



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Finance & Administration Council Committee

Thursday, December 2, 2021

12:00 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING - WORKING SESSION

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call by City Clerk April Leggett

Mayor Harold Copenhaver was in attendance.

Present 7 - Charles Coleman; Ann Williams; John Street; David McClain; LJ Bryant; Joe Hafner and Brian Emison

3. Other Business

[COM-21:055](#)

WORKING SESSION OF THE FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE ON THE CITY OF JONESBORO 2022 BUDGET: QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION
(No motions or votes to be taken)

Sponsors: Mayor's Office and Finance

Attachments: [2022 Budget](#)
[Jonesboro Budget 2022](#)

Chairman Joe Hafner explained that this is just a working session regarding the proposed 2022 budget. Some of the rules for this session include that the duty of the Mayor obviously is to work with his staff, and city department heads and to submit a budget to the city council for approval. It's the job of the city council to adopt the budget by either ordinance or resolution. We have until February 1st. We always try to do it by the end of the year, so that we don't have to do any temporary measures. The layout for today's session will start with the Mayor, and his staff to make any comments that they have regarding the budget, and then I will allow the committee members to ask questions or make comments. This is a special called meeting and technically we are not allowed to let the public make comments, but I do think it is important to allow public comment, so we will reserve some time at the end of the discussion for public comment. Again, this is just a working session, there will be no motions or voting on the proposed budget today.

Mayor Harold Copenhaver begin the session by saying we are pleased to be here, and I think this is the ultimate part of transparency for the community and city of Jonesboro. When we took office our goal was to present a budget that hopefully all could understand, and it is set to the parameters' of what the city has done and where the city plans to move in the future. You all have already received the initial copy of the full budget along with my letter of recommendation in the front of the binder and what we are really trying to adopt, and how we anticipate 2022 to occur financially. Obviously

we are stressing public safety, and long term visions for our city employees. These are two areas of concern that were addressed that I have seen through departmentizations, being competitive in our community, and providing the services and the individuals on the city's behalf that provides all of those services to our residents, and that we need to invest in them. In this proposed budget we have initially shown you what we feel that we can do from a financial standpoint of doing so and then again our initial investments on projects moving forward on the quality of place in the city of Jonesboro, from sidewalks to city overlays, how we've increased that as well in the budget request. So, what I am going to do here today is give a short presentation, I will address the full city council at length when the budget is presented to you all. I would like to commend Finance Director Steve Purtee and his entire staff in the finance department, they have heard my request and I think they have made adjustments in our budget accordingly. They have been working on this for six months, there is some major changes that I feel are very self-explanatory, a lot of it is common sense and we've gotten to a balanced budget in one year and I'm very pleased with that. But, again I think that it's important in the year 2022 that any major investments that we make in our city we bring to city council. Whether it's a new fire station or whatever the case may be, it needs to be brought forth instead of going ahead and pre-planning and putting that in. We have reserves for that and we will talk about that later.

Finance Director, Steve Purtee started the presentation with the 2022 proposed budget overview. As you see here on this first slide on the left hand side are the projected revenues of \$62.88 million, total expenditures of \$62.86 million, and ending the year with a surplus of \$22,627, and this is our O&M category, it also includes capital expenditures relative to the detail in there.

The ending fund balance projection for the end of the year is \$26.5 million, and considering our reserve position of about \$8.0 million we expect that are excess fund balance will be about \$18.4 million. I always like to look at the reserve analysis to kind of see where things stack-up. In this slide if you will look at the 4th line you will see the budget O&M surplus, after our revenue consideration in this O&M category of \$62,121,543 and the expenditures of \$56,715,008 we would actually end the period with a surplus position of \$5,406,535. After that we do need to consider those capital improvement programs that we have aligned, as well as any required reserves that we would be mandated to have. The capital improvement net position of those is just a little over \$6-million projected for 2022 and after considering that reserve position of \$7.3 million, and there is still a little bit of that in the capital improvement section as well. Every expenditure basically for the budget cycle you count that as a 15% reserve requirement. The conclusion is again back to that \$18.4 million in available or excess funds, we always like to look at that in relation to what we should have on hand regarding our available fund balances, sometimes referred to as the "rainy day fund". If you look at what AML recommends, they say that you should have at least one month of coverage and GFOA (government financial officers association) they recommend two months of coverage. At \$18.4 million we would be able to sustain ourselves for about four months of activity.

As we go into the next slide we will discuss some of the projected O&M revenues. Our previous budget was over \$54 million, we are projecting that that is going to increase \$7.4 million to just over \$62 million. I'd like to point out on this slide that basically, if you look at this in relation to what portion of this comes from sales tax routines, you can see that about 66% of that is coming from city and county sales tax. Then when you add in the state aid, which again is a sales tax activity that bumps that on up to about 77%. So, 77% of our revenues comes from sales activities in our community and the state relative to fuel or street fund turn backs. There aren't really any other increases here that were of significance here that we felt like we need to talk about, obviously

interest income has become a challenge for us based upon interest rate in the market and we've seen a significant decline in those categories over the course of the year. Councilmember LJ Bryant asked about the increase. How much of the increase would you say is due to the overall economy and how much is due to the shift in population? Mr. Purtee explained that the actual increase was right in the range of one and one half to one and three quarters of a percent. So basically where we were at 66% we are bumping to 68%, we are picking up there. Again, we are kind of on a routine that the county sales tax is going to equate to about \$15-million, so if you calculate that it's a sizable increase. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman asked if that increase was due in part of internet sales base. Mr. Purtee stated yes, we look at that strategy, we haven't looked at that in a few months. I know initially internet sales was increasing four-fold over from where it started. Obviously we started at 0 two or three years ago, but we are still seeing increases in internet sales tax, it is starting to level off. Dr. Charles Coleman also asked about the internet services that we are getting from a particular company now, is there any way that our internet sales money can increase, or does that have anything to do with that company, or maybe replacing that company or going to another company? Mr. Hafner stated not on sales tax. Mayor Copenhaver also addressed Dr. Coleman's concern as well.

We have been in discussions for the last three months regarding broadband and possibilities for the community on a holistic approach. Because, as a city we have industry that would provide services to areas of our community where it's only profitable to them, and as city and city council we've got to look at holistic at what partnerships we can bring to the table. So, yes we are addressing that and in broadband we are looking for all of the resources that the city can use. The county has the capability of 100% funding from the state and the city does not, so the importance of bringing partners to the table within our community to provide an option of services to all residents is where we want to move. Dr. Coleman stated that is the reason he brought it up, because that sales tax can go up if people are still doing much of their shopping on line.

Finance Director Steve Purtee continued with explaining some of the proposed O&M category revenues. When you do a budget to budget comparison it looks rather significant in the year over year change, but then when you start looking at our 2021 projections, obviously you will recall we are working ahead of last year by about 14%. Looking under the sales tax projection you can see that we are projecting to end the year with a little over \$45.5million in 2021 sales tax revenues, with a 3.2% increase in that category. The State Turnback for 2021 is projecting a 3.5% increase, ending at \$4,910,000. Franchise fees are still a struggle for us and project it to remain at a flat increase. Total over all O&M revenue is projected to increase a little over 14%. Turning our attention to the O&M expenditure, we are projecting our 2022 expenditures to be over \$56.7 million, this is about a \$2.6million increase from 2021, with the lion's share of that being in personnel. Breaking that down by classification levels you can see the principal category's here. Obviously the lion's share of those are; public safety, law enforcement and fire protection. I'd like to point a couple of things on this slide, fire protection looks like that it is decreasing year over year, and again if you recall, we've taken the opportunity to try to address some things as we've gone along, we have also done some ARPA funding, we stipulated about \$1.8million out of that fund just within the last four to six weeks. The next slide represents department budgets with significant increases. You can see in the jail fees we are projecting another increase of \$25,000, this is consistent with the two previous budget cycles. In the middle portion of this you can see the operations of the shooting complex, we obviously have to have part-time salaries to operate the facilities along with the supplies to do so. Another thing that I do want to point out in our engineering department we are doubling the budget for street overlays. It went from \$250,000 to \$500,000. The administration has

specific emphasis on maintaining our roads, streets, drainage systems, sidewalks and all of the infrastructure that we seem to have challenges with. Chairman Hafner stated for the record that that increase actually went from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000.00. Mr. Purtee stated that is correct and that he miss-spoke on the amount. Councilmember McClain asked in looking at the Police category of travel and train, is that just to send them for training or do Officers get increases in pay for obtaining certificates of training? Mr. Purtee said what we are finding is kind of a ramp up from COVID, travel and training were severely hampered in 2020 and up to now for 2021. The police department has had several certification courses that they haven't been able to get to in person, so they are projecting that they will have more in-person training and this includes the travel to and from as well as the course itself. Councilmember McClain asked if that also included additional salary for officers if they get a certification. Mr. Purtee said that he probably would yield to the Police Department Administration to answer those types of questions. I will call this ongoing training to maintain those certifications. Mr. McClain said okay.

Doesn't mean we are going to follow it, doesn't mean we are going to substitute ours for something else, but it does give us information for analysis to kind of understand what the market provides. The proposed salary enhancement will effect 164 employees, the proposed average increase for all of those groups is a 6.9% average increase and you can see the scale that was applied to each of those job grades. Mayor Copenhaver spoke to some of Dr. Coleman's concerns, and stated that we are well aware of those. I think this is the first step for us, for the Administration to just come in immediately and make a change abruptly. We are trying to understand what was done in the past to what is being done presently and how we can move forward in making these salary adjustments. I would like for Councilmembers to note that this effects 164 employees, this change just to get up to \$14.00 per-hour, that is a quarter of our work force, and these are the ones that are providing our community services on a daily basis, from our streets, sanitation, and others. We are making this adjustment, but we need to go in the direction of what Dr. Coleman spoke about, but it is a slow process, it has taken time to get to these adjustments in these category's and this is a critical investment in these individuals. We are training them in the sanitation department for example, in the streets department to run heavy equipment and then they leave us because they can make \$15.00 per-hour somewhere else. If we can at least narrow that margin for these employees, the turnover rate and the cost investment that we have is critical. But, 164 employees really reached out to us.

Chairman Joe Hafner stated, when we have these salary changes in the pay plan is that something that is brought to the council to approve. I understand they are in the budget, but I believe there still has to be approval from the council to some degree right? I know like the elected officials pay I see in the budget, that still has to be brought to council right. Mayor Copenhaver stated that they reached out to Carol Duncan who is the City Attorney and if it is done outside of the budget that is a cost of living not a salary adjustment. Cost of Living Adjustment per Carol's comments in was included in either the 2014 or 2015 budget. A cost of living is across the board if it is approved in the budget, in 2018 you made an adjustment but that was outside of the budget and had to be done with an ordinance. Councilmember LJ Bryant said while we are on that topic I've got some questions on the elected officials raises. I will say that I am in favor of giving the Mayor, the City Clerk, and the City Attorney this raise. I think they should get 4%, they should be in line with all of the other city employees, and I think particularly as it relates to the Mayor. We have got to be sure that he makes more than all of the other city employees, I mean no offense to other employees, but for him to be the Chief Elected Official we have got to make sure that he makes more than whoever our other higher paid employees are, whether that is in engineers or whoever. I think we have to be mindful of that and not fall behind on that. I guess the

next thing if you could just educate me a little more, as I was flipping through my tabs I was looking at the City Clerks tab and it looks like the 2021 and 2022 budget difference it looked like it was about the same, so I guess I was confused there. Mr. Purtee explained that with the election of our new City Clerk, and then there was a transition of staff in that department we had less tenured individuals that joined the department and were at lower steps in job grades, those types of things. Mr. Bryant said so then the increases I see here for the City Attorney's office is just the COLA increase? Mr. Purtee said that is correct.

Mr. Bryant said, so on councilmembers it just stayed flat and didn't get an increase. Again, Mr. Purtee said that is correct but we will be making some adjustments in that regard, that's probably just an oversight on our part. Mr. Bryant said, just out of curiosity I would like to see where the Mayor's salary would be after this versus the other folks, because like I said I just want to make sure that we have some distance and make sure that we don't let city employees outpace the Mayor salary. I was googling and the Mayor of Rogers makes \$156,000 annually, I'm not saying let's give the Mayor a \$30,000.00 raise, I'm just saying we need to stay in line on that as well. Chairman Hafner stated that we do not need to get ahead of ourselves here, we've got a lot of salary issues going on. Mr. Bryant said I understand that and my only point is that I think it's important that we watch and make sure that through steps, and COLAS and whatever, if you hold the elected down, I mean we've done it on the council, you can play political football with the other elected and that's part of it, it happens, they have to make a living working for the city where is we are part-time.

Mr. Purtee continued with the remaining bullets on this slide that talks about some of the concerns that Mr. Bryant just spoke too. The 2% COLA will be applied to all other individuals within the city, and this includes the elected officials as well. Additionally we will continue the step program throughout 2022. Again, the average increase of that is about 2%, we also will continue the longevity pay as well, all of that coupled together is in 2022 we hope to have an average 4% salary increase for all employees. Dr. Coleman asked if that includes the police department, Mr. Purtee stated that it was for all employees, Mr. Coleman said okay, I just want to make sure. Councilmember Brian Emison said one question that I have and it goes along with what Councilmember Bryant was asking about. In the grants department I was noticing that the budget for salaries, it had actually gone down in that one. But, back in the restricted funds it was actually underneath the community block development grant, I saw that one and it was actually up \$35,000. Is that a direct offset to that with the increase? Mr. Purtee said through the Director of our grants department she is identifying that we are permitted to allocate additional salaries of her mix into CDBG as well. So, that is why you are seeing a decrease in one category and an increase in the other. Dr. Coleman asked if that was adding employees. Mr. Purtee said, grants department budgeted for five head counts in 2021 and they are being budgeted the same for 2022. We expect the hiring to occur to fill that full time position. Mr. Emison commented that with us actually being able to write that off on the CDBG grant side of it, it actually frees up more of the tax revenue budget, so that is actually going to a cost savings to us since we are applying that to the CDBG grant, is that correct? Mr. Purtee said that is correct, basically the end result of that is through a grant funded program as permitted we are allowed to consider salary expense, administrative cost relative to operating those grants. Dr. Coleman asked if that included training for them also. Mr. Purtee said that the grants department budgeting includes a training component in there relative to their departments. As we continue with this slide, there is a lot of detail here, but the conclusion is that we are increasing our head count from budget year to budget year by 14-employees and you can see on the left hand side how that is broken down. There are two new positions that we will be asking for your approval in the salary plan

administration revision, but then there are 12 positions that we are budgeting in calendar year 2022 that were not in place in 2021 budgets. You can also see here that we are looking at a couple of administrative assistant positions, allowing for one more video analyst for our police department, and in correlation with their 11-hour shift change program we are proposing an additional Lieutenant and Sergeant slot in the patrol division of the police department. Dr. Charles Coleman commented that the reason he is bringing this up is because it is beginning to be a hot spot not only for the council but also for the community. This one so called employee is that a desk employee or out in the field employee in the code enforcement department. Mr. Purtee said that is an administrative person in the office that would hopefully allow the field staff to be more involved out in the field instead of the office. Mayor Copenhaver also addressed Dr. Coleman's concern about the lack of having enough personnel to work out in the field. Mayor explained that obviously what we have done is taken the communities concerns and met with Chief Elliott and our staff have met and we are bringing back Scott Baxter into that department, he is reassessing that. But, as we have went through this, then for code enforcement to get more feet on the ground more tickets written and in a faster manner so that they can encompass and do it all instead of different departments an administrative assistant was necessary so the paper work could be more involved instead of our higher paid personnel. Dr. Coleman stated that he hoped that whoever was hired as the administrative assistant is qualified because that is a lot of paper work and assessment. I think sometimes that Michael Tyner is sometimes put in a bad situation because of all the work he was doing and then fighting against it. I just have a problem with that personally, nobody can stop my personal opinion. I just think he's been put down a whole lot, when he should have been put down as doing his job and another person's job at the same time and I think that's just wrong, I also think if the city is doing that then the city is wrong. Mayor Copenhaver commented that that is right and as we move forward in that particular department we are continuing to re-address this. So, I think by the second quarter we will have a better evaluation of what we can do in that department to improve it.

Councilmember McClain said that while we are on this topic of adding positions and things like that. I was wondering if we have looked at a position for pedestrian safety. Mayor Copenhaver explained that's where your investment what you all had voted on for the \$2,000,000.00 ARPA funding, the investment in our intersections and having cameras in our community is going to help provide us the information we need so that we can reassess that. Yesterday we also had a meeting as well with several of our community schools on what we can additionally do with our SRO's, how we can become more involved, how we can open up that communication. So, around our schools it's really important that the sidewalks, our safety and all of that is addressed. Councilmember McClain also asked are we going to do anything where a study shows that we need crosswalks at Johnson and North Main. Mr. Purtee stated that in the capital improvement section there is a \$750,000 budget for each street miscellaneous as well as sidewalk improvements. We fully expect that that could go to some of the things that you have concerns over, this is a fluid process and we are working that as we speak through our engineering department, street department and with Allen Pillow in MPO. Councilmember John Street also added that in some areas it is going to have to be a collaborative effort between the city and the state on some of those projects.

Mr. Purtee said in wrapping up in this slide regarding salary revisions. There are 7 positions encompassing 22-employees where the directors through their request, we have agreed based on their analysis and their support of that to increase these positions as indicated here. Councilmember Bryant stated he had a couple comments as it relates to this and I just want to make sure that I understand it, When I was

reading through this and where it states directors and assistant city attorney elevate 8-employees, obviously I understand that the assistant attorney is 1-employee, who are the other 7-employees in this group? Mr. Purtee said the other 7-employees are in job grade 122. Councilmember Bryant said okay, and I guess the other one here is not exactly a re-grade, but an unfilled position in the Mayor's Office that stayed in the budget. Maybe if someone in the Administration could speak to what the vision is for leaving that in the budget. Brian Richardson explained that in last year's budget we did have an allocation set aside for an additional administrative person if needed. We have an empty slot up on the 4th floor, at this point it just hasn't been needed, there is no immediate plans to advertise and fill that position. Hopefully when COVID settles down a little bit, there is going to be a lot more traffic coming in and out of the office at some point, so for the entire 4th floor a receptionist position might be something we look at later this year. Right now there is no immediate plan to fill that position. Mayor Copenhagen said, and again we did not fill that this year. We were anticipating on that, but if we don't need that we won't fill it. Mr. Purtee said going into the next few slides we will be talking about fixed asset purchases as well as our capital improvements. Fixed asset purchases appear to be about \$650,000 less than the current budget. I think we have to keep in mind that recently we approved about \$1.7million in fleet auto purchases, which again allowed us not to include that in this current budget. As you can see here the total coming in through the street fund is \$853,500 and the total coming in through the general fund is \$2,259,000. You can see all that detail in pages 10-11 of the proposed budget that is before you. Also, in relation to this is the capital improvements expenditures. You can see comparing budget year to budget year there is about a \$2.6million decrease in capital improvement. I think a real key point to this slide here is the last statement below. On the council agenda there is a resolution to establish a capital improvement carryover fund of about \$5.6million. Councilmember Joe Hafner asked related to the carryover fund and the depreciation fund, will those be added down as restricted funds to the budget? Mr. Purtee said yes, and we will be preparing accounting entries to effectively move those from the general fund to the restricted fund. On page 12 of this slide it shows you the category details of capital improvement expenditures. Again, you can see the reference to the previous budget with regard to miscellaneous street projects and sidewalk projects. Councilmember Bryant said that he was excited to see that we have increased the funding for sidewalks. I know we are under lawsuit orders and have to spend what it says to stay in ADA compliance. I know that the Mayor referenced doing more around schools, but do we have a general scoring thought process around how some of these decisions will be made? Mr. Purtee stated that I believe that our engineering department and parks department and JETS are establishing those areas where sidewalks will be beneficial. Councilmember Joe Hafner commented that some of the COVID money we received for JETS quite a bit of it went for sidewalks. Mayor Copenhagen stated that we did and it was specified for ADA compliance.

Chairman Hafner asked if any of those projects have started. Mr. Purtee said, in the current budget \$340,000 was included, some of those were completed and we are expecting to carryover another \$200,000 plus in this current budget. Councilmember Bryant asked, if the vac-truck was part of this proposal, Mr. Purtee said no, but there could be some grant funding or ARPA funding relative to those types of equipment, we fully expect to visit with you all in the future for some additional funding and you will see a sizable component in drainage relative to equipment as well. The last slide here is a re-cap of other fund categories. You can see in the Advertising and Promotion category the two levy's one is still pending of course, but the first one regarding prepared foods enacted and we are projecting \$2.8million to be receipted to the A&P fund, specifically to prepared foods and it will have its own designated line item in our financial reports as well, as well as the 1% hotel tax pending council passage. You can

see the remaining detailed items listed on page 14 of this slide. The last slide is detailed information as it relates to ARPA funds. You can see that we did receipt in \$7,789,522million and the earned interest was just under \$10,000 through the end of this calendar year, with a remaining balance of \$5,791.773. I always like to remind ourselves that the Federal Government is allowing cities to consider any revenue loss opportunities. Basically what they did, they established that you can either calculate your true actual loss or you can use a factor of 4.1% year over year growth to account for that as a revenue loss calculation. Obviously we have not experienced a loss in revenues so we are able to take that 4.1% as a calculation of an administrative cost and that will be just under a million dollars that we will be able to utilize in the future based upon your directions relative to coming through this fund. The other thing would be basically for administrative purposes we could associate 10% of the actual cost as an indirect cost to manage the fund, and again those can be unrestricted as well and utilized for other purposes. So, that is about \$1.8million that we expect that will stay within the ARPA program. If we were to enact that differently than we would have available fund of about \$4million through this fund. Councilmember McClain commented by saying let me understand this. So, you are telling me that we would have \$4million left, do we have, or should we work on identifying a list of projects or things that we would like to see happen? Tony Thomas explained that there are guidelines that have been provided of what is and what is not allowable. There has been recent legislation that we are waiting to see if it passes the house and the senate that provides some flexibility. So, we are beginning to see the longer the money is out to cities and municipalities that they are beginning to loosen the strings on how that funding can be used. We have been cautious and we have looked at those items that we know that will qualify for this program, and we are also hopeful that some of the things that we desire to do will become eligible based upon the loosening of the strings. You can also note that the infrastructure bill was recently passed and there may be some possibilities to take federal funds and use as matching opportunities for additional federal funds which is rare, but that legislation is out there and we are waiting just to see some of wat that final language comes out to be. Mayor Copenhaver added as well that we would love that all of the councilmembers give input on their ideas and in particular to your wards and we can make sure those do qualify. We do have an ongoing list, we also have not received the second part of this payment which will be next year and we may or may not receive that payment, so that is why we are being very cautious with the remaining funds. Mr. Purtee commented that that was the last slide regarding the presentations.

Chairman Hafner stated that he had a few comments to make. I know that we have talked a lot about the salaries and the Mayor mentioned that early next year a salary review needs to be done. I know a lot of us were not on the council or in our current jobs back in 2016 when this pay plan was done, so I urge all of you to do a lot of research regarding this. I am doing this as well, I have all of the minutes from the meetings that I could find regarding the current pay plan. Everybody talks about the Johansen plan that was used, that plan was marked up 6% when they came up with the number. Any Johansen plan that we get from now on if we don't mark it up 6% we are not comparing apples to apples. Like I said I urge you all to keep that in mind and do some research, I think there a lot of things that need to be addressed regarding the plan, it was a step forward but I think there could be more improvements made. One thing related to the budget concerning salary is that we talk about the 4%, the 2% step and the 2% COLA, obviously there are some people who are maxed out that don't get a 2% step so hopefully those people can be addressed somehow so that they get the same 4%. Mayor Copenhaver commented that he was glad that Mr. Hafner brought this up. Our year ending goal as we move through to assess that and get everybody at that 4%, obviously there are some that get the longevity pay and it is more than that 2%,

but others on the higher end their not to that point yet. So, we are looking at ways to address that and I feel confident that we can get to that. Mr. Hafner commented okay, because I would like to see everybody get that 4% and Mayor Copenhaver said that he did too. Mr. Hafner stated that you mentioned with the ARPA money and stuff like that as well as a potential revenue bond, hopefully early next year by the end of the first quarter we will have a whole lot more clarification so that we can start moving on some of those items and actually start having projects getting completed with that money. Mr. Hafner said the other thing that I have is regarding the head count. I mentioned this on Tuesday at the meeting we had, I would really love under finance or the collections department for a compliance person to be added. When it comes to this prepared food tax and privilege licenses and all of the other fees that we charge I think that position, having someone dedicated to make sure people are complying would more than pay for itself. So, I would ask that you all strongly consider adding that in the budget or in the first quarter of next year. Also, in the city attorney's budget, I think that retirement pay can be taken out. Mr. Purtee said we have discovered that error and will remove it.

Councilmember John Street asked if the state turn back funds reflected the 2020 census. Mr. Purtee stated that it does. Councilmember Bryant wanted to know if they could get some holistic thought or feedback on the shooting sports complex. I know that you guys inherited the project and you all have had to come along and make it right and make it work and all of those kinds of things. But, I know we are in for about \$6.4 million and I think maybe the budget alludes to maybe coming back with another piece for that project next year depending on what things look like. I think it's an important project and I have supported it, I know that you and I have e-mailed back and forth on it but, do you think we'll get to a break even point? Mayor Copenhaver said I think it's important that we continue the input and I just again want to commend all of the work that the department heads put into the budget process. We've taken a sensible approach in moving the city forward and we have invested in our employees and that is the key thing out of all of this, to move forward we have to do it in a very conservative nature. Again, our projections for next year are a 4% increase and hopefully as we keep investing in our community then those tax revenue dollars will help generate at a higher level.

Sergeant David Stout with the Jonesboro Police Department stated that he is a citizen of Jonesboro and has been here basically his whole life. I have been lucky enough to know a lot of the councilmembers over the years through this job and my previous job. I am the Employee Representative for the Police Department. The only thing that I really want to address today falls under the topic of the salary plan from 2016. I was here when all of that was going on and was privy to a lot of the meetings that took place and was a part of a lot of the different things that happened. There was some things that were said during that whole process that didn't come to fruition. I really hope that whoever we decide to use, if we decide to go with Johansen like Dr. Coleman said or if we decide to do our own study with other departments I really, really hope that whatever is said in here is the same thing that is said behind closed doors. Because I know that we were promised a cost of living raise, Johansen suggested a COLA to be included in it, it was not. I have still got the packet at home from the meeting, it was changed to the Mayor would consider a COLA. We do not know if it was ever considered or not with the previous Administration, We are above 7% behind based on the COLA from 2016, we were told that this plan that is in effect now would not work without the COLA being included in it. As of the beginning of the year, depending on what you look at, which section you fall under for the Federal Government is going to be 4.9% and up to 5.8% increase for next year. Although, I do appreciate the 2% COLA that is nowhere it needs to be, because we are still going to be over 11% down based on the cost of living figures that I have looked at. There is a lot of different

areas in my opinion where money could be used to take care of the falloff in the city salaries. If I have read it correctly the ARPA funds can be used for salary, my suggestion is to start making more investments in the employees for the city then in equipment for the city. We as a police department are one of the best equipped anywhere around, but our pay is not good. Whenever I go to a training class, to answer Mr. McClain's question we do not get any salary increases for going to those training classes. I will use one of our officers, he is an explosive tech as an example, he's been to countless classes he is one of our Sergeants and he makes exactly what one of our Sergeants would make. He is very well trained and his name is Jason Chester. Something else that needs to be looked at is the shift differential pay between the shifts and clothing allowances for police officers, the person that is over that does a good job at getting us what we need, but there is times that there is stuff that we have to pay for. Like I personally like a certain type of boot and I can't get that boot through the police department through the city so I have to foot that bill on my own. There is a \$12.50 shift differential from night to days, that is \$25.00 a month if you work over night you get \$25.00 more a month. Arkansas State University has a 5.5% shift differential. ASU starts out at \$4,000 more than we do. Whenever I go to training class I always try to recruit, I have always done that whenever I have gone anywhere and it's gotten to the point where the last several classes that I have been to I have gotten laughed at for our starting salary and that is embarrassing. Conway Jailers laughed at me to my face about our salary. So, the fact that we cannot recruit with what we pay makes it very, very difficult. The first time I tested here there were 165 people that tested that wanted to be police officers the first time. The last time we tested I think we had 18 people test. When I tested the first time, we tested twice a year, now we have to test monthly because we cannot get enough people to test. I applaud everything that has been done and all of the work that has gone into the budget, and the fact that it is a balanced budget in your first year, I applaud you for that, that is coming from me as a citizen of Jonesboro not a department rep. Mr. McClain brought up a very good point about sidewalks and crosswalks on Johnson, as you all know we lost a citizen of Jonesboro who was very close to the police department, Mr. Timothy Morgan, he was ran over on Johnson, it was a very, very bad scene, crosswalk safety in this town is sorely lacking. Mr. McClain commented that I have made mention before maybe having some type of incentives, and it may need to be across the board for all employees. Chairman Hafner asked Mr. Stout if there used to be some type of incentive program. Mr. Stout said yes, the previous Chief of Police, Mike Yates had worked with the council to get a training and incentive program that was enforced that worked like basically what Mr. McClain is talking about right now. That was taken away when the Johansen plan went into effect, it was incorporated into the salaries. Mr. McClain stated so once the 2% was given then that went away. Mr. Stout stated yes sir, but that was also supposed to include the COLA. So, yes sir once the step programs went into effect the incentive program that we had went away. The COLA that was mentioned and I keep harping on was originally told to us that it would be included, that we would get the COLA and the step increase. Like I said earlier the reps for Johansen said that there was no way that his plan would be conducive without the COLA. I do want to say one more thing, I came up here on my own, this was all me. If anyone has any questions or if anyone needs me to tell them anything or about anything that's said, this is all me. Mayor Copenhaver asked Steve Purtee as it relates to the COLA increase, what is the cost across the board? Mr. Purtee stated that it was just under \$500,000, in addition to those four tiers that we talked about that is about a \$370,000, all combined we are projecting our salaries to go up by about \$810,000. Mr. Stout commented that as far as the 2% step plan we have had multiple officers through the years that have been maxed out. We had officers that were maxed out when the plan was put into place, we have multiple officers who have lost money every year due to the increase, obviously the COLA increase that they aren't even getting.

We have had multiple officers lose money because of the insurance increases. Everyday daily expenses of gone up since 2016, but these officers have been stagnate at their pay rate because there is no room for them to go on this pay plan. We have got multiple officers who have lost money not only yearly, but as in their retirement goes into the future, they will not retire at what other officers retired at, that worked here previously or at the ones that are retiring at now.

Filed

4. Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilperson LJ Bryant, seconded by Councilperson David McClain, that this matter be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 6 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain;LJ Bryant and Brian Emison