



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

5:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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 10 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

Absent 2 - Anthony Coleman and Ann Williams

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, so, Council, it's always a pleasure to stand before you this evening, and I have several councilmembers I would like to come forward and recognize. Brian Emison, if you would please come forward, and Dr. Charles Coleman. First of all, I always am proud to work with our councilmembers, and more importantly, the dedication that they have to our community, and time flies by in a hurry. So I'm honored tonight to go ahead and present several pins in recognition of their years of service. And so, Councilman Emison, here's your five year pin. Congratulations, sir, and we appreciate your commitment to the city. And the next Councilman, I'd swear, he's been here a whole lot longer than this pin recognizes. We are, I think it says 15 years, if I'm not mistaken as city council. So, again, we appreciate your support and due diligence. On behalf of the City of Jonesboro, we want to say thank you.

[COM-26:004](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE MAYOR'S YOUTH ADVANCEMENT COUNCIL (MYAC) FOR THEIR ROLE IN JONESBORO BEING NAMED A 2025 VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR BY THE GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON NATIONAL SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM AND THE ARKANSAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

Mayor Copenhaver said, and before we hear from the Ridge, we're going to switch a little bit, and I think it's always important, too, that we always say great things about our community, good things that are going on. And so many of you are well aware that some of us attended the AML conference this past week and it's always nice to be recognized among your peers. And in doing so, it's the commitment of our community and what we have done, and so there are several awards that I want to bring back to the City of Jonesboro. We had four city councilmembers that were there at the convention that were also recognized for that. One of which was honorable mention of Tourism and Development and Creative Culture. We were honorable

mention in that category. And then the city was the winner of Technology and Security. And then winner, as well, in the Infrastructure and Water category. So, when we go to AML, obviously, we're recognized and compete against cities that are 20,000 and above. And to garner these awards in front of them is an honor. We were the most recognized city of 2025 with these honors. But here's another honor that I'd like to have, and I think we have some youth in the room, if y'all would at least come forward and just kind of stand around me, and then we'll take a picture afterwards. This award was recognized for the Mayor's Youth Advancement Council for their role in Jonesboro of being named 2025 Volunteer Community Year by the Governor's Advisory Commission on National Service and Volunteerism in Arkansas Municipal League. They recognize the MYAC because of its important work that they do. Students are vital to this community. They represent the future of Jonesboro Civic Leadership and they transition to statewide recognition. Jonesboro named 2025 Volunteer Community of the Year Award recipient in the most youth engagement category. It is co-sponsored by Engage Arkansas and the Arkansas Municipal League. This honor reflects the city's commitment to the youth engagement and civic participation from all. You know, the Mayor's Youth Council started five years ago. We had 49, 49 that began. We are up to 99 students. And from the inception to today, they have volunteered almost 1,200 hours; 1,178 volunteer hours in the past year alone. The students work directly with organizations and the city on real life challenges, health and safety, communications, planning, beautification, and inclusion. They are a symbol. These students impact Jonesboro with hands on, service driven projects, and the outcomes are very focused. You know, some of their key accomplishments: Jonesboro 411 app, recognized in the Congressional App Challenge by Congressman Crawford; Spring Community Fair, serving North Jonesboro families; the giving tree supporting residents in need; community cleanups; Earth Day events; coding camps; and youth led safety outreach. Student led efforts, though, have an impact citywide. So again, in my appreciation to the students, I want to say thank you for your leadership. You're doing so by example and commitment. I also want to recognize our city staff, schools, and community partners, and parents, and guardians who support the program. Reinforce the MYAC as a way for any student to be involved in civic life. So as our city motto always says, we're always moving. This is reaffirmed by inclusive civic engagement in youth leadership. So this award, we, as a community, want to say, thank you very much, and we're going to put these up on the highway signs as they come into the City of Jonesboro. So thank you MYAC. Appreciate you all. All right, thank you very much, council for being present this evening.

Read

[COM-26:003](#)

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE ON THE RIDGE ATHLETIC CENTER

Attachments:

[Jan 20 City Council.pdf](#)

[Matt Modelevsky.pdf](#)

[Minute Excerpt in Question_HIGHLIGHTED TO SHOW_CONTEXT IS STILL](#)

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, all right, on our next special presentation, I was asked by city councilman Moore to have an update regarding the construction update on the Ridge Athletic Center. So if you would, Craig, please come forward.

A&P Director Craig Rickert, said, Mayor, Counsel, thank you for letting us come and talk about some exciting things. My name is Craig Rickert. I am the Executive Director of the Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission and we're here to talk about the Ridge. If you've been along Race Street, made your Sam's Club run, you have no doubt seen the walls are going up at the Ridge. People are very excited about this. I just want to give you a quick update on where things stand in this

process right now. Currently, the great crews and subs at Nabholz are working on decking and roofing of the main gym area. As you drive by Race Street, that is the biggest gym area that you see closest to Race Street, 65,000 square feet in that part of the building, eight basketball courts, 16 volleyball courts in that area. The natatorium footings, the natatorium is about 40,000 square feet and they are currently putting the footings in for that. So, as soon as those get in place, we'll start putting up walls there, as well, concrete is the name of the game and also steel. You can see by those pictures right there, steel is being installed in the main gym. Steel's also going in the event center, which is the four court gym, towards the back of the building on the southern side. So, we're very excited at the point we're at. We are hitting a lot of milestones right now.

Here's some pictures from the drone just a couple of days ago. It gives you a real good idea of what you're seeing. As you can probably tell, this shot, you're kind of hovering over Race Street, looking to the southwest and you see the decking and roofing going in there on the eight court gym area. That's the main gym that faces the front of the building. Taking another look at those 35 foot panels going up. This is from the southwest corner, looking back toward, you see Sam's Club there in the top left corner of your screen. And you get a pretty good idea. And just to put it on the map for you here, here's what you're looking at. The main gym, the competition pool, the rec pool, and the event center. All of these are indoors. Both those pools are indoors. That's about 180,000 square foot footprint on the main floor. Tack on about 20,000 square feet on what would be a second floor will be offices, meeting rooms, conference rooms, atrium type areas, and that gets at 200,000- 203,000 square foot footprint for this building. So very excited. And if you just take a note here, one great thing, the crews have done in building this place, is that we're doing concrete tilt up walls. This is a fortress. This is going to be such an asset and a well built part of our community. In the bottom right corner of your screen, you see some wall panels that are ready to be installed by that massive crane. Each one of these panels weighs about 100,000 pounds. That is how massive this structure is. So you are getting to see the scale.

So, some pictures a lot of folks haven't seen yet. Let's take a look inside. Here's some really cool renderings of what you're going to see when the Ridge is complete. This would be the first thing you see when you walk in. Of course, some things that might be some small changes in color and things like that, but this is the entryway into building: a reception area, right there you walk in. As you turn to your right, you can see the entrance to the natatorium for the athletes. The entrance for the spectators is on the other side. And you get a real good idea of how bright this is going to be. If you would turn your corner to the right, you will see the Ridge store where we'll be able to sell items for tournaments, items about Jonesboro. I imagine there'll be some Red Wolf stuff in there as well. And you see the ticket office down there around the corner. The eight court gym, not only will have tilt bleachers for people to see, taking the games on the ground floor, but we have an overlook on the second floor where people can, as you can see in this picture, pull up a chair, have their meal, watch the games, and see many courts all at once. So if you've got kids in different spots in the gym, you can keep tabs on many of them at the same time.

Other parts of the building, this will be the showcase, this beautiful natatorium that we are putting in, about 40,000 square feet, 1,250 spectator seats, four diving boards, two one-meter boards, two three-meter boards. And that will be such an asset to this community. Fifty-meter competition about ten extra meters there at the end for the diving. What you don't see in this picture, is the bulkhead, which is the part that will go over the pool and be able to move back and forth to set different lengths of the pool for competition distances. Other things to take a look at are the cafe, which is very near the front of the building. We have room for about 175 seats, I believe, in

this area. There will be other places where people can sit and enjoy a meal. This kitchen at the Ridge is a full commercial kitchen. This is, if you call it a concession stand, I might have to have word with you, because this is the real deal. You want hot dogs you got it. You want a slice of pizza, you'll have it. But this is a full scale commercial kitchen because we want to be able to host fantastic events in this facility, and we're going to be able to. And one of the things we're super excited about in this community, the outdoor water park. Two big slides, about a 30 foot drop, you know, from top to bottom, and the lazy river which we have expanded and made even bigger. So this will be a wonderful asset for our community that we're very excited to share with everybody. Some other updates besides construction, as you know, Sports Facilities Companies is going to manage this facility for us. Sports Facilities out of Clearwater, Florida manage just close to 100 properties like this across the country. Everything from Baseball Parks of America up in Branson to our place here to Bryant Park in New York City. They are well reputed and excellent at what they do. They've been fantastic partners.

In the last week or so, they have hired Brandon Schrader as the General Manager of the Ridge. Brandon currently is the county administrator for Craighead County, has a fantastic background in programming in Parks and Rec, and he did a little construction project himself with the new courthouse over there, a couple blocks away. So he is well versed. He also was part of Batesville's Parks and Rec Department when they built their aquatics and community facilities. So, he is used to projects like this and we're very lucky to have him. Our hiring matrix kind of pans like this over the next few months. By June, we hope to have the following positions hired; Director of Operations, Marketing, Director of Business Development, and a Finance Director hired out there by Sports Facilities at the Ridge. We are still about a year or so from opening up. We are excited about that. And as part of that we are exploring sponsorships. We will have some names that you might recognize at various places around the building and we're very excited to have some partners that are coming along with us on that ride. So that's my quick update. I can talk about it at nauseum. I'm slightly excited about this. If I had another kid, this would be it. I'm just so excited to see this project come for our community and just so thrilled to have a part of it myself. So I'll entertain any questions from you if anybody has anything.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, Craig, thank you for your update. You left out one important piece of information. When is it going to be open? Mr. Rickert repeated the question, when is it going to be open? Oh, well, that is the million dollar question, isn't it? We are on schedule. I just talked to Nabholz and we're looking good. We've been saying first quarter 2027. And so I feel pretty confident about that. We got to get for this winter. This weekend is messing with us a little bit, I'm sure, but we, I'm told we're pretty much right on schedule. The original deal was to be done by the end of 2026, but we know how construction goes especially on a project of this scale. The other thing to remember, if you can recall last May, how rainy the month of May was for us, and that set us way back, but the crew's been working pretty much six days a week out there when they can and we have all but caught up. We are doing a really good job. So I'd say we're right where we should be. And when you take into the scale of this project, the size of this site, the size of this building, it's remarkable that we are on schedule, like we are.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, Craig, I mentioned at A&P, but I think I'd be amiss if I didn't mention it in this forum as well. I was at a swim meet at the University of Memphis this last weekend, had teams from Missouri, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas. I'm sure I'm missing a few states, but there was a group from Louisiana that was right behind me and they had heard of our natatorium and the rack and they were excited to be part of it when it gets here. So that says a lot from that far away. Mr. Rickert said, we're pretty excited. And, of course, then we

talk about what a revenue generator this is going to be for our city and it's going to bring tax revenue. It's going to fill up restaurants and hotels and we're very confident in that. And, you know, Jerry Morgan is here, Chairman of the A&P Commission. He just wanted to update the council on some of the numbers and the trends we've seen in hotels and restaurants in here. Jerry, were you going to do that Jerry? Mr. Morgan said, I think we are going to let Matt go first. Mr. Rickert replied, oh, your going to let Matt go first, okay, I'm sorry, Matt. Matt is head of the Public Facilities Board, the owners of the site. A&P is the tenants, I guess. So, update.

Public Facilities Board Chairman Matt Modelsky said, Craig, thank you so much for the update. It's exciting to see, and I certainly, as a member of this community, share your excitement in this project, and I know that you've worked very hard, and on behalf of the Public Facilities Board, thank you for all your work. I know that you spent a lot of time and energy to see the project to this point and will continue to do that. So thank you for your work. I appreciate that. For those of you all that don't know me, I'm Matt Modelesky. I've had the pleasure of being the Chairman of the Public Facilities Board for a number of years now. I've served on that board for I think close to 15 years. It's been a long time. I don't know, I can't remember exactly how long, but it's been it's been a long time, and it's a pleasure to serve on that. Brian Emison was formerly on that board and others. So it's a great way to be part of the community. I did want to take the opportunity to address the council because in the position as the Chairman of the Public Facilities Board, it is critical that we get sports tourism right. And I think the Ridge is off to a great start and I think I can agree with Craig's comments here. But I think to make it all really work, you know, we issued bonds of over \$60,000,000 for this project. That's a huge burden and we need to make sure that we can satisfy that burden. And the way that we do that is through hotel stays and through people going out to eat. So we need people coming into town, and we need people to stay here, and we can't just rely on the Ridge, in my opinion, in order to do that. I think we need to start thinking about tourism overall, and our programming overall, not just at the Ridge, and that includes two other parks that are primary to that, and one of those is South Side, and the other is Joe Mack Campbell Park. I prepared some notebooks that I will give each one of you all here, but I want to touch on a few things. But before I really get into the heart of what I want to say, I want to say first, I want to be part of the solution. That's why I'm here. That's why I volunteer on the Public Facilities Board. That's why I volunteered to coach soccer for the last decade and volunteered in other capacities for other boards and organizations in this community in this area because I want to be part of the solution. Some of the things that I'm going to say are tough. I'm going to be honest with you, they're tough. But we need to hear them because I want us to come to a collective understanding of where we are so that we can make sure that we're being thoughtful about our community and how we proceed. So if you all will bear with me, I promise you, this relates to the Ridge Athletic Facility and sports tourism overall, but I do think it's imperative to give you a little bit of background first so that we have this shared understanding of where we are today. So if you've got any questions as I go, please feel free to jump in and ask me for those.

As far as background, like I said, I volunteered to coach soccer for years, and in that, I've coached City Stars, Revolution. I've coached junior high teams, volunteered to coach for the high school, and now coach a team for the Arkansas Legends. I've always volunteered my time to do that because I believe in giving back to the young people of our community and watching them develop and grow through sport. As part of that service, I volunteered on the Revolution Board for a number of years and was a board member and then subsequently the president of that board. On that board, Danny Kapales, our former Parks Director, was the self appointed treasurer of that board. That was the one position that was never open for election, or even frankly, discussion. Danny would prepare a one or two page spreadsheet that he would

present to the board periodically, that represented what he said was the financial state of the organization. One of the line items on that was an entry field usage fee. Some of you are probably familiar with this issue. That field usage fee was questioned not only by me but other members of the board multiple times. The problem with the field usage fee was, Danny said, that was what Revolution had to pay to help offset field maintenance costs at Joe Mack Campbell Park.

Well, one of the board members undertook it to go look for that fee. He looked for a check from Revolution to the city for either a field usage fee or for the roughly the \$20,000 +/- it was represented on the financials. That occurred in 2024. And I'll tell you, it didn't exist. A line item of receivables by Jonesboro showed no payment had ever been received by Revolution or City Stars for that. Now, many of you might still be confused. I was confused at the time about the relationship between Revolution and City Stars and the city. At the time, I didn't understand that City Star's Booster Club was a separate entity legally from the city. The name is misleading. I didn't recognize that Revolution was separate from City Stars Booster Club, but they are. And so this check, this payment was represented have been made, it wasn't. Danny was confronted about that. Originally, he stuck to this representation, that's what it was for. Ultimately, when presented with the facts, he did relent and say, You know what? You're right. It's not ever been paid. I keep that in the account. I use it for whatever, may be needed. An example was given, buy a golf cart. The point is, is that for years, Danny had misrepresented to the board about what this fee was and what it went to. And as the president of the board, I felt like I had a fiduciary relationship to not only the players and the parents who paid for dues, to be part of Revolution, but also the donors that are given their money in reliance on the representations that have been made to them about the use of their money. And that's was one of the representations made. So I took that concern to the mayor. I asked for a meeting in July of 2024. And I told the mayor about this concern. Said, hey, this is a real problem. I'm concerned that he's lying about money. Generally, where I come from, that is a big red flag. The mayor's first comment to me was, well Matt, he's probably paying himself. And I said, mayor, I'm not accusing him of that. We were sitting in your office. I said, all I can tell you is, is I don't know what's happening to it, but I'm very concerned. I'm troubled that I've made representations to donors and to players and their parents about money and I can't tell you where it's going. He said, don't worry about it. We're going to get to the bottom of it. We'll find out what's happening, get to the bottom. Great, that's what we need. We need some transparency and some accountability. I will tell you, as you look through these packets, that didn't happen. You'll see a bunch of text messages from me to the mayor. There were calls and meetings in addition to those. I would say, just from me alone, there's over 40 points of contact asking for something to be done about this from July 2024 through April of 2025. And I can tell you, nothing was done. It's hard. It's tough. But I want to point out a couple things in this packet that you will see. In January of 2025, was able to get a meeting with mayor. It was me and another board member, our incoming executive director, the mayor, Mr. Richardson, some other people from the administration, and presented a preliminary proposal, again, in an effort to try to have some accountability and transparency with regard to these programs. And the ask was, let's remove this from City Stars. Let's have an account that Mr. Purtee can see, that he can audit, that he can, if we need money, we will go to him. The mayor said, absolutely, that's what we're going to do. Give me two weeks. In that meeting, we talked about these financial concerns again because they really hadn't been addressed. I remind you, this was from July of 2024 until January of 2025. They hadn't been addressed, and in that meeting, the mayor again said, well, he probably paying himself with the money. Again, I don't know what he did with it. I don't know to this day and I'm not making that accusation. I want to be clear about that. All I know is, there's a misrepresentation about the money. The mayor said give him two weeks. You'll see text messages in here from me to the mayor begging him

to respond. Begging for something to happen. I actually got concerned at one point that maybe I somehow gotten the wrong numbers. I texted those others, he's got two cell phones, texted the other cell phone, are you getting these messages? I'm concerned you're not getting these messages, but something has to be done. I'll tell you, nothing was ever done. Okay, fast forward toward April. But in between this time in February to April, we had the opportunity to get one of the premier tournament directors in this region, not Arkansas, the entire region. They put on dozens and dozens of the biggest tournaments in Memphis. I don't know if you all are familiar with the Mike Rose Soccer Complex. It's a big complex out in Collierville that hosts tournaments every weekend. It has huge economic impact. And so, one of the things that I wanted to do, that I talked with, various councilmen about, and A&P commissioners about, is the need to really maximize sports tourism opportunities. This is part of where it fits in with the Ridge. This gentleman agreed to be our tournament director and to put on tournaments. I think Mr. Morgan's got some numbers that he can share with you later about the impact of a roughly 60 team tournament and what that could have done. We gave dates to the Park's Department, and we're told, we could tentatively schedule those, but you'd have to have a full meeting to see if the park's available. We were shut out of the park, couldn't even put on a tournament. We couldn't even bring this guy in to try and help our community.

I'll cut some of this down. A lot of this information's in here and I'll encourage you to look at it. I'll be glad to answer questions later. I know this is a lot and I appreciate your attention so much. In April, the mayor sent a text message, you'll see the text message, inadvertently to one of the board members talking about canceling Revolution. You talk about a knife to the heart. I donated hundreds and hundreds of hours to these kids to try to provide them a pathway to develop through youth sport. And our mayor, on one hand, was telling me, we're going to get to bottom of this. We're going to fix this. We're going to make it right. And on the other hand, inadvertently sent a text that he was going to cancel the program. Hundreds of kids and families would have been affected. It was apparent to me in that moment that not only was nothing going to happen, no transparency, no accountability, but it was worse. And so in an effort to try to bring some attention to this, I resigned, as well as our Executive Director and the remainder of the board. Those resignations are in here. You'll see those. You can read them. The interesting thing about that is, in anticipation of that resignation, I was still trying to take care of our kids the best way I could. So I had a phone call with Ms. Duncan and the mayor. There's emails there. They kind of confirm these phone calls. And I talked about, hey, why don't you look at maybe bringing in a third party to run this program? That would get it away from Danny and the city, these misrepresentations. It will provide clarity. It will provide high-level programming and it could provide a pathway to have the sports tourism opportunities that we really need. They're crucial for us as a city. And so you'll see an exchange of emails there where I recap and summarize at that point, ten months worth of frustration on trying to get a response from the administration, from the mayor, to get something done. One of the things I want to point out is, is Ms. Duncan did respond to my emails. Each time I emailed her, the mayor did not respond, and importantly, never refuted a thing I said. Never took issue with it, never clarified a point. That's important. And I think it's important because as soon as we resigned, the mayor gets on KAIT and says the kids are his priority. We're going to make sure we take care of this. That's number one. Well, that's what I'd been hearing for almost a year and it hadn't happened. I've got in here, too, some additional information. Not only did the mayor not do anything, you saw the tourism awards. The administration nominated Danny for Sports Tourism Person of the Year in October of 2025, knowing that for then, over a year, concerns had been expressed about misrepresentations that he had made regarding finances, City Star structures, conflicts of interest, et cetera. That information is in here. And instead of addressing those, it was more important that we put form over substance, that we gave a public image that

everything was good and everything was fine. So let's just keep doing what we're doing. The mayor also said he was going to get an audit of City Stars, which is interesting, because when you see the email exchanges that I had with Ms. Duncan, originally, on the phone call, I was told they didn't really know much about City Stars, but if I wanted something done with soccer, I'd have to go to that board. Later, it looked like we had a little more information about City Stars. But if we don't know anything about it, I don't know how we get an audit of it. But we had one. And there's a clip in here that's interesting, and I would encourage you guys to go back and look at a particular finance meeting where that audit was presented. Alright, Councilmember McClain, asked a really important question in that meeting. He asked the auditor and he asked Danny, he said, So, if I do work for City Stars, I get a 1099, and I don't get paid in cash. And Mr. Kapales stepped up here to this podium, and he said, Correct. Absolutely, nobody's paid in cash. You'll see an excerpt, and hear the transcript from that finance meeting, where that line is omitted. I don't know why. That's a really important line to leave out. Given the history that you'll see in here, and the concerns about finances and money, to leave out that line and at that critical juncture, is very troubling to me. I don't know what it means, but I just know it's troubling. I encourage you to go back and look at it. You'll see a timestamp in that photograph from there. I think it's easy in this moment to just say, well, that was all Danny. He has now resigned. We all know the Department of Justice is investigating or did or was, don't know the status of that. So it's easy to blame. But I want to quickly talk about a couple of things, and I'm going to get to the heart of this, okay? I just wanted to get the background out, and I apologize, it's so lengthy, but it's a lot of information. But, recently, I coached this team, volunteer, wonderful, amazing 12 and 13 year old little girls. Great, all members of this community, their parents and they just want to play soccer. So I texted our soccer coordinator and asked for a field on December the 12th and was told, no, Lights at the Park is out there. But, the Park is going to be closed maybe until March and somebody would follow up with me. So I followed up on December 23rd, having not heard anything. No, the park is closed, Lights at the Park. You'll see pictures and some advertisements in here. I started going out to the park because I knew that wasn't true because on December 21st, one of my daughters participates in what's called the Olympic Development Program, and they held an event out of Joe Mack. So I knew that people were using the park. I was out there, and my daughter was out there, and frankly, they should be. That's what it's for. We've got these wonderful turf fields. Let's use them. Right? I again followed up and was basically directed to Mr. Stearns for a response. Mr. Stearns said the same thing. The park is closed. And this is no shot, by the way, on either our soccer coordinator or Mr. Stearns. They're just the messenger. I understand that. Okay. Closed, but I had been going out there, and you'll see pictures that I dated. I took pictures of people using the park every single time I was out there, soccer fields, playground, walking, all the things. The park was very active. I'm glad, glad for that. But I was continually denied access. Interestingly, when Mr. Stearns responded to me, he copied Mr. Richardson on the email, which I found very peculiar. I know Ms. Duncan will appreciate this, but a park is a public forum under the law. And you can't deny equal access to a public forum. You have to provide access on the same terms and conditions, and I knew that I was being denied access on the same terms and conditions. And while I could tolerate that personally, I was not willing to tolerate that on behalf of the kids that I volunteered to coach. It's not fair to them to not get access, to have to go out to a park that's muddy. I was told to go to Miles Park, we could use that one. I went out and took pictures of Miles Park, muddy, there's no nets, the goals are in disrepair if you can call them goals. But everybody else got to go to Joe Mack.

Another situation just this morning, Premiere Training Academy sent a letter separating their relationship with Revolution. I want to be clear. I have nothing to do with Premier Training Academy. I know some of the people involved and they are

wonderful people. So I'm not speaking on their behalf. I just read their public statement and it's included in here as well, so you all can have the benefit of reading it if you like. But they severed their relationship, but when you read their statement, again, I can't speak on their behalf, but I think it speaks for itself. A lot of the same problems I am describing. Misrepresentations, misinformation, denial of promises, et cetera. My point with all that is, is that we're at a crossroads. I know I emailed you all on December 10th and I encouraged us as a community. While the Department of Justice Investigation into Danny Kapales is tough, and no community wants to go through that, it is an opportunity for us as a community to pause and to say wait a minute. Is what we were doing the right thing for our community, and even if it was back then, is it the right thing moving forward? I encouraged us to pause, and to get a sports advisory panel, I want to applaud Mr. Gibson. Following that, I don't know, Mr. McClain and Mr. Bryant express some support for that and Mr. Gibson took some steps, some public works committee, and to reactivate the Parks and Rec Board. I appreciate that. I think it's an incredible first step. I want to thank you for that. I think that was important. But I would ask the council to empower that committee, or start another, whatever you guys see fit, to really vet all the options. For us to pause. And this is part of the solution that I want to be too. Because we need these things to be active. We need Southside and Joe Mack, just like a Ridge, to be active. In order for this to work, and I can tell you from my experience on the Public Facilities Board, this is key. All of these have to be hand in glove. And we really need that committee to be empowered to vet all the various options. There's a lot of options out there, and I won't try to go through them or pretend to know them all because I don't. Some communities use a vendor model, some, you know, just like the organization, Craig, that's going to be doing the Ridge. Right? That's a vendor model. And they obviously do it all over the country at a very high rate. I think that's great. I think for some of our other sports, we ought to at least consider that. But the bottom line is, I would ask that this council be thoughtful in how we proceed. I know you will. I have said that repeatedly in my information, you'll see it in the emails when you read them. I believe in this group. You wouldn't serve on this, on this council, if you didn't have the best interest of Jonesboro at heart. I believe that. You can do a million other things with your time. You guys have lots of important things to do. But I believe in you and that's why I'm here asking you, pleading with you, to take the time to empower this committee to get this right. Let's stop making rash decisions. Let's stop just hurrying to put form over substance. Let's take the time to get this right. I appreciate your time tonight. I'll be glad to answer whatever questions you have. I'll provide these binders to you with the information that I'm referenced, it's got the text, the emails, it's got all the things, okay? Any questions from anybody at this point for me? Again, I apologize for the length of time. I appreciate the opportunity to visit with you. If there's anything that I can do in the future, please reach out. With that, I believe, Mr. Morgan is going to provide some update on some financing. And while he's doing that, I'll pass these out to you.

A&P Chairman Jerry Morgan said, thank you Mr. Modelesky. I'm Jerry Morgan, Chair of the Jonesboro Advertising and Promotions Commission. I've been doing this for seven or eight years now. You know, on the screen in front of you, is the hotel revenues for 2025 and all the years prior to that. As you can see, we hit \$942,000, on the 3% hotel revenue, that was a 0.6% increase from 2024. If you saw that we were down 4.2% in 2024, we were on a pretty good trend from 2021 to 2022 and then kind of leveled out over the last couple of years. I will say, you know, I'll go through that one, and, you know, our 1% hotel revenue follows the same trend, as you can see. That is that those funds are specifically used for city partnerships with the A&P Commissions at the city's request. The last one was the soccer fields that I think we started that in 2023. We just finished paying for that at the end of 2025. So we have about \$300,000 a year coming into that fund that could be used going forward for another project. I will reiterate some of Matt's topics. Again, it's very uncomfortable to

talk about these things, but I think it's important that we get it right going forward. You know, again, one of the big things that we did, a couple of years ago, is we approved \$2.5 million towards soccer fields. A&P paid for half of that. When it was presented to us in 2023 by the previous Parks and Rec Director and Matt Modelesky in the A&P meeting, the plan was for turfing the fields so we could increase our rec league and also host outside tournaments. That was the plan, that was the economic driver behind it. Fast forward to the beginning of last year and we did partner with Matt and them. We had the opportunity, I think, to host over four outside tournaments this past fall. We did get some numbers from sports facilities. One tournament would have brought in about 60 teams and would have an economic impact of \$1.5 million dollars per weekend. That would have been a total of \$6 million, up to \$6 million dollars in economic impact to our hotels. And you can see what this would probably do to our hotel revenue, it'd obviously increase it. I will reiterate what Matt said. We were denied getting dates for that. We were denied that from the previous Parks and Rec Director. I met with the mayor and some others and was told that we will work on it and never heard back. He did give me a response that he was going to make sure that we did nothing that would affect the rec league kids which I appreciate that. But I think it's important to note, we have always partnered together with rec league and outside tournaments. We've done it over the years on Jonesboro baseball boosters. We've done it at softball. We have done it at volleyball and that's never been a problem. It's not a problem for other cities. But last year, we were denied those dates for economic development for our city and hotels and restaurants. I'm not going to reiterate a lot of things that Matt brought up, but, I mean, there are some concerns that were raised, that were raised by me and some others last year. And again, our position is, not only the economic development of the sports programs for our city, but A&P has given City Stars organization over \$150,000 over the last five or six years. So that's money that we gave them, at their request, to help fund youth programs for low to moderate incomes to kids that couldn't afford it otherwise, and also for trophies, and that's sort of thing. So let that sink in please. We gave that money. We also thought it was part of the city. We thought it flowed through the city, that was on us. I think everybody, many of the people in the A&P, many people within the city, thought that the City Stars money was part of the city. We did not find out until after that, that it did not flow through there. You know one question that I raised a couple of times last year after the concerns were raised, is why would Legislative Audit not review this. And I understand the response I got what it was a 501C-3. It was a separate organization from the city that we received. But what I don't understand is you had city employees on city time, using city facilities, using city trucks and vehicles, and the only thing that wasn't part of the city was the collection of funds that was going through a portal for City Stars. I would think that that would be a red flag that would require Legislative Audit to come in and review that. I know we get reviewed from A&P on several different occasions. So, I don't know who talked to Legislative Audit or what was told to them, but I would think that that would be an item that should have been looked at, especially with the concerns. It would have been very easy to internally review this instead of having to get an outside audit for a further investigation. I would also ask each of you to please go back and look at the finance meeting. I'm not going to go through all of the quotes. Go back and look at the finance meeting of, I think it was July of this last year, and review that because there are several key things in there that are all red flags, from not much money was collected, not much money was involved. It's such a small program. All we were asked to review was the field usage fee. I mean, all of those things are concerning, especially when you allow somebody to request their own audit after the accusations that were made to them. Lastly, and I'll finish it with this, our community is made up of volunteers. It's hard to find good volunteers that actually want to serve in our community and be very active. It's hard. I mean everybody's busy. Everybody's working. You know, through this process, I don't know how many volunteers we lost last year. It was 8 to 10. I'm not sure how many were on that board. But they raised

concerns over programming, they raised concerns over field usage, and then they raise concerns over financial irregularities. And nothing happened, and they finally said, to heck with it, we're going to give up. There's no sense in fighting this and we don't want to be a part of this if there's no transparency. So we've lost volunteers there. It's very, very frustrating. It's frustrating. I'll end it with this, I think at the last city council meeting, the mayor's comments, said, I have talked to several members of our Parks Advisory Committee, and I know Jim has talked to most of them, if not all of them, as well as to them, about our youth sports programs. I don't know who talked to them or who communicated with them, but I've talked to several, had several call me, and is like, obviously, you have been talked to, I haven't heard anything. Most of them have not been talked to anybody before that city council meeting, the last city council meeting. If I'm wrong, let me know. Let me know who you talked to because several of them said, I have not, they have not heard from anybody. And we're making decisions on programming, going forward, just like nothing happened without any input from stakeholders. The A&P has not been involved, the Facilities Board hasn't been involved, and it seems like most of the Parks Commission has not been involved. So why would you go through and start making decisions without the input from the stakeholders? You know, I will follow up with what Matt said, and I appreciate what Chris, Mr. Chris is doing on this, is we need a separate commission that is focused on sports, that has actual input, and it also reports to the city council, because, obviously, the path that we have taken previously hasn't worked well for our city. So with that, I will answer any questions that you may have. Let me also say, the path we've gone through last year has not been easy, but it does also show that there's a significant upside to what we have available. With the projections we have on RAC Center, it also shows us that we have a significant potential at our other facilities that Matt mentioned, but we've got to get it right, and we've got to get the programming right, because all of this revenue has to pay for this facility. If it doesn't, it's on all of us. It's on every one of us. I mean, Matt and I are volunteering. We can walk away any time. The reason we haven't, and people have asked, why are you keeping doing this? There's times I don't know. But the main reason Matt and I talked about last year, is we wanted to make sure that the RAC Center didn't fall under the same issues that Joe Mack has and that's why we're trying to keep it independent and keep community oriented in a volunteer organization controlling that and working on it and working on a partnership with the city on that. So with that, any questions or any comments?

Councilmember David McClain said, I got a question, Jerry. Thank y'all for being here, you and Matt taking time and serving our community. So I appreciate that greatly. One, I think the biggest thing and one of the questions I've been asking about is cashless. Will RAC be cashless or will that be a combination? Mr. Morgan said, I don't know the answer to that. Ms. Duncan said, I really believe there was a court ruling recently that said you can't be completely cashless, that if somebody tenders legal tender, you have to accept it. Now, you can be mostly cashless and give those opportunities, but I don't think you can declare completely cashless. Like, I think ASU's been going through trying to refigure out what they're going to do because they did go cashless inside the stadiums, and they're trying to figure out how to do both. But you can go mostly cashless, for sure. Mr. Morgan said, I think there's definitely ways to put controls in place to make sure the cash is handled properly. Councilmember McClain said, I think the other question to follow that up, have we started working on a cash handling policy in that we've got this group, this person's counting or can we spell that out? Maybe bring that to us and give us an official this is our procedure. This is our policy that we will follow each and every time. Because I remember going back and looking at the finance meeting that they referenced and it was three people counting it, counting the money, but it doesn't say who the three people are and their role in the city. So I think we do need to outline, is it somebody from finance? is it somebody from, you know, the different, whatever. But at the same

time, we need to have a policy around that. So I would love to see us bring that back, maybe to finance and give us... But Mr. Chairman, what do we have available? I see this extra one percent. What do we have available to spend? And have we had, have you used it? Have you not? Mr. Morgan stated, it's a good question. We just finished the three-year allocation we did from the soccer fields. And so we have this fund can be used for a project going forward. Again, that is designated for a city requested project. The city brings it to A&P and we partner with them on funding that we can do, you know, one year, two, year, three year, project for that. I can tell you in our last year's planning meeting for A&P, and one of my personal goals, is as a community, as a city, we need to find a way to get the Shooting Sports Complex finished. We have got to get that done. It's going to take a final facility out there. The main facility, I think the estimates are \$3-4 million dollars. If we all pull together, we could find a way to get that done. We need some leadership that's going to take that and roll with it. We've talked several times. We are still waiting on a solution. I think A&P could come up, could use this money over a three or five year period to help with that. You know, a million, a million five, I think A&P would have some additional money, possibly, after the sports complex gets finished, to put towards that. I know the Facilities Board has expressed an interest in that. So if we all put our heads together, we can get that done, but that is a huge economic opportunity that we are wasting out there. It is well ran. The individuals out there work really, really hard. We could host a lot of regional tournaments if we had the final building. We basically just, we built it, and we have not completed it. It's like having a house without a front door on it. We need to get that finished. So that would be my recommendation. Obviously trying to find partnerships for that. So, anyway that's where we're at there.

Councilmember McClain said, the last thing I'll say in regards to this, I know the RAC is going to be, somebody else will run that out. I can't remember the name of the group. Mr. Morgan replied, Sports Facilities. Councilmember McClain continued, Sports Facilities Group, they're going to run it day to day, tournaments, et cetera. I really feel like we need to look at moving our sports outside of the city and making it something that we have a separate entity, their responsibility is our youth sports program. Now, there are some other cities that do it. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, maybe reach out to them and say, what are you doing? Help us make this happen. Number one, to make sure we don't have any things that have happened in the past. So, you know, that's my preference, but we'd love to see that happen as well. Mayor Copenhaver replied, thank you councilman. Mr. Morgan said, again, that's a huge option that could be done. There's several companies that do that. Several companies that do that programming, a lot of cities are going to that model, because the advantage you get is those people, they know how to run a tournament and they can bring teams in for those tournaments. So I would think that's something we could definitely look at, get bids on it, and if we don't like it, we keep doing what we're doing. And, let me be clear, the current Parks and Rec Department does an outstanding job. I don't want any of this to be a reflection on anything anybody has done in that department. They look great, their mode, everything looks really, really good. So I think we've got to maybe really, really keep that in the back of our minds. And also, you know, programming is just one part of the Parks and Rec. Any questions? Any other comments? Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you Jerry.

Read

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Chris Gibson motioned, seconded by Councilmember Joe Hafner, to adopt the consent agenda unless any changes are noted. Councilmember Brian Emison said, actually, I'm sorry, I do have an item to remove mayor. That's going to be RES-26:004. Councilmember Gibson said, I will amend my motion to reflect that. Councilmember Hafner said, second. All voted aye.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

Aye: 10 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

Absent: 2 - Anthony Coleman and Ann Williams

[MIN-26:002](#)

MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2026

Attachments: [CC Minutes 01062026.pdf](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-25:201](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS AUTHORIZING THE OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE TO PURCHASE RIGHT-OF-WAY AT 3229 S CARAWAY ROAD FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSTRUCTING AND MAINTAINING ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Attachments: [Signed Offer and Acceptance.pdf](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-019-2026

[RES-25:218](#)

RESOLUTION TO EXECUTE A TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICE AGREEMENT TO MAINTAIN TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF HIGHWAY 1B AND FOREST HILL ROAD AND HIGHWAY 1B AND PARKER ROAD

Attachments: [100881 Jonesboro Signal Agreement.pdf](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-020-2026

[RES-26:001](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 910 MARCOM DRIVE, PARCEL 01-143251-04100, OWNED BY WILDA SEATS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [01. 910 Marcom Notice of Violation.pdf](#)
[02. 910 Marcom Billing Request.pdf](#)
[03. 910 Marcom Mowing Invoice.pdf](#)
[04. 910 Marcom Council Notice.pdf](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-021-2026

[RES-26:002](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 224 S. MCCLURE, PARCEL 01-144183-13600, OWNED BY CITIFIRST, LLC IN THE

AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [01. 224 S McClure Notice of Violation.pdf](#)
 [02. 244 S. McClure Billing Request.pdf](#)
 [03. 224 S McClure Mowing Invoice.pdf](#)
 [04. 224 S McClure Council Notice.pdf](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-022-2026

[RES-26:003](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 234 S. MCCLURE, PARCEL 01-144183-12700, OWNED BY CITIFIRST, LLC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [28529792-255686 234 S McClure.pdf](#)
 [29334505-234 S McClure 255686.pdf](#)
 [29819088-255686 234 S McClure Mowing Invoice USPS 9589 0710 5270](#)
 [29959769-255684 255686 224 234 MCCLURE NOTARIZED AFF CITIFIR](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-023-2026

[RES-26:005](#)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT WITH AXON GROUP, INC. TO PROVIDE BODY WORN CAMERA, VEHICLE CAMERA, AND TASER EQUIPMENT FOR CITY DEPARTMENTS

Attachments: [Jonesboro PD Revised Axon Quote w NAF DEC 2025, R1.pdf](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-024-2026

RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

[RES-26:004](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 01-144214-13300 ON NELMS, PARCEL 01-144214-13300, OWNED BY STONE PARTNERS, LLC & CSC INVESTMENTS, LLC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$315

Attachments: [01. 01-144214-13300 on Nelms Notice of Violation.pdf](#)
 [02. 01-144214-13300 on Nelms Billing Request.pdf](#)
 [03. 01-144214-13300 on NelmsS Mowing Invoice.pdf](#)
 [04. 01-144214-13300 on Nelms Council Notice.pdf](#)

Councilmember Brian Emison said, mayor, the reason why I asked this item to be removed this evening is that lien has been satisfied. I'll make a motion to table indefinitely. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman seconded the motion. All voted aye.

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

Aye: 10 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

Absent: 2 - Anthony Coleman and Ann Williams

6. NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

ORD-26:001

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, ARTICLE III, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, PROVIDING FOR A CHANGE IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-1 SINGLE FAMILY MEDIUM DENSITY DISTRICT TO C-3 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2620 ALEXANDER, JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, AS REQUESTED BY PAULA THOMPSON

Attachments: [App_2620Alexander](#)
 [MailReceipts_2620Alexander](#)
 [Staff Summary RZ_26-02](#)
 [Rezoning MAPC 1.13.26](#)
 [Receipt](#)

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember L.J. Bryant, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-26:001 by title only. All voted aye.

Held at one reading

ORD-26:002

AN ORDINANCE FOR THE APPROVAL OF A PRIVATE CLUB PERMIT FOR MONARCA'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT, LLC

Attachments: [Application Redacted](#)
 [Lease Agreement](#)
 [Receipt](#)

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Brian Emison, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-26:002 by title only. All voted aye.

James Elwyn Hinds, 508 Ridgecrest, said, I noticed we had two of these and by the way, what does application redacted mean? Does that mean that there is information they don't want the public to have until they can get their permits? City Clerk April Leggett said, Mr. Hinds, I'll answer that question for you. If they've listed a social security number on that, that has to be redacted. Mr. Hinds said, okay. Folks, when is this going to stop, you know, the citizens of Craighead County have at multiple times voted for this to be a dry county. And there is no respect for that vote at all. You know, it's yeah you voted, but we run things. It's almost like a dictatorship. The votes of the people don't mean a thing. We need to put limits on this. There's lots of things, and I want you all to know if you haven't looked up the law, because some people like to blame it on the alcohol control board, but the alcohol control board is only an appeal situation. They fairly well are bound by whatever you all decide. You all have a lot of power when it comes to whether or not to grant these private permits. You all can limit them, and let me say, I think there needs to be a number set of how many, and now, I would recommend, one for every 2,000 residents of the city. Of course, there is a matter that we have a lot more than that permits out there already. But we need to think about, you know, the citizens of county voted this thing dry. When are

we going to start paying attention to the citizens instead of to the liquor money?

Held at one reading

[ORD-26:003](#)

AN ORDINANCE FOR THE APPROVAL OF A PRIVATE CLUB PERMIT FOR WALK-ON'S SPORTS BISTREAUX

Attachments: [Application Redacted](#)
 [Lease Agreement](#)

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Brian Emison, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-26:003 by title only. All voted aye.

Held at one reading

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING

[ORD-25:041](#)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BOARD

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

Aye: 10 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

Absent: 2 - Anthony Coleman and Ann Williams

Enactment No: O-EN-006-2026

[ORD-25:045](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-1 TO PD-R LUO FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT CORTE BELLA

Attachments: [Application](#)
 [Plat](#)
 [Publication Receipt](#)
 [Staff Summary RZ 25-18](#)
 [MAPC Minutes 12.09.2025](#)
 [Receipt ORD 25.pdf](#)

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: 10 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

Absent: 2 - Anthony Coleman and Ann Williams

Enactment No: O-EN-007-2026

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

Mayor Harold Copenhagen reported on the following:

So, good evening, everyone, and we're three weeks now to 2026, and as expected it's cold, and the wintry precipitation is in the forecast. I'm sure that Steve Tippen and his road crew are looking forward to that, but as Ronnie Sturch and all of our emergency response departments prepare, let's be mindful of the safety of our families and neighbors, too. The Street Department will be busy this week in preparing and will remain in close contact with ARDOT to be ready for mother nature. Warming centers, which are the community centers, will be open and JET services will operate as much as possible. The Salvation Army, again, is helping with overnight shelters and meals.

Even though the Dr. Martin Luther King Day parade held yesterday was chilly, it didn't stop the enthusiasm. The Drum Corps and Steppers performed, brought the energy, and it was great to see the size of the crowd to celebrate an important work of such an iconic and brave leader in our history. And the trolleys took part in the parade as well. I had the honor of being one of the speakers at the ceremony, which followed at the ASU Alumni Center, joining leaders of various organizations working together to bring our community together.

Lots of exciting plans now are going on at our airport. I attended the airport commission meeting last week and along with new construction, which is totally visible, the improvements are being made. There's genuine interest. We had outside interest in multiple groups for commercial jet service, which is now leading us in a new direction. And the commission will decide at what point in time in the years to come that we'll be providing that opportunity for our residents. So these improvements are leading us in that direction. So it brings me, at this point, to additional safety features for travel at the ground level.

I want to say thanks to ARDOT. You'll be seeing safety features added on Johnson and Caraway. Right now, the HAWK Light on Johnson gets about 100 pushes a day. ARDOT will soon be adding another HAWK light. Now, council, this is on top of the one that we're going to have out by Parker Park, the one on Johnson, they're adding an additional HAWK light on Johnson at their expense because they've seen it pay off with relevance. They will also add a rapid flashing beacon near Textbook Brokers as well. And then at Caraway and Johnson, they're going to be making some combined traffic features enhancement for the safety crossings of those pedestrians. We continue our efforts to improve both vehicle and pedestrian safety.

Speaking of plans, be on the lookout from some public input meetings on our master growth plan. Now, as we move forward with that master growth plan, we're looking for anywhere from what, Derrel, about 10 to 15 local meetings. The majority of them are going to be, hopefully in church facilities. We want the input of the community, that honestly, we want to engage community members that don't engage themselves on a normal basis on our master growth plan. This is really key for the future development of Jonesboro. So we'll be providing that.

Speaking of growing, I'd like to make an introduction. Jim, if you would, please come forward. I think everybody is well aware, and if you haven't met Mr. Stearns, I would garner for you to do so. He's a talented individual, and I'm very pleased that he has accepted the position as the new Director of Parks. And I'd like to give him a minute to discuss some of the plans and visions for the future of our parks.

Parks Director Jim Stearns, said, thank you, Mayor. I appreciate that. Nice to see everybody tonight. I'm excited about this challenge in front of me. I really am. I'm really looking forward to working with various community groups and individuals that

are concerned about youth sports and how we run those youth sports programs. Our goal is to be more accountable, more transparent, and continue to improve the opportunities for kids to play and enjoy sports in our community. Coming up this year, right now, we've got sports registration for youth sports, open for rec basketball, rec soccer, softball, flag football cheer, Miracle League pickleball and Miracle League basketball coming up. We're really excited about that. My team rallied together and pulled together off the Icebreaker J.O. Volleyball Tournament this past weekend. Just real quick, we're looking really forward to the Ridge. Can't wait to have one solid place for conducting large tournaments. We were at 15 different gyms on 22 courts. We had 9 concession stands. We had 86 teams this weekend. We had 21 teams within 10 miles of Jonesboro. We had 65 teams that were within 25 miles of Jonesboro. We had 10 teams that traveled over 150 miles. Our farthest was a Cornerstone Volleyball Club, 175 miles away from Elkhorn, Mississippi. They brought 2 teams to Jonesboro for the tournament. We had a total of, well, nearly 2,000 spectators, adults. We had 1,955 of that 270 were youth spectators. We had a great weekend. We had a really, really good weekend in Parks. The Parks team pulled together and pulled this off. We had a lot of interaction with people. We talked about the Ridge and we talked about the future, hoping that maybe this would be the opening event of next year's Ridge Grand Opening. With the number of courts and consolidated facilities, we think it'll just be even a bigger tournament potentially for us. I'd really like to say that we welcome input from all community groups to help us moving forward. You know, we're just trying to make things work for the city. We're trying to improve youth sports and youth sports opportunities, and continue to work forward towards that motion. I appreciate the opportunity and look forward to working with each and every one of you guys. Mayor Copenhaver said, all right, Jim, thank you very much.

So, many of you know that some of our directors and staff, as well, went to the Arkansas Municipal League Winter Conference in Little Rock last week. It's always interesting to hear about other community's challenges and solutions, as well, the level of topics that impact us. And I'll admit that the awards lunch and Jonesboro name was called out numerous times, and it's always wonderful to see among your peers, but I believe we won awards because of the community's engagement. You've heard us mentioned that Volunteer Community of the Year, and that's who we are. We are volunteers, and it's been said here many times this evening. That's what sets Jonesboro apart. That's who we are, and that's who we'll continue to be.

So, we have wonderful plans for the vision and the future. I would like to go ahead as well and for community members, we are looking for volunteers on many of our committees. So please access our city website, find a committee that you would like to engage yourself with, and please put in your application to participate.

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember John Street said, Oh, I was glad to hear Mr. Morgan's offer for A&P to work with the city to finish the Shooting Sports Complex. I hope there's a way that we can get together with them and finish the investment we have out there to maximize the economic opportunities that it will bring to the city. It's a great facility, and all we need is that building, and I think that would reap great economic benefits for us. I mean, I think we'd really see them. So hopefully we can get on board with that and get that done.

Councilmember L.J. Bryant said, Oh, boy. I don't know what's on Kevin's mind, but tonight reminds me a little bit when I sold real estate full time, I was showing a house and I got bit by a dog. And the person that I was representing that I was going to make money off of acted like it didn't happen. I mean, it was unbelievable. The guy

never said a word about his dog biting me. We had a shark bite tonight and the mayor read from a script, like a robot, talking about weather. So the folks that are concerned about stuff, the mayor's not going to do a thing about it. So it's going to be up to this council for us to make change. I mean, the FBI has been in city offices, and we're sitting here acting like everything's just going great. So it's time for us to get serious.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I think it's always good to have input and I think we have plenty of opportunities for improvement. Thank you.

Councilmember David McClain said, I think one of the things that was brought up tonight as Matt said was tough. I'm concerned. I don't know if we have...a concern of mine is that we saw minutes that were altered. I'm just curious if somebody can give me some clarity on why something was removed. City Clerk April Leggett stated, I will allow you a response to that. There is an ongoing investigation and that will exonerate our office. City Attorney Carol Duncan said, I agree, it will. I mean, I don't know how much we can talk about the FBI investigation, but they investigated that and they found no wrongdoing on that. Councilmember McClain responded, to remove, to alter the minutes? Ms. Duncan replied, it wasn't altered. The minutes weren't altered. I think what happened is the phone rang. I believe it was the time that my phone, unfortunately, went off during a meeting of all the great timing. And, I think that disrupted when the minutes were being typed. And yeah, we've all answered questions about that, and they found no wrongdoing on the part of the City Clerk's Office on the minutes. And that's who is 100% in charge of the minutes. I don't have any say so on the minutes nor does anyone else. Councilmember McClain said, yeah, that's all I got.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, the only thing that I've got, Madam Clerk, is I think, and I mentioned this at our last meeting, just briefly, I would like for you to send out an email to the Parks Advisory Committee as well as the Public Services Committee, and see if we can arrange a good date and time that works for all parties involved to have just a popcorn session and a brainstorm session on how we really do need to move things forward and how we need to realign.

Councilmember Brian Emison said, I appreciate all the comments tonight, and as we move forward and talking about anything in regards to any cash controls or anything else, that, after having 15 years of retail banking, if there's any conditions or anything that I can help serve on to improve any cash controls or any motion forward, I'd be happy to serve on those.

Councilmember Janice Porter said, the council's first meeting in March falls on election day, and I will be working all day as an election official. And, I bring this up in case it would affect anyone else on the council or members of the public.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Daniel Gary, 668 CR 763, said, for 12 years, I have coached here in town. 4,000 hours of coaching hundreds of our youth. One of the volunteers was on board that Matt mentioned because I believe our kids needed a good place, a place to grow that is built on honesty and integrity, not deception, not lies. While those of us on the board were operating in good faith, leadership, city hall was allowing a culture of deception. Core of the issue is simple, Parks and Recreation Director lied to volunteers and parents about our finances for years. It wasn't a secret for over a year. The board reported this to the mayor. He sent warning after warning to the mayor's office about serious financial red flags. You've got the documents now. Instead of stepping into protect the families, the kids, the mayor gave empty promises

that he would fix it. He never did. It's hard to ignore this period of stalling and ignoring it and hoping it went away. It occurred right in the middle of his re-election campaign. It feels like accountability was sidelined for political convenience, leaving volunteers to be misled and families to stay in the dark. After months of hitting a wall of silence and excuses, our entire board felt we had no option but to resign. After the resignation, the mayor met with me in my office, looked me in the eye and promised that we were going to find a path forward. He promised me three things. One of those is going to be getting Revolution financially independent. One of those, can be figuring out a way to help fund it. The other one was he was going to offer an apology to our board president for the repeated disrespect and dishonesty he showed. And to my knowledge, that apology has never been offered. And that's a shame. The city deserves better. What I saw with Danny was not poor communication, it was a deliberate coverup. When we discovered that the missing budget item for field usage, I asked Danny for a City Stars board roster so I could understand what was going on. Danny gave me a list of private citizens who I then followed up with. I called them. They didn't have a clue what he was talking about, what I was asking about. I followed up with Danny, sent him an email. He gave me a new list, all Parks and Rec employees that reported directly to him. It wasn't an oversight. The mayor's office was fully aware of every bit of this and failed to do a single thing about it. It's been 18 months since he received his first contact. And the mayor only made a single visible action once the FBI raided Danny Kapales's home and his office. Even then, the goal wasn't transparency. It was a power grab to take control of our youth sports programming. Letting the same leadership that turned a blind eye to years of financial deception, now, dictate the future of youth sports of Jonesboro is a mistake. Tells the public nothing's changed. I understand the instinct to wait for the outcome of that FBI investigation, but criminal investigations determine guilt. They don't determine whether this city's leadership has met its ethical obligations. Moral failures of the mayor and his administration are already documented, and they require action now. Let's be clear about the stakes. The mayor didn't just fail to protect youth sports, he failed to act when warned, allowed deception to continue, and in doing so, exposed this city to national scrutiny through an FBI investigation. All while prioritizing political expediency over accountability. If the council does not intervene now, the message is that protecting political power matters more than protecting our kids. I'm asking you to draw a firm line here and say that Jonesboro's not willing to accept that. You have an ethical and professional responsibility to step in, slow this down, and take ownership of what happens next. Youth sports should not be consolidated under an administration that prioritizes politics over the truth. This transition needs independent oversight and public accountability led by this council, with representation from the A&P Commission and the Public Facilities Board. Let's empower the sports advisory council that Matt and Jerry mentioned to make educated decisions about our kids and make sure they're taken care of. Our kids deserve a system they can trust. And I'm asking you to be the leaders, our city and our kids' need that is missing from city hall. Thank you.

Jolene Mullett, 2004 West Nettleton, said, I'm here tonight to talk a little bit about the Black History Museum at the E. Boone Watson Center. As you guys know, the E. Boone Watson Center is a cultural center for which there are a few in Northeast Arkansas. My understanding is that when the building was chosen to house the warrants division that it was supposed to be a short term solution. Currently, the community room is not able to be accessed for birthday parties, baby showers, family reunions for the community that it should be serving. And I understand that there are issues beyond the city's control. It seems like insurance matters, and the like, and that the city is making an effort to navigate the situation. With this in mind, I'm just wondering, what is the timeline for the center to be back in use for the community? Mayor Copenhaver said, we've got your name and address, and we'll get right with you. Ms. Mullett said, okay, thank you. Mayor Copenhaver responded, thank you.

Jeremy Terrell, 909 Pinecrest, said, I'm gonna try to be, I don't think I'll be as nice as Jerry or Matt, but here's the truth. The truth is, I got up here in April. I did the math. A math, I did the math and very few people took that math as math. It's incredibly frustrating. And the math that I did was only on soccer. It didn't include the other sports. And then I got asked, you know, by Carol to provide names to those that have been given cash. It's incredibly frustrating because, you know, Carol, I don't know you, so I don't, this is not, you're in the public eye, but you asking me to give you something instead of you going out and finding those names and asking around, that's incredibly frustrating to me. That, you know, your job is to make sure that we're acting as legal as possible. And, you know, with all due respect, I didn't have any confidence that if I gave you the names, anything would happen. And, that's not a reflection on you, it's just a reflection on the city administration as a whole. And at some point in time, we've got to start listening to the people of Jonesboro. At some point in time, we've got to quit talking about how awesome we are, and how awesome we're going to go, and what we're going to do, and look at all the stuff that we've done and really do these things. That's the important thing that we have to do. We have to move forward. And we have to do it in a way that protects kids, that protects the taxpayers, that represents the kids and the taxpayers, and the future of Jonesboro. And the problem is, you know, there's a lot of things going on that doesn't do that. And it's a total reflection of the leadership of our town. You know, case in point, the E. Bone Watson Center. I know that they were told that they would be opened up very quickly and that was told to them the first of December. And, you know, here it's the middle of June. (He said June, but most likely meant January.) And now they still don't even have an answer. And, you know, I don't know why we can't answer the young lady's comments right now. Just tell us. Or tell us what's going on so that we know. Tell us that we're looking for some property. Tell us that we're, you know, we're looking to lease something, something, transparency is everything. But to keep pushing things down the road and just saying, we'll get back to you, when we've heard that getting back to us, is it a real thing unfortunately. You know, we had an incident downtown where 50 people around 50 people were in a fight. It was atrocious. Those of you that have seen it, those of you that know about it is absolutely atrocious. Did anybody from the town get up and say anything? Did anybody get up and say, this kind of stuff will not happen in Jonesboro Arkansas? No. Nothing was said. It was atrocious. People almost lost their life. And our leadership didn't say anything. And we act like, you know, what? Like it wasn't a big deal? I can tell you if some of the national news would have got a hold of this and actually see footage from, like, the apartment and stuff, it would have been unbelievable. And yet we say nothing. You know, at some point in time, you guys know I'm critical. And man, I do. I try to be solutional too. And it's tough. But you guys are the oversight. You guys are. And it's important that you hold our elected officials accountable. If they're not doing their jobs, we would love to hear it during these meetings. And we would love the demand that we do better. We can no longer just sit by and act like things aren't happening. I called something a baby audit, and man, you'd thought I shot somebody. It was. Now we know, now we find out it was a baby audit. And we asked the person that is now being investigated by the FBI to pick somebody to do the audit. Like, that's crazy time. That's not transparency. That's not us doing our job and want to get to the root and cause of things. You know, Mayor, if you said to Matt Modelesky, numerous times, that he's probably paying himself, that's crazy. Mayor Copenhaver interrupted and said, this is the end your comments. Your comments are over. Mr. Terrell, your comments are over. Thank you. You had five minutes. Mr. Terrell continued, so, I encourage you guys to do better. And I know you guys are great people. Everybody on here is trying to do their job, and I get it. And it's a tough job and I just encourage you guys to take, to heed a little bit more about what's been going on and hold people accountable. Thank you.

James Elwyn Hinds, 508 Ridgecrest said, I'm going to end on what will hopefully be a more upbeat note. Most of you know we are supposed to have our first snowstorm of the season this weekend. Some of us are going to stay inside as much as we can. We need to remember that there are those that are going to be outside more than they normally would be because of this, trying to keep us safe. And, well, the police department, that's a given. You know that they're going to be working extra hours because of it and not only the police department, but the sheriff's office and some other police departments. Unfortunately, if something does happen, you might be having the fire department and ambulance drivers and tow trucks and these kind of emergency workers out. First, let me in advance say for myself, thank you to the people that are going to be putting in this extra time trying to keep us safe from this and any other snowstorms we have this winter. And I'm going to and some people may not think this is appropriate, but I want anybody who is in hearing range of me, whether it's in this council chamber. First thing, we need, all of us can do, is we can pray for these people that it'll be easy for them, and that they will stay safe, and if there's something that we can think of that can make their jobs easier on them as they do it, then let's do it.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Gibson, seconded by Councilperson LJ Bryant, that this meeting be Adjourned. The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 10 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

Absent: 2 - Anthony Coleman and Ann Williams

_____ **Date:** _____

Harold Copenhagen, Mayor

Attest:

_____ **Date:** _____

April Leggett, City Clerk