



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

5:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

PUBLIC WORKS COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING AT 5:00 P.M.

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

3. ROLL CALL (ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE) INITIATED AND CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

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

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

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

[MIN-23:111](#)

MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON NOVEMBER 21, 2023

Attachments: [CC Minutes 11212023](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-23:266](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO WAIVE COMPETITIVE BIDDING AND ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH APCO INSTITUTE FOR PRE-ARRIVAL INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR MEDICAL CALLS FOR E-911 DISPATCH

Attachments: [APCO Intellicom Quote](#)
 [Priority Dispatch Quote](#)
 [Total Response Quote](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-273-2023

[RES-23:267](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAM (OJP) OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO ACCEPT AND ALLOCATE THE FY23 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG) LOCAL SOLICITATION

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-274-2023

[RES-23:268](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE ARKANSAS STATE POLICE TO ACCEPT A GRANT AWARD FROM THE FY2024 SELECTIVE TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-275-2023

[RES-23:269](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO ACCEPT AN AWARD FROM THE FY2023 BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-276-2023

[RES-23:270](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO APPROPRIATE FUNDING TO HIRE 12 FIREFIGHTER PERSONNEL AND AMEND THE SALARY AND ADMINISTRATION PLAN BY INCLUDING REVISED PAY GRADES AND SALARY RANGES FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Attachments: [Cap Imp Plan JFD Additional FF Personnel](#)
 [JFD Revised Pay Grades & Salaries effective December 2023](#)
 [2023 JFD Step Grid](#)
 [2023 JFD Department Salaries State Comparision](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-277-2023

RESOLUTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED

[RES-23:273](#)

A RESOLUTION TO THE CITY OF JONESBORO REQUESTING APPROVAL OF THE BUDGET FOR THE CRAIGHEAD COUNTY SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL AUTHORITY (CCSWDA) AS OUTLINED IN ACT 677 OF 2021

Attachments: [Letter to County Judge and Mayors to approve 2023 budget](#)

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

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

Enactment No: R-EN-278-2023

6. NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

[ORD-23:043](#)

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 30-1 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, THE DEFINITIONS OF INOPERATIVE VEHICLES

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Mitch Johnson, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-23:043 by title only. All voted aye.

Councilmember David McClain said, Mayor, I had a question. I had a call today. Someone was concerned that we would be hauling off vehicles. We don't haul off vehicles, correct? We just cite you and go through that process. Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, typically, but you are correct. Scott, feel free to answer that. Code Enforcement Director Scott Roper said, when we issue a warning to someone we give them 30 days to bring that vehicle up to code. If they fail to do that, one of the options is to tow their vehicle and we have towed vehicles in the past. We will continue to tow vehicles going forward from this point. Councilmember McClain said, thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, they have 30 days in order to bring that up to the request. Mr. Roper said, yes sir, and we work with people. We are trying to get people in compliance. We are not looking to tow vehicles, but we do tow vehicles. Councilmember McClain said, got it, thank you.

Held at one reading

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

[ORD-23:040](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-1 TO C-3 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3007 COLONY DRIVE AS REQUESTED BY BRANDON WOOD

Attachments: [Application](#)
[Deed-Bk597Pg192](#)
[Deed-Bk627Pg31](#)
[Mail Reciepts](#)
[NotificationMap](#)
[Owner Notification List](#)
[Rezoning Plat](#)
[Sign Picture](#)
[Staff Summary - Colony - CC](#)
[Publication Fee Receipt](#)

Held at second reading

[ORD-23:041](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM RS-7 & C-4 TO C-3 LUO & C-4 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3703 S. CULBERHOUSE STREET AS REQUESTED BY JEREMY BEVILL ON BEHALF OF MICHAEL DANIELS

Attachments: [Rezoning Application](#)
[15 LOT ZONING-EXISTING](#)
[15 LOT ZONING-EXISTING EXTENDED](#)
[15 LOT ZONING-PROPOSED](#)
[15 LOT ZONING-PROPOSED EXTENDED](#)
[23901300 RZ 2 PLAT](#)
[Certified Mail](#)
[Deed](#)
[Exhibit A](#)
[Sign Photos \(2\)](#)
[Updated Plat C-4 C-3 LUO](#)
[Staff Summary - Culberhouse - CC](#)
[Publication Fee Receipt](#)
[23901300 RZFINAL](#)
[C-3 C-4](#)

Councilmember David McClain said, I do have a couple of questions. I was looking over the staff summary, I don't know if you want Derrel or anybody, whoever to come up, but reading through the staff summary and noticed that it did not, it said it wasn't compatible. Compatibility is not achieved with this rezoning considering the surrounding area is residential. Can you help me understand why we would, MAPC would approve, but then also the second part of that is there was discussion before about Options on Main, when they were looking to move that, the conversation was well, it would be considered spot zoning because you have residential, but you also have businesses in the midst of that. So, help me understand the differences there please. Planning Director Derrel Smith said, this shouldn't have been an x. You have commercial now to the west and also to the south are in place. So, if it would have been surrounded by residential, this is when this would have been required, but it just shouldn't have been there. Councilmember McClain said, okay, got it. So, you mean the property directly to the south that used to be the Sartin Services, is that what you mean is commercial? Mr. Smith said, yes. Councilmember McClain said, okay. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you.

Councilmember Mitch Johnson said, Mayor, before you move on, I would like to make an amendment to this ordinance under Section two, sentence four prohibits the following uses. They go all the way down to (s). I would like to add (t) to that to read: any businesses that remain open 24 hours per day. That is my motion.
Councilmember John Street said, I will second that. All voted aye.

Wendy Spanos, 304 Dunwoody, said, I've talked to a few people that are involved in this. I'm trying to work this out to be in my best interest for the church and for the land and my access to this church and not lose the value of it. We have made some progress. I just wanted to let you know that. I don't have all of the clear answers at this point, but I wanted to let you know where I am. Thank you.

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

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

[ORD-23:042](#)

AN ORDINANCE FOR THE APPROVAL OF AN APPLICATION FOR A PRIVATE CLUB PERMIT FOR DREAM ALIVE ASSOCIATION.

Attachments: [Private Club Application Redacted](#)
[Baker Firm Letter](#)
[Application Fee Receipt](#)
[Publication Fee Receipt](#)

James Elwin Hinds, 508 Ridgecrest, said, I am not going to speak because this is on the second reading, but I do want to say that I am opposed to this. I do believe that the main thing that will come from this particular club is it will increase underage drinking in the City of Jonesboro. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you sir.

Held at second reading

[ORD-23:044](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM C-4 LUO TO C-3 LUO FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 604 E. HIGHLAND DRIVE AS REQUESTED BY HORIZON LAND SURVEYING, LLC

Attachments: [Rezoning application](#)
[Rezoning Questionnaire](#)
[Rezoning Signs](#)
[Staff Summary - Highland - CC](#)
[Mail Receipt](#)
[Plat](#)
[Publication Fee Receipt](#)

Held at second reading

ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING

[ORD-23:039](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO WAIVE COMPETITIVE BIDDING AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH RITTER COMMUNICATIONS TO PROVIDE

FIBER CONNECTIVITY AND CLOUD SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF JONESBORO

Attachments: [Quote City of Jonesboro Services Renewal 10 24 23](#)

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

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

Enactment No: O-EN-040-2023

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

Mayor Harold Copenhaver reported on the following:

I just have to say that a lot has taken place since our last meeting. This past Sunday, the MYAC Holiday Meet & Greet occurred along with Saturday, we had JoyFest. Friday night was the Christmas parade and the prior week was Thanksgiving. And, I also want to give a shoutout to Arkansas State Red Wolves who received an invitation to the Camilla Bowl in Montgomery, Alabama. So, if you want to go to the game on December 23, 2023, start making plans. We are playing Northern Illinois and it is our first bowl game in four years. So, we are excited about it for the University and our community.

The Mayor's Youth Advancement Council had a holiday meet and greet. We had approximately 100 guests this past Sunday including students and their families. It's always refreshing to spend time with students as their energy is a breath of fresh air. Visiting with these outstanding Jonesboro young students and their families is always a holiday highlight for this season.

JoyFest was a tremendous success. I had lunch today with the Parks leadership and DJA Sarah Rickert and Sarah Doss to review all of the activities and continue to plan for a great JoyFest in the future. The ferris wheel remains in operation for the rest of this week and the Winter Wonderland and First Community Bank Winter Rink remain open through January 1st.

I also want to give a shoutout to Ritter Communications. If you haven't noticed the new Christmas tree downtown, it is 100 ft. tall and it is quite an earmark for our community and I appreciate their commitment and their posturing to make that happen for the City of Jonesboro. I was blessed as well. My daughter's family was able to light the tree this year. So, it was a big event.

Our Christmas parade drew our biggest crowd I believe we have ever had. And, I am proud of the Foundation of Arts for taking it over and growing it successfully. Nonetheless, I was saddened by a young lady who was participating in the parade who suffered some broken bones in her foot by being run over by a float tire. I've spoken with the young lady and her father and we are going to meet this coming week. And, I'm reporting though, she is in good spirits and should see full recovery. I will also say that we planned significantly with JPD leadership and the FOA. While accidents do happen, Chief Elliott and I will review the parade process to see if we can help the Foundation of Arts decide whether anything should be done differently in future parades.

Christmas at the Park has also been better than ever and I want to thank Adam Sartin and his Christmas Attraction staff for making that even more successful.

Bids have been opened and the procurement process begun for the Initial Low to No Emission Transit grant received in 2022 to purchase five trolley style buses. The total price for these buses is just north of \$1.2 million according to the bid specifications. They have roughly a year to provide the buses. Meanwhile two of the traditional style are already arriving. One arrived Monday and we anticipate another one next week. They will be fitted with proper equipment to be on the street soon.

We made our pitch to the Game & Fish for continued funding of our Shooting Sports Complex for an educational facility. The Game & Fish Commission met in Jonesboro last week and it was good to see all of the commissioners. And, we hope they saw the investment that we have made in our range and feel good about contributing yet again for its continued growth. I will say that, that was carried all over the state of Arkansas. It was a packed house with many legislators and the commissioners who obviously represent all corners of the state of Arkansas. And, I am proud that our Chairman is Stan Jones, who is obviously from Northeast Arkansas, and his commitment to not only the educational process of the Nature Center, but our Shooting Sports Complex. Hopefully, we will reap dividends from his leadership.

Animal Services will help with the Bissell Pet Foundation. They were helped out to empty the shelters with the Holiday Hope event. This is sponsoring reduction, adoption fees through December 17, 2023. This means that you can adopt a sweet pet for \$40 which includes spade, neutered, rabies, 5-in-1 vaccine, dewormer, microchipped, and heartworm test. I think those are the equivalent of close to \$400 if you were having to purchase them yourself.

On December 22, 2023, a Friday, Fisher Street Community in Action will hold its drive thru toy giveaway for children up to 12 years old. The kids must be in the vehicle to receive gifts.

I also want to give a shout out. This past Saturday, we also had a cleanup in Eastern Jonesboro. I think we had two roll offs that were done by Code Enforcement and the Sanitation Department.

I also want to give a shout out to the FOP (Fraternal Order of Police), as I believe we had about 40 young youth that the individual officers went out with them and shopped with them for the holiday season. It was great to see. We had about 60 officers from all over Northeast Arkansas participate in this festivity. And, I want to congratulate again for them stepping up to the plate for these youth in our community.

So, events like these show the Best of Jonesboro, especially during the holidays. Together, we serve residents. This is the heart of what we do in public service for this community that we are all proud to call our own.

[COM-23:061](#)

CRAIGHEAD COUNTY JONESBORO PUBLIC LIBRARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
DECEMBER 31, 2022 AND 2021 WITH INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Attachments: [Final Audit Report - CCJPL](#)

Filed

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember John Street said, I just want to thank Mayor for having the Jonesboro High School Choir up. I thought they did a great job and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was nice. So, thank you Mayor. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mayor, I've just seen, kind of the headlines about Christmas at the Park. And, some of our vendors at Parks, if there is something we need to do to reanalyze our contracts with them and help those guys be sustainable if that's hopefully, on you guys radar screen. Mayor Copenhaver said, well, and that has been on our minds too. Originally, the contract was started back in 2019 and we renewed it again in 2022 and the contract basically goes hand in hand with other contracts that we do the same with for-profit entities and we did limit that at that point in time. So, we are reevaluating that as we move forward with that because the cost of that is going up for Mr. Sartin and that organization. And, listen, I have gone through it twice. You get to go see Santa. You don't have to pay for Santa. It is a wonderful event and I can't say enough for the volunteers that make it occur, but there is always a cost too that goes along with it. So, I appreciate A&P also off-setting some of those costs as well. So, thank you. Director of Communications Bill Campbell said, tomorrow night is pay what you can night. Mayor Copenhaver said, that is correct. So, it is open. I think there are two pay what you can nights. So, that way it is open to anybody that can go. Adam wants that to occur.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, we have been discussing impact fees for several years now. I know since at least 2015. I think it is time to get that ball across the goal line. So, Mr. McClain, Ms. Williams, and I have been discussing. I want to call a Nominating & Rules meeting to kind of get that ball rolling down the hill instead of up the hill. We will have that meeting on Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

City Attorney Carol Duncan said, congratulations to L.J. and his wife on the birth of their daughter. Mayor Copenhaver said, congratulations. Ms. Duncan said, another little L.J., Lyla Jane. They named her Lyla Jane, so it is another little L.J. Mayor Copenhaver said, God's greatest blessing.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Patti Lack, 4108 Forrest Hill Road, said, I have something to hand out to you guys and I'll speak on that. You don't have to open it up right now, but you can take it home and read while you are sitting by the Christmas tree. Last week I came here and I gave a copy of this letter to Derrel Smith, Craig Light, and Michael Morris. And, it is concerning the FOIA request that I made over two weeks ago. In fact, it is going to be three weeks ago tomorrow. And, what the FOIA request was is to get information about the property that is on 915 Southwest Drive. Apparently the gentleman or whoever owns that property cut down some trees. The city assessed a fine to this person and I wanted to see how much this fine was. I have found out over the weekend that I am not the only one that has requested this. But, I did a FOIA request over three weeks ago. I believe it is three days that you are supposed to get the information. In the packet that you have right here, what I really want to compare is a property that is behind me at Savannah Hills because if we are going to fine an individual for cutting down trees and breaching our contract with our tree ordinance, then we really have to do it to our developers. In your packet, what you are going to find and I don't know if you guys have ever seen our tree ordinance. And, this is in your packet, this is phase 5 of Savannah Hills. On it, it says that it says that Mr. Pickle took down three significant trees. I had to tell you during that Phase time, I know that I called up every single day almost, every single weekend, and I either had Brian, I had Craig, I had Michael, I had Derrel, I had someone going out there and there were more than three trees that were

cut down. And, when you say significant trees, so if you only cut down three significant trees, our policy is that if he cuts down three, he only has to replace it by one. If you look at this picture right here, there are three significant trees on Phase 5. What he did is that he piled dirt around them. The trees have died. But, those were significant trees, so our count really isn't correct on that because he kept those, but they are dead now and they are burnt. I have photos of all of these because I know I was calling every single day. And, then when you look in your packet, if you look at Phase 6 & 7, it says that Mr. Pickle has 186 significant trees that he is going to take. If you look at this, this is what you call our tree ordinance. It really kind of looks like little Spirograph circles. I tried to count those and I had other people do it, there are not 186 Spirograph circles on that. So, the reason why I did this, one, was if we are going to assess a fine to individuals, we have to make sure that Mr. Pickle is getting a fine too. I know that I met with Tony Thomas and Monica Pearcy. She said that she was going to look into it a little bit more because in this right here, something is just not right with both of these phases and the tree ordinance that we have on there because I know that we have stringent rules and regulations, we want to follow them. Until, and this is at the bottom of it, until further facts are proven for both of these phases that I have is that since we follow the stringent regulations and requirements, Mr. Pickle should not be granted any type of grading permit or tree removal for Phase 6 & 7 until we find out what we are comparing to. And, the reason why I want the letter that was sent to this person on Southwest Drive is I want to have a comparison of how much did the city charge that gentleman for each one of those trees? So, that is one of the things. And, just really fast, Mr. Pickle is going to be building 200 more units on that property. He just got his final plat for Phase 4. On Phase 5, he's got four buildings. He's got 14 units in Phase 4. He has ten more to go. He still has to do six units for Phase 4. And, what we did is that he got his preliminary plan for Phase 6 & 7 and had a traffic study done. The traffic study was done for 6 & 7. When Mark Nichols did that, he told all of us that he did not include Harrisburg Road or Forrest Hill Road. We are going to get a traffic signal at Forrest Hill Road. So, we know that there is too much traffic on there. We are widening Harrisburg Road. So, we know that there is too much, but he got his traffic study approved already and you know it is going to have a big impact especially if he is going to have 200 units in 6 & 7 and in Phase 4 & 5, he's got 14 units will be 66 units and then in Phase 4, there is four units or six units with four of them in there. So, two things that I would like for you guys to consider. One, we need to look at our tree ordinance a little bit better and make sure that we are staying by our stringent rules and regulations. But, also, too, the traffic study shouldn't have even been done until Phase 4 & 5 have been done. And, especially if we are going to get a road through Culberhouse through there. A lot of traffic is going to come down that street. So, I think we have a lot of rules and regulations that we need to look at. So, I hope you read that packet right there. And, that Mr. Pickle is not granted a tree removal until we can figure this out and I get my letter for that. So, thank you very much. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you.

Andrew Nadzam, 1421 Cole Street, said, for those who don't know me, I am a local criminal defense attorney, father of a young son, and husband to Jessica. Each year I represent over 100 people charged with felonies in Jonesboro. I have made many mistakes in my life, but what I have found is as I have become older is that it does not cost anything for me to admit when I have made a mistake. The city's recent decision to fire Rachel Anderson and then deny her appeal were two mistakes that will have long lasting consequences to our city. Ms. Anderson was an excellent officer and employee of the police department. She has a unique ability and talent and that cannot be replicated. In my opinion, the city fired Ms. Anderson for exercising her first amendment rights and for acting as a whistleblower. The eighth circuit court of appeals has appellate jurisdiction over first amendment cases in Arkansas. In 1983, the eighth

circuit decided the case of Bowman v. Pulaski County Special School District which deals with similar issues as in Ms. Anderson's situation. In Bowman, the eighth circuit ruled for the plaintiff that he had been unjustly punished for exercising his first amendment rights. The court summarized it by stating, we do not underestimate the internal unease or unpleasantness that may follow when a government employee decides to break rank and complain either publically or to supervisors about a situation which he or she merits review and reform. That is the price the first amendment exacts in return for an informed citizen. Those word written in 1983 sound like they were written the day after Ms. Anderson was terminated. The city has not cited any official policy addressing when city employees and officers may speak to the city council. The city has had years to develop such a policy. That is the city's faulty and not Ms. Andersons. In 2014, KAIT reported that dozens of police officers attended a city council meeting to protest official JPD pay policies. Pictures from that event clearly show multiple officers in full uniform and equipment using taxpayer dollars to send a political message. Further, in 2016, KAIT also stated that 23 police officers parked their taxpayer funded patrol vehicles at City Hall to protest official JPD and city policy. Chief Elliott released a statement that he was NOT reprimanding these officers for speaking out for the fact that they had parked their cars at City Hall. Chief Elliott then stated he had been supporting the issue of pay for 24 years that he had been employed with the department. When city governments allow police officers or employees to exercise their first amendment rights because they agreed with the speech, but then fire a police officer because they disagree with that speech. That is textbook, viewpoint discrimination and it is unconstitutional. That is what occurred in this situation. In my opinion, the city fired Ms. Anderson to send a message that employees are not free to give their informed opinions in public settings if it does not match the administration's viewpoint. Rachel Anderson is a homegrown talent. She went to Nettleton and ASU. There is a clear brain drain in our community, both from young adults and high school seniors. We need to be keeping our homegrown talent, every single one of them. And, then we need to go attract new talent which is NYIT is so crucial. Things like quality of life are a major factor where individuals now choose to live. Freedom of speech, public safety, and the absence of fear or retaliation are far more important to young adults than sidewalks and parks. The city can spend millions of dollars on parks and sidewalks, but firing Ms. Anderson says far more about what this city thinks about young adults than any amount of sidewalks and parks. Jonesboro citizens from a wide variety of viewpoints have made it clear they don't support this decision. Two groups, young adults and females are especially outraged. I have served on the Keep Jonesboro Beautiful Commission since its beginning. I have enjoyed serving on that commission. However, I cannot serve on an official commission of a city that does not support the first amendment or its employees. I am resigning effective immediately tonight. Firing Ms. Anderson makes us less safe. I am proud to represent people's constitutional rights in Jonesboro. Firing Ms. Anderson will make it more likely that people who commit crimes in Jonesboro will go free. I am calling on all elected officials up there to either say whether you support the city's decision or speak against it and call for an independent investigation. The choice is yours. Thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you.

James Elwin Hinds, 508 Ridgecrest, said, before I get to what I want to do, I want to speak my moral support for what the speaker just finished speaking had to say and I applaud him for saying that. I agree with him. Something that we need to do and this may be early, but it is something that needs to be done to prevent future accidents. Do we know what authority the city has under current ordinances as far as getting people to keep the kids and all back away from the street during parades? They should at least be back behind the lines for the parking space not out in the lanes of traffic. But, I don't know what we. Last year at the parade, I heard an adult encourage a

kid to go out into the street and pick up a tootsie roll. We are putting people at risk for tootsie rolls. So, we do need to look at what authority, okay, we can send police officers out there to say stay back. But, what we need to do is do we have fines that they can say you keep your kids back or else you are going to have a fine because we don't need people hurt. So, we need to be prepared to support whatever changes need to be made to keep that from happening. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments.

Chris Futrell, 2429 Evie Lane, said, I just have a question. I have addressed different bodies in Engineering and stuff. So, I have eleven acres and I did the engineering, got everything ready, the city approved my plans basically. I want to build a 268,000 sq. ft. warehouse over here off the interstate behind Kenworth. But, to do that, I have to have two access in and out. So, my question is, what is the policy of Jonesboro if someone has built a building in a city right-of-way, not an easement or a private easement. IT would be like someone coming out here and just building a building right in the middle of this right-of-way. And, I would like for somebody to reach out to me. It is probably a question for the city attorney. I reached out to them. Kenworth's building is in the city's right-of-way. So, if I don't have two accesses, I can only build like a 150,000 ft. because it is a dead end road. And, then the other question I had that nobody can really answer is, is it 150,000 ft. can be built total down a dead end road or can each building be 150,000 ft. And, I will give you an example. Moore Road off of Post Road, you all are familiar with that. The city has the shooting resort out there. Hytrol just built 150,000 sq. ft. building. They have plans to build hundreds of thousands feet of warehouse. You have the old FedEx ground building that is 70,000. You have a post office down there that is probably 50,000 or 60,000 or 70,000. So, nobody can really answer those questions. And, I don't really know, it is really not worth building 150,000 ft. So, if that is the case, I can divide the land and build, you know, there is all kinds of rules. You can only take up so much of your space, you have got to have enough retention, you have got to have so many parking spots. I spent about \$50,000 in engineering, rezoning, and I am at a standstill. I don't really feel like I should have to sue them, sue that company. I mean I reached out to them. I reached out to their legal department and they basically told me, you know, we are not worried about it. It is not our fault. I thought, well maybe, you want to sue your title company. You bought a building in the city right-of-way. Like I said, not just an easement. And, so, I just need someone to reach out to me so that I can get down with my project. Mayor Copenhaver said, sure. We have got your contact information. I know we do. Mr. Futrell said, thank you for your time. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you. Mr. Futrell said, the address of that property, I'll tell you, it's 4324 Access Road. That is the address of the property. But, this is, I don't know what direction. Councilmember Chris Moore asked, is that address actually the Kenworth building? Mr. Futrell said, yes. And, like I said, when I get down, when I get down to it, I mean, they didn't build the building. They bought the building. But, the building is in between there and Cooper. And, it is, I mean it is a right-of-way. We looked it up. I had it surveyed. I mean, that building is in the right-of-way. I mean, really, all of what I need is emergency vehicle access which is ambulance, police, and fire. But, you know, it really, I just need some help on it and I appreciate yall's time. Thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, you bet ya, thank you Mr. Futrell.

[COM-23:063](#)

Handout from Patti Lack, 4108 Forrest Hill Road, for the Public Comment Section of the City Council meeting on December 5, 2024

Attachments: [PLack Handout 12052023](#)

Filed

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

_____ **Date:** _____

Harold Copenhaver, Mayor

Attest:

_____ **Date:** _____

April Leggett, City Clerk