension in the Craighead Technology Park South. The Arkansas Economic Development Commission this past year, had a pilot program that allocated \$10,000,000 toward site development across the entire state. We put together an application and were awarded \$2,000,000 of that total \$10,000,000, so we received a large portion of that. We celebrated that particular day, and I'll show you in just a second, sort of where this is going to serve, that 612 acres, which is CTP South, Craighead Technology Park South, will be getting the benefit of this particular waterline extension, which will come back from Highland drive down south toward the 612 acres CTP South. You'll notice at the very bottom of the screen that's I555, so if you're not familiar with this property is, it's just south of where Nestle, Unilever, and those other companies are. This is the property that was acquired about three and a half years ago now, and we're currently developing. The other important activity that's going on related to this is we're currently putting together a new proposal as well for the next round of site development grants. The state of Arkansas was so pleased with the first \$10,000,000 they've allocated another \$50,000,000 over the next two years. So, \$25,000,000 this coming year and then \$25,000,000 the next. We are putting together an application for sewer service, to this same piece of property. Which the deadline for application is November 7th, so we're about 90% complete with that particular project and we'll be submitting that next week and looking forward to that. The process has changed a little bit in that, if we're a semifinalist, we'll know that in December and then in February, I'm sorry, in January, there'll be a team of site developers, site location consultants, that will actually come and look at the project, look at the site, to determine whether or not it's one of the top projects in the state. So, we're looking forward to hopefully making the semifinalist list and then having them for a site visit in January. So, we'll keep you posted on the progress there. But very important for this

particular piece of property and for the industrial park. Part of the reason this is incredibly important, when you look at our industrial park, and you see all the companies that are already in the Craighead Technology Park, in large part, one of the reasons they're there is because of the infrastructure that we don't see. We drive by it every day, and we don't see the water lines, sewer lines, electric lines, that are there. Having that capacity and quality of utility service sets us apart really from a lot of places across the state of Arkansas. So, we're developing that 612 acres to do the same, and really appreciate your continued support in our efforts to do that.

Also wanted to note the celebration at the Jonesboro Municipal Airport. Having the new terminal, the grant from EDA of \$5,000,000 for a total of \$6,000,000 project is incredibly important. I think all of us, when we think about economic development, economic growth; air service certainly has a role to play in that. All of the infrastructure improvements, the strengthening of the runways, the new terminal, all of that goes to strengthen our economic development efforts in our community, so I applaud you for all of your work in this particular effort, and we're encouraged. Look forward to seeing that project through to completion.

This past year, the legislature was in session, and there were about 12 different economic development pieces of legislation that were passed. I'm not going to talk about all 12 of them today so you don't have to sweat that. But I do want to mention two of them that I think are extremely important. One of them is Act 882, which is the modernization on automation incentive. For years, the state of Arkansas used to have an incentive that we encourage existing businesses to continue to invest in modernization and that incentive went away several years ago. And so, a group of people back this previous summer recommended that, two summers ago, recommended that that be looked at. This was one of the bills that was passed. And so, it will encourage our existing companies to modernize and automate where appropriate. It will be important as we continue to compete for projects across the country. Our existing companies oftentimes compete within their own footprint or their own companies, if you will, for additional volume here in Jonesboro. So, this will help them do that and be more successful as we continue to move forward in the future.

The second project, you've heard a little bit about, you'll hear a lot more about, and that is Senate Joint Resolution 15, which allows for economic development districts to be created in communities. This will be actually on the ballot in November of 2026, so it's a constitutional amendment, so it will require the vote of the people. So, over the next year, you're going to hear a lot more about this and its importance. It allows communities to provide additional incentives and provide some additional support to economic development projects, which we think is critical. Similar to a program that's in Texas right now, this will increase competitiveness across the state of Arkansas and give another tool to communities like ours to be successful. And we're encouraged by that. We hope to have a couple of different occasions to bring in some folks to talk about this measure, and we'll coordinate with you all to be part of that so that we all better understand what the capability and the capacity of Senate Joint Resolution 15 will be and how we can benefit from it.

Initiated by one of our existing industries, we're having conversations with the City right now about continuing JET service expansion to Craighead Technology Park. One of the challenges that we face out there is that we did a study, not that long ago, and there are 37 different start and stop times. So, to coordinate and make sure that we have the right schedules, etc. is a challenge, but we're working with staff at the City to evaluate that and see what's possible. Anything that we can do as a community to remove barriers for work is a good thing. Having that service to the industrial park, we

think will be very positive for the companies that are out there. So, we're going to continue to look at that, work with the City to see what's possible, and see how we can work together to make that happen. More on that just a minute too.

We've talked a lot about talent attraction and the importance of talent attraction and talent retention. The International Economic Development Council is the largest economic development group in the world, and Jonesboro Unlimited received a bronze award for our talent attraction campaign, Always Jonesboro, recently at their annual conference. I'm happy and proud of Bethania Baray-Harrison and the work that she's doing in that effort. If you've not been familiar with Always Jonesboro, I would encourage you to look at it on the web, so [alwaysjonesboro.com](https://www.alwaysjonesboro.com). There's a great cost of living calculator that our HR professionals use to help them in their recruitment efforts. There's a lot of additional information there as well about our community. In addition, there's both Facebook and Instagram and other social media feeds that promotes great jobs in our community, promotes quality of life amenities, and helps people know what's going on in the community. So again, if you've not checked that out, I strongly encourage you to do that. We're excited about the things that are happening with Always Jonesboro.

One of our efforts too, this summer, was our Intern Edition 2025. We have companies here in Jonesboro that have interns from across the country that do summer internships here. And oftentimes those students will go to work and then they'll go back to wherever they're staying, right, their apartment or whatever, and then they get up and they go to work the next day. We wanted to make sure that all of those interns saw Jonesboro beyond just a place to work. We wanted to make sure that they saw Jonesboro as a place that they could see themselves living. So, we hosted them for a day. Did a lot of fun things in the community. Also gave them a lot of information. Got them to sign on to Always Jonesboro, so even when they went back to their colleges and universities across the country, they would still be looking at what's going on in our community and following that with interest. And our hope and desire is as they become seniors and graduate, that many of our companies will be extending an offer for them to work at their places and business and come back to Jonesboro because of their good experience here. We had a blast doing this. We've done this a number of years now, and it continues to be successful for us.

One of the things I'm most excited about in workforce development is the Crest Center, career readiness, education, and skills training. You all probably followed that story of the hired grant that was received by Arkansas State University. It's a collaboration between A State, ASU Newport, and Arkansas Northeastern College. During my career time, it's probably the largest investment in workforce development that I've ever seen across the state of Arkansas. They're deploying about \$88,000,000 in total. Arkansas State received a little over \$10,000,000 as part of this project. And the first cohort class actually started in August with 35 people studying in food technology and high-speed automation. There's also a steel education component, steel manufacturing component, to this as well. And the board in September approved the initial phase, phase one of constructing a facility. So, you'll be hearing and seeing more about this. But it allows our workforce a great opportunity to have a ladder, if you will, to work on. And so, if you're interested in any of those items I mentioned, you have the capability of getting a certificate of proficiencies, associates degrees, bachelor's degrees, and beyond. So very happy and appreciate Chancellor Shields and his leadership in putting this program together and excited about what the future has. You'll be hearing a lot more about this in the very near future.

This past year, just two weeks ago, I'm sorry, we hosted our Tekstarz Externship,

which is an externship for public school teachers. We had 30 teachers participate. You can see a comment that someone made about a couple of the companies that they visited, Nestle and Nice Pak. One of the things that we have found is a tremendous influence for students or their teachers, and we wanted teachers to be able to articulate the kinds of careers that are available right here in our community and how the students can engage in that. So, we've done this for a number of years now. We've had 194 educators go through the program. Excited about that, and excited for that to continue. I'm going to play, if this works, I'm going to play a short video for you to kind of get a flavor of some of the things that the teachers are able to see and do.

We had great response from our educators about the program. Some of them want to come back year after year, we typically don't allow that. But I'm glad that we're able to support them and glad that they're able to take that message back into the classroom and encourage their students about all the opportunities that are right here in Jonesboro.

A couple of years ago, you may remember, that we worked on a project with the National SHRM Foundation. We're working on a second project with them now called Keeping Local: Employers Driving Good Jobs in Rural Arkansas. There are two communities that are participating in Arkansas, Jonesboro and El Dorado. We've identified 10 local employers who are participating, and really it's focused on providing them additional resources and skills related to skills-based hiring. And how they can continue to enhance and improve what they're doing in terms of attraction and retention of workers. We're off to a great start. In September we had our training session. Now each of those employers are putting together their own action plans that they're going to be implementing in their places of business. A second component of this is actually, we're going to be provided, Jonesboro Unlimited is going to be provided with a \$100,000 grant to identify a barrier to work and for us to help identify an initiative that will help overcome that barrier to work. We've identified three very broad areas right now. So, I mentioned transportation earlier, transportation is one of those, and sometimes we often hear that that's an impediment to work. The second thing is childcare; there are a lot of people who have a challenge identifying and seeking good childcare. And then the third area is in upskilling. So those 10 employers will be working with us to identify a project that we can implement locally, and we're looking forward to that. If you have suggestions or ideas, feel free to reach out to me, I'm happy to hear about those and interested in what you think too. But glad that we're part of this project and happy that SHRM had a good experience with us the first go around and they wanted to work with us again. Also wanted to give a shout out to Shelle Randall. She's our director of Workforce Development. She was actually highlighted in the SHRM Foundation's report that just came out. And so, she's got a quote in that particular project. This is really from our first project, which we did for the internships. So, the Get To Know Jonesboro Internship Edition was part of this too. So, it's good to get that national recognition and for people to see some good things going on in our community.

A new initiative that is coming up, so two things in the near future that you will be seeing more about. There's an event called Here 2 Hired, which is a career fair on March the 12th. It will be hosted at Nettleton Public Schools. And we hope to have about 40 different companies that will be represented there. This will be targeting seniors who are going to go directly into the workplace. So those individuals will be provided some information to get them prepared to have those conversations. After that, there'll be separate interviews that will be held. So, companies will be holding those interviews, both on campus, and then at their places and business as well. Those individuals who are hired, we're going to have a signing day celebration on April

9th to celebrate them, and what they are doing, and what they mean to our workforce. So, I'm excited about that project, something that we've got a task force that's working on right now. The other thing that I'll mention is it's going to be inclusive of many different types of businesses and industry, so we're really looking forward to that, and thinking it'll be a great event.

Another thing that I mentioned probably about six months ago to you guys. We've been awarded an EDA grant for the JumpStart Partnership. We've started phase one, which is to create a centralized website for entrepreneurs, so that all those resources are at their fingertips in one particular location, which we believe is important. And at the first of the year, we'll be starting, and it may not be on Fridays, but we're going to have a coffee so that those individuals who are entrepreneurs can come together, and they can meet each other, but more importantly they can meet some resources as well. They can support them in their efforts and get them connected. Long term we also hope to have an Angel Network that can help with some early funding for those companies as well. So, all those things are yet to come, those two last items are.

I did want to share with you a couple of statistics, you know, I love statistics, and the first one is our Civilian Labor Force. We've talked a lot in here about the importance of making sure that our labor force continues to grow. And you can see this is from the Federal Reserve, that goes all the way back to 1990, all the way to this current as we've got, this is August 2025. So, you can see that between August 2020 and currently we've grown just under 9%, which is good. You can kind of see the trend, right? So, it's moving the right direction from lower left to upper right. We want to see that continue to be the case, and that's where a lot of our efforts in retention and talent attraction go to as well. Equally important, if not more so, is also the trend of those individuals employed in our community. So, when you look at these statistics in August of 2020, there were 49,725 people employed in Craighead County. Today, that's 55,456, so it's 11% increase, roughly over that period of time from August 2020 to August 2025. So, we've had really good job right over that period of time, very steady job growth, which is healthy and encouraged. And we're pleased with that and hope that that trend continues. Again, you see sort of the historical data there, lower left, upper right, that's the trend we want to continue. Again, you see sort of the historical data there. Lower left to upper right. That's the trend we want to continue to see, and a lot of what you do is reflected in here, and a lot of what our efforts are are reflected in these numbers as well.

Lastly, I'm going to ask for your help in just a second. So, we are currently working on our new five-year strategic plan, VisionFirst Advisors, which is a consulting firm that is assisting us with this effort, and is in the process of helping us. And the pyramid on your right continues to remind me of all the things that all of us do that are extremely important. Workforce, infrastructure, leadership, existing industry, and the recruitment efforts. All of these go hand in hand. You can't be successful in one and expect to be successful in another one. So, it's important that we continue to lay the foundation for success in the future and with your partnership, we certainly hope to do that.

Lastly, I'll just mention that as part of that planning process, we're conducting a community survey. If you've not participated yet it is not too late. So, the QR code actually works. So, I encourage you to take a look at that, and I'm leaving a digital copy of this for April so that she can send this to you as well. But the deadline is October 30th, so the deadline is approaching. We've had well over 500 people respond already, so we're getting good feedback. It takes about 10 minutes, but it's important that we get people's feedback about what they want to see and what they want Jonesboro to look like. This gives us an opportunity to ask those questions and get

some great feedback. So, I would encourage each of you to participate as well. The city has sent that out on social media, and we very much appreciate that. There was an article in the newspaper. We've sent it out to all of the chamber members, etc. So, it's been pretty widely distributed, but if you've not had a chance to respond, please do so.

Lastly, I just want to thank you for your partnership and your continued support of what we do. Nothing that is accomplished in the community can be done in isolation. We appreciate the value, what you do for us and what you mean for us. And with that, I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I got about 10 questions. Mark Young said, yes sir you go right ahead Dr. Coleman. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, the airport itself seriously. Is that going to be an extension where we can get larger aircraft into Jonesboro? Mark Young said, it should be. So, the length of the runway and the strength of the runway it's really probably more important for the strength of the runway, and I say more important, we've got the length already having that strength on the taxiways and the runways are important. So, we should be able to accommodate larger aircraft. And I suspect when whether it's private craft or commercial craft that's something that we're all interested in is being able to have larger aircraft come in here, and that's something that we certainly will be working toward.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, and you might have already answered this question, but I guess I have to answer just to make sure I'm hearing it correctly. Mark Young said, yes sir. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, you know you're putting in the pipelines and that's which is actually wonderful and I think it's a wonderful idea but I also while that ground is being vacated for their ethernet lines and their underground lines, and I guess the reason why I talk about underground lines, I'm not sure why Jonesboro has not gotten more into underground utilities when it comes to lights and stuff like that. Especially because of... Mark Young said, I did not answer that question. That would be a question for City Water & Light, but I'd be happy to visit with them about it. I do know that in some areas and obviously there are parts of the United States that do that because extremely wind conditions etc., that's, you know, you don't want to have that interruption of power.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, and I guess the other question and hope everybody's listening take this as a positive statement and not a racial statement, but most of the committees that are going out recruiting there's not a lot of minorities, or there might not be any minorities at all on those committees because a lot of these big companies most of their overseer employees, heads, are minorities. So, I'm wondering when you're going to put David McClain on a committee. Mark Young said, well he can come on, absolutely. We need all the help we can get. Thank you Dr. Coleman.

Councilmember David McClain said, Mark, I do have a couple questions. Mark Young said, yes sir. Councilmember David McClain said, I appreciate you guys taking time to be here to speak with us. Mark Young said, well I thank you. Councilmember David McClain said, I think one of the biggest things I heard and it got me excited. I don't know if you saw me sit up a little bit when you said it was that Angel Network. Mark Young said, yes sir. Councilmember David McClain said, I was curious where we are or how close are you all to making that happen. Mark Young said, early stages. So, the grant that we have is a three-year grant so we're at the very beginning of that process. Creating an Angel Network will happen probably three-fourths of the way through that process, but something that we're interested in. You all know this, oftentimes start up

companies have a hard time initially with some initial funding and having the ability to do that and partnership with our financial institutions, private investors, etc., is something that I think is important and something we can do to better support our entrepreneurs here. We're very interested in that. Councilmember David McClain said, well I'm excited about that. Makes me feel good because... Mark Young said, yes sir. Councilmember David McClain said, I do believe that, you know, that site developments are important but at the same time you know we saw today I don't know if you saw the news that Amazon is laying off 30,000 people because of AI. So, if some of these companies adopt something similar then what do we have to fall back on. I don't want to see us get the industrial is our backbone but at the same time I'm glad to see we're introducing the Angel Network to help our entrepreneurs and help them get started and I do think that's also the backbone of our country as a whole. So, I want to see us continue to invest there and even leveraging the University and I saw that someone just got an NIH grant for \$3,000,000. So how are we leveraging that relationship and maybe saying how do we turn that into an opportunity for start up business. Are we doing that or is that something we're okay. Mark Young said, and one of the things that we've hoped to put together in the entrepreneurial part of what we're doing. You all probably are familiar, there are resources and assets that are already in place that some people know about and some people don't know about. So, when you think about the garage, the shop, and the lab. They're actually labs that Arkansas State University for researchers to use currently. And to make sure that more people know about each of those resources and getting them plugged in is part of that process and helping them make sure they can achieve their full potential is something that we want to do. So, to your point, being able to leverage that and then being able to help those individuals as they come out with products that can be commercialized is certainly important. The other thing that you commented on that I agree 100% with, one of the things that really benefits our community, I think all of us will agree, is the diversity of our economic base that's here. So, we're not solely reliant on any one type of business or industry, and to your point, anytime there's a down economy the good thing about our community is typically if we're down in one area we're up in another area. So, we don't see that cyclical nature that some other communities unfortunately see, and I think that's based on good strategy that was started years ago that we still benefit from today and having that diverse nature of economy I think is going to be important for us to move forward. We can't put all of our eggs in one basket, to your point, and I think that's something to continue to think of. Thank you.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I do have one other question. Mark Young said, yes sir. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, it's not so much a question but it's almost a statement. One of the things I talked to the City about constantly is advertising. Making sure the whole community sees and knows. I've watched your presentation twice and I think it's really really well. The only issue I would have with it is that your presentation being produced where all people in Jonesboro being able to see part of that presentation. I talked about that because I talked to a lot of community people that I know about the Chamber and some of the things I think that you're doing wonderful as a group that I just want to. But I think at the same time it's advertisement type needs to be a little stronger. You know I'm not sure how much money you could put in this but you know a lot of posters, boards, the bulletin boards, and stuff like that. Because the thing, Jonesboro's growing faster than most people think it's growing and I think there's a lot of people that's going to be left behind because of that, because they don't know where you're going. But I think a lot of these bulletin posters all over Jonesboro instead of putting all the politicians up there maybe we can put all the. Mark Young said, Dr. Coleman I agree with you. I think that something we can all do more of and be better at is telling our story collectively you know as a community.

That's not just about us as our organization but our community as well. For those who have not been to Jonesboro Unlimited's website I encourage you to do that. There's a lot of really good information there. There are some videos that we've produced called Here & Invested that highlight people in our community who chose to move here, tells their story, and helps tells that. We all know that we're bombarded every single day with information, right, and whether that's social media, etc. We have to continue to look for ways to get our message out to everybody and we'll keep doing that with your help, so thank you. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I'm not sure that Jonesboro's bulletin board has that, but I know a lot of states that I've lived in, they had a lot of electronic stuff so they could actually show those videos, you know. So, that might be something you want to check into. Mark Young said, absolutely thank you. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I'm sure Brian Richardson could help you with that. Mark Young said, absolutely. Again, telling the story not for people in our community and people outside our community. It's something we work on every single day. We spend a lot of time talking to site location consultants and people who may have never been to Jonesboro before, so I appreciate your comments. It's something we'll continue to focus on and work on, Thank you.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, hey Mark, I do have one quick question. Mark Young said, yes sir. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, and it may be too early to tell but with the Ridge Athletic Center under construction have you been able to see a pick up in recruitment efforts or attention to Jonesboro from businesses and individuals? Mark young said, I have. So especially people in Arkansas and the surrounding area, all of the things that we've invested in, and I say we right, whether it's the Shooting Sports Complex whether it's the Ridge Athletic Center whether it's the biking trails, right, we keep adding to that list. It continues to enhance what I call is our brand. It continues to enhance Jonesboro, and when I go places you know whether that's across Arkansas or West Tennessee I hear more and more of that so that buzz is out there, and I certainly think that when the Ridge Athletic Center comes online we'll see an influx of folks who want to come see it and want to come participate and all the things that they have from a programming standpoint I think that will really help our community in a big way so I'm really excited about it. That's a great question.

Councilmember David McClain said, the only thing I have and kind of curious, and Brian, I guess you guys can talk with Mark. I would love to see you do this full presentation to the council just so in case anybody else has questions. Think that'd be good. Mark Young said, yes sir happy to do that. And I'm going to give this to April if that's okay. Thank you so much.

Filed

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

8. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Brian Emison, seconded by Ann Williams, that this meeting be Adjourned. The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 4 - Charles Coleman; Ann Williams; David McClain and Brian Emison

Absent: 2 - John Street and Anthony Coleman