



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

5:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

PUBLIC SERVICES COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING AT 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL 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 (ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE) INITIATED AND CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

Present 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Councilmember Chris Moore motioned, seconded by Councilmember John Street, to suspend the rules and walk on RES-24:031. All voted aye.

[RES-24:031](#)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO AGREE TO A SETTLEMENT IN THE ANDERSON LAWSUIT AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS

City Attorney Carol Duncan stated, I know that we have people here from the AML. Chris, are you ready with a motion? Councilmember Chris Moore said, sure. I'll make a motion we suspend the rules and add RES-24:031 to the agenda. Councilmember John Street said, second. Councilmember Moore said, I have a motion and a second to add RES-24:031 to the agenda. Any comments by the Council? Ms. Duncan said, let me read it first Chris. [Ms. Duncan read RES-24:031. Councilmember Chris Moore is acting President Pro-Tempore of the City Council during this matter.]

Councilmember Street moved to adopt. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, hold on, have we actually voted on...? Councilmember Moore stated, my motion is to suspend the rules and add this item to the agenda and we have a motion and a second. All in favor say aye. All voiced aye. No Nays were voiced.

Ms. Duncan said, sorry, I got ahead of you. Councilmember Moore said, now, I make a motion to adopt. Councilmember Street said, second. Councilmember Moore asked, does anyone on the Council have questions or comments? Councilmember David McClain said, Chairman, I guess if you are chairing this portion, so AML, I remember Carol, we talked a little bit about AML is going to pay the remainder. We pay the \$35,000 and the remainder goes to AML, correct? Ms. Duncan said, I think it would be best to have Annie Depper, which is legal counsel, come up and give a

presentation briefly and then you can ask any questions of her. Councilmember McClain said, perfect, okay.

Mayor Harold Copenhaver stated, and, Council, before Ms. Depper comes up. This item is now on the floor for discussion. Before us, we have Ms. Annie Depper and Keith Wren to speak on the proposed mediation offer on behalf of the Arkansas Municipal League. All questions or comments will be directed to legal counsel and then after the vote, I might make a short comment. Thank you. The floor is yours Ms. Depper.

Ms. Depper said, thank you Mayor. Good evening Council, my name is Annie Depper and I am an attorney with Fuqua Campbell Law Firm in Little Rock, Arkansas. Our firm represents Mayor Copenhaver as well as Chief Elliott in the lawsuit that was filed by Mrs. Anderson. Here with me this evening is Keith Wren. He is an attorney with the Arkansas Municipal League. John Wilkerson and Mark Hayes wanted to be here this evening, but they are in D.C. Mr. Wren has handled these types of cases for years. He is very knowledgeable and I am very glad that he is here with me this evening.

As you know, Mrs. Anderson filed a lawsuit against Mayor Copenhaver and against Chief Elliott in December of 2023. In that lawsuit, she had various claims that they were a violation of her due process rights, violation of her right to remonstrate, and right to freedom of speech and a violation of the Arkansas Whistleblower Protection Act. In that lawsuit, through the course of it, pending since December, we have had a couple of hearings and ultimately the judge ordered us to mediation, ordered all of the parties to mediation.

We took part in that mediation in good faith on March 28, 2024. Ultimately, at the end of that day, we were unable to reach a settlement. However, the mediator the following day after he had heard from both sides during the mediation had a day long of discussion, sent us a mediators proposal, a proposal of what the mediator thought would be an appropriate settlement that maybe both sides could accept. That proposal included the following, one, a payment of \$99,000 to Mrs. Anderson; two, that Mrs. Anderson termination be removed from her personnel file and be replaced with a resignation letter; and three, that there would be a neutral recommendation for any potential employers that had inquiries on Mrs. Anderson. If everyone was to accept those terms, then the case would be dismissed with prejudice. The case would be over.

A little bit on that \$99,000, as was discussed a little bit between you earlier, \$35,000 of that would be paid by the City of Jonesboro. \$64,000 of that will be paid by the Arkansas Municipal League. So, at the end of the day for the City to approve this settlement, it is \$35,000, done, end, no other hidden costs behind that just a straight \$35,000. Discussed this issue of settlement and this proposal with Mayor Copenhaver, also with Chief Elliott, and in my opinion in reviewing this case, I think it is an appropriate settlement.

Ultimately this case would land in front of a jury and you never know, I have tried to guess in the past and I have been unsuccessful at it, you never know what a jury is going to do. And, so, what do you do then? You look to mitigate some risks. With a settlement, you are mitigating those risks. Let's talk about what happens if we went to a jury trial. Again, have no idea what a jury would do with this case, but ultimately when you are examining a case, you have to think about if we lost.

If the plaintiff won this case, what would that look like? The plaintiff would be entitled to damages, back pay. She has requested damages for emotional suffering, for

damage to reputation and so those would be damages the jury could consider if they wanted her to win, if they found that she had proved her case, and then they could ultimately award her whatever they wanted to. Back pay would be a definite number, but these other damages, emotional pain and suffering, those type of things, the jury could award what they wanted.

What I think is very important for everyone to keep in mind is if we went to trial and lost and I am not saying that we would, but this is weighing risks, what could happen. And, it is something that I have to think about and I have to counsel my clients on. If we went to trial and lost, in addition to her damages, her attorney would be entitled to his attorney's fees. And, as we all know, attorneys can be expensive, particularly when an attorney has taken a case all the way through trial. I think a number of \$100,000, at least, for attorney's fees could be what we would be looking at or what the City would be looking at. And, so, this is again mitigation of risks.

There is a settlement offer here in which the City would only have to pay \$35,000 done or if it is rejected by this Council, we continue down the road through litigation, ultimately land in a jury trial and that jury trial could result in expenses, damages, costs, well over \$100,000 and that would be taxpayer money that the City would be looking at. So, again, weighing risks, mitigating those risks the best we can.

I advised Mayor Copenhaver and Chief Elliott that I thought it was an appropriate settlement. Ultimately, Mayor Copenhaver and Chief Elliott agreed to it and so did Mrs. Anderson. So, at this point, all of the parties have agreed to the settlement. What's left is the City Council has to approve it as well. If you do not, then we will not settle the case. We will continue to go through litigation, through discovery. That could take 18 months, 24 months, through potentially some appeals and again, land in a jury trial. And, so those are the terms of this settlement. I am here to answer any questions about that.

I would state that currently we are in the middle of litigation. If you do not vote for this, that the settlement is shot down, then we will end up continuing litigation through discovery, deposition, interrogatories, requested production, all of that. So, at this time, I am just here to talk about settlement, not to talk about the facts of this particular case because we are currently in the middle of litigation. And, so, I am here for any questions that you may have of me or Mr. Wren.

Councilmember Moore said, as I propose this to the Council and I discussed it with our City Counsel, we have no questions on the basis of the merits of the case. Simply before us is do we want to limit our liability to \$35,000, yes or no? All counsel has agreed that would be a prudent move. So, that is the only item to be discussed. We have a motion and a second. I would ask the Clerk to call the roll. City Clerk April Leggett called the roll, Ms. Porter – I vote yes; Mr. Emison – Aye; Dr. Charles Coleman – Yes; Mr. Moore – Aye; Ms. Williams – Yes; Mr. Gibson – Aye; Mr. Street – Aye; Mr. Johnson – Aye; Mr. Bryant – No; Mr. Hafner – Aye; Dr. Anthony Coleman – Aye; Mr. McClain – Can I ask a point of clarification first? Councilmember Moore said, discussion has past. I mean if it was a point on the \$35,000, specifically, that would be the only question we would entertain, but the time for discussion has passed and call the roll. Councilmember McClain said, you didn't give that option. Councilmember Moore said, the option for what? Councilmember McClain said, to ask the question. You just said... Councilmember Moore said, well, there is no discussion. There is only one item before us with no other option. We are simply voting up or down. Do we want to accept the \$35,000 settlement, yes or no? Councilmember McClain said, right. I had a question, but I mean...aye. Councilmember Moore asked, will you announce the results Madam Clerk? Ms. Leggett said, 11 aye and 1 nay. Councilmember Moore said, the item passes.

Ms. Depper said, thank you. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you Annie and Keith as well. Council, the only comment that I will make at this time is I do thank you for your guidance on this matter. I appreciate that the city can move forward as well and I hope, Mrs. Anderson, we wish her well in her future endeavors.

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

Aye: 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and Ann Williams

Nay: 1 - LJ Bryant

Enactment No: R-EN-026-2024

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Moore, seconded by Councilperson Chris Gibson, to Approve the Consent Agenda. The motioned PASSED

Aye: 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

[MIN-24:031](#)

MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON APRIL 2, 2024

Attachments: [CC Minutes 04022024](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-24:024](#)

A RESOLUTION TO THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO ENTER INTO AN INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT WITH GOTCHER HOLDINGS, LLC

Attachments: [Indemnification Agreement - Gotcher Holdings LLC](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-027-2024

[RES-24:026](#)

A RESOLUTION TO CONTRACT WITH CAVENAUGH AUTOMOTIVE GROUP FOR SPONSORSHIP OF A BASEBALL AND SOCCER FIELD AT JOE MACK CAMPBELL PARK

Attachments: [Cavanaugh Auto Group Turf Contract](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-028-2024

[RES-24:027](#)

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE WILLINGNESS OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO AUTHORIZE THE GRANTS AND COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION BLOCK GRANT (EECBG) FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-029-2024

[RES-24:028](#)

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE WILLINGNESS OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO AUTHORIZE THE GRANTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA), FY24 BUSES AND BUS FACILITIES COMPETITIVE GRANT FOR THE JONESBORO ECONOMICAL TRANSPORTATION (JET)

Attachments: [Buses & Bus Facilities Budget](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-030-2024

[RES-24:030](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE JONESBORO CITY COUNCIL TO PURCHASE SOFTWARE AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH TRIPSPARK FOR JONESBORO ECONOMICAL TRANSIT FOR ROUTING SOFTWARE

Attachments: [Jonesboro Software License and Maintenance Agreement Migration from Ro](#)
[RES-24-003 JET Formula 339](#)
[Jonesboro - Novus Pricing Summary](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-031-2024

RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

[RES-24:017](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS AS RECOMMENDED BY MAYOR HAROLD COPENHAVER

Councilmember John Street asked to be recused from voting and discussion of RES-24:017 due to his membership on the CWL Board of Directors.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman asked to be recused from voting and discussion of RES-24:017 due to being nominated to serve on the Impact Fee Research Committee.

Councilmember Ann Williams said, I have a question. This has come up in the Committee. Is it necessary to recuse oneself if you are serving on a committee? City Attorney Carol Duncan said, I don't. I mean we talked about this before. I think that those of you that would be serving on some of these, I mean you are not on it for monetary gain and if you are not going to receive any monetary gain, I don't think technically that you would have to recuse, but I understand if people feel more comfortable that way. But, I don't think technically you would have to.

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

Aye: 10 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;Janice Porter;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

Abstain: 2 - Anthony Coleman and John Street

Enactment No: R-EN-032-2024

[RES-24:025](#)

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE WILLINGNESS OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO PARTNER WITH THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS: JOB 101073, HWY. 351 CONNECTOR (AGGIE RD.) (JONESBORO) (S)

Attachments: [Diagram](#)
[Pages from 2024-02-21_r101073 45% Plan Submittal](#)

Mayor Copenhaver said, I just kind of want to reiterate this project will include a pedestrian infrastructure along the road as well. It's estimated in the five million dollar range and the city share would be one million dollars which would be capped at that figure. This is consistent with these types and shared projects that we do with ARDOT. But, obviously, Arkansas State University is not here, but they are very much involved in this project. I do believe we have a Chamber of Commerce representative here as well with Steven Lamm if any questions were needed. The floor is open.

Councilmember David McClain stated, Mayor, I did have a couple of comments last, I had one or two questions. I spoke with Craig earlier and he said that this was one of the projects that have been on, and Craig correct me if I am wrong, on a list for the last maybe ten years or so. I was trying to understand that. I know the list that you, we spoke about earlier, but also have we done any kind of studies as far as has there been a study done by the Highway Department or us that shows there is a huge need for this road or anything like that? Engineering Director Craig Light said, this connection road has been on the list of projects for at least a decade, probably a decade and a half. It's just been one of those projects. Actually, I think it predates me of being a want of the community of the decision makers. There is a document called the JTIP, Jonesboro Transportation Improvement Plan. I am pretty sure it was even included on that list as their connection road. So, it has been around for a long time. It's a project that has been pushed for a while. I'm not aware of any traffic studies that show the amount of traffic that would be diverted from Aggie Road over to this, but we know that it would divert quite a bit of traffic from the airport and from the new neighborhoods through it. But, I am not aware of any study that has been done on it.

Councilmember McClain asked, so, if we deny it, if we say we don't want to do this, we don't want to spend one million dollars from the city to partner with the Highway Department, what happens? Does that road, does that connector go straight over 351 or how does that connect, the overpass, does it turn back and connect to 351? Mr. Light stated, it connects to Airport Road. Councilmember McClain said, that's what I mean, Airport Road. Mr. Light said, yes, Airport Road. Councilmember McClain said, it would go back that way. How much is, what is the price difference? A million dollars versus going back to back to Airport Road? Mr. Light said, it is already going back to Airport Road. This new road would connect just to north end of the bridge. So, the bridge would land, come down, and then this new project would take off. So, you know, if you, if the Council decides not to fund the project, then the project will just die on the vine I would say. Unless the city is going to participate in it, ARDOT is not going to move forward with the project. Mayor Copenhaver said, which at this point and time, ARDOT has already approved the four million dollars. And, also, with the University, I think you are probably well aware that the veterinarian facilities here. I think it's a 30,000 sq. ft. facility which to be on that road which means

about 120 students per year. That should be completed in 2026 is their game plan as well. So, again, that's all on the table.

Councilmember McClain said, I will make this last comment and I will be done. One thing that, I think the biggest reservation that I have is, Craig, you said it is on a want list, but I don't know if there is a huge need. When I watched the last meeting that this was discussed at, it talked about, everybody talked about it being a great entrance to the city, but I really didn't hear a we need this to do x. And, maybe, I missed that, but, at the same time, I feel like I didn't hear that and I also want to make sure we don't end up spending. I know you said it was capped at a million dollars, but things seem to tend to change sometimes. Mayor Copenhaver asked, do you want to address that Craig? Councilmember McClain asked, how can we guarantee that it is going to be capped at a million? Mr. Light said, that is the agreement with ARDOT. Councilmember McClain asked, so they will cover the rest? They will cover the remainder? Mr. Light responded, yes, anything over the project goes long, then they are responsible for it. Mayor Copenhaver said, and, it is consistent Councilman with what the projects we've done in the past with them. So, any increased cost in that project, that is ARDOT's side, not the city's. Councilmember McClain said, okay. Let me ask, I said it was the last thing, one more thing. I know the Chamber, Mark spoke, is there a reason Jonesboro Unlimited maybe didn't help chip in with this project? Mayor Copenhaver said, Steven, if you are here, can you answer any those type questions? Would you like to come forward? Councilmember McClain said, I don't even know if we asked them, but, I mean, half a million, I would sleep a little bit better with a half a million. Vice President of Economic Development for Jonesboro Unlimited Steven Lamm said, I am not in a position to speak in advance of Mark Young, President of Jonesboro Unlimited. But, I can tell you that we're just wildly supportive of the project from an infrastructure perspective for the city. State funds are oftentimes rare and when Jonesboro has a chance to claim those, JU and the Chamber will line up behind the support of that. And so, an opportunity to invest on behalf of the city, the airport, ASU, and the people in Jonesboro would just be a good stance. Mark would have to answer questions maybe around what our quality of place and infrastructure funding could be put towards, but that's just not something that I'll be able to answer.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, Mayor, I have a question. I don't know who can answer this, maybe Danny or somebody, but I just thought about it. Well, let me say this. It's in our ward, so that is probably why we are a little bit more invested in this discussion. So, I think for me, it's a great idea. So, my question is I remember some plans regarding the RAISE grant and potential trails and bikeways or whatever through Aggie and I heard you say pedestrian crossing and so on and so forth. But, that doesn't change that? Will that still go through Aggie? Does that change any kind of way or what? Mayor Copenhaver said, you can go ahead and give an update on that. Chief Administrative Officer Brian Richardson said, sure. The RAISE grant, that trail is actually not even, that trail is not funded. We are kind of in the completing phases of final planning from Aggie Road. So, from Red Wolf to University Heights, that trail is fully funded as it sits right now. Now, this new road will also have a side path on it. And, so, putting a million dollars towards this road doesn't have any impact on the pedestrian infrastructure and trail that is being put in the planning stages along Aggie Road.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman, said, yeah, I was just making certain that we still had plans to do that and I didn't recall that it was funded. So, thank you. Mr. Richardson said, absolutely, and you know, part of the appeal and the discussions on this road was also, you know if we are trying to make Aggie Road a more pedestrian friendly corridor for cyclists and runners and what have you, then it behooves us to also consider getting some of those vehicles away from that road. And, you know,

Aggie Road is a curvy road. It is narrow in places and mainly goes, it's almost all residential if I remember right. Yeah, this road would divert some of that traffic away from that and hopefully make a little bit more pedestrian friendly. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, thank you Mayor for allowing me to share that. I just thought it would be prudent to mention that at this time. Mayor Copenhagen said, yes sir councilman.

Councilmember John Street said, I would just like to say that Craig's probably right. We were working on this and Ann would remember, it has probably been 17 years through the MPO with collaboration with the City and the Airport Commission to facilitate a better, a really nice entrance to our airport due to the economic effect it would have on people who come here and that is the only part of the city they ever see. They don't realize how important the airport is, but it is probably as important as any interstate that could ever come through the city. It will provide a great entrance. It will also afford ASU the opportunity to open up the east side where they are putting their veterinarian school. And, this is money I don't think we can afford to pass up. It's a rare occasion that ARDOT steps up and agrees to do this project. We tried to do it through a TIGER grant, 16-17 years ago, but it has never been off our radar. We have always worked to do that very thing. So, it's a blessing that we're getting the opportunity to do it. Councilmember Ann Williams said, I think if we don't do this, we will regret it after the vet school. Councilmember Chris Moore said, it is also worth mentioning, isn't there a development plan right in that location. So, if that moves forward, we won't have the opportunity in the future to realistically be able to put a road through it, the subdivision. So, keep that in mind also.

Dr. Richard Wang, 101 University Drive, said, I urge you to listen to Councilman McClain and others who have some concerns, short term perhaps, concerns. Concerns about the fact that there has not been a lot of transparency coming forward. We learned about this program, most of us that aren't in the know, on with the report of the committee. Right?, the council committee that said, yes, we support this resolution or this proposal and we are going to send it forward. And, that is where we are tonight. That was six days ago and now we are here. I understand that it is a resolution. We pass everything by resolutions anymore. There is no second reading. I can't come here and say, "what is your emergency?" because that is no longer the case. So, what goes tonight is it. This is the end, just like the deal you just made on the complaint. That coupled with what I just heard. I'm not sure, who did I heard it from, the city engineer?, that the negative lack of support from the city on this rather paltry amount of money, right. It is symbolic, those who have orchestrated this plan, who have authored it, are bringing the council in, right, as a symbolic, right. We don't want to go forward without the city council. This is your card, right. You are putting it out there, your chip, you are in the game now. You are in the game when you do this. What interested me about what I just heard though is that in the engineer's opinion, I think I was right, the engineer's opinion, the council's failure to support would mean the project would not go forward. I heard that right, yes? Can somebody tell me that? I heard that right, without the council's approval tonight. So, this is really even more important, right, for someone to stand up and say, you know, maybe there are others, and I heard at least one councilman offer some almost right move to put this off, the motion. I would say, this is the most beautiful spot and I am biased, right. I live on that corner house. That's out there most of you know that. This is the spot that, maybe I know it better than most of you do. Some of you grew up here, right, and you know that spot. How long do I have? One more minute? Is that okay? Half a minute? A Wang half a minute. It is irreplaceable. Most cities would defend this property even though they didn't own it and the university owns it for the moment, right. They would defend politically in every way they could, this property, because there would be a realization, right. You can't recreate this. So, right, giving up this place that most cities would die for in my opinion. And, I've seen some of them. For what? For another

state road that hasn't been explained, right? I was listening. Good job. But, you know, I needed more. Could you take it two weeks, over the two weeks, and talk to people about it. Let them know. There was a little petting zoo on Saturday morning, beautiful weather, nice day. Anybody there? No? Just me and my dog. Mayor Copenhagen said, no, I was there. I was there with a grandchild. Dr. Wang said, I'm not asking you where you were. There were hundreds of people there, right. There was a petting zoo. They were riding and it was breaking my heart because somebody had the sense of humor that is beyond mine to continue with this because everybody knew, right, that was in the know, knew that. And, who didn't know? Everybody. I hate this expression, but it's in Arkansas. Everybody in attention, right, didn't know. Nobody knew about it, right. Nobody knew about it. Here we are, right. Take it to your people. We deserve discussion. Take it to your people. See how, I'll end, see how they feel, how strongly they feel about giving up this piece of property for a state highway that will save them a little time on their trip to the airport. Because that is one of the, I'm not being fair, because there are other reasons for it, but that is one. With a straight face, I say that's not up to us, voters, right. I have not been to the airport. It's put out there as one of the three or four. They need to express, you need to express yourselves better to us and spend the two weeks to learn something about this project because there is no going back. Thank you so much for your time. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you Mr. Wang, and I do want to address. Alan, would you come up and kind of give us a little background on that. Mr. Wang brought up timeframe. If you would, just give us a little history on this when it comes to the requirements, MPO, and the public meetings that have been set forth.

MPO Director Alan Pillow said, yes sir. This most recent plan that this project was listed in was adopted I think about a year a half to two years ago. It is called the Transportation Improvement Program and the subsequent statewide Transportation Improvement Program. It basically outlines all of the federal and state funds for roadway projects over a four year span. The project that we are talking about right now is outlined in that particular plan. It was outlined for prospective for 2026. I know this, Mr. Street discussed for a second there that this is a project that was discussed long before this actually came about. But, even throughout just the entirety of the Transportation Improvement Program, there is an extensive public comment period that goes out. The public website is made. A public hearing is had beforehand to display maps of where projects are intended to go. Requests for public comment in any capacity for a number of time. And, anytime we make changes to that plan, even the most minuscule fashion after the fact, it goes back out, the entirety of the plan goes back out for public comment any time that we make any adjustment to this plan. So, as far as it being out to the public, at least from our office, it's as public as we physically make it in my understanding. Councilmember McClain said, let me ask you Alan, so you guys make it public, do we then turn around, Brian or the Mayor, do we then turn around and put that information out? I don't remember, I don't recall there being a public meeting about this project in particular. Mr. Pillow said, it was a meeting to discuss that we tried to get folks to come to. They discussed the entirety of the projects in that plan because it's really, each time this comes out, which kind of speaks to the fact that whenever this money does come about, there is only a little bit of it at a time. So, there was only maybe six, seven projects, and a lot of that was system preservation projects. Councilmember McClain said, but you are talking about that as a whole. If I made a plan, if I made a change to the plan over in west Jonesboro or in Craighead County or whatever, I know this is made up of different counties, if I made a change, we would have a public meeting for that portion, but not in particular, this project. Is that what I am understanding? Mr. Pillow said, yes, you are correct. We wouldn't have a public comment period for that specific project, but the entirety of the plan would also once again be republished with that project associated with it. So, it would obviously highlight the change in question, but once again, it puts it out there for the public to see. But, the preliminary public comment

period highlights every project. And, there is just a handful of maps in there showing a handful of projects that we have received in that four year time period. And, it's just really, it's about as public as we can make it. It's also, it's always listed on the City of Jonesboro's website. If you will go under major plans under the MPO website, the Transportation Program is always there. It is always published and you can see which projects are listed in that program. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you Alan. Mr. Pillow said, yes sir. Councilmember LJ Bryant asked, Mayor? Mayor Copenhaver said, any other questions? I believe I've got it out to the audience at this time. Just a minute.

Misty Bennett, 2711 Iroquois Street, Virginia 2 (lives on ASU Campus), said, I wasn't here for this, but since it was brought up I would like to mention like, I think that this ties in with something I was going to speak about. If a million dollars is going to go towards a project, I don't see where this road is necessarily needed. As somebody that is always in that area, I do not see where there is enough traffic for this project to be needed. If anything, like Aggie Road where the schools are, that needs like a stop light or something there for the students and the parents and the buses and things. The only time that there is traffic going towards the campus or Aggie is like rush hour, five o'clock, stuff like that. And, as I was going to say anyways like you're going to have to have more traffic officers which I found out that there is only four of those right now, about to be five. So, then, you are going to need more to deal with this big ole road that's coming about. And, I just feel like, sorry, I am nervous. I've never did this before. But, I just, I think, if you're going to spend that money, split it up and do different projects for things that are really needed because like he was saying like that is, I only moved here in 2022, but I have been coming to Jonesboro since 2020. I'm from Georgia. And, this is a beautiful place. Aggie Road is beautiful. University Heights and Medical Arts and the school across from it, beautiful, but it is not safe. Like, my son started off at Medical Arts last school year and just trying to get in and out of there is crazy, hectic. And, there is one security guard that sits out there is not enough. Like, something needs to be done there. Crosswalks are needed on Johnson, more than what there already are, up and down there for students that live off campus for on down where you know like there's those other apartments and stuff that's crossing and stuff like that. Like, I feel like if you are going to spend such a big amount of money, don't put it into one thing. Do like, if it's not broken, don't mess with it. And, I don't think this is broken. I think you should, just like, do different projects and just add to it. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you. I appreciate it. You were fine. We will come back to Councilman Bryant. Councilmember Bryant said, thank you Mayor. I was just going to say, kind of once Councilman McClain said something and Mr. Pillow said something that made me think talking about looking at all of the road projects comprehensively at once and kind of to Dr. Wang's point, it is important for the public to hear them individually. I mean, we don't have all of our zoning requests heard at once. I mean, you know, folks in the neighborhood see the blue signs and they weigh in. And, so, I think in the future, it is really important to Dr. Wang's point that we really give the public the time to consider what might happen in their neighborhood, particularly since it is a resolution. I mean, generally speaking, a rezoning is going to be three readings and go through MAPC and the blue signs and all of those kind of things. So, I think we have learned a lot from the citizens tonight that they want to see us give them more of an opportunity to weigh in on future road projects.

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

Aye: 10 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and Ann Williams

Nay: 2 - David McClain and LJ Bryant

Enactment No: R-EN-033-2024

6. NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

[ORD-24:012](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM I-1 & I-1 LUO TO C-3 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2800 INDUSTRIAL DRIVE.

Attachments: [Cover Letter](#)
[Rezone Application](#)
[ALTA SURVEY](#)
[Vicinity Map](#)
[Vesting Deeds](#)
[Mail Receipts](#)
[Signs](#)
[Staff Summary-CC](#)

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Mitch Johnson, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-24:012 by title only. All voted aye.

Held at one reading

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

[ORD-24:006](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE 6-30 CLARIFYING REQUIREMENTS TO GET A NEW OR CHANGING ALCOHOL PERMIT ON THE COUNCIL AGENDA

Held at second reading

[ORD-24:010](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF JONESBORO AND CRAIGHEAD COUNTY, ARKANSAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONTINUING THE SHARED EXPENSES OF CRAIGHEAD COUNTY JONESBORO PUBLIC LIBRARY OF ARKANSAS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Attachments: [County Interlocal Library 2024](#)
[Craighead Cty Judge 20240401 151423](#)

Councilmember Chris Moore said, Mayor, I didn't notice seeing anything in that agreement that stipulated who had appointed the members and what the ratio should be. Was that in another attachment to it? City Attorney Carol Duncan said, that was not in the original agreement and this just mimics that agreement to get something on the books. As we have talked about before, it might be something that needs to be addressed moving forward. This was to bring us into compliance because we hadn't done one in 40 years. Councilmember Moore said, and, the original agreement was from 1941? Ms. Duncan said, and, it didn't designate who appointed who really if I

recall correctly. Councilmember Moore said, I gotcha. It just seems to me before we could have an agreement between the city and the county, we would have some form of understanding on who is going to appoint what. Maybe that is something we can do after the fact. Councilmember David McClain said, the only other thing I had, we spoke about mosquitos earlier and since we have a Quorum Court member, we need more agreements like this to help the citizens of Craighead County and the City of Jonesboro. So, if we could look at other things, whether it be...(something inaudible was said). I mean I understand that, but I'm just saying as a whole, we need to address other issues with the county. Ms. Duncan said, agreed.

Garrett Barnes, 518 W. Jefferson, said, what I would like to say to not be redundant from last time is that last time we covered briefly population and covered funding and I was mistaken. It's not the first time. It won't be the last time that I am mistaken. On the figure, I said it was roughly \$750,000 that Craighead County contributes. It is actually \$672,962 and some change. So, you know, this is not a political thing. These are facts. We can't change the population from the census that was done in 2020. Those are payments that were cashed and tendered. So, that's a fact. And, you know, the thing I want to emphasize tonight and I first want to concur with Councilman Moore that this is a section that is needed in this agreement. I don't think that should be up for debate or much discussion because this is a contractual agreement. This is legally binding and it is missing a very fundamental, crucial piece of it with not specifying those nominations. So, it can be addressed later. My concern is that if you pass this in its current form, that we will be at a stalwart in the future legally because I am not sure if the Quorum Court would pass such an amendment. I don't know if the Quorum Court would be willing to give up those seats. I'm willing for it to be equitable as the current agreement states, but right now it is not equitable if the same nominations are in place with the county receiving four and the city receiving three. Given the population of the city and the county, given the funding amounts as well. That trend of about 70% with the City of Jonesboro contributing 70% holds true at every tenant that you look at, whether it is funding, whether it is population. Another tenant to look at is the current city/county nomination/structures on other boards. Councilman Bryant mentioned MAPC, the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission. The city has well more than the county on that. If you look at the NEA Industrial Development Commission, the city has well more than the county on that. And, if you look at the Solid Waste Management Board, you will see the city has eight members on that and the county has two. So, if you take just those three boards, that's 25 shared seats between Craighead County and the City of Jonesboro. There are other entities that nominate to those boards, but if you just look at those two, like this agreement it is set up, it is just between the county and the city, you will see that the city has 72% of those seats on those three boards. So, it doesn't matter how you slice this. It is still going to be about 70% in favor of the City of Jonesboro and that's just how it is in Craighead County. And, there is nothing that can change that except for an amendment. And, I encourage you all as Council before the third reading to really look at that and what that amendment can look like. If we follow that trend, it would be five to the city and two to the county. Now, the building is claimed in the agreement by the County, but it has already been confirmed to me by the County Assessor, there is not a current appraisal on the building. It is not subject to property taxes, but it can be appraised and it is not appraised. I think that is important and it would show the value of the building. The appurtenances is also being claimed by the county and I'm not sure if you have that document in the docket that you have because it goes into more detail and the interlocal agreement itself. You may have it elsewhere. But, please look at that because the county is claiming the building and the appurtenances to the building. And, those need to be valued as well because without it, the mismatch in funding is roughly \$92,040 difference between what is being contributed by the City of Jonesboro to Craighead County. So, that building, I can't give an appraisal because I am not an appraiser, but I do have an active

broker's license in the State of Arkansas for real estate. That building is not going to rent for that much a month, okay. I think we can all agree to that. So, I strongly encourage you to consider an amendment before this is passed because if you don't, you probably won't get the county to agree to it or I would be pleasantly surprised if they did. And, equalizing this board. And, I would love to help write it with you if you so see fit. We can do such a thing together on that unless I am mistaken and I would like to be mistaken if I am and told and disclose that, but I don't believe open meeting law would pertain to us writing an amend together. And, I offer that to you. I am not going to force it upon you because that is not how I operate. And, I yield my time.

Mayor Copenhaver asked, Mr. Barnes, question, that has already passed Quorum Court, correct? Mr. Barnes said, yes, it has. Mayor Copenhaver said, this interlocal, okay. Mr. Barnes said, and if you don't get an amendment and it doesn't pass the county. I think it will just revert back to this. It hasn't changed since 1941 or whenever it hasn't changed. Ms. Duncan said, it also doesn't designate who. The problem would be that we are allocating funds through taxpayer collections that have not got an interlocal agreement assigned to them. And, by state law and changes in state law, I think we are required to have a current interlocal agreement in order to disperse those funds. So, the risk we would run is if the County Collector decided I'm not going to disperse the funds that have been collected from the taxpayers to pay the library if we don't have a current interlocal agreement. That's the risk. Mr. Barnes asked, so why is it not current then? Ms. Duncan replied, because it is 40 years old and you have to have one every five years now that that law has been placed into effect. Mr. Barnes said, okay. Ms. Duncan said, so that is the concern is that the collector could say I'm just not going to disperse any funds to the library until the city and the county reach an agreement on this and the library has no funds. Mr. Barnes said, maybe we can play nice together and that would be very nice. Ms. Duncan said, do I think that would happen? I don't know, but that is the concern and the legal concern. And, that is why we just tried to keep the same as it was with the knowledge that we are going to have to do this at a minimum of every five years. So, any changes, then we would have to time to sit down and negotiate any changes. But, if it is the desire of the Council, ultimately, as always. Councilmember McClain asked, what do you suggest? Just pass it in its current form and then come back? Ms. Duncan said, I do think in the future we need to look at the clarification, but I think that, you know, you would want to hear from people on the library staff as well. I mean, it's been this way since the inception of the library and there has never been a change. I mean, I also think it is important to note that, yes, you have Craighead County and you have City of Jonesboro, but everybody in the City of Jonesboro is in Craighead County. We are also citizens of Craighead County, the citizens of Jonesboro. We are not separate from Craighead County. We are a part of Craighead County. So, I think that is a consideration to take in affect.

Councilmember Moore said, I am just a stickler for details and the rules and I just think if we are going to make an agreement with the county on the library, it shouldn't piece mill it. We should at least say how many seat appointments we have from both entities. Then, the board can decide however they want to run the library. I'm not wanting to be in the library business. I'm just wanting the positions on the board. If we've got the most people and we are spending the most money, we should at least be appointing the most members. That's all.

James Elwin Hinds, 508 Ridgecrest, said, I want to start with something that the city attorney made a point of that I was going to start with and I'm still going to start with it. I am a resident of both Craighead County and the City of Jonesboro. So, I've done some searching into this thing and a lot of this stuff is bookkeeping semantics. And, I have looked at it. I'm not being charged a lot of extra money because I am in the city that people out in the county, people out in the county are saying we shouldn't even

be, people in cities shouldn't even be allowed to vote on county offices because we don't treat them fairly and we don't. The truth is if you really look into this thing, it looks to me like we probably ought to give the county one of our votes, reduce the city appointees by one and give it to the county. However, the fact is this thing has been worked out. It works. And, if it was fair, then it's probably fair now and I would say pass this thing with no amendments as far as this appointees, but if we switch one to the other, we need to switch one of the county's, I mean, city appointees to the county. Councilmember Moore said, Mr. Hinds, one of the notable facts about it is the county voters voted not to fund the library and the city voters voted to fund it. So, you want to give our votes to the ones who do not want to fund it, is that what you are saying? Off mic, Mr. Hinds said, I am in both groups. Do we need the city to have funds? Councilmember Moore said, that is all I had to say. I just wanted to make sure I was clear. You wanted to give our votes to the ones who don't want to fund it and don't want a library. Mr. Hinds said, we don't tax, like whenever I go, they don't ask me do you live in or out of... Mayor Copenhaver said, excuse me, you need to come up to the microphone please sir. Mr. Hinds said, this taxing thing, you know when I pay taxes, I go to the store, I pay taxes. They don't say, do you live inside the city limits of Jonesboro or outside. In fact, they don't even ask whether I live in Craighead County or not. It's all the same. It's a matter of the bookkeeping and the way that it is shown. All these people, you know, the people who come into Jonesboro and buy groceries and whatever, those taxes show as City of Jonesboro taxes, even though they are paid by people who don't live in the city and we are making a big mistake whenever we start putting ourselves because we've got them outnumbered, we can bully them around a little bit. We don't need to do that. We need to have...we are one community and we need to stay that way. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments. Mr. Barnes, do you have comments that you would like to make?

Mr. Barnes said, yes sir, just a few new ones. The nominations section of this agreement, I don't know how it came to fruition, but it was intentionally omitted and to me it is incomplete without it. The other may not have had it in the past, but with it being renewed per to be in compliance after it hasn't been in compliance for forty years, it could have been added then and that would have been permissible by state code. To the point the gentleman made, Mr. Hinds makes about being in the city and in the county, I fully agree with that comment. I think it would be a monumental mistake to that that Jonesboro is not in Craighead County and that Jonesboro is not a crucial partner of Craighead County. It is the reason why Craighead County has the operational funds that it has. And, with that, to me, it should be a sense of obligation to work as equitably and interlocally as possible without going down the rabbit trail that I would love to go down in the future, hopefully sooner than later on other things like mosquitos, other things like the jail, different other things. And, the point too about the city county, there is explicit enumerated code that defines the distribution of powers between City and City Council and Mayor and County and County Judge. So, while, you know, you can be in both and I am in both, you can't conflate the annotated code to say that the county should have the things of the city or the city should have things of the county. That is why it is important to look through this lens with the facts of population, with the facts of funding and with the facts of other city and county boards. Thank you.

Mayor Copenhaver said, so Council, after hearing this discussion, Carol and myself will follow-up with Judge Day and his team and have further conversations. We had already had this conversation to some degree before it came to Council. So, we will open that discussion back up. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mayor, point of clarity, you said this Carol I think, but if you don't care to say it one more time. So, in the absence of it being there and the absence of the nomination piece being there, we feel confident that it would just automatically stay as it is. Ms. Duncan said, yes. I don't think there is any intention to change the way it is right now. I don't know, I

wasn't at Quorum Court. I don't know whether that came up for discussion there or not, but I think that the intent is that the agreement would substantially stay the same as it was. We would get something on the books to make sure we were in compliance with the Collector's Office so that they are disbursing funds pursuant to a valid agreement and then knowing that this has to come up at a minimum of once every five years, we could then have time to start discussions and make determinations, not on how it should work and what the makeup should be and how it should look. I mean that was the discussion I had with their legal counsel, was the intent was to just to try to draft it as closely to the old agreement, but make it valid because it is within the last five years and then move forward with knowing in the future, we could have negotiations on all of these topics because it is going to have to be renewed every five years. So, they can't hold it hostage for longer than that, right. But, that was legal counsel discussion. But, ultimately it is up to you guys as always. Councilmember McClain asked, if we did make the amendment, if we did add an amendment at the next reading, does that make it go back to the first reading? Would that be enough? Ms. Duncan stated, I mean it would be a significant amendment I guess. So, potentially, it should at least go back to second reading to give the public notice so that they can come and speak on it because it would be at the third reading. Councilmember McClain said, right, okay. Ms. Duncan said, I would suggest that it at least go back to second to give public notice and transparency. Councilmember McClain said, I got it. Ms. Duncan said, and then, of course, it would have to go back to the Quorum Court to see if they approve the agreement with that change. Councilmember McClain said, thank you. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you Councilman for your questions.

Held at second reading

ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING

[ORD-24:008](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-1 TO C-3, LUO FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1323 STRAWFLOOR DRIVE AS REQUESTED BY HORIZON LAND SURVEYING ON BEHALF OF TILLER LAND DEVELOPMENT, LLC

Attachments: [Staff Summary - CC](#)
 [Signed Rezoning Application](#)
 [COJ Rezoning - Adjoining Property Owner Notification](#)
 [H22-173 Phipps-Strawfloor-Rezoning Plat](#)
 [Certified Mail Receipt](#)
 [Zoning Signs](#)

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

Aye: 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

Enactment No: O-EN-012-2024

[ORD-24:009](#)

AN ORDINANCE FOR A PRIVATE CLUB PERMIT FOR QVW Holdings, Inc., d/b/a BRASAS MEXICAN GRILL OF JONESBORO.

Attachments: [Brasas Private Club Permit Redacted](#)
[Brasas Menu](#)
[brasas receipt](#)

Councilmember David McClain said, Carol and I have had some discussion about looking at requirements for distances to schools, churches, etc. for alcohol permits. I know that it will not affect this one, but just as an FYI I feel like for me with the location and proximity to the school, I do not like that. But, at the same time we are working on something for the future.

James Elwin Hinds, 508 Ridgecrest, said, as you all know, I strongly oppose this. Really, at this point, I think you need to table this until a decision is made as to what the rules are going to be as far as locating a liquor establishment adjacent to or immediately across the street from a school. I think most of you know where this place is you just walk across the street and the moment you step off the sidewalk you are in Jonesboro High School's parking lot. We don't need them that close to the school. We need to table this thing, make a decision on what kind of buffer do we need between this thing. If you start passing them now, it is going to be so much harder. Once you start granting them, allowing them to be right next to the schools. To stop is a deep hole that you are about to step off in. You need to table this thing, make a decision, and then take a look at it. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments.

Jason Willett, 1804 Starling, said, QVW Holdings meets everything obviously under the law and the requirements to make application. They are a non-profit private club that exists for common recreational and social activities. I think that you are aware of that. In some previous meetings, they have brought up some of the charities of choice. I am very happy to have this applicant, Mr. Reynaldo Cano would be at the restaurant, but he is here tonight as our President of the non-profit and the owner of the restaurant. Brenda Soto is the Vice-President and Judith Shrenger, who is a lady from Batesville who is also in the restaurant business, is the Secretary and the Treasurer. State law is state law and distances as it relates to liquor stores, not private clubs or restaurants, I think we all know that. The state obviously when the city makes decisions if they want to adjust or adapt, you are going to deal with the state right there on your backs on what their requirements are. With that being said, you do have LaCascada, which is a restaurant down on Southwest Drive that the Valley View School District sits right behind as well. I would remind you that years ago I was the individual that put a liquor license down around Nettleton Schools at Couch's. I would say to the opposition, it didn't stay in business long, but a license was granted there. It is just as close in proximity as well. This entity, this private club, is looking at supporting several charities. One is the city sports activities here by sponsoring teams and that type of thing as well as the Hispanic Center here in Jonesboro which I think always needs as much support in this being a Hispanic based business. I think that is only important. And, also looking at giving any type of assistance to the Jonesboro Booster Club as well. Once again, it's a good applicant. Under the law, they meet everything that they need to and you have already granted licenses before under schools. But, keep in mind the 1,000 foot rule is for liquor stores. It is not for restaurants. So, thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments.

Jackson Spencer, 1301 W. Matthews, said, as a business owner that also has a liquor license, I would like to point out some of the things that y'all may not know in terms of the individual that holds those licenses. I don't understand any need to have any particular distances from school, church, or daycare facility. If the idea is that it is closer to the school, that kids will be drinking, that doesn't really compute because as the holder of the liquor license, you are, you have to attend a class at the Arkansas Beverage Control. You are held personally liable for underage drinking, not just the

business itself. But, if someone comes into my establishment and I serve them, I personally would be held liable for that incident. So, it being close to a school or not, I don't think is going to increase underage drinking by any means. Just because there are kids across the street going to school does not mean that they're going to come over there at lunch and get a margarita. I would also like to point out that the City of Jonesboro levies a supplemental beverage tax of 5% for beer and wine. I think it might be higher for mixed drinks, I'm not sure. But, I know as a business owner, I've remitted hundreds of thousands of dollars in sales tax revenue to the city and state, tens of thousands of dollars of just the supplemental beverage tax to the City of Jonesboro. I think in terms of a business aspect, private clubs are a great way to generate revenue and enhance quality of life for our citizens. And, so I heard you talk, Mr. David McClain, about maybe looking at an ordinance in the future that would prohibit these types of establishments close to schools. If that's the case, I would also like to look at fast food restaurants as well because I believe childhood obesity is probably a higher cause for concern for kids than alcohol that's not even legally available to them. So, that's just my two cents. Thank you for your time. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you for your comments.

Councilmember David McClain said, real quick since he called my name, my problem is not with, I don't think kids will go there and drink. Most kids are going to have their first drink at home to be honest. My problem is maybe a drunk driver that goes and has a few beers at lunch and drives across the street. That's my problem. That's my concern. So, it may not be a concern of y'all's, that's fine. This is my concern. I'm one of twelve. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you Councilman.

Corelentesa Porter, 353 North Fisher Street, said, I could say it leans on both sides of the fence, but more so towards the side of it really doesn't matter because if you look at as long as the private club or restaurant or whatever establishment is holding these type of licenses, as long as they take the necessary precautions, having the proper, I would say the proper precautions to making sure that there is no students or just pretty much making sure that it is handled properly when it comes to these type of situations with alcohol, whether it is alcohol or tobacco or whatever the situation may be, as long as they are making sure that they are taking care of it on the backend because we have those that are working hard enough, responsible enough, to make sure that they are keeping these things at a minimum. We also look at the underage drinking rate, the underage when it comes to opioid addictions, we look at all of these. They take all of these into consideration. So, I really don't see a need to either penalize or cause to say that it should be tabled or it shouldn't be looked at as such because I'm also looking at it from the standpoint of I went to JHS and I graduated in 2018 and I have noticed the steady rise of alcohol, the steady rise of opioids, the steady rise of vaping in these necessary areas. And, so, that is pretty much what I have to say. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you sir for your comments. I appreciate you coming forward.

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Moore, seconded by Councilperson Joe Hafner, that this matter be Passed. The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 9 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

Nay: 3 - David McClain;Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

Enactment No: O-EN-013-2024

ITEMS THAT HAVE BEEN HELD IN COUNCIL

[RES-23:168](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO CONDEMN PROPERTY LOCATED AT: 304 W Easy St. Jonesboro, AR 72401; Parcel # 01-144072-07000

Attachments: [304 W Easy Inspection Report](#)
[304 W Easy Board & Secure Affidavit](#)
[304 W Easy Board & Secure Returned Cert Letter](#)
[304 W Easy Board and Secure Returned Reg Letter](#)
[304 W Easy Map](#)
[304 W Easy Pre Condem Notice Returned Cert Letter](#)
[304 W Easy Pre Condem Notice Returned Reg Letter](#)
[304 W Easy Pre Condemnation Notice Affidavit](#)
[304 W Easy Map](#)
[WIN 20230808 10 44 32 Pro](#)
[WIN 20230808 10 44 54 Pro](#)
[WIN 20230808 10 45 03 Pro](#)
[WIN 20230808 10 45 18 Pro](#)
[WIN 20230808 10 45 44 Pro](#)
[WIN 20230808 10 46 47 Pro](#)
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Councilmember Chris Moore stated, after discussions with Code Enforcement Director Scott Roper, I was asked to make a motion to postpone indefinitely RES-23:168. Councilmember Chris Moore motioned, seconded by Councilmember John Street to Postpone Indefinitely RES-23:168. All voted aye.

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Moore, seconded by Councilperson John Street, that this matter be Postponed Indefinitely. The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

Mayor Harold Copenhaver reported on the following:

We have had a lot go on here in the last two weeks, more than we normally do, but I think I want to highlight some additional things and then I am going to finish up with a very important item concerning safety in our community.

As the skies showed out from a memorable show during the April 8th eclipse, Jonesboro showed out with hospitality. Early estimates approximate about 20,000 additional visitors, many from out-of-state. We even had some from England to Ireland and other areas in our community over the weekend. In addition to our 120,000 daily, we had no incidents and we were well prepared, but thankful not to have to utilize any of our emergency plans. I would like to say many thanks to all of the city employees who worked hard to keep the city related services on track while also serving our visitors.

The day before the eclipse, downtown was bustling with activity from the OASIS Arts & Eats Festival. This organized event coincided with the eclipse and there were over 150 vendors, the highest amount yet including an entire group that came over from Memphis. Memphis travel kicked off their Memphis Loves Our Neighbors Campaign

bringing many vendors, bands, and activities to a section of the festival with a Memphis twist. This was a wonderful opportunity to continue to building partnerships with neighboring cities for economic development and tourism opportunity. The safety of our residents and visitors obviously is a priority. So, we were also thankful that JPD, Jonesboro Fire and E911 worked overtime to ensure safety during the community events. And, now, we have more law enforcement officers who recently graduated from the JPD Law Enforcement training and I am just going to say that is due to the efforts. You're seeing an uptick, obviously, in personnel that are applying for these positions. Morale is wonderful in these recruits. We had 21 graduates, 15 of those 21 are staying right here in Jonesboro with the Jonesboro Police Department. So, that is good work and I'm glad to hear that Chief. We are grateful for a city who appreciates our officers, but I want to express gratitude to Archie Don Blackmore and the entire Central Baptist family for hosting the officers law enforcement appreciation lunch on April 9th. We are truly as we are all better together.

I would like to mention the quarterly Mayor's Caucus that was held in Paragould which AML is now a part of due to its success on being able to communicate with our region and with our legislators. We will be the footprint for this expansion statewide. Also, hosted our state legislators to keep them abreast on projects within the city and enabling them to represent Jonesboro as well.

And, wow, speaking of representing Jonesboro, the April Neighborhood Cleanup was the largest cleanup to date. 13.75 tons, 208 tires were collected at this month's cleanup. As always, I want to say thank you to Code Enforcement, Sanitation Department, and Keep Jonesboro Beautiful for the monthly efforts. That was at the West End. So, the volunteers came out from the West End Neighborhood, ASTATE Soccer team also participated and made this a successful event. So, mark your calendars for the next cleanup scheduled for Saturday, May 4th at Scenic Hills Neighborhood, behind Annie Camp Junior High School.

In economic development, the Chamber of Commerce hosted their Business Expo and Luncheon featuring speakers Philip Polston from Hytrol and Jeffrey Higgins from JTown's Grill, Munchy's, and the Social, Cameron Campbell from ARTents, Play It Again Sports, Super Sam's Fireworks, and Kevin Bailey from Bailey Construction. I was able to visit with many from the area wide businesses while at the Expo. We cannot emphasize enough how important these opportunities are for our small businesses and this is a great event for our community.

Many of you have heard that Amazon is coming to town with a last-minute facility on Moore Road. Amazon currently employs around 4,000 in Arkansas and is invested \$1.9 billion in compensation and infrastructure in the state since 2010. Amazon's investment in the city reflects our strong economy and their confidence in our future and prosperity. This project significantly highlights the importance of partnerships between the City, Chamber of Commerce, and private developers. Jonesboro is always moving and I will say that I appreciate the team at the City of Jonesboro for working with Amazon to make this a reality for our community.

At the recent A&P meeting, Jerry Morgan and Kevin Hodges recently provided updates of the sports complex project. I'm excited about this project and it has already been attracting interest from developers looking to capture some of the associated area activity. While the cost estimates were for the actual wall building, I do want to point out that we are gathering construction estimates for an outdoor water area for the community to enjoy. We hope as plans get finalized on the building that savings will cover these costs but if not, I am already working on a couple of different options to make sure that this amenity is built.

A \$1 million gift from the Judd Hill Foundation was presented to UAMS, that's Northeast Arkansas Regional Campus to renovate the fourth floor of helping to extend the UAMS Cancer Treatment Center for Clinical Trials and Research Opportunities. This investment is vital for our community's growth as well as medical care and is keystone to prospering city. Now, the partnerships, we had St. Bernards, we had NEA, we had UAMS, all were present working together. Many of those already have mobile transportation cancer care units, but this will bring more cancer care treatment underlying to our community in Northeast Arkansas.

This past weekend I also spent Saturday out at Delta Crawfish Festival, hosted by Jonesboro Business Association at Gamble's Shop Local Park. Events like these are supporting programs, enhances the lives of our youth, and are essential to building Jonesboro to a future.

Now, on Sunday, the Mayor's Youth Advancement Council hosted their now annual Spring Community Fair at Northside Park. It was a huge success. The Exchange Club of Jonesboro provided food for all and I saw many of our city departments represented there as well. I want to say thank you to Animal Services, Fire, Police, and others who help make this event successful. It is beautiful to see the neighborhood residents come out and envision future possibilities for work. Now, speaking of the Mayor's Youth Council, the 2024-25 new members of the MYAC were announced, making the Youth Council members 81 strong. So, let's give a reference, the first year was 49, then 61, 72, but now we are at 81. This is evident by our youth wanting to get involved in our community and I am glad that it is continuing to grow.

At Craighead Forest Park, we will be hosting a ribbon cutting for the soft surface trails next week. Soft surface trails were once only thought of in Northwest Arkansas, but Jonesboro will now have over 13 miles of soft surface trails to call our own with plans with more possibility in the future. This keeps Jonesboro always moving. And, Council, if you will remember, we appropriated the initial funding for that and we did it two years in a row of \$250,000 in our approved budget and this is making this a reality along with other partners. So, please come out and enjoy that groundbreaking ribbon cutting.

Many of you have heard that Lee Wells has served as our Interim Director of JETS since October of 2023. He's been selected now as the official new director of JETS. As Interim Director, Lee proved his leadership skills and interest in modernizing the system for its thousands of residential users. He proves he is the right fit to keep us moving in the right direction. We are always looking and remaining on how the system looks. We are going to reallocate and I'm excited about his plans for the future because of how it serves the community. It's always on the uptick. I believe we had a 30% rise since 2021 in traffic for that.

So, as I close, I mentioned safety and this is an announcement that just became public before we had the City Council meeting. Now, as we move forward which we are continuing to do, I am looking forward in the next couple of days to sharing upcoming news on an announcement of a new Communications Director for our community. It was released by the Office of the United States Attorney, Jonathan Ross, representing the Eastern District of Arkansas. Drug trafficking results in over a dozen people arrested on federal charges, Jonesboro. Fifteen people were arrested Tuesday morning as a part of the sweeping law enforcement operation that targeted associates and drug organizations responsible for distribution of methamphetamine in the Northeast Arkansas area. Law Enforcement officers previously arrested one person on Monday and served arrest warrants on an additional three people in custody. Investigation began in August of 2022. Law Enforcement officers arrested

15 individuals and served an arrest warrant Tuesday on two defendants already in federal custody and one in state custody. Here are some numbers of interest. Prior to today's arrests, the investigation had resulted in the seizure of 45 pounds of meth, 10 pounds of marijuana, 1 pound of cocaine, 6 firearms, various ammunition, and \$125,000 in drug proceeds. During arrest operations on Tuesday, agents recovered additional meth, three firearms, of which one was defaced, ammunition, approximately an additional \$28,000 in specialized drug proceeds. Fifteen drug dealers have been taken off the streets. I could read on. There is much more detail, but this was a collaborative effort between the FBI who led the investigation here at Jonesboro and Craighead County Sheriff's Office, State Police, and others. We will continue to work and keep Arkansans safe and bring dangerous criminals to justice. To give you a few ideas of how far reaching this was, but again, it was led right here in Jonesboro. Individuals were taken from Texas, some in Jonesboro, Little Rock, Hot Springs, Paragould, Earle, Brookland, Harrisburg, Memphis, TN, and Hughes, AR. This is a statement that we continue to do. The Jonesboro Police Department has invested ourselves and personal funding for 14 Task Force Officers. Federal agents are certified with the FBI, Homeland Security, ATF and Marshall Service. All work together with the City of Jonesboro. I'm proud of these continued efforts and in any order to continue to make our community safe. Our federal partnerships are critical to keeping an open line of communication and coordination efforts. So, Chief, thank you again for those efforts and you and your officers, many of which we can't announce or the details thereof, but, again, as a community, we appreciate that effort. Thank you so much.

[COM-24:013](#)

NAIDC 2023 Annual Report Update

Attachments: [NAIDC Report Annual Report 2023 - FINAL](#)

Filed

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Janice Porter said, last week, I had the pleasure of attending a reception and ceremony honoring new military recruits and their families. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers and I would also like to thank our Mayor, County Judge, and other officials for their presence. Mayor Copenhaver said, that was a wonderful event and to me, they are just like children, but they are going to represent our country and they were in all armed forces represented that evening. So, it was a wonderful event. It was the first time we have ever had it in Northeast Arkansas. Councilmember Porter said, it was very impressive. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for attending.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, I just wanted to say an addition on the eclipse, we had nine come from Mexico City to stay with us just to see the eclipse.

Councilmember Ann Williams said, at the Public Services Committee meeting today, Danny Kapales indicated that the pool at Parker Park may be open around Memorial Day, if not long after anyway. And, that was really good news because I know when it was initially indicated that it would hopefully be ready by Memorial Day 2024. I thought that was maybe overly optimistic, but it appears that it is going to be on tract. Mayor Copenhaver said, and if you haven't seen it, you need to go by and see it. Councilmember Williams said, oh yes, definitely, yeah. But, I think that is a very positive thing for Jonesboro.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, yes, April 29th, Public Services at 4:00 p.m., we will be hearing the presentation regarding the Master Parks Plan if anybody would

like to attend that. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you Councilman.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, just real quick Mayor, and I noticed Steve had to leave, but do you know why the financials haven't, we haven't been getting the financials? The last financials that are posted on the website are July of 2023. They are still putting the check register. Did you hear your name mentioned Steve? They are still putting the check register and the Springbrook report on there, but we haven't been getting the financials. So, I was just wondering what was going on? Mayor Copenhaver said, Mr. Hafner, would you kind of restate that? Chief Financial Officer Steve Purtee said, I heard the question. I caught my breath finally. That is a good question. What we were doing, we had utilized our current accounting software, Springbrook to provide the reporting that was being provided online through the web portal. So, that is what we have been showing out there. In addition to that, we were providing this summary report. The answer in short is, is we had had no feedback on that report in the three years since it was put into practice. We were shelving it thinking that the Springbrook report was providing the data. We are now revisiting that since we do understand that that report was providing some benefit. And, so, now we are republishing that. Councilmember Hafner said, I just think that report was much easier to follow and not have to look through several, several pages in the Springbrook report to try to figure out what the information was. Mr. Purtee said, yeah. Councilmember Hafner said, I would appreciate that report getting started back. Mr. Purtee said, it will. Thank you. Councilmember Hafner said, thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you Councilman.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, I would just say that the taxpayers I heard from today want the Mayor to pay the \$30,000 to the City. So, I would encourage the Mayor to pay for his mistake.

Councilmember Mitch Johnson said, a couple of things that came out at Public Safety at the end of Public Comments, Mayor, I will be passing onto your office for further visitation. One, the gentleman behind Brian, we need to get his contact information to further has discussion with him as well. And, I hope he will accept my apology for cutting him short because we had to end Public Safety and start the Council meeting. That's all I have, thanks.

Councilmember John Street said, I just going to say that I was really excited about Amazon's presence and hopefully they will have many future expansions. I think they probably will or they will be a good candidate for it. We are a great location for that kind of facility. Man, that was a thorough report you gave. I thought that was a mini State of the City address for a minute. But, we have a lot going on and your staff is doing a great job. Danny Kapales, hats off to him, I mean he provides a lot of leadership in Parks. I sat in on the meeting earlier tonight and it was just incredible everything that is going on. Also, JPD for all of their work during the eclipse, the Fire Department, the Street Department, everybody. Again, you have got a great staff. So, they are all onboard and going. Mayor Copenhaver said, I agree.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dustin Medlin, 2505 Nancy Sue Place, said, I just want to make a few comments today. I have been here for a little while so I appreciate the time to speak. 3,170 daily meals; 7,431 school meals; 700 potholes is what your mistake could have accomplished. I would like to know and the citizens would like to know what you are going to do forward to prevent unnecessary costs to the citizens over egregious, unprideful, unprogressive, against the people mistakes. The epitome of democracy is freedom of speech, end all, be all, regardless of your position. Rachel Anderson has the most upstanding record of any citizen I have ever met in Jonesboro from my

personal experience. You should be ashamed of what you did and what you have cost the taxpayers. That is all I have to say today. Thank you for your time. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments.

Richard Glidden, 920 Aggie Road, said, you had commented earlier on some of the drug busts you guys had made. Man, I want to be real clear on this. Like, I live in these neighborhoods where these drugs are going. Right, this is where I live. Like, this is my life. This is kind of what I deal with on a daily basis. Y'all deal with this in like the abstract third person. This is a very first person problem for me. Right, this is affecting the people in my community. And, to be honest with you, you know what I am saying, ten pounds of methamphetamine is not a lot, not in the grand scheme overarching, you know, story there because, like, we have a very real fentanyl problem here. Fentanyl, right. And, I mean that is fine, but we've got guys driving up on the gas station sidewalk right over here downtown. That happened probably a couple of months ago. The dude got 90 days. But, you know, the problem is that you can keep sending them to jail. Well, that is fine. You are going to let them out. They didn't learn anything. Have y'all ever been to jail? You don't learn s**t. Mayor Copenhaver said, excuse your language, yes. Mr. Glidden said, I am so sorry. Mayor Copenhaver said, yes sir. Mr. Glidden said, y'all, I'm just a regular dude here. But, you ain't learning nothing there. Like, are y'all kidding me?! You can learn to fight, the Gladiator School. That's what it is called. So, it's like y'all want to make a change in this. You know what I am saying, there is going to have to be a material change in the way that it is handled. And, if y'all are going to do that, you know, there's some avenues there, you know what I'm saying. Y'all could probably benefit from opening a rehab that isn't Christian based and that's a year that you can be sentenced to. That would be wise. Right, cause y'all, I don't want to say y'all because y'all are just general City Council members. But, people generally think that this issue can be handled so easily by putting somebody in jail like they really learn something. Like I said, you just get better connections. You know, you meet new people, you know what I mean and eventually you get out and you are going to act upon that. Like, I don't know, what y'all think jail is. You know what I mean, but once you go to general population, man, it is a day off. Three hots and a cot, you know what I'm saying. You got to threaten these people with a good book and a nap. Like, there has got to be something more to it. And, it's got to be there is a gray area I feel like we are not meaning like between compassion and being firm handed or being firm with it because like you can be as compassionate as you want, you know what I am saying. These people don't have any compassion for themselves to help no body. They ain't going to help themselves at all. And, it's like y'all want to comment on the drug problem. Y'all want to say the police are doing a great job which they are. Most cops are nice. You know, they stop me all of the time because I walk in that neighborhood. So, it kind of is what it is and I get it. But, what's happening now with the way the jail is, how it is constantly bringing 70 people, then releasing 70 people. And, then people are getting OR'd that probably shouldn't be, it's a bit more of a nuanced issue than I think that it's being handled with. And, I don't know if that was an actual sentence that made sense, but it made sense to me when I made it. But, there's a lot to it. And, like I said, like, really right, your enemy right now is fentanyl. And, if y'all don't like really focus down on that and where that is coming from, none of this other stuff matters. It don't, cause fentanyl is twice as deadly, twice as addictive, and the withdrawals are insane. I've seen it. Like, you aren't going to catch, you aren't going to catch me being around anybody like that, I know that. But, it's new. It's nothing I've ever been seen with. I've been sober since 2013. Like, I don't know how to deal with that. Well, I don't know what that's like. Cause not only is it, the drug itself is getting cut with other drugs. Or, it is cutting other drugs, rather. So, it's like, uh, if y'all don't get that under control, it's going to be a bigger problem. And, unless y'all want people just hunched over like zombies over in like Portland or something, like y'all will do something about it. That's all I had to say. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you very much and your

fantanyl comments are correct. Chief I know you would like to probably follow up with a little bit of that as well.

Police Chief Rick Elliott said, that's a good comment. It's not a y'all problem. (Off mic, you can barely hear a comment from Mr. Glidden. "I didn't mean to present it like that. I don't know how.") It's not the Council's problem, it's not the police problem, it's a community problem that has a big desire for drugs across this country. This country is so ate up with the consumption of drugs, it is destroying itself. And, yes, that problem is here in our community. And, yes, there is a fantanyl problem here in the community and we have taken thousands and thousands of pills off of the streets this year alone. And, you know, we average over 30 narcan saves in the community every year. We have had four fantanyl deaths in the past two months in this community. So, don't stand up here and say that we are not recognizing the problem with the fantanyls on the streets. We understand that problem. But, it is the people on the street that has this desire for this drug and other illegal drugs that is driving it. That's where it has got to start. It's not a rehab center, year-long or faith-based or whatever, that's not the solution. It's got to start at home. It's got to start with education. You have got to get rid of this desire to get out here and stay stoned and then turn around and be a productive member of society. That's where it is going to start. It starts with education. So, we are doing what we can do based on what I got to deal with day in and day out. And, we talk about the rest tonight. Yeah, we talk about 45 pounds. These people distribute hundreds of pounds over years, this couple of years investigation. This is just what was seized. These people are bringing, trafficking drugs in from all over. These people were part of the big problem. So, we go after the street level. We go after the big dealers. I'll take every approach possible to rid the city limits of Jonesboro of this problem. You talk about fantanyl being a big problem. No, fantanyl is not the biggest problem. There is a new drug coming out. Another synthetic drug, nitazenes. Twenty times more potent than fantanyl. Twenty times more potent than fantanyl. Now, that is what you are seeing up in Philadelphia. We talk about the zombie standing on the streets, whatever. So, has this made it to Arkansas? Yeah, it is here in Arkansas. So, now we are dealing with fantanyl. Now, we have got this new drug coming into the state. So, the problem is not going to go away overnight, but it is going to take everybody working together to alleviate the problem. So, no, we are not going to arrest our way out of society's problems. I agree with him. Three hots and a cot is not a solution at all to the problem. But, you have got to get rid of that person that wanting that desire for these drugs. So, that's education. That's teaching your kids right. So, that's my two cents on the matter. And, I take offense if you think members of this police department not taking an aggressive approach to the problems here in Jonesboro. I'll take our approach and put it up against anybody in the country. Have a good evening. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you Chief for your comments. Mr. Glidden said, I didn't mean to offend anybody there.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

Aye: 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Mitch Johnson;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

_____ Date: _____

Harold Copenhaver, Mayor

Attest:

_____ Date: _____

April Leggett, City Clerk