



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

5:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 5:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR HAROLD COPENHAVER AT 5:30 P.M.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

3. ROLL CALL BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

Present 10 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain; LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

Absent 2 - Chris Moore and Chris Gibson

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

[COM-21:027](#) PRESENTATION OF 5-YEAR SERVICE PIN TO COUNCILMEMBER BOBBY LONG

Sponsors: Mayor's Office

Read

[COM-21:028](#) PROCLAMATION HONORING THE HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPION VALLEY VIEW BOYS & GIRLS SOCCER TEAMS

Sponsors: Mayor's Office

Read

[COM-21:029](#) PROCLAMATION HONORING THE HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPION VALLEY VIEW BASEBALL TEAM

Sponsors: Mayor's Office

Read

[COM-21:026](#) Northeast Arkansas Industrial Development Commission Report Update by Mark Young

Sponsors: Mayor's Office and City Council

Attachments: [NAIDC Report 1st QTR 2021](#)
 [NAIDC 6-2021 - City Council](#)

Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Mark Young updated the city on the Northeast Arkansas Industrial Development Commission. Other Economic Development Partners in attendance range from members of the Chamber of Commerce, The Jonesboro Economic Development Corporation, Jonesboro Unlimited, as well as again NAIDC. Mr. Young said, we have talked about this before. Economic development is a team sport and on behalf of those individuals in the room and all of the people that they represent within those organizations we want to say thank you for your continued support and steadfast work to continue to make sure that Jonesboro has a great business climate for us to continue to succeed and grow our economy.

I know that you all have a busy agenda and I will try not to take up too much of your time. I do want to talk just a few minutes about economic activity over the last quarter and about the future and what we anticipate doing in moving forward. The first quarter of this year we had a total of nine inquires and those were all in manufacturing and activity that is related to our economic development outreach. That is us providing information via lots of Zoom calls as well as providing lots of data to companies that are interested in our community. You will also notice one prospect visit during that time period as well. I believe this is the first council meeting that has been opened to the public. So, what you have experienced through the Covid pandemic and how it effected how you all did business it did the same for us in how we had to do business. One of the things that happened during the last year is the fact that very few companies would allow their individuals to travel at all. Those travel restrictions caused our numbers to be down. In terms of prospect visits, I anticipate those numbers to increase throughout this year. In March of this year, things started improving significantly and we hope that continues.

We continue to work with a lot of our existing companies as they explore how they can continue to maintain their level of business as well as increase their level of business. In business retention expansion, you will see ten projects that we worked on this last quarter and are still currently working on. That continues to be a very robust area for us and we believe that will continue to be the case through 2021. You will also notice market research request, I anticipate those numbers will continue to go up. Most often those market research request represent retail activity or retail inquiries that we might have and as you can imagine COVID-19 had a tremendous impact on our retailers. Those that were outwardly looking for new opportunities were greatly diminished. But, we are starting to see those numbers come back up and we are pleased about that as well. So, a good first quarter that we anticipate will continue to get better as we move forward in the future.

From a job creation standpoint, one of the things that we think is important, we try to take a look at trends over a period of time. Around six years ago, before the Covid pandemic, we hovered around 47,000 people being employed and today we are well over 55,000 people employed. We will look closer at those numbers in a few moments. So, that trend line continues to be where we want it to be. One of the things that we always take a look at is the civilian labor force numbers because while the unemployment rate is important and we certainly keep an eye on that as well, really, the number or total number of people employed and are actively engaged in our community, we always want to make sure that those numbers are going in the right direction. As you can see from the graphs overall job growth has been extremely positive in our community. During the same time period from 2014 to 2019, Jonesboro's employment growth rate was at 12%. That doubles the national average

which was at 6% during that same time.

EMSI is an organization that collects lots of data. They made it clear that we were part of the 100-fastest growing metropolitan job markets in the U.S. What is important about that is other communities that were our size or smaller which was 5 that were in that same 100. So, we are in good company when it comes to job creation. Just this past April, we were cited as number 14 in best performing small cities in the United States and that was among 201 that represents communities that have 250,000 or fewer in population. Part of what they look at in that particular ranking is they look at job growth both short-term and long-term, but they also look at issues like housing availability and cost of housing. They also look at issues related to continued civilian growth and population growth as well. Lots of different factors to consider and we are pleased that we ranked number 14 out of 201 of similar size communities across the country. The point that I am trying to make is if we look at context and we look at how our community is doing as compared across the country we are doing well. That doesn't mean that we are not always looking to do better.

One of the things that happened last quarter that you guys were very instrumental in and paid a lot of attention to, and Mayor I appreciate so much of your leadership in this effort challenging the proposed changes in the metropolitan statistical areas across the country. 144 communities are or were set to possibly leave the metropolitan statistical area category. If you look at this slide it would have a tremendous impact on our economy. Funding and transportation, funding for healthcare, grant funding, and many more activities could be adversely effected if those changes went through. As an organization with you and with the county we continue to voice our concerns for that. The Mayor wrote a great letter in that regard as well. Many of our businesses wrote letters as well in response to that. Our organizations wrote letters in opposition of that too. The other thing that we did and thought was really important was we reached out to our friends and colleagues in similar communities and all of the states that surround Arkansas. When I was notified that this potential change might happen one of the things I did, I wanted to make sure that my counterparts in other states were aware of this. How this information was originally announced was through the Federal Register, there are not that many people that read the Federal Register on a regular basis, I am included in that group that reads it on a regular basis.

But, when it was brought to my attention I realized that all of our counterparts in those surrounding communities that would be impacted needed to know about this too. So, we started a grassroots effort to make sure that people were more educated about the importance of the issue, made sure that they were informed and made sure that they had an opportunity to voice their concerns as well. Currently no action has been taken. There was a recent article that was written where the acting director mentioned that they understand the challenges and the severity that this might cause, so they have not made a decision yet and we are still waiting on direction when that might occur. A couple of months ago I reached out to a contact that I have with the OMB which is the organization that sort of has looked at this the entire time, he indicated that once a decision has been made it would be brought forth in the same way that the original information was brought forth in the Federal Register. So, I have stayed in touch with them to make sure that we are aware of any changes that might be proposed as we move forward so that we can act appropriately.

One of the things that we did this last quarter is update our website. So, if you have not looked at it, I would encourage you to do so by going to jonesborounlimited.com, there is a tremendous amount of information on that website. We are pleased with the progress that has been made and pleased with the updates that we made. The screen

shot that you see was something that was also announced in March as well. That is our virtual shell building idea. We actually took video and with our friends at NABHOLTZ, we were able to demonstrate and show what a building of 100,000 square feet and up would look like on two separate pieces of property. The important part of that marketing effort was again, especially in the height of Covid when people couldn't travel, it was important for us to be able to show that piece of real estate and what their building might look like as well on it. It is animated. It is about 2 ½ minutes long, again, if you have not had a chance to look at that I would encourage you to do that.

I would like to also mention that there is a lot of activity going on out at the Craighead Technology Park. One of the projects that's going on out there is the Colson project. That project was talked about in a recent Finance Committee meeting and how important it was for them to continue to invest in our community, and each of these companies that I will briefly mention had an opportunity to do things in different communities. So, we were very thankful when Colson made the decision to continue to invest in Jonesboro, if you have not been out there drive by and take a look at their facility. Camfil, APC is located on the southwest corner of the industrial park, it is also making significant progress and we are just as excited to see what their facility will look like when completed and able to all be under one roof again. In the northwest corner, Nestle USA right before Christmas announced a major expansion of \$100,000,000 and plan to add 100 new jobs, that construction has started and we are super pleased about it as well. We've worked with all of these companies for months on these projects, whether an individual or a company is making a \$100,000 investment or a \$100,000,000 investment they take it very seriously. So, lots of information is gathered, lots of questions are asked, lots of meetings are held and we are pleased to be able to work with them and partnership and help those come to fruition. It's kind of hard to see on the screen but, the other thing that I wanted to mention and to recognize is City Engineer Craig Light for all of his work.

The red stripes that you see are on the west side of the industrial park, adjacent to the industrial park is where the rail project is going. Craig has talked with you all quite a few times about the rail storage facility, he's done a great job of that and construction is now getting underway. Again, it will give us a tremendous asset and a tremendous opportunity to continue to serve our companies in the industrial parks. So, what it will provide to our recruitment efforts, what it will provide to those companies already here and what companies that will come later is tremendous. Again, Craig, thank you, wherever you are for all your work and we appreciate the opportunity to work with the city on that. This leads us up to discussing labor. Most of the labor force that works in Craighead County and in the City of Jonesboro comes from about 12-counties. You see on this map slide those 12-counties and their population. It is important that we continue to have the opportunity to draw from that region as well. The numbers that you see here on this slide are from the most recent NIADC report. You will see that the overall unemployment rate for Craighead County is 3.3%. If you consider Covid and pre-covid, that's just a little bit higher than we were pre-covid. During Covid, it went as high as 8.9% for Craighead County so, we have made tremendous gains. I think what's most important and impacting our community today and as we move forward is again that total civilian labor force. You will see down at the bottom left hand corner of the report a total of 173,985 people compared to the March numbers we provided for the region the total labor force was 167,000 people. So, the good news is we have more and more people re-joining the workforce which is important to meet the needs for our community and for the companies in our community. Now I will say if you look at data from a little over a year ago that total number was around 175,000. So, while we have made a tremendous increase over the last several months, including this last month, we are still about 1,000 people short of the total number in the labor force in general.

Obviously, people have taken early retirement, people who've dealt with Covid and other issues related to that and they made the decision to no longer be in the workforce and that has impacted the numbers but, they are improving.

In planning for the future I received a draft copy of the strategic plan that the Jonesboro Unlimited group has been working on, and I am in the process of reviewing that and we look forward to unveiling that to the community in the near future. We are excited about what is in it, a big part of it really builds on the foundation that we had as the first strategic plan by Jonesboro Unlimited which was almost five years ago. The first four years we had the pleasure of working with our targeted industry group to create almost 4,000 new jobs and we surpassed that original goal. As mentioned before we always want to look at how can we do more, how can we be better, how can we make improvements to all of our efforts. This process helped us do that, it helped us take a critical look at where we are today, and where we might want to go in 5-years. I'll mention specifically the community survey. We had over 1,950 people participate in the community survey, and that helped us put together the strategic plan, the comments that were made, the suggestions that were given really helped focus our strategic plan. We also participated in focus groups as part of that planning process and ultimately turned out with our consulting firm a strategic plan that we are excited about.

As we move forward we will continue to look at and focus on a couple of critical key issues. One of those continues to be business attraction and expansion. We will continue to work with all of our companies to make a difference as we continue to move forward. The second thing we will continue to look at is talent attraction and workforce development. That has been an extremely important issue in the past and it is going to be a more important topic in the future. The third area is in quality of life, and infrastructure development. As a community we always keep an eye toward the future, to think about the kinds of infrastructures that need to be in place as well as the kinds of quality of life amenities that are important.

Just prior to this meeting I had a conversation with a couple of councilmembers and they asked about that specific topic. Quality of life and the amenities that quality of life brings is super important in our outreach and as we recruit companies to come to our community is an important part of that. As companies start that process they are often looking at can we do business there, does it check all of those boxes in terms of real estate, in infrastructure, and people, all of the things that are must haves. When it gets down to the final two or three communities that is when quality of life really comes into play. So, at that point in time it's no longer a process of elimination, they are trying to figure out how to mark us off of the list. When they are looking at us or 50 other communities, when it gets down to that one or two it really is a matter of selection. They are trying to figure out where they can be most successful, where do we want to make this investment, where does it make sense? That is where the quality of life and infrastructure continues to play a role.

All of those things are super important and it is sort of why we have taken a holistic approach in our planning for now and in the future. We are excited about the accomplishments we've had over the last five years and we are even more excited about the future. In summary I will just say that we still have a lot of work to do. We continue to work on many different fronts and many different topics, and we can't do that without your support. I appreciate very much again, what you do to make Jonesboro a great place, and what you do to make sure we have a business environment that is competitive and that we can be successful as we continue to grow our community and grow our economy.

Mayor Harold Copenhaver thanked Mr. Young for his report and commented that when you talk about business attraction, workforce development, quality of life and infrastructure, one thing that my Administration has done when we've made our visits out to these organizations out in the Industrial Park the main emphasis was concerning labor. So, how do we address that going forward, what are you seeing through JEDC and the other organizations? Like, what impact are other communities able to provide that we are not? The good thing is that our unemployment is at a lower level than most communities. It doesn't seem that we have the problem of finding the jobs, and people are working in our community. It's to educate what I see is a lack of ability to educate those that are coming straight out of high school, that there is opportunity for them in Jonesboro right now. That is a window that we have got to bridge and I think that is an initial part of the process.

Mr. Young said, absolutely and explained that Jonesboro Sun Reporter Keith Inman did a great story this week which addressed some of the topics you mentioned. The story was on Tech Stars, which is a manufacturing camp for students that we were able to have this year, unfortunately we were unable to have it last year. Going back to your point of educating students and people in our community about the opportunities that exists today. There is a wide variety of career choices even in manufacturing, whether it's in accounting or engineering there is a whole gamete of choices in the manufacturing sector and we want to make sure that we continue to talk with Councilors and Teachers so that that can be communicated to the students. Another important part that I know you are passionate about and I am too is that we are so glad that Jonesboro is home to Arkansas State University. As we continue to work with Arkansas State and Arkansas State University Newport-Jonesboro tech campus to try to retain as much of that talent as possible, that's important for us as well. We have to continue to grow our own talent which means that we have to work with anyone and everyone that we can to make sure that that educational alignment is aligned with the kind of jobs that we have to offer in our community. I think we are doing a good job of that but, I think we can always improve and increase that and that is something we continue to work on. Another part of the strategic plan is to get people to move to our community that have that talent. So, part of that is growing our own talent and having programs that can support that within our educational institutions, and part of what we can do and the other part is attracting that talent from outside into our community and having a concerted effort and strategy behind how we do that. Again, I am pleased at what we are seeing in our strategic plan and looking forward to sharing more of that with you in the future. Mayor Copenhaver said that he appreciated the work that Mr. Young did regarding the MSA. That is very important for our city, there are four cities in the State of Arkansas that would be adversely effected by that as well. I know through the Congressman and the State Senators and US Senators they are watching this because of our input. So, again I appreciate your efforts on that. Mr. Young said "thank you" and it is a topic that we will continue to monitor along with you and be ready to respond however we need too once a decision is made because, it is important for us to stay as part of the Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Councilmember Joe Hafner asked Mr. Young in his opinion has the chambers recruitment changed over the past few years and what do you think the chambers efforts are focused on as far as recruitment goes? Mr. Young explained that we have a targeted industry study that we conducted in our last strategic plan and we have continued to work with those. While we work with any company that has an interest in coming to our community, where we focus our time and energy are on those companies quite frankly that pay at and above our current wage scale for Craighead County. So, we look at advanced manufacturing, IT, professional services, which

include accountants and engineers, we also look at healthcare and agricultural businesses. The time that we use in proactively going out and recruiting new businesses are focused on those and there is a lot of reason for that. Part of it is we have the infrastructure in place, the people in place, and the educational programs in place to support those jobs. Moving forward in the next 5-years that will change only slightly, there is going to be some just minor revisions and fine tuning of that, those targeted industries if you will.

But, again with that same methodology, that same thought pattern, there is lots of companies out there and what we need to be more effective and cost effective is to focus on those that we will likely have the greatest chance of success and so that is what are focus continues to be on. Mr. Hafner said "thank you." Another question I have is, you mentioned talent recruitment and retention of ASU graduates, what is our biggest challenge on actually recruiting the talent to Jonesboro or keeping the talent in Jonesboro? I am sure you or chamber representatives' talk to ASU graduates. One thing that Mike Downing had mentioned when he worked with the city was that it is different when we were growing up, we got jobs and then moved to the community, now people decide where they want to live and move there and find a job. In your opinion what is our biggest downside to retaining or attracting talent. Mr. Young explained that I think today in looking at the next to last slide, and thinking about what's going on across the country. In this day and time part of the greatest challenge is the number of job opportunities that are across the country that are currently unfilled, people have lots and lots of opportunities right now to go to work anywhere. So, that is part of the challenge, I think if you localize that, one of the things that I think we have to continue to do is to ensure that again, the types of companies we recruit, that what we are doing is aligned with our educational institution and making sure that those students that are coming out of high school and wanting to go directly into the workforce, as well as those students going to Arkansas State University have opportunities that are here. Again, I think we do a good job at that but, we are going to have to continue to monitor that and make sure that we continue to do a good job because we want to retain that talent. I will say this and this is an unscientific poll, we did commit a survey not that long ago and we asked a group of Young Professionals about what some of the most important things to them were. Number one thing is still a job. While I am not going to disagree with Mr. Downing, a lot of the people do have the capability or opportunity to maybe pick where they live first. But, for most people I still think they focus in on what kind of job do I want and need, where is it, what do I need to go and get that, and then will I be satisfied and happy when I am there. So, if someone from a different community or different state is considering a job opportunity they are going to compare the two communities and decide where do I want to live, where do I find success, where do I want to raise my family and all of the different things that are important to that individual.

Councilmember Hafner commented that he just wants to see us as we continue to move forward my hope is that the chamber, the city, and ASU continue to improve their collaborative efforts and work together as well as continue to discuss topics such as quality of live projects, investments, and plans like the American Rescue Plan. If ASU is successful, and the chamber is successful then the city is going to be successful. We've just got to continue to make strides in improving our relationships. Mr. Young replied by saying that he was fortunate that he has known most of the councilmembers for a long time and that he appreciated all of the work that you all do. We also have good relationships with ASU as well and we look forward to our continued work with the Mayor and the council.

Councilmember Bobby Long also thanked Mr. Young for his presentation. Economic

Development to a lot of people can seem to be ambiguous because, they don't exactly know what it is you do. How does what you do impact what would have possibly went on anyway? Just a couple of questions, we were talking about job force and labor preparations for kids coming out of high school. Something that was prevalent and talked about heavily over the course of last summer is students falling behind in their educational preparedness. So, what are you hearing from industry as students coming in there, and what do you think the effect that virtual learning and possibly COVID had on just the preparedness that our high school kids are going to have when they come out of high school and they start looking for those jobs? Mr. Young said, great question and the short answer to that is that we do not know yet. There has not been enough time lapse between those challenging times and those students entering the workforce. What I am hearing though from most of our industries is that when a student that has just graduated shows up and maybe they've had some additional training through the NEA Career and Technical Center or the ASU Tech Center, those students that get that little bit of additional training are better prepared. So, those that might not have been able to participate in those activities in the past, I think certainly that would have an impact on them. But, the good news is those organizations have continued to do a fabulous job and will continue to do that, and if students are behind I'm sure our local educators will catch them up quickly and those students will work hard to get caught up. Again, we just have not had enough data and information for me to really be able to comment. Mr. Long said, I just want to echo that as well, we have unbelievable public schools here and the technical center at Jonesboro is great. How do you coordinate with all of the training centers to make sure that you are not reproducing something that someone else is already doing? Mr. Young said one of the things that we try to do is to communicate. Shelly Randall is our Director of Workforce Development on existing industry. Part of Shelly's role, mine and Steven Lamb who is a new VP with us, part of our role is to understand from all of our companies what their needs are and what their concerns are, what kind of training programs they need and then try again to identify where they can go get those resources to do that. Whether it's through the organizations that you mentioned or others as well. So, what we try to do is communicate that back to the appropriate provider but we also report it to larger groups. So, if your company has two or three people that need to be trained in a particular area and someone else has a company that needs two or three people trained in the same area we try to bring those together and offer that training. We do that through workforce training portion, which is another asset in our community that works together. It is industry driven, its industry led and they determine the training that is needed and it is important that we do that. So, often we coordinate that, we don't conduct the training itself but, we often try to understand the need and then put that individual with the need and in touch with the appropriate resources.

Mr. Long explained that he just had a couple of other items and he would make it quick. You mentioned the Jonesboro Unlimited website, how many unique visitors did you have there? Mr. Young said he did not have that information with him but that he would be happy to get that for you all. Mr. Long then asked out of the nine interested companies, how many of those were initiated by the company themselves and how many were contacted by us? Mr. Young explained that four out of the nine approached us and five of those came to us through the Arkansas Development Commission. So, many of you may know if you are company and looking to do a site search across a particular geography, whether you are looking at 5-states in the southeast and 3-states in the southwest or whatever the case may be, often the original contact goes to the state. In our case it is the Eastern Arkansas Development Commission, they are our partner in development efforts so, they will look at whatever that client has asked about.

They will talk about geographically where they want to locate, if they have to be on an interstate, size of the community, they will give their parameters of the project, etc. and then the state will contact those communities that meet the criteria. So, typically half or a little more than half of inquiries across the year will come from the state. Where those inquiries originate, where they are looking for multiple communities in our state, and quite frankly they are looking at communities in other state's and then they are going to start narrowing that down. We have pro-active approach too, where we contact companies again that are kind of in our wheelhouse and in our expertise that would be successful here that we contact so, part of those leads are generated and come directly to us as well. Mr. Long said one follow-up, Northwest Arkansas versus Northeast Arkansas, are those inquiries un-bias, if someone is looking for a certain size community, that's on the interstate, things like that, then there is us and a company from Northwest Arkansas. Do both counterparts get those inquiries and you both vie for that or does the state divvy those out? Mr. Young said it is based on the requirement of the company. For full disclosure, we typically don't compete with Northwest Arkansas much. When you look at our touch states, we typically are going to compete with Tennessee and Mississippi, sometimes Louisiana and it could be even more east than that. You would be surprised, sometimes we've even competed against much larger communities in Oklahoma, Texas, in Georgia and Alabama. So, it really is dependent on that geographical approach that that individual, that company might have and how they express that. But, yes when that lead goes into the state I have confidence that if we meet the criteria regardless of where else they be looking in the state we've got those same shots too.

Mayor Copenhaver said, just to follow-up with what Mr. Young just said, that criteria a lot of times is going to be the collaborative effort of what we can bring together as the city, the University, and the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Young replied, absolutely. Often time's companies and consultants communicate with us via Request for Information by sending us a questionnaire giving us about two-weeks to respond to it. And, when I say they want detailed information they want detailed information regarding utilities, geo-tech studies, phase one environmental audits, ex-cetera. Again, they are looking to see what communities they can mark off of their list, obviously our goal is to stay on the list as long as we can and give them the opportunity to come to our community so that we can show them and demonstrate that we can meet or exceed their needs. Councilmember John Street said, Mark I know you know this very well but, I think we would be remiss not to mention City Water & Light. They have been a blessing to this community, in fact Northeast Arkansas. I know when Nestle first came here I had an opportunity to do some work for the Plant Manager, and I asked him what was the big difference between us and I think Knoxville, and he said there were a lot of similar things between the two but, City Water & Light saved them a half-a-million dollars a year in utilities, plus CWL put about a million dollars in their water processing facility. CWL's proactive approach in establishing the infrastructure in the industrial park continues. They are a great partner not only to the City of Jonesboro but, to the industrial family we have here and I believe that is one of our force multipliers along with all of the others mentioned before.

The availability of water is getting to be even more critical, if you have watched the news lately you have seen reports where the western part of the US is having dangerous low levels of water and being asked to conserve water. A lot of manufacturing facilities need a good supply and a good quality of water and we have that. I think our Fire Chief and all of the other folks here that work on the ISO rating of 1 it really helps on the industrial and commercial establishments. Our staff that work on seeking grants, the rail system that is coming in I think will be a big plus, and I know that has been in the works a long time, some of it was lucky because of the

availability of funding. Our Grant Staff did a lot of hard work in writing those grants. I believe that we have a great synergy with all of the team work we put together. Mr. Young said, I agree with you 100% they do a tremendous job, they are a great resource for us and a great partner for us and every project that we work on they are always there.

Councilmember David McClain said some of the things that you said that stood out to me one of those being how short the labor-pool is around the country. What is the chamber doing to help start-ups, we've had some start-ups here that have done really well, and Tech-friends is one, Rule Sourcing and CUSI. What are we doing to attract or even grow our own start-ups? Mr. Young answered by saying, part of what we do is we try to make sure they have the resources they need. Many of the company's that you just mentioned when they were starting up did come to us, did ask for assistance and we provided that assistance. We provided assistance by identifying a location for them to operate in and we sometimes identified opportunities for them for funding to start up, in a couple of cases we actually provided the seed money for them to start-up. Another part was mentioned earlier, Arkansas State has a small business development center, they do a tremendous job we sponsor every single one of their educational programs that they put out. So, we encourage those entrepreneur's and those new start-up companies to attend those meetings. You guys may know this they have an accelerated program going on right now. So, we have committed to them to help market those programs and to help identify the people that would participate and gain a great deal from that. Again, part of that is matching up those resources with the individuals that need those resources and that's a big part of what we do. I think moving forward you'll see in our strategic plan that innovation and technology will take an increased roll in our recruitment efforts and I look forward to sharing more about that with you later on. Mr. McClain said that he appreciated the answers. It was the spread of the manufacturing operations that we've had and I think that has been a core pillar in our town. So, I am just curious on how we plan on moving forward in the future. You and I both know that technology is huge, it is growing and changing rapidly every day. Mr. Young explained, you know we could be here a long time going over this but, a couple of other things we do is continue to work with Arkansas State on innovation. One of the things that they have looked at is their innovation hub that they have. When you look at the garage, the lab, and the shop that they have, we support their efforts in those things and will continue to do that. We have also provided some support to the research foundation as well and what they are trying to do at the University in terms of taking commercialized or products that have commercial applications and help send those out so, we are part of that effort as well and will continue to be part of those efforts.

Read

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Copenhaver gave a special thank you for their commitment to our community. They are; Dr. Ladd Scriber, Dr. Todd Higginbotham, our friends at Critical Edge, the Noell Family and DNW Outdoors, and Joe Clay Young.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Charles Frierson, to Approve the Consent Agenda. The motioned PASSED

Aye: 10 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain; LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

Absent: 2 - Chris Moore and Chris Gibson

[MIN-21:049](#) Minutes for the City Council meeting on June 1, 2021

Attachments: [CC Minutes 06012021](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:088](#) A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO GRANT AN EASEMENT AND RIGHT OF WAY AT 3511 EAST HIGHLAND DRIVE TO CENTERPOINT ENERGY RESOURCES CORP., d/b/a CENTERPOINT ENERGY ARKANSAS GAS, A DELAWARE CORPORATION

Sponsors: Engineering

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:097](#) A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO CONTRACT WITH ACADEMY SPORTS AND OUTDOORS FOR SPONSORSHIP OF TWO ATHLETIC FIELDS AT THE JOE MACK CAMPBELL SPORTS COMPLEX AND ONE SIGN AT THE CONCESSION STAND

Sponsors: Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [Academy Contract 2021](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:098](#) A RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT WITH DR. LADD SCRIBER FOR SPONSORSHIP OF THE TRAP FIELD 2 AT THE JONESBORO SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX

Sponsors: Police Department, Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [Shooting Range - Dr. Ladd Scriber](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:099](#) A RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT WITH DR. TODD HIGGINBOTHAM FOR SPONSORSHIP OF THE TRAP FIELD 3 AT THE JONESBORO SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX

Sponsors: Police Department, Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [Shooting Range - Dr. Todd Higginbotham](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:100](#) A RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT WITH CRITICAL EDGE FOR SPONSORSHIP OF THE TRAP FIELD 7 AT THE JONESBORO SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX

Sponsors: Police Department, Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [Shooting Range - Critical Edge](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:101](#)

A RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT WITH DNW OUTDOORS FOR SPONSORSHIP OF THE ARCHERY RANGE AT THE JONESBORO SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX

Sponsors: Police Department, Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [Shooting Range-Archery - DNW Outdoors](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:102](#)

A RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT WITH JOE CLAY YOUNG FOR SPONSORSHIP OF THE RANGE ROOM AT THE JONESBORO SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX

Sponsors: Police Department, Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [Shooting Range-Range Building - Joe Clay Young](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:103](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO ENTER INTO A FACILITY USAGE AGREEMENT WITH JONESBORO JETS, INC.

Sponsors: Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [JETS 2021 Agreement](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:104](#)

A RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT WITH EAST ARKANSAS BROADCASTERS FOR RENTAL OF JOE MACK CAMPBELL SPORTS COMPLEX

Sponsors: Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [JULY 4TH 2021 EAB](#)

[EAB Contract 2021](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:105](#)

A RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT WITH SAGA COMMUNICATIONS OF ARKANSAS LLC D/B/A JONESBORO RADIO GROUP FOR RENTAL OF SOUTHSIDE SPORTS COMPLEX

Sponsors: Parks & Recreation and Finance

Attachments: [JULY 4TH 2021 JRG](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-21:106](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO APPLY FOR THE FY2021 COPS (COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES) HIRING PROGRAM THROUGH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Sponsors: Police Department, Grants and Finance

Attachments: [06.08.2021 COPS Budget and funding-COPSH FY21](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

6. NEW BUSINESS

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

[ORD-21:021](#) AN ORDINANCE FOR A PRIVATE CLUB PERMIT FOR IMPROVING LIVES, INC. d/b/a THE SOCIAL OF JONESBORO TO BE LOCATED AT 1004 CHANCERY LANE, JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

Attachments: [The Social Improving Lives Private Club Application Redacted](#)

Held at second reading

[ORD-21:022](#) AN ORDINANCE TO THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO PLACE VARIOUS TRAFFIC SIGNS AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS AS DETERMINED BY THE TRAFFIC CONTROL COMMITTEE

Sponsors: Engineering

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Joe Hafner, to suspend the rules and read ORD-21:022 by title only since it had been read in full at the first reading. All voted aye.

Held at second reading

[ORD-21:023](#) AN ORDINANCE REGARDING ABANDONING AND VACATING A UTILITY EASEMENT IN A PART OF LOT 2 OF STATON MINOR PLAT ON WOOD STREET AS REQUESTED BY MICHAEL BOGGS FROM TRALAN ENGINEERING ON BEHALF OF C3, LLC

Attachments: [Petition](#)
[RESOLUTION](#)
[ORDINANCE](#)
[utilities](#)
[Utility Easement_Eng&Plan](#)

Held at second reading

[ORD-21:025](#) AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE JONESBORO CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 2 ARTICLE 3, ENTITLED CITY COUNCIL, ESTABLISHING CITY COUNCIL RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR 2021

Sponsors: City Council, City Clerk, City Attorney's Office and Mayor's Office

Attachments: [Council Rules FINAL 07062021 - Exhibit A](#)
[Citizen Comments ORD-21-025](#)

Councilmember Bobby Long motioned to amend Section 2-87, (b)(8), to strike the second sentence, "There shall be a maximum of four persons per side for proponents and opponents to speak for or against." There was no second to the motion made and therefore the amendment failed.

Councilmember Bobby Long explained that in reviewing this ordinance in Section 2-87, item b, number 8, I would ask that the second sentence be struck. I don't want to limit the maximum number of people. I think line number 2 is ambiguous because, it doesn't really spell out whether or not there is maximum of four people for it or four people against it or just a maximum of four people for and against. I think we are treading on a place we don't want to go when we start minimizing the number of people that can speak for or against a certain item on the agenda. I don't think we have to go back too far before we can come up with several instances to where there were several people that wanted to be heard.

Patti Lack, 4108 Forrest Hill Road, said, on page 6, right about where Councilmember Long had mentioned, I just need a little clarification on this. If I have handouts do I give those to the City Clerk before the meeting or during the meeting? City Attorney Carol Duncan answered by saying they would need to be given before the meeting, and that is an existing rule. Ms. Lack said, I know that has been back and forth that way. I have been in a couple of situations that it's difficult to get it here in time especially if people are working. Ms. Duncan explained that the council can choose to accept them at the meeting, but the request is to get items to the City Clerk before the meeting so that they can be distributed on Legistar so the public has a chance to view them. Ms. Lack also commented on what Councilmember Long just talked about in section 2-87. I guess where I am at on this is that in the past years, we've had a lot of controversial issues here when the chambers were full. I agree with Councilmember Long. If someone takes the time to come here and speak we should not limit it to the number of people who can do that. What I suggest to all of you, is that if we can change it to, and you are suggesting that you have 15 minutes, let both sides have 15 minutes of time. I agree we can make this go on forever and ever and that is not what we want to do. But, we want to at least give everybody the chance to speak up. Mayor Copenhaver explained that is not the intent here. The intent is to keep the flow going and we can adjust and extend that according to what the conversation is at that time. Ms. Lack explained that she had talked to Councilmember Chris Gibson and he also stated that it is flexible. But, I would like to see that in writing because, if these are the policies and procedures that we are going to follow, we need to have that in writing. You guys are giving us 15 minutes and hopefully we can stay at that time limit. Also, where it talks about the redundancy, you know we are almost smart enough to be able to say to you that it's going to hurt my property value, I'm upset. I think for all of us if that is going to happen to you and it's going to happen to me, I feel like I need to say that. I think what happens is when we have a big enough issue here we are smart enough to have both sides organized.

Councilmember David McClain asked, do we need to add the time period in there? Ms. Duncan said, you can always do that at any given time and you can always suspend your rules and give more time if there is a topic that has more people here that need to be heard. You don't have to have it written that you are allowed to do it.

Councilmember Joe Hafner stated that he would like to say one thing. A lot of times people are for or against an item and wait until the third reading to voice their opinion. The way it is currently written there are 36 minutes a piece for and against by the three readings. But, you also have committee meetings, where the item is first presented

that people can come to and speak. Other ways to get your voice heard is by calling and sending emails. Mayor Harold Copenhaver explained that is what we are wanting the community to do, to get involved as early as you can in the process. Councilmember McClain explained, as Councilmember Hafner pointed out with the committee, first reading, second reading, do we limit the same, like if someone spoke at the first reading could they speak again? Councilmember Hafner commented, as long as it is not redundant. Mayor Copenhaver also said the same, as long as it is not redundant.

Held at second reading

ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING

[ORD-21:020](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, ARTICLE III, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-1 SINGLE FAMILY MEDIUM DENSITY DISTRICT TO C-3 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT - LIMITED USE OVERLAY FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 7201 E. HIGHLAND DRIVE, JONESBORO, AR AS REQUESTED BY JOSHUA NEELY ON BEHALF OF JEREMY BALTZ

Attachments: [City Council Staff Summary](#)
[Rezoning Plat](#)
[Application](#)
[Deed](#)
[Pictures of Area](#)
[USPS Receipts](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Mitch Johnson, that this matter be Passed . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 10 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain; LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

Abstain: 2 - Chris Moore and Chris Gibson

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

On Friday, June 25, 2021, the Municipal Center will be host to a COVID vaccination clinic. It was designed for city employees and their families but everyone is welcome and we encourage you to do so. There is a variant of the disease that is now in Arkansas which puts a lot of people at risk that have not had the vaccine.

I would like to say thank you to some of our staff. I received a letter this week from a JETS passenger who wanted to say thank you to two of our JET employees that she regularly encounters. These ladies execute kindness, patience, and their ability to communicate with individuals is just remarkable. They know where I need to go and what I am on the bus for. These ladies are outstanding and you are lucky to have them. I agree and thank the JETS employees for their commitment to our community.

This week I attended a statewide meeting with the Sheriff's Association of Arkansas, as well as the County Judge's Association at our Convention Center here in Jonesboro.

It was wonderful to have this right here in Jonesboro at Embassy Suites. I am doing this in order to create and extend partnerships with other Arkansas Governmental bodies and to learn more efficiencies for Jonesboro in ways that we can all work together for the public good. I would like to say thank you to the Embassy Suites Hotel and Convention Center for hosting these conventions. This is a major hit for our community, our State and region. I can't tell you how many people that I met or been around that has never step foot in Jonesboro. They were amazed and blown away by what our community has to offer.

As we noted last time our City Pool is open and sometimes we overlook the facts that it provides more than simple recreation. I received a note this week from Vick Moore about a 15-year old who is taking swimming lessons, overcoming their fear of water and his mother was filled with tears of pride to know that now her son could swim.

Due to the employee shortages in Animal Control, we have two officers that are working basically to cover five jobs. I would like to say thank you to Officer Early and Officer Peterson. They have endured stress, fatigue, and the inability to take comp-time leave. This is a message that we need workers in our community. We need people that are passionate. We have job availability in our city.

Yesterday, I attended the Elks Lodge Flag Day event. They do a tremendous job in servicing our veterans. Those in service, those that have retired, and those who fell to service to our country. I also met with Army Recruiter, Staff Sergeant Daniel Burr. We talked about a program and I am proud to say I want to partner with and we have done so, it is the US Army Pays Program. What it does is provide the opportunity for honorably discharged veterans with a certain amount of service to automatically have a job interview with the City of Jonesboro. This is a win for the city because soldiers are good workers, but sometimes it can be hard for them to transition from military life to civilian life. I want all veterans of all branches to be able to have opportunities to find work in the City of Jonesboro. So, I appreciate this partnership and look forward to joining this program.

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember John Street said, I just wanted to remind everyone that the Arkansas Municipal League virtual summer conference starts tomorrow for those of you who have not signed up yet.

Councilmember LJ Bryant explained that he had gotten a couple of emails today regarding downtown parking, taking out spots and what all was going on with that. Mayor Copenhaver explained that on May 27th, we worked in conjunction with the Downtown Association. We talked about safety. We talked about the speed of traffic, beautification, etc. One of the ideas in my heart is safety. We have a high-traffic volume on Main Street with accelerated speeding. We have parts of downtown that are unvisitable to those pedestrians that are walking across our Main Street. We went out and visibly looked at what improvements we could make immediately to address a concern and then move forward with other concerns. One of which that we brought to the table with this group of individuals was the possibility, and we have done so at this point, was to have moved parking spaces in front of the crosswalks. If you have crossed there, you have to stick your head out, cars cannot see you and vice-versa. It is important as the Mayor, and I reminded these individuals in the meeting that if somebody should become a fatality, and we have had accidents, we've had pedestrians hit and some have been almost fatal, when that fatality happens, they are not going to call on the businesses down here, they are going to call the City of

Jonesboro, our offices, and they are going to sue the city because we did not provide the right kind of safety features that needed to be in place. These are not always permanent. We are trying this out. We can use it for different methods. Engineering Director Craig Light and the Administration team went downtown and looked. It was decided to move six of the parking spaces in front of the crosswalks. Those have been striped yellow. It also provides spaces for ambulance service should the need arise. Again, it is about safety and we felt comfortable about the choice.

Councilmember David McClain said maybe you or Chief Elliott can answer this. I think there are some safety issues that have been going on around the Jonesboro Pool Center. I don't know if you all have been made aware of it. Someone brought it to my attention. Mayor Copenhagen said yes, the Chief and I are aware of that and some adjustments are taking place. One thing to keep in mind is that it is just the start of summer and everyone is getting out. We want to protect the employees that are working at the facility as well. Police Chief Rick Elliott said, part of our safety plan that the Mayor and I have been working on, we have officers assigned that are working at the pool. There was a fight that broke out at the pool and it's unfortunate but when you get a large group of teens together things happen. We try to have officers working there to curtail that. Even though the officer was present, we still had the fight. We may have to limit the number of people coming into the pool. We are working with Parks Director Danny Kapales and the Mayor trying to come up with some solutions to curtail that kind of activity at the pool. I will also touch on that I've got officers working overtime out at Craighead Forest and the feedback on that has been positive. We are working on it and we have some ideas that we are going to be bringing before the council in the near future.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman commented that on Saturday, June 19th we are going to host a Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccine clinic at 315 Allis. We will also be doing cleanup at the Parker Park Facility. There are a couple of gentleman that are sitting out in the audience that have talked to me about some issues and I would like to ask the Mayor to check into something for us after they have spoken.

Rick Thomas, 243 Sundown Lane, said, what I am here to talk about is an article that Keith Inman had in the Jonesboro Sun regarding city sewer. I am one of the 3,500 residents in Jonesboro without city sewer. We were annexed into the city limits in 2011. It was approximately 80 acres off of Highway 49 North with the promise of city sewer and not by this body. I think everybody on this council was aware of the situation and did okay the annexation because that promise was made to us. The promise was not fulfilled. The city sewer went right past us to the designated area that it was set up for. What we are looking at now is we know a lot of federal money is coming out for all kinds of things. I know the city needs a lot of stuff. I worked as a public servant to the city and Craighead County for 44 years. So, I know how that it is and I know your obligations. But, let's look at the 3,500 residents that do not have city sewer and do not have access to it. If you go to these places during the wet seasons and cold seasons, you are going to see a skim on top of the ground and even notice a smell. Even in our neighborhood, we have to wear boots during the winter time in our yards. We just fill like the city could get together and look and discuss things regarding these issues that is all we are asking. Mayor Copenhagen said, please get your information to Councilmember Coleman. Then, we will pass that on and work with City Water & Light and discuss that with them. Councilmember Coleman commented that he thinks one of the things that people are misunderstanding is that we only get a certain amount of money but, I think if there is a conversation with City Water & Light and the city there is a possibility of a solution to this issue. City Water & Light is a powerful contributor to our community. But, I think they are also capable of maybe trying to work with us regarding this concern.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Glen Talley, 179 Sundown Lane, said, I was one of the first ones that started this with trying to get city sewer completed for the people out here. I am a Vietnam Veteran, I had nine guys in my unit and when I told them I had their back, I had their back. We've been lied to a lot out there. We were told we were going to get sewer. When that church decided they were going to let the Fair Board have the grounds and then it went back to the church, vise-versa, my granddaughter was 3-years old when this started and now she's 14, and we still don't have a city sewer system. I would appreciate if you all would help us in any way you can.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilperson Charles Frierson that this meeting be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 10 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain;LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

Absent: 2 - Chris Moore and Chris Gibson

_____ **Date:** _____

Harold Copenhaver, Mayor

Attest:

_____ **Date:** _____

April Leggett, City Clerk