



# City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center  
300 S. Church Street  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

## Meeting Minutes Public Services Council Committee

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Tuesday, June 18, 2024

4:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

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

**Present** 7 - Chris Gibson; Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[MIN-24:039](#)

Minutes for the Public Services Committee Meeting on Tuesday, April 16, 2024

**Attachments:** [Minutes](#)

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

**Aye:** 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

[MIN-24:043](#)

Minutes for the Special Called Public Services Committee Meeting on Monday, April 29, 2024

**Attachments:** [Minutes](#)

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

**Aye:** 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

[MIN-24:055](#)

Minutes for the Special Called Public Services Committee Meeting on Wednesday, June 5, 2024

**Attachments:** [Minutes 06.05.2024](#)

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

**Aye:** 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

### 4. NEW BUSINESS

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*RESOLUTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED*

[RES-24:039](#)

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE WILLINGNESS OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO AUTHORIZE THE GRANTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS UNDER 49 U.S.C. SECTION 5339 FROM THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) FOR THE JONESBORO ECONOMICAL TRANSPORTATION (JET) SYSTEM

**Sponsors:** Grants, JETS and Finance

**Attachments:** [2024-04-26 HSIT Split Letter FFY2021 Funds](#)

*Patti Lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, approached the podium and said, so I just want to make sure, so this is that money Hot Springs had left over from 2021 in their transit account. And so what they are doing is they are saying, here Jonesboro, go ahead and take it. Is that what I am understanding from that? More or less? Someone off camera said, that is correct. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, they had a certain amount of time to spend it, and they didn't spend it, so they are sending it to us. Mrs. Lack said, yes, I noticed that it was like three years on that, so that is awfully nice of them to do that.*

*Alejandra Morales with the Grants Department approached the podium and said, I just wanted to say that is correct. They didn't have enough time to be able to apply for this funding before it expired, so they just rather give it to us. Because we would have the time and the resources to get that in place. Chairman Chris Gibson said, okay, thank you.*

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

**Aye:** 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

**5. PENDING ITEMS**

**6. OTHER BUSINESS**

[COM-24:019](#)

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM JETS

**Sponsors:** JETS

*Direct of JETS Lee Wells approached the podium and said, good evening, everyone. I just wanted to touch base and kind of let you all know where we are. I have handed out some ridership reports for you guys. Unfortunately, I was one short. I do apologize. That is just to kind of keep you updated on where we are with our ridership. I just wanted to share a little bit of information about some of the things we've been doing and going through. We did just recently finish our triennial review, which we were very pleased with the results on that in order to get not only the insight from the FTA in the auditing group to find out where we were, but also how we can continue to improve our service. Some of the things that we have done, I wanted to share. I know, Mr. Gibson, we talked about the video in our buses. We actually found a solution for that and have implemented that in our buses to where we have that video solution now on all of our fleet. What that allows us to have is that ability to be able to instantly pull anything up*

*that is going on on a bus if it's needed. It also does have that reporting that we had talked about previously. We have that installed currently and rolling in our buses.*

*Chairman Chris Gibson said, on all the rolling stock? Mr. Wells said, yes sir. We are very pleased with that. We are also looking forward to getting our upgrades started and completed on our routing software. That is the software we use to schedule our trips for primarily our paratransit, which is our non-bus systems, and then also to have more integration with our bus routing systems, to have us more access to future opportunities that may arise. We are getting that started with them, and have been communicated by them that we should have it in place probably within the next few months. That is barring any hiccups with the software integration and such. We do also still have the trolleys coming. I have spoken with the company, and we are still on schedule with what their intended plan is, which should be the end of September, is what their scheduled plan is on that. And then once we get those in, we will be able to integrate that into our systems that we already have in place, and to be able to make improvements on our service moving forward.*

*Chairman Chris Gibson said, thank you. Any questions for Lee? Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman? Hey, Lee. I was just looking at this report and kind of compared month to month this year and such; but do you have any data, you know, year to year comparison? How we are doing saying the first five months of this year versus the first five months of last year? Mr. Wells said, yes. We have the ability to pull that up if that is something you would like. I can get that information pulled, and I can send it to the council. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, that would be great. Thank you, Lee. Mr. Wells said, yes sir. Chairman Chris Gibson said, thanks, LJ. Any other questions for Lee? Yes, sir.*

*Councilmember Brian Emison said, Lee, how are we doing on staffing currently? Mr. Wells said, staffing is actually very, very good right now to where we are fully staffed with our full-time drivers. We are able to use that full-time staff to help supplement what we are, the small amount that we are lacking in our part-time staffing, that once we do get our rolling stock in a better position, we already have that staff in place to be able to improve our routes. I know we had talked about previously on how we are running on our limited service, which is our red, blue and green routes, and that they have one hour headways. With the staffing we have in place, once our rolling stock gets to where it needs to be, we will have the ability to increase that out to a four route system or a five route system, which will make those headways a lot less; and then also give some crossover at some of the major stops in our area to where that will improve our service. Councilmember Brian Emison said, thank you, sir.*

*Chairman Chris Gibson said, once we receive our trolleys, what do you project our need to be for rolling stock moving forward? Mr. Wells said, we are still evaluating that based upon not just what we currently have with where our system is or should be with our full five-route system, but also looking at the opportunity to be able to improve our service. We have been talking and discussing on ways we can do that. That is one of the reasons why we did upgrade our software is to allow us more opportunity to be able to improve our service, whether that be adding different types of service in the city of Jonesboro, or to increase our routes in the city of Jonesboro. It's just until we get to that position, I don't really have a definitive answer on that. But we do have the contacts and the plans that we are working on, that once we get to the point that we can get to our regular service, to where we can start looking at these opportunities that are available to us, that we should be able to quickly move on those. Chairman Chris Gibson said, and you've got the drivers in place to cover those trolleys? Mr. Wells said, we have the drivers in place for our service. Chairman Chris Gibson said, what about to*

cover the trolleys once they arrive? Mr. Wells said, once the trolleys come in, and we start looking at doing any kind of improvements, again, whether that be additional types of service or additional routes, we will then have to look at increasing our staffing. Our staffing numbers now are based upon our standard routing system, which is our five routes and then our paratransit service. Our paratransit service is a growing service that we will see an increase in that as we increase the knowledge base and the ability to be able to service our clients. So the paratransit will have some expansion opportunities, and then again there are opportunities that we hope for in our regular fixed route service, which is the buses you would think of. Buses and trolleys. Chairman Chris Gibson said, thanks, Lee.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, question, Chairman. I have a couple of questions, but he asked a question that you answered, but put it in layman's terms. When you said once we get up to our service. What did you mean by that? Mr. Wells said, so currently we are running on a limited service. We are running only a red, blue and green route. This was a route system that was devised based upon, well, it was from around the Covid time, based upon the decrease of the traffic from customers riding and also the inability to find drivers. This was something that we made as a solution to where we took our service area, and we shrank that. It just takes longer to do that. We have not been in a position yet to get back to our full service, which is the full five-route service, as the system is intended to be. That is the design that that is. Now that we have our staffing in place for that five route system, as we get this rolling stock in place, then we will be able to go to the five route. Once we get to that five route, then we can start looking at other opportunities in order to make that service better.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, makes sense. Thank you. My other question is about financially; and I know my colleague Brian was asking about ridership. But I was looking at the quarterly revenue, and just saw the first quarter at roughly 10,000 from last year. Do you know where we are this year at this point? Mr. Wells said, for the first quarter? It should be on that report as far as having the yearly breakdown for last year. I believe it is separated into four quarters. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, okay, you have it in months. Mr. Wells said, then the second paper is listed in months for this year because we've only went through a quarter and a half. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, yes. So we are a little under. Okay, I got it. So my next question is, and I am sorry. I walked out for a moment. I know Councilmember Williams has been asking about this quite a bit, but the covers and the buses and the stops, you know. Mr. Wells said, the shelters. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, yes, right. So, where are we on those?

Mr. Wells said, so the shelter program, the grant that we have (and Alejandra may be able to speak a little bit more on that), but we are in the process of that grant, of getting that finalized and processed. There are a few steps that have to be done that we are still getting worked through. And essentially once we finalize those steps and get that FTA approval, we are in the position we need to be in to make that happen quickly. We are preemptively preparing for that approval. We are just waiting for that approval process. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, so that is for Grants, but my question too, following that, is have you requested or asked Administration or have given some kind of plan as it relates to if we don't have grants or just what it would cost? Can we implement this in our improvement plans or other things that are coming up? Have you suggested or recommended that? Mr. Wells said, with where we are, we have made lengthy discussions about all of our services and that includes our shelters. We are not expecting to have difficulty with the approval of this grant. It is just sometimes a lengthy process; but if for some reason that did not become

available, we have already made the contacts and the resources and have discussed on what it is that we want to do, on what the project is that we are looking to do, to where we are in the position to immediately spin and try to reevaluate how we can continue that project without that funding that we had originally intended for. But as far as having a specific backup plan in place, it is not something that we have actively-

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I ask, and I'm sorry. I didn't mean to jump. Mr. Wells said, I just said it's not something that we actively have available.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, sure. I asked because it's extremely hot out there, and I know it's getting hotter. And I just think we ought to make certain that we are at least talking about it and have some kind of plan for that for our citizens.

Thank you. Mr. Wells said, yes. And just again, also one of the things with our moving to our full service, that will reduce that time that they are having to wait. Which I know the shelter improvements are definitely an important piece of our business, but that one thing on its own will also assist in that area by not having to wait as long at that bus stop. Whereas before a customer may wait 30 minutes or more for a bus at a stop, the buses are coming through every 30 minutes or less once we go to that full service. So their wait times are going to be drastically decreased.

Councilmember Ann Williams said, and we also have the federal funds that the MPO authorized by resolution at the last joint meeting to designate for public transit. That's a pretty good amount of money there including for operating expense. I had mentioned this, and John Street had mentioned it at a meeting too, that we need to look at perhaps increasing the drivers' salaries to be competitive with other companies and agencies that are hiring those with CDL license. And because it's competitive, to be able to recruit drivers, and we are competing with places that might be paying more; and we need to be competitive. We need to look at increasing drivers' salary just so we won't have that turnover.

Mr. Wells said, and that is something that we are always evaluating, not just in our office but also as a city looking at those things and seeing what we can do. We've been very blessed to be able to have the opportunity to get ourselves staffed; but as you said, any type of professional driver like that, a commercial license, which makes that person a professional driver, then there is a market for that. It is something that we have to do. We are doing things to be able to make ourselves more enticing in the ways that we can, but also always reevaluating and looking for opportunities to make it better.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman, I know Councilwoman Williams took JETS to Parker Park, and so I think too often on the council we are not users sometimes of the things that we're involved in. And that doesn't make us all bad that we are sometimes not users of the things. I don't play soccer and so on and so forth. It's hard for us to all be users of the things we do at the city, but I was thinking about Mr. Hines challenge to walk with him down on Southwest Drive. I think if all of us stood for 30 minutes on South Caraway and waited on a bus in 100 degree heat, I bet we'd all get in a little bit more of a hurry. And so I think sometimes we have to put a perspective on what it is like to be a user. Chairman Chris Gibson said, thank you. Councilmember Ann Williams said, thank you. Chairman Chris Gibson said, anything else by the committee? Anything from the public? Thank you, Lee.

**Filed**

[COM-24:020](#)

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM PARKS & RECREATION

**Sponsors:** Parks & Recreation

*Parks and Recreation Director Dann Kapales approached the podium and said, thank you for having me. I appreciate the meeting today and the opportunity to update you. First off, I just want to thank the ones that we able to be at the pool opening on Friday. Ann, I know you took the JETS bus system to get there, and you made it on time. Councilmember Ann Williams said, and it was worth it. It is beautiful, absolutely beautiful. Mr. Kapales said, thank you. Thank you so much; and Dr. Coleman being the first to get into the water if you haven't seen the pictures. He rolled his pants up to his knees and went into the water. So, yes, it was a good sight to see, but he was the first into the water. We are very much so proud of the pool at Parker Park and that opening. I believe the numbers were somewhere around 500 folks that got into the water over the weekend, so it was a really good weekend with the opening and just an absolutely beautiful pool. So I think a lot of the folks that had their hands in it, a lot of different departments within the city had their hands involved in it. It was just a good accomplishment for a winter project.*

*As far as programming and activities, you know, we were in that transition period where we came out of our spring sports. We had 1600 kids playing recreational soccer. I think we had over 300 kids playing travel soccer. Softball, we've started seeing an increase again in numbers. I get to brag on the Mountain Dew tournament. The numbers have started going back up. Last year, we hit a really low, which was a tough year, but it was like 32 teams last year. This year, we were 65 teams, and so that was a nice recovery. And we hope to see that continue to rise and go back up to what it used to be. We know the park is in great condition. It's just making sure we get a lot of communication out to folks and get them back into the park and utilize it. Currently, we did put out a bid for Field 10, Southside, to get it renovated and turned around. And that project will start, I believe, July 9th. So we will be seeing the fences and the dugouts and the backstops and all the stuff needed to get that field up and going, so that field will be taken care of and actually will be our premier field, which would be nice because they will have LED lights. It will have the up lighting. It will be the field that everybody wants to be on in the championship games. So I'm really proud of what is happening out at Southside. If you go to the Miracle League field, you will see that there has been a lot of little cleanup and projects. So we were able to hire a company to come in and do a really nice soft washing of the block and the bricks and get it cleaned up, and then pressure wash the concrete. They did some test runs on the rubber surfacing and with a machine that almost looks like a zero-turn mower, but it's got the brushes underneath it; and it did a really nice job of cleaning up that test spot. So we're going to get a cost on what it would take to go through and actually clean that surface and get it rejuvenated and brightened up and hopefully get another couple of years out of that surfacing. It's what that place needs is to be continued to be touched up and maintained and be a first class facility. And that is what our guys are out there doing, just trying to find ways to make sure it stays that way.*

*We did change our flagging system out there. Used to, we had small flags across the top. We took those down. We put one big Miracle League flag right in the very center of it. And one of the reasons we did that was we noticed every time we had to change those small flags, it was just monthly, we had to change them out. The guys were having to climb on the roof, climb on other locations, and it was starting to look like a hazard. It was becoming a routine thing. So we changed it to where we could actually bring a lift in and change that one right in the middle for safety purposes; and I think appearance-wise it looks better to have one big flying flag right in the center of it.*

*If you go out to Joe Mack, you can go out to First Security field right now. The guys, I think, have put down seven pallets of sod, patching a bunch of dead spots, bare spots, worn out spots, just things that needed to be done. We finally, two weeks ago,*

college kids, high school kids that we have been waiting for have finally come on board. We went from about four staffed to fourteen. And it's amazing what you can do when you can actually get some young legs and bodies out there working. They are getting some stuff done out there that we've been needing to get done for a while.

As far as other activities, I know we did a tree planting out at the Greenway trail behind where the mall was located; so that was part of our Earth Day program. We will be doing a little ceremony out there because Jonesboro is in its ninth year as Tree City, USA; and that is something that we do every year to make sure we keep that dedication along with, we do tree inventory and make sure that we have a tree budget and continue to try to continue that direction. So that is just another piece that we try to maintain.

As far as Craighead Forest, we are, I think, today was our third day; and then this Thursday will be our fourth day of having the Ridge Riders, which is our young group of mountain bikers who have been doing project days and working the trails. They have been spending three, four or five hours out there just cleaning the trails, helping build bridges, cutting limbs and just working, maintaining what they utilize throughout the year riding on. And so it's nice to have those high school kids out there putting in those volunteer hours and working alongside our guys on a project that they really love and care for. Just a lot of things are happening. I know that's just a small portion of what we handle, but any questions?

Chairman Chris Gibson said, yes, just real quick. Jumping back to the Mountain Dew, you said it trended down for a few years, and I assume some of that was Covid related and then it started increasing again. Did most of the communities that are our size, are they starting to see that rebound too? Or are they above where we are at in regards to volumes and tournaments? Mr. Kapales said, no, I would say what we are seeing is heavier competition than we've ever had before; and we are having to figure out ways to compete with it and work with that competition. Covid was a big portion of it. And what caused that competition was the communities in central Arkansas that we were competing with, when Covid hit, baseball was heavy. Well, they had to find ways to fill those gaps that they weren't getting as many baseball tournaments as they were, so they started throwing softball in. They realized that softball was a profitable program also, so they continued with that; and it started pulling a lot of those teams that we were pulling up from central Arkansas. Now we are having to either try to get those back or reach out in other locations to bring teams in, just recovery and regroup.

Chairman Chris Gibson said, anything else by the committee? LJ? Councilmember LJ Bryant said, just curious. Who is in charge of Craighead now since Larry retired? Mr. Kapales said, Matt Shimasaki. He is an army ranger that honestly is leading that place very, very well, a young man that came by way of obviously military, and then he was working in construction, Boring Company. And honestly the moment I interviewed him, it didn't take me but about ten minutes to go, he's the guy that needs to be taking care of the place; and he is proving it every time I go out there. You can see he is bringing that level up every moment to the point that you sit down and talk about changes or things you would like to see done, the next day he's got it. He's on top of it. It's not a wait for a few weeks or have to revisit on it. He jumps on it and takes care of it. We were talking about the trail system and how we need to dedicate some folks to it. Well, with that dedication moment, he we needed to do it. He found two guys that are mountain bikers that wanted to work part time, and that is what they do. One is a college professor and one is a high school teacher; and what they do is this summer they are putting a lot of time into it. Obviously they are taking a lot of riding right now, but that is what they are going to do is focus solely on the mountain bike trails. That's

what their hours involve. They come out. They ride the trails. They are running the equipment through. They are patching it. They are making the trails are up to first class; and so he's just finding those different avenues to make sure the park is first class like it should be.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, the most challenging part, and his people are working hard at it, but people are littering more, which there is only so much we can do to prevent that. And his people are working super hard to clean it up, but it seems like people are trying harder than ever to litter even though his people are trying harder than ever to pick it up. So I don't know what our solution is there, but there is noticeably more litter even though I see them working hard to clean it up. Mr. Kapales said, yeah it is. It's just we have to continue to combat it; and I think the education that we have to continue, the Keep Jonesboro Beautiful education they keep putting out, we all have to be on the same page and that just has to be constant. We have to keep asking people not to litter and just educate them. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, maybe we need some more receptacles, and I know that is more work too. But it's also a lot of work to pick up the trash. So food for thought. Chairman Chris Gibson said, you know, that may be parks wide, because I think you and I had a conversation about baseball here a while back where some of the out of town visitors said that was their biggest complaint was trash on the ground of the facilities. Anything else by the committee?

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, yes sir, Chairman if you don't mind. You may have said this before, and this may be premature, but the shooting complex. I thought about that, and kind of where we are revenue wise and expenditure for that. I know you don't have that now. Mr. Kapales said, no, I don't have the numbers, but honestly, at any point, if you would like me to get you those numbers, I can. Yes sir. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I mean, next month's update will be fine, or I don't know if it looks better during hunting season or whatever. Mr. Kapales said, no, honestly I have no issue with getting the numbers and just getting those in your hands. That way, you can see what it looks like. Yes sir. Chairman Chris Gibson said, anything else by the committee? Anything by the public? Patti, did you want to address something?

Patti Lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, approached the podium and said, so this has to do with the Jonesboro Parks and Recreation Master Plan that we had. And I know that you all got a letter from Kitty Sloan talking about the Beatrice Park. So the one thing that I hope you can explain to me of how she wrote here is saying that the lowest ranking park was Beatrice Park, which was at 1.9, and the highest park rated in Jonesboro was the Union Park. And I assume this is over here at Union over here by the United Way. So if you can explain that, but then also too can you tell me, have you met with her? Because I know I had questioned at one time what was going on there; and I know that the residents put a lot of restrictions out there. So I guess it's talking about how we had a lot of ideas about what it would look like, but the implementation is a different thing. So can you explain that, because her letter when I read it was kind of concerning? So can you address those? Thanks.

Mr. Kapales approached the podium and said, yes. Kitty and I have emailed back and forth. I haven't actually met with her, but we've emailed back and forth and had great conversations with Kitty. She's very observant and very caring. Obviously that park means a lot to her and her family, but it's not just that park. She looked at the entire plan. She was very observant throughout the plan, and it was nice to see somebody sit down and read through it. As far as that park, the reason why I got a low number is because it was a piece of property that we acquired that, at this point, we really have just mowed and maintained to a standard of keeping it cleaned up. We've not done any



*projects on it. We've not changed it. We've not adjusted it. So that is why it's got a low number because nothing has been done to it. And part of the reason why it hasn't been done is because we were waiting for the master park plan to get done to get our priority list and be able to put together a package as far as which projects need to be first and so on. That is why that park was ranked low. If you look at Union Park, that was a park we just recently finished when the master park plan started up. So when you have a brand new park, new pavilion, new sod, new playground, new sidewalks, new fencing, you're going to automatically get a high ranking because everything around it is new to that park. So that is where you get your two differences within those park systems. Chairman Chris Gibson said, thanks, Danny.*

**Filed**

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Aye:** 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter