



# City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center  
300 S. Church Street  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

## Meeting Minutes City Council

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Tuesday, November 2, 2021

5:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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### PUBLIC WORKS 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 BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

**Present** 12 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; Chris Moore; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Chris Gibson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain; LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

#### 4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

[COM-21:048](#)

A PROCLAMATION DECLARING NOVEMBER 2, 2021 NOAH CARUTHERS DAY

**Sponsors:** Mayor's Office

*Noah Caruthers was presented with a proclamation from Mayor Harold Copenhaver along with the mayor's medallion. November 2, 2021 is Noah Caruthers Day in the City of Jonesboro in honor of this big hearted, courageous young man who suffers from 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome among other developmental and physical issues which has him approaching his twelfth surgery while also going through treatment 3 times a week without complaint.*

**Read**

[COM-21:049](#)

A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE JONESBORO HIGH SCHOOL 5A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP BOYS & GIRLS TENNIS TEAMS

**Sponsors:** Mayor's Office

*The Academies at JHS Boys & Girls tennis teams were recognized Tuesday night by Mayor Copenhaver for attending their 5th consecutive 5A State Championship win sweeping in both singles and doubles divisions. Congratulations to these phenomenal athletes.*

**Read**

#### 5. CONSENT AGENDA

*Approval of the Consent Agenda*

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

**Aye:** 12 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; Chris Moore; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Chris Gibson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain; LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

[MIN-21:093](#)

Minutes for the City Council meeting on October 19, 2021.

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

**This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.**

[RES-21:224](#)

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 AND ACCEPT THE FY21 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG) LOCAL SOLICITATION.

**Sponsors:** Grants and Police Department

**Attachments:** [10.26.2021 FY21 JAG Resolution and Agreement](#)

**This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.**

*RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA*

[RES-21:223](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO ALLOCATE \$1,803,000.00 OF AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDS TO PURCHASE PUBLIC SAFETY & ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT

**Sponsors:** Mayor's Office, E911, Police Department, Fire Department, Engineering, Grants and Finance

**Attachments:** [Operation Eagle Eye Council Presentation](#)

*Mayor Copenhaver addressed the councilmember's and explained that this was one of his top priorities when he ran for mayor and public safety will always be my top priority. Because, it not only offers safety for our community it also provides safety for our officers. Tonight I want to announce the first major step in implementing a plan that can significantly reduce crime in Jonesboro. This is a big operation, it involves one-third of the departments in our city, and they are Police, Fire, E911, and Engineering. This project has taken about six months to put together and there are three main areas, police, fire, and e911, these are the ones that it will mainly address. But, again we have to incorporate engineering, IT, and other facilities. Number one with police we are going to upgrade our technology to an Avalon system, we have many different systems in the city but that can cause confusion or disruption in the process to our first responders, to our police and fire departments. This system will now be under one umbrella. Where we currently see our sky cops in the community we have seen a reduction in crime in those areas by 30%. As you will see later in this presentation we have 22 parks in the Jonesboro city limits, only 15 of those have security cameras, we are going to upgrade that where many will have three cameras or*

more. In the fire department will incorporate a full Motorola alert system that means locations will be located and recognized all at once. The other area that is sometimes forgotten about in our community is e911 but it is the central hub and brain of making all of this work. We have to upgrade the environment that our officers are serving in in e911, we have to show them the ability that we have faith in what they do. So, it's time that we upgrade this. In the presentation you will see slides of equipment that will be upgraded along with the software, they currently operate under 12 different systems with this they will be under one system, communication is key.

Officer Rachel Anderson, presented project Operation Eagle Eye, City of Jonesboro, American Rescue Plan Act to councilmembers. The project goal is to increase safety in the city of Jonesboro. As the mayor stated citizens will see more cameras which will in turn help with better traffic flow, be a greater crime deterrence, help in accident investigations with better results, and help ensure safety in our parks. For those that question why this is needed. There is ongoing traffic issues, more drivers on the road than ever, and altercations at parks and facilities. There are times when our children, grandchildren, spouses may feel unsafe in our parks, and therefore aren't visiting them. Fire, police, animal control, and dispatch are working with outdated equipment, and the police department is having difficulty in recruiting and hiring Officers. If you have that camera in the sky watching twenty-four hours, seven days a week, that means we can do more with less manpower. We recently had past damage and thefts at city properties and there were no cameras there, so no investigation could be done. Our first aid supplies at the fire stations are waning, our firefighters are also our first responders. Sometimes they are the first ones on the scene and we need to make sure that they have the proper first aid supplies to do their jobs so this money will help go toward their first aid supplies. As the mayor mentioned we are using 11 different platforms for retrieving video which includes someone driving to the site, climbing the poll and retrieving a video card from the DVR and bringing in to the station for review that is a complete waste of man hours and resources. Condensing this to one platform will save manpower, time, space, and money. Total upgrades are estimated to cost \$1,803,000 with the bulk of that going to traffic and safety camera upgrades and the rest of the cost will be absorbed in equipment and supplies. A question we often get asked is, are you going to be sending tickets through the mail? The answer is "no" there state laws that prevent us from doing that. Other topics consist of, this is an invasion of my privacy, you can see into my house, windows, backyard or garage. All cameras are pointed at roadways or parks. If a house or backyard is in view, the software has privacy screens (black boxes) that are used to black out certain areas. All recordings are subject to Arkansas FOIA Laws and are purged from servers after 30-days. Let's talk about the license plate reader, under Arkansas Code 12-12-1803, section (b): An automatic license plate reader system may be used: (1) By a state, county, municipal law enforcement agency for the comparison of captured plate data with data held by the Office of Motor Vehicle, the Arkansas Crime Information Center, a database created by law enforcement for the purpose of an ongoing investigation, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for any lawful purpose. We have also been asked if neighborhoods like Sage Meadows can purchase these. The short answer is we put them where we have them now for crime data, we would not place one in a neighborhood like Sage Meadows because that is not a high crime area, but if the neighborhood associations would like to purchase one through your fees you can, we will host it and monitor it for you. Public-private partnerships is something that can be done. There will be at least one camera placed in every city park. The breakdown of cost will go as follows: traffic and safety camera upgrades-\$650,000, E911 dispatch station consoles-\$140,000, E911 wireless headsets-\$3,500, E911 switching systems-\$9,000, E911 Officer ID software-\$9,000, E911 dispatch mapping monitors-\$4,000, E911 dispatch chairs-\$10,500, Fire Station

Motorola Alert System-\$740,000, First Aid supplies and AED devices-\$40,000, Animal Control radio dispatch system-\$5,000, and Motorola Radios-\$162,000. All cost are estimated and are not to exceed \$1,803,000. Again like the Mayor says this really does touch a lot of departments, it's a third of the city, if not half.

Councilmember Bobby Long asked, how long will it take to implement this? IT Director Jason Ratliff said they are estimating about six months. Councilmember Dr. Coleman asked Officer Anderson about the cameras in the Parks. I know that you said that there is going to be one camera for each Park, and I have already seen the triangle that you all have done on this. But, is there going to be a need later on for more cameras in Parks? Mrs. Anderson stated that she believed that it is endlessly expandable, all of the Community Centers are going to have Wi-Fi, and as I stated earlier there will be at least one camera in every park to begin with. Dr. Coleman asked if there was a need to move the camera within the park can that be done, and can those cameras be changed from within your office to view a different angle. Mrs. Anderson said yes, they could send someone out to move the camera if there were a need, and it depends on what type of camera is purchased, some do have the ability to pan, tilt, and zoom.

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

**Aye:** 12 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain;LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

#### RESOLUTIONS NOT ON THE CONSENT AGENDA

##### [RES-21:225](#)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO ENTER INTO AN OPTION AGREEMENT WITH JURHA (JONESBORO URBAN RENEWAL AND HOUSING AUTHORITY) HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, AN ARKANSAS NON-PROFIT CORPORATION, FOR THE OPTION TO PURCHASE A PORTION OF PROPERTY LOCATED BEHIND 1502, 1504, AND 1506 EAST JOHNSON AVENUE, JONESBORO, ARKANSAS FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUILDING A PROPOSED 20-UNIT MULTIFAMILY DUPLEX PROJECT

**Sponsors:** Mayor's Office

**Attachments:** [10.26.2021 JURHA Attachment](#)  
[10.26.2021 JURHA Option Agreement](#)  
[Design - budget set 9-29-2021](#)

Councilmember Chris Moore commented that he assumed that this was part of the 6.75 acres on Johnson. I know that the previous Administration and the council, we kind of pieced that together where we acquired property as it became available and we now own from corner to corner and now that is a piece of property of almost 7 acres in size. I think the previous Mayor and the Council's idea was that corridor between ASU and downtown is transforming and the previous mayor had an idea of something going on that property that might be a changing project for that neighborhood. Maybe, something of a large scale, and of course with this much acreage a large scale project could come on it. My concern is, that by breaking part of the property off it could hamper the ability of a large scale project. I think within the next 24-months that corridor is going to change and there is only two pieces of property on Johnson between the downtown and the ASU campus that are capable of 5-7 acres of property.

*So, I personally would rather hold on to that for 24 more months until we can see what the final design of that corridor is going to look like. The other thing under state law we are required to have an appraisal of that property, did we achieve that appraisal? Mayor Copenhaver stated that he believed so, but that he was going to ask Sharon Poe Spikes with JURHA to come and address these concerns in just a moment. Mayor Copenhaver stated that JURHA approached the city, and basically what we were doing was listening to their request for a Senior Citizens area. It is not the full acreage as you mentioned Councilman Moore, but the back portion is a lower elevated area, to where we as a city are going to have to make some adjustments for it as well.*

*Sharon Poe Spikes, JURHA, 330 Union Street. This is the non-profit side of JURHA, HCDO. What we are proposing to apply to ADFA for a low interest loan of \$1,000,000 and then a loan from the National Housing Trust Fund for a \$1,000,000 to build a 20 unit development for elderly people. We would also work in transition with the Veterans Administration, where hopefully that their people that transition out of the Veterans Village we would be able to assist them as well. JURHA is going to attach 20 vouchers to that development so that would be the subsidy for it. Anyone coming into that development would pay 30% of their adjusted income. Of course the option is, as the mayor said is only if the application is approved, but we have to have the option in order to submit the application.*

*Mayor asked if there is a deadline for this optional request. Ms. Spikes said, yes, we are trying to get the application submitted by the deadline in November. Councilmember Joe Hafner commented that in light of Councilmember Moore's concern over the land being broken up, is there any other land available that would work to suit there purpose? Mayor stated that he thought all options were on the table. Mr. Moore asked Ms. Poe-Spikes how much room they needed. Ms. Spikes said that she thought that they needed a little over five ackers in order to build the units. Jeremy from JURHA came up and explained that they size the project per the land that was there, and in keeping with the current zoning and the spirit of the neighborhoods that are already in that area, 20 units was kind of the max for that particular piece of land, and that would leave the full frontage on Johnson still available. Councilmember Moore said, I'm not trying to take away anything with the desire to create more public housing, I just feel that that piece of property directly located between downtown and ASU is not the appropriate use for that in our ward. I can't help but to think that once that corridor is developed that there will be some form of larger commercial development will be interested in going there that will benefit the city, and that public housing could be build off of the main thoroughfare. Jeremy stated, I don't agree with that, with the front portion of that is an old R-2 zoning that would have to be rezoned and accepted by the city, and I think going in with a development that is not residential would be a conflict with the neighboring streets. I think you would have a lot of backlash when it came to rezoning. Mr. Moore said, that may be true and we would address that at the point of conception. I would just ask that we hold on to it for the next 24-months, and I would ask the Mayor's office to work hand in hand with Sharon and see if they could find another piece of property that's not right on a five lane highway that would be suitable for public housing. Councilmember Charles Frierson said looking at the plat the five acres needed for this is not right on the main thoroughfare, Mr. Moore stated that we own the entire frontage on the thoroughfare, Mr. Frierson said, I understand that, but we are still taking five acres out of the whole entire area right, Mr. Moore said that is correct, but if a large project would need more than one acre on the frontage, so if remove the back that may be a deal breaker for a future project. Mr. Frierson said, how do we choose whether elder housing is or is not as beneficial to the total city in the future as a compared to a larger commercial development? Mr. Moore stated, it's not to choose between one or the other being beneficial or being more worthy, it's to*

choose whether or not that is the right location, and I contend that building an elderly housing development on a five lane road may not be the right location. Councilmember Bobby Long asked how much land was in between perspective location and Johnson, Jeremy said I believe five acres. Mr. Moore said it is 6.75 total acres, including frontage on three streets with that property. Councilmember David McClain asked, how long have we had this property? Mr. Moore stated that we started acquiring it eight or nine years ago, and we bought it as it became available until we acquired it all the way from street to street, because the thought was that a project would go on that property, we might not want them to have a direct driveway on to the five lane road. Mr. McLain said, so within that time frame how much activity as far as offers for it? Mayor Copenhaver stated that he knows of one offer, mayor asked Brian Richardson have we had any additional offers other than one. Mr. McLain also commented that the only reason I'm asking is if we are not getting any activity, in my mind I think that it is better to use it for something like this rather than letting it sit empty. We could wait two years and then another two years and nothing happen.

Councilmember Moore said, I don't think the last eight or nine years is reflective of the next two, and I'll give you a case in point. We have 38 properties that are before public works right now that we are acquiring right now in order to build a new connector between downtown and ASU, there has been no interest in those properties for years and years, but now all of a sudden the city is developing it through that corridor, we've built the Veterans Village, the city currently owns a large tract that used to be the Wolverine (Folic Footwear) factory, there is another tract adjoining that and this is almost directly across the road. There is a real possibility of large developments coming in there in the very near future. Mr. Hafner commented that he agreed with Mr. Moore's point about safety being so close to Johnson, we just had another pedestrian fatality there. Mr. Moore said the idea as I understand it regarding the connect ability between downtown and ASU, is that we are going to try to get pedestrians and people coming from ASU to downtown down Aggie road and that businesses would be located on Johnson, and it will be little Dixson street businesses on the connector, so if that is going to be our plan the available property for the businesses is going to be on Johnson and that is where this property is. Brian Richardson commented for the record. We have done some research over the last couple of weeks and there was no official offer brought to council, but there was meetings regarding an offer to purchase all of the property, I believe in 2017 with the intent to build a multifamily development. To my understanding that is the only offer we've had for the entire property, we've had none on the back portion of the property, which is 4.1 acres or the adjoining 1 acre which is currently slated for a detention pond. The property was purchased in three segments, 4.14 is the northern portion which we are discussing now, and then there was a 2.61 which is the front hillside acreage which you see from Johnson, the last parcel that was bought was to complete the corner of Rogers and Johnson. Mr. Moore explained that he envisioned a commercial development that will be interested in going there, we let them tell us how much they need, they will also need retention, then if there is anything left on the back then by all means we split that off and make a residential development out of it, but not the other way around. We don't build the duplexes on the back and then all of a sudden say this is what we have left for commercial.

Patti lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, Jonesboro. I was at the finance meeting where this property was discussed, and I was told to do some research after I had e-mailed to you all. I spoke with Ms. Spikes last week for about 20 minutes. I have to tell you the only thing I didn't like about what she had to say about my question of what elderly means, and she said aged 62, and we both turned that this last week. I totally agree with what Mr. Moore has said, what I took away from my conversation with Ms. Spikes, this appears to be a little bit more of a deal than just the land part of it. At the finance

meeting it was said, that there was no ingress or egress there was two little arrows on the left hand side of the property, and it's on Roger's road. Roger road is a single lane road, you take Scott Street it is a two lane road, and it has a center line painted down the middle of it. On the map that I just handed the Mayor it shows the property where the potential road would be going to the location for Brighton Manor. I went out there on Sunday and measured, it only measures 31ft. So, you would have to make an agreement with the people that own the duplex and the house between there. I know Mr. Thomas said that we have an easement, ingress or egress road right there, well there is not. What happened the other day when we went there to look at it the two people that live in the duplex, the Aunt owns the property, they called the Aunt and I asked her if anybody from the city has contacted them about putting a road through there, they said no and the next comment was that she had no intentions of selling. So we've got a situation where we are not going to be able to have a street right there. I think the property, you know the agreement you all must have with JURHA to apply for the loans to help get the Veterans Village started, I think is a good thing, I think the property is the wrong thing and I agree with you Mr. Moore, that property is a beautiful piece of property and if we are trying to develop the trail, developing that side going out toward the Hilltop area, why don't we find another piece of property to put these houses so that we can house the elderly disabled people, and also to the people from the Veterans Village during their transition. I don't have a problem with that, we just need to find a different piece of property for that, let them go ahead and apply for the two loans then we can get this started and we get the Veterans Village going right now. Here's an idea, maybe put a community park there, put a community pool, a walking trail, out there and start making that a really nice place. A second idea would be contacting ASU and let them put their Veterinary School there.

Linda Denny, 3905 Pleasant View, Jonesboro. I am a little bit concerned, because I do have some property there on Scott Street too. You mentioned three roads would be involved, which would be Roger's, Johnson, is Scott Street the other one? Mr. Moore asked if that was the one located directly to the East, Ms. Denny said, it's to the West. Mr. Moore said we own the frontage on Johnson, so it would be the two adjoining roads. Ms. Denny commented that the property on Scott Street is all private property and there is not any way that there would be a connection to that property. Mr. Moore said, we just have a very short piece right out by the highway, not back. Ms. Denny said that she also heard that the Veteran's Village would just be for one year and then that is it, I just thought that the Veterans Village would be used for as long as someone needed it. Mayor Copenhaver explained that when we were approached by JURAH, that is simply what it was, they brought this to the table for the city to look at that is what we are doing by bringing it here. In that conversation as Mayor I am going to look for any services that we can help to provide to our Veteran's, JURAH provides services that the city does not provide. So, that was not an agreement, that was just a question, would services be available if opportunities came about. Whether we have the project or not, that might be an opportunity, so it is my job to look for all opportunity for our Veterans, and again this is what conversation is about. We need to be thankful that we are looking to advance our community, and whatever the council decides here this evening then we will move forward.

**A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Charles Coleman, that this matter be Passed . The motion FAILED with the following vote.**

**Aye:** 1 - LJ Bryant

**Nay:** 11 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; Chris Moore; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Chris Gibson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain and Brian Emison

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

*ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING*

[ORD-21:043](#) AN ORDINANCE TO THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO PLACE VARIOUS TRAFFIC SIGNS AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS AS DETERMINED BY THE TRAFFIC CONTROL COMMITTEE

**Sponsors:** Engineering and Streets

*Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Charles Frierson, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-21:043 by title only. All voted aye.*

**Held at one reading**

[ORD-21:047](#) AN ORDINANCE TO WAIVE COMPETITIVE BIDDING AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH ACTIVE NETWORK, LLC. FOR HOSTED REGISTRATION SOFTWARE FOR THE PARKS DEPARTMENT

**Sponsors:** Parks & Recreation

**Attachments:** [10.26.2021 Activenet Jonesboro - ANet\\_V1, 6.30.21](#)  
[10.26.2021 ActiveNet Jonesboro City of Sole Source Letter 08-18-21](#)  
[10.26.2021 Active Net Breakdown](#)

*Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Chris Moore, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-21:047 by title only. All voted aye.*

**Held at one reading**

[ORD-21:048](#) AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 62 OF THE JONESBORO CODE OF ORDINANCES LEVYING A FOUR PERCENT (4%) GROSS RECEIPT TAX ON THE RENTING, LEASING, OR OTHERWISE FURNISHING OF HOTEL AND MOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

*Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Bobby Long, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-21:048 by title only. All voted aye.*

**Held at one reading**

[ORD-21:050](#) AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4600 E NETTLETON AVENUE



- Attachments:** [Minutes - Rezoning RZ 21-14 - 4600 E Nettleton](#)  
[REZONING PLAT](#)  
[Application](#)  
[Arial View](#)  
[Certified Mail Receipts](#)  
[Mailing Receipt](#)  
[Neighborhood Statement](#)  
[Rezoning Sign Photos](#)  
[Staff Summary](#)  
[Warranty Deed](#)

*Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember LJ Bryant, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-21:050 by title only. All voted aye.*

**Held at one reading**

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING*

[ORD-21:039](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE AN ASSESSMENT FOR THE DOWNTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OWNERS IN THE DISTRICT AS APPROVED AND REQUESTED BY COMMISSIONERS AND A MAJORITY IN VALUE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT

**Sponsors:** Mayor's Office

- Attachments:** [Cost of Improvement 7.19.21](#)  
[JHafner emails about Downtown Business Improvement District](#)  
[Downtown Jonesboro Bus Imp Dis 8-25t](#)  
[ORD-21-039 emails](#)

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

**Aye:** 12 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain;LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

[ORD-21:045](#)

A ORDINANCE TO VACATE AND ABANDON A DRAINAGE EASEMENT LOCATED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF E. HIGHLAND DRIVE AND ON THE EAST SIDE OF GREAT DANE LANE AS REQUESTED BY THE JONESBORO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

- Attachments:** [Petition](#)  
[Resolution](#)  
[Ordinance](#)  
[Plat](#)  
[Abandonment Letters](#)

**A motion was made by Councilperson Mitch Johnson, seconded by**

**Councilperson Chris Moore, that this matter be Passed . The motion PASSED with the following vote.**

**Aye:** 12 - Ann Williams; Charles Frierson; Chris Moore; John Street; Mitch Johnson; Chris Gibson; Charles Coleman; Bobby Long; Joe Hafner; David McClain; LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

[ORD-21:046](#)

AN ORDINANCE LEVYING A TAX UPON THE GROSS RECEIPTS OF PREPARED FOODS BY ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE CITY OF JONESBORO; PRESCRIBING THE PROCEDURE FOR THE COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT OF THE TAX; PRESCRIBING THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH REVENUES DERIVED FROM COLLECTION OF THE TAX MAY BE USED; AND PRESCRIBING OTHER MATTERS PERTAINING THERETO

**Attachments:** [Jonesboro Advertising & Promotion Commission Presentation handout](#)  
[Jonesboro A&P Commission Clarification of Misinformation](#)  
[Jerry Morgan Jonesboro A&P Commission Feasibility Study Minutes August 30 2021](#)  
[ORD-21-046 emails Must have a residential address which is within the city](#)  
[Joe Hafner Handout 11022021](#)

*Mayor Copenhaver commented that before we open this up for discussion I would like to make a statement. By State Statute the A&P Commission is tasked with researching and recommending ways to bring people to Jonesboro that will result in economic activities for the city. As Mayor I am charged with the look out of the best interest of all of Jonesboro. I think a sports complex will provide an opportunity to serve all of our community right here in Jonesboro and I want it to be a place that serves people of all ages and from all backgrounds. Just to be clear this carries the endorsement of the A&P, Chamber of Commerce, and local Education Leaders.*

*Councilmember Joe Hafner commented that we have talked about the prepared food tax, and obviously no tax should be taken lightly, we all pay them, we are not exempt from any of these taxes that we talk about up here. We've talked about the estimate that the prepared food tax might bring in on a yearly basis, and what we could do with it, or what we would like to do with it. We really haven't talked about how much it would impact the citizens, so I did some research on the internet and again you have to be careful with that type of research. One of the first things I found it said is the average annual food away from home expenditures that a United States Household from 2010 to 2020, I took out 2020 because of the COVID pandemic because, there was not a lot of travel or eating out going on. For all of the other years in between the average that this 2% prepared food tax cost the average household was \$69.00 a year, or \$5.75 a month. Just for context in 2017 the average spent out for food was \$3,365, for 2018, it was \$3,459, and for 2019 it was \$3,526. I would gladly make a \$5.75 investment for what I think this sports complex can do for our city. Then you look at it by what it does to people by income group, obviously if you make more you are more likely to eat out, this is for 2020 by income level. Households make between \$30,000 and \$40,000 spend an average of \$1,716 eating out, that is \$34.32 a year at 2%. The households making \$150,000 to \$200,000 was \$80.12 or \$6.68 a month, those less than \$15,000 spent about \$971.00 out eating, that's \$19.42 a year or \$1.62 a month. Just to justify some of these numbers I have been keeping up with some of my eating out receipts and my annualized total based on the last month would be \$about 75.00, so \$6.24 a month is what it would cost, and I would gladly invest that or even double that for what I think this sports complex can do for the city. Then we start talking about, once again with taxes, I think sometimes we forget how lucky we are in Jonesboro, I went through*

*the DFA website, it breaks down the cities that have sales tax, and the counties that have sales tax, of the cities that have sales tax there is only 2% in the whole state that have a lower local sales tax than Jonesboro, there is only seven cities that have a lower rate. Of the counties, you know we are at 1%, there is only five counties that have a lower rate than Craighead. So, I think we are very lucky from a sales tax rate, and I know people say taxes are too high, well I think we should count our blessings. Then you hear with COVID going on now is not the time to do things, but I also still feel like you have to take steps to make progress, and just as a re-cap over the last couple of years, since October of 2019 there have been 27 tax increases, this is general sales taxes and that's also an important, because this prepared food tax is not a general sales tax, it's a consumption tax, the more you eat out the more you pay, the less you eat out the less you pay. It's a consumption tax, I think I saw an e-mail from a restaurant owner that about 35 or 40% of the people that eat in his restaurant are people from out of town, but on this general sales tax over the last couple of years there has been 27 increases, there has been eight new general sales tax enacted, and 13 decreases.*

*The interesting part, on the cities that have had sales tax increase their average sales tax rate is 10.133%, we are at 8.5%, Gillam has a 12.625% total general sales tax rate, of the county increases their average tax rate is 2.216%, we are at 1%. The cities that have enacted general sales tax rates, their average rate is 9.9%, once again we are at 8.5%. Being a number nerd, this is what gets me right here the cities that have had decreases their average rate after the decrease is 9.75%, the counties that have had decreases their county rate after the decrease is 1.475%. So, once again I think we need to consider how lucky we are that our sales tax is not higher, I also think that one thing we forget, you know people get all stirred up over the word tax sometimes taxes in my opinion are more fair then fees, especially when it comes to something like a consumption tax. A fee no matter how much money you make or how little money you make you pay the same fee, most of us realize in 2000 our sanitation fee went away. I did a study of some of the top cities on the spread sheet that A&P had and the average rate monthly rate is \$17.97 for sanitation, Little Rock is at \$29.68, Fayetteville is at \$22.30. To me we help out the lower income by them not having to pay fee for sanitation that saves them an average of about \$216.00 a year. North Little Rock is like us, they had a 1% general sales tax rate which went into effect back in 2000, at that time they did away with their residential sanitation fee, in 2018 or 2019 they had to make a decision, they had to start decreasing their service level, they are up to 20%, they had to enact another 1% general sales tax increase, and we continue to operate with the lowest sales tax rate around. The Mayor mentioned it, but I appreciate everybody that took time, pro and con that sent in emails. We had Superintendents, Athletic Directors, Doctors, we had emails from across the spectrum, some very well thought out emails about investing in the future, then we had those that were simply against a tax regardless of what it is for. I don't think that is the best way of looking at how to invest in the future of our city, I think this sports complex will be done right through the due diligence of the feasibility study that is going to be done. I had a friend that owns a restaurant and he told me that this tax was going to directly come out of my pocket and hurt my business, so he was under the impression that he was going to have to pay that tax out of his pocket. I said no, it's just like any other tax it's added on to the check, you may be mad at us because it's going to create too much business, this is going to bring people to town and keep people in town that are going out of town on a lot of weekends and spending several dollars that will never be back in Jonesboro again, and that's economic development, it will improve our quality of life. People have talked about membership fees, there is a \$400 membership fee for this or that, we are not building a fitness center, we have plenty of great fitness centers in Jonesboro, we are building a sports complex that will be a lot like a community center when it's not*

hosting a sports event. I confirmed with Danny this morning, we do not charge admission fees for our community centers, they charge for those that want to rent the facility. We always talk about public safety, I grew up across the street from the YMCA, and that place kept me out of a lot of trouble and we need to free up our community centers and let those kids back in and off the streets.

Councilmember Bobby Long commented that he agreed with Mr. Hafner that increasing taxes is a serious thing, it demands due diligence, preparation planning and a lot of communication. I agree with every one of the reasons that Mr. Hafner has given for the sports complex and I think that there is a misconception of those that are not in favor of this is against a sports complex that could be furthest from the truth, they are not. I can tell some of the issues that they've had, one is timing, and I appreciate the research that Mr. Hafner gave on the little amount that the 2% would cost the average person that eats out. I also did a little research that the bureau of labor statistics put out, between March and September food has been up 4.6%, what you pay at the pump is up 42.1%, energy as a whole up 24.8%, natural gas up 20.6%, vehicles are up 24.2%. If we were just talking about this in a bubble I could see where it does make sense, but we are not. All of us in here has seen where our dollar buys less and I don't see any indication that that is going to slow up anytime soon. Also the product, and the product is the sports facility. I have to admit I was really excited when I saw the presentation, but by the end of the presentation I thought what do I really know, what do I know for sure? Out of 13 slides we saw what other towns has built and what other towns are slated to build, they range from five to fifty million dollars, some included pools, some did not and we are still no closer to knowing what is going to be built with the taxes that we are about to levy. When we start throwing pictures of what we could have instead of what we are actually going to get, what we are doing is sitting our self-up for a lot of people to be disappointed, because when we don't know what we are buying, everyone in this room has a different vision of what they think their tax dollars is going to buy. I think we are sitting our self-up for a big disappointment, because some of those expectations may not be met, placement, we talked about freeing up the community centers where kids can go, we don't know where it's going to go, we have no idea. What if it's five to six miles away from population centers where people can't get to it? You have got to have a designated amount of land, I forget how many acres that we have to designate in order to build there, what if it's not even close to where these kids live, most of them don't even have transportation, they have to walk or bike. So, if it's not close then it's really not going to do them any good. Lastly is the process, we've been told that we need to collect the tax first so we can get tax revenue, a good history on tax revenue so that we know how we are going to finance this thing that we don't even know how big it's going to be, well we already have historical tax data that we can go back and get just as much accurate tax revenue on what it could produce, so we have a good accurate sales tax data from the prepared food establishments that we could go on instead of going ahead and initiating a tax that we really don't know if it's going to be enough, too much, too little, whatever. Not to mention that any tax revenue collected during this time will be skewed, like Mr. Hafner said, he took out 2020 because we really just don't know, right now our establishments are trying their best just to find people to work in them. When we levy taxes before a product is established, placement is determined, and a cost to build and maintain are established it's easy to lend itself to the belief that the sports facility is not the end goal, but it's the tax money. Because, if it was, then there would be a picture of what we are going to build, how much it's going to cost, then say this is the tax that's needed to support that endeavor, but instead what we've got is, let's levy the tax and then figure out what we are going to build later. I just don't know that that is the right avenue to take, I think the community would be involved and show greater support if we knew what we were going to build, how much it is going to cost and where

*it's going to go.*

*Councilmember David McClain said that he just had a couple of comments. Number one is the concept, and number two, we said we are going to do a feasibility study. We made that very clear from the time we started the conversation on A&P to now. We are going to do a feasibility study, the drawings are concept ideas nothing is set in stone. That is why we are doing our due diligence to do a feasibility study, the city attorney has worked on doing RFP's for groups to come in and do a feasibility study. The one problem I do have is we have sat hear and listened to this, at the same time there has never been a mention for projects in the past for a feasibility study, again, we are doing our due diligence. I appreciate Jerry Morgan's efforts in making this happen for us.*

*Councilmember LJ Bryant said that he had two brief comments. I was eating the other night in town and I bumped into Naz Kazi he showed me something on his phone, it was an article that I think that Robert Speer had sent him from the 1970's and he was discussing a project of this nature. So, it's kind of like if not now, then when?*

*Jerry Morgan, President of the A&P Commission commented that he would be brief in his statement. We have talked about the feasibility study and it's interesting that that is the biggest point of contention of taking an extra step of due diligence to make sure we get this right. It will take us time to enact the tax to start the collection process and to also determine how much that tax revenue will be. We did get estimates from the State, our CFO from the city was able to help do that, there are still some unknowns. Also, in that process the bonding company will require a history of those taxes for three to six months before they will allow us to finance it, so, we are talking three months to get it enacted, three to six months of collection to determine that. During that time frame of six months we thought it was best to go ahead and provide it, an extra layer of security for the city and the A&P Commission to ask for a feasibility study. We could have very easily come in here and said okay, we want a cookie cutter approach. We have been looking at facilities like this for ten years, I have been on site visits for about five years and looked at different facilities, and we could have said we want 12-basketball courts that would convert to 24-volleyball courts, an aquatic center that would've cost us thirty-five million dollars. We could have come in here and said okay we've done some community studies, we've talked to different groups that's what we think we need, and I think we could have justified that. That is still the concept of what we think the City of Jonesboro needs, that's the A&P Commission would think, that's probably what the parks department would think, and that's probably what a lot of citizens would think. What we are doing in this process is, we are going to get a third party opinion to come in here and interview different groups in the city, look at a needs analysis on a geographical level, you know what's in other cities that we are competing with. What's in the city itself, the private sector that we don't want to compete with, we don't want to compete with the private sector which is an important part, that is why we are asking for this additional step, they will come in and make recommendations to us and to the city, they will also go and look at different facilities around the country and tell us what the operating expenses are going to be, what the maintenance cost are going to be, and what our projected revenues are going to be. Because, right now we are still working on that and having to do those projections our self. I think it's a good idea to get a third party opinion to come in here and help us with that process. I think it could have been beneficial for other projects in the city over the past several years as well. So, that is why we are doing the feasibility study and that is the process we are going to go through, and important part that people forget is once this is completed we have got to bring that in front of you, the city council to review the feasibility study, we are going to make the proposal to you this is what the project is going to look like, this is what it's going to cost, and this is*

what we are going to need for financing. At that point we will also have the numbers from months of collections to determine how long it will take to pay that back. So, we are adding that extra layer of due diligence in this process to protect the A&P Commission, to protect the city council and to protect the citizens of Jonesboro. I never once thought of us asking for an extra layer would be criticized like this, but that is fine, if you want to find something to criticize us on I guess that is the best thing. As far as timing it will take us some months to do this, I seen a comment that said, we're not going to know what this is going to be for two years, well if someone can find us somebody that can build it in a month and can build it for free we will take that offer.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said that he just had a few bullet points for some of the emails that we have gotten. Several of the emails addressed this as a want not a need, I saw a few out there that said we are using our kids to promote a tax. I have started going to a few events over the course of the last few months after this came up, one of which was a swim meet that Coach Moore actually hosted for the local JETS team to compete against each other. The air started getting a little cool, there were children laying on the pool deck wrapped up in towels because we have inadequate facilities that is unacceptable for Jonesboro, Arkansas. I was at volleyball practice the other night, I think photos were sent to most of the councilmembers from other parents there were five volleyball teams and two basketball teams having to share two courts. This is a need not a want. I received a call the other night from one of the coaches and they had chosen not to practice volleyball at the community center because of overbooking, this is a need not a want. Some of the other comments that were made stated that we were going to put restaurants in jeopardy, Mr. Hafner has already addressed that and I have talked with several restaurant owners that are in support of what this tax will do for Jonesboro and our children. Mr. Weinstock has repeatedly sent emails over the course of the last week or so in regards to comparing this project to Fort Smith, apparently he was not at the last A&P Commission meeting because his information is a little bit skewed, and I am going to read just a paragraph from the minutes of that. Renee Golas, Sports Marketing Manager for the A&P gave a report to the current research done for the sports complex. Most all cities that have built a complex such as this hire a consulting firm to perform a feasibility study which we are going to do to determine a solid plan for the project. These firms cost approximately thirty to fifty thousand dollars in a onetime fee for such studies, fifty thousand dollars is on the high end of that. Ms. Golas explained that the Arkansas Department of Tourism offers fifteen thousand dollar grants to assist with feasibility studies, we will want to apply for this grant. So, when you are comparing Fort Smith to Jonesboro, and want to talk to us about not doing our due diligence, we have already talked about applying for the grant, we've already talked about the feasibility study, the tax rate in that particular community is 9.75%, which would add about \$25,000,000 to our bottom line, again I just wished the fax were strait before we started sending out correspondence.

Jerry Morgan, President of the A&P Commission spoke again, he said as the Mayor has already stated, we do have an endorsement from the Jonesboro Regional Chamber of Commerce and we appreciate that. Again there has been more emails in support of this then opposed. Mr. Hafner wanted to clarify his statement from earlier, when I made the comment about the sports complex opening up the places for kids to go, I wasn't mainly just talking about them going to the sports complex. What I was referring to is, we have Allen Park, Parker Park, Earl Bell, all of those courts in these community centers are booked right now because competitive teams are needing a place to practice. The kids in those neighborhoods can't go to those community centers to use the courts because of this. You give everybody a place to practice,

*those courts will be opened back up and those kids will be more apt to be in there playing basketball rather than out running the streets.*

*Howard Weinstock, 200 Wilkins, Jonesboro. Councilmembers if it is not your responsibility to oversee Mayoral Administrations on behalf of the constitutes except for according to Councilmember Frierson issues within your scope of duties regarding the budget and managing city properties by seeking information and discussing its concerns publicly, and if it is in the residents task to provide you information that being in the case of these A&P taxes offer a better alternative to the mayors decision to increase taxes, which is the most harmful to residents then the option I have provided you after the last city council meeting on October 19, 2021. Much better options are underway at Fort Smith, Arkansas, both Fort Smith A&P Commission and City Government are paying \$7,500.00 which along with the matching grant of \$15,000 from the State will fund no more than the \$30,000 feasibility study for an indoor sports complex. That study will begin before November 11th Veterans Day. The Fort Smith option is the same study Mayor Copenhaver seeks, yet his Administration wants your vote to increase taxes to get what Fort Smith residents get for tax payer chump change. Thirty-thousand dollars versus a \$250,000 that our A&P Commission estimates that it will permanently rake in each month. Vote no to this ordinance, city coffers overflow with a revenue to model Fort Smith's better practices, which unlike the ordinance before you best protects the safety, health and welfare of the constituents you represent. Even more so the welfare of the 50% who struggle to make ends-meet at the end of each month according to the local United Way. Too many have stated that if you don't want to pay the taxes, don't eat out. Working parents don't have that luxury to shop for and then prepare all meals at home, and frankly that statement is a heartless position to any yea vote tonight. Now armed with a knowledge of a much less harmful option, and option of win, win. Reject this ordinance that purposely empties wallets and purses, as Councilmember Moore said, taxes are enforced at the point of a gun and because this administration did not offer up the Fort Smith option or any other option that may be available, then only tax is in fact theft of the publics private property. Simply amend the ordinance and pony up the whole \$15,000, that will reduce the stress on the A&P Commissions account balance, since it now must rebate the Embassy Suites roughly \$15,000 per-month. Councilmember David McClain said that he just wanted to point out one thing, this was not from the Mayors Administration, and this is a recommendation from the A&P Commission.*

*Louis Lancaster, 2916 Dacus Lane, Jonesboro. We have 22 parks, and four community centers. Why not just expand on them if we need more courts? Your right we are lucky on our sales tax, why change that? If this thing is such a good deal, why don't the supporters of it just walk across the street to the bank and get a loan and build it yourself and they can keep all of the money they want. The proceeds from the tax of this thing is going to go in a lock box, social security was going to go into a lock box until the legislators got a hold of it and now it's in the general funds. Do you plan on taxing concessions at ASU football and basketball games? I asked this the last time and maybe you all have thought about it. Hospitals, meals served to patients are these taxed? City Attorney Carol Duncan gestured no. Mr. Lancaster said all it says here is cafeteria and lunchrooms. Meals served to nursing home patients, are you going to tax these? The St. Bernard's Senior Life Center serves meals five days a week, they don't charge for them but they ask for donations, are you going to tax the donation? St. Bernard's Senior Life Center is going to hold a fund raiser, they are going to have a cinnamon roll bake off, and if they sell cinnamon rolls are you going to tax these, that's a prepared food. What are you going to do with other charities that have charity events that sell prepared food? I am against this, if you want to do it go issue another bond like you did for Nestle, I just don't like it.*

Craig Matthews, 1107 Holly, Jonesboro. I would just like to say I am a numbers nerd as well. With respect for Mr. Hafner's numbers from 2019, I have some numbers here from last month. The Wall Street Journal. U.S. prices rise at the fastest pace in a decade, CNBC, inflation notches a fresh 30-year high as measured by the feds favorite gauge. PBS news hour, U.S. wholesale inflation rose at a new record at the year over year 12-month ratio. At the risk of being redundant, also to reinforce a previous comment about all of the American families who are in dire straits right now, we obviously have the vaccine mandate that's coming into effect that many people either have lost or will lose their jobs very soon around this area, you've heard, I'm sure with issues surrounding St. Bernard's and others. I would just also enforce Mr. Long's point that it seems that the focus is more about the tax itself then the actual sports complex, it seems odd to me that the chain of events, and I know that you said you are going to do a feasibility study, and I would also just add with these inflation numbers setting new record highs we don't really know where that is going to go in the future. I would just advise caution, and of course I am against this.

Bryan Hubert, 309 Huntcliff, Jonesboro. This is something new for me today, something was brought to my attention today, and I've been thinking about this. I am not against a sports complex, I respect the research and work you all have done on this. I figure this tax will cost me about \$200 or \$300 more a year at 2%. What we do on Friday nights we keep three grandkids and all of them like a different place to eat, I am working the schedule and the menu out, I think with the 2% increase I am going to contribute at least \$6.00 total at 10.5% once a week on a Friday night. So there is a \$300 increase right there. I went through a drive-through yesterday, I don't think about people to much, will I should not say that I do, they get out in the cold and take orders. Yesterday, I went through this drive through at one of the busiest places in our city, the breakfast was one price and today the price went up, and I said, I think the price went up.

The person at the window said yes, I have a lot of other comments about that. I said well I hate to be the bearer of bad news here, but if the council approves this everybody is going to be paying 2% more. And then the person said the cost of everything is going up. I know it's just \$50 or \$60 a year for some people. As far as eating out, I'm spending a whole lot more eating out then what your numbers reflect, maybe I need to learn how to cook more. I'd just appreciate a no vote.

Jimmy Farley, 2022 Catherine Drive, Jonesboro. I don't really want to read this, I've already sent the email to all of you guys. I'm a lifelong resident here, I have two kids that are in the sports world and I wished they could be in more sports world. It has been referenced that practice facilities are precious, and in high demand, so you kind of get stuck with somebody's back yard to practice baseball in, ankles can get twisted and injuries occur there is a lot going on there. My main question is this, what is the future of Jonesboro worth to us? Mr. Hafner I appreciate you, I am a numbers nerd as well and I did my own number crunching real quick. A \$5.00 lunch currently would cost me at 8.5% rate \$5.43, with this additional 2% that same \$5.00 lunch is going to be \$5.53, .10-cents, it's worth it to me for our kids, and it's worth it to me for Jonesboro's future. I am on the Jonesboro Baseball Booster Board, our number one complaint is how come we don't have more tournaments here, and I agree 100%. Not just baseball, but sports in general, the revenue that these other towns get when our Jonesboro families take their families down there and spend money in the hotel, spend money on the food, spend money on entertainment, that is just money that Jonesboro is missing out on. We may have one tournament a year, we could have a lot more. Imagine what this town could look like full every weekend, year around with an indoor sports complex. I remember going to the YMCA with my grandpa when I was young,



*swimming in that bubble, I realized and appreciated swimming, just learning it, the way you stay in shape, and just the health, you don't see swimmers that are not in shape. Swimming is just a good exercise and such a good life skill to learn, we've tried to put our children through swim lessons, and there is not a public pool that has the space for us to do this. The only one that I can think of is the YMCA, and when I grew up we had Earl Bell. I am usually not a big fan of taxes, but I think we can see the benefit that is ahead of us in Jonesboro and it makes me happy to see what the potential could be, not just for me and my kids, but the grandkids, anybody else that is going to come to Jonesboro.*

*Margie Magee, 2513 Abby Road, Jonesboro. I am a sports junkie, I have spent the last 15-years traveling to J.O. volleyball tournaments, and I have gone through three cars because of the mileage I have put on them to make opportunities for pretty much the kids in Jonesboro. I run Arkansas JR. Volleyball Club, we are in a crunch for practice facilities, Danny and I work closely trying to get practice facilities for our teams, we have at one point been up to thirty-two teams in our club and I am also watching my daughter who is in Huntsville, Alabama playing and I have one in Fayetteville playing because of all of the travel that we did and the opportunities that sports gives to these young kids. One thing I do know as a Coach in this area is a sports complex keeps kids off of the streets, anything that they can be a part of, a team and they are not individuals, anything that they can do to work for a common goal together makes a better citizen later in life, that is a proven fact about sports. A sport complex would open up opportunities, I am a Chicago native, and I grew up playing Junior Olympic Volleyball in the McCormick Sports Center downtown with over two-hundred volleyball courts put in that facility and that opened up opportunities for me to come to Jonesboro, Arkansas on a volleyball scholarship, 500-miles away from home. I am very passionate about young ladies getting an opportunity to go to college and make something of themselves. I never thought that being from Chicago I would not go home because it is a big town, but one thing that brought me here is I fell in love with Jonesboro and I am still here, since 1991. So, my biggest thing about building this sports complex, give the children opportunities to play on teams and not have to be in a car 4-6 hours on a week-end to make it back home, because we are traveling to bigger cities because they have these types of complexes. We are traveling to bigger cities to give these kids opportunities, not everybody gets a college athletic scholarship, but what they do get is the experience of being able to be on a team and being a part of something special. I also coach at Valley View High School, I have nine seniors on the team, one is going to play in college and the rest of them have simply enjoyed the experience of playing on an athletic sports team, we need this sports complex.*

*Chenoha Summer, 6055 Beaver Run Lane, Jonesboro. I am the furthest from being athletic, I don't even really care for sports that much, but I understand that this is important for Jonesboro. I understand, specifically to what Mr. Hafner was saying earlier just really touched me, also what you were saying as well Mr. Bryant, about if not now then when? That's the thing if not now, then when will this happen? I am from around the Newport area, I have lived here in Jonesboro for over ten-years, we just didn't have these kinds of things growing up, a sports complex like that. My sister is really athletic, she would have benefited so much from having something like this. Looking at Batesville now, which is only an hour away from here, they have an aquatics center and it's a very nice facility. It's time for Jonesboro to have something like this here, it will benefit the kids so much.*

*Hayden Moore, 2578 Terra Lane, Jonesboro. I just want to start out by addressing a comment that was made at the last meeting that suggested that this facility was just*

*an excuse for those of us who can afford to leave the city for tournaments and meets. I would like to make it clear this facility is not about those of us that can leave the city, it's about those who cannot afford to leave. As it stand right now the city is not capable of providing equal opportunity to all of the kids in the city, and I think this facility would be able to do that, every kid would have a place to go and things to do. They would be able to participate in multiple different sports, which they can't right now, I would just like to also say that just within the past few weeks we have lost a lot of pool time and a lot of pool space, it has gotten too cold outside to practice. With the new rule at the Trim Gym we are no longer allowed to practice at the pool unless we are above the age of 18, so that leaves us with St. Bernard's which has limited us to just a few hours now and that is not sufficient for what we are used too. A facility like this would give us all of the time we need to train properly, thank you for your time.*

*Vick Moore, 3133 Sistine Chapel Circle, Jonesboro. I am the CEO and Head Coach for the Jonesboro JETS Aquatic Club. The kid that just spoke is a high school champion who has been bouncing around in three to four different pools for the last three years. I have been blessed to coach a kid like that, the kids that are in that back corner right there, they've been sitting here for two-hours, and they wouldn't be sitting here if they didn't believe that this was important. I love every single bit of the conversation that I have heard, Mr. Long I talked to you at the last meeting and I told you I understand where you are coming from and I completely get that. I want that accountability to be held and I would be willing to step on any committee that you guys create, you are much smarter than I am I'm sure, but I will hold accountable the people that need to be held accountable. The first time that I ever came here and spoke in this chamber, Mr. Jerry Morgan was sitting where the mayor is sitting and what I told him was, look right now all I want to do is make sure that we get the grant money that we got last year, don't worry about whatever you are going to tell me. Since then my baby has been born in Jonesboro, my wife has written millions of dollars in grants for 15 surrounding counties and she sees the love of this community. I represent a body of people who are the most honest and devout people to their children that I have ever seen, I love this community. Mr. Long asked me the last time I was here what I saw over there on those easels, I said there's no pool, that's valid, and I will stand here and say if that's not on the docket we still need volleyball, we still need basketball, we still need pickle ball, we still need a walking track, we still need everything. I use the term we, because I am invested in this community, the reason my baby was sitting in the audience was not for sympathy votes, my wife has not been able to see my son play a football game all season because she has allowed me to get to watch him play. I volunteered with that team, and he doesn't get my attention she sent me a picture of him sitting on the side line away from his team, he's the middle linebacker on the program, he was upset that I was here, but rationally he knows this is where I need to be and there are people in this room that believe that as well. I will do everything in my power to support this community.*

*Christina Forester, 2804 Ridgemont, Jonesboro. My daughter swims for the JETS Aquatic Club, but I'm not here tonight just as a swim mom. For over eighteen years my family has been a multi sports family, mu boys participated in wrestling, soccer, basketball, football, baseball all of through school and all of the organizations in the city. I have witnessed the positive outcomes of what the A&P taxes can do, because we spent many years out at the Joe Mack Campbell sporting complex, both before and after all of the improvements. Due to those improvements the city has been able to attract larger tournaments, such as the Cal Ripken World Series that was an eight-day tournament that brought in teams from states such as Connecticut, Washington, Florida and others. This was eight or more days of families from other communities getting a glimpse of what Jonesboro is all about, this was also a week of families from*

out of town adding revenue to our community by shopping in our stores, eating at our restaurants, and staying in our hotels. The sport facility and the aquatic center that this new tax would support is not about our swim and sports families saving money on travel, it's about providing better opportunities for the youth in our city and surrounding areas. It's about drawing visitors and revenue to our community and even more it's about attracting families to our city. We have so many young adults graduating and leaving this area for better opportunities. I recently spoke to a new freshman at A-State who has grown up here in Jonesboro, this student is majoring in pre-med with a minor in business and he plans to open his own medical practice one day and this is what he shared with me. As a high school wrestler a multi sports complex would have helped our team to have a better facility to practice in with more equipment. We could have also hosted meets at home instead of driving hours to compete, what Jonesboro has to offer is limited to other cities in Arkansas that I have been to and considered starting my medical practice and raising a family in. Springdale, Arkansas has a massive multi sports complex with an ice hockey, basketball, tennis, swimming, and soccer. Even a smaller city like Paragould has a water park that every person in Jonesboro travels to if they want to go. If Jonesboro were to have a plan and start building a sport complex during my time at college it would absolutely encourage me to stay in my hometown instead of moving off to another city with more amenities. I would absolutely love to grow a family in the same town that I grew up in, but I also want my future children to have access to sports facilities and activities that I didn't have growing up. So, what I have to say is that we must do what it takes to continue to improve our community and encourage our young people to want to stay here, to have a place where they want to settle down and grow their families. As it stands other communities are attracting them away from here, they come here, they stay here to gain the leadership skills needed and then they take those skills to communities that provide them and their families with better opportunities, so I just ask that you vote yes on this.

Scott Saunders, 5209 Paula Drive, Jonesboro. I just want to mention one thing that I think has been missed over by some of these comments tonight and I was in hopes that Margie might have mentioned it tonight. I had asked her if we built a facility how many teams could we attract just for volleyball on a weekend for a tournament. She said, we could probably get 100 teams in here for Jonesboro, I said well how many kids is that and she said roughly 1,000. So, let's say about two-thirds of those kids, roughly about 600 because some of those kids are already here, so, let's just say that we also host a swim meet that weekend now you are back up to 1,000 kids. I just want you to know that it is going to bring in a lot of revenue just in the hotel revenue alone. If I was a hotels owner I would be building more hotel because I don't think Jonesboro will have enough.

Steve Schrantz, 1112 Layman Drive, Jonesboro. I just want to echo what Scott brought up. I swam from 1985 until 1998 and we used to hold a swim meet over at the YMCA and we would bring in 600 to 700 swimmers to that one swim meet, most of these teams were from outside of Jonesboro, the surrounding area all swam with Jonesboro so they weren't staying with us, maybe 130 or so. The rest were coming from Little Rock, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Springdale, and Bentonville, I support this.

Rennell Woods, 3916 Brandywine, Jonesboro. I had the opportunity to play football at Arkansas State University. I have been working with youth coaching a wolf-cub football team. I am now coaching in AAU youth football. Talking about space, we've been practicing out at A-State, it's the old A-State fields, we have practiced out there for about two-years now and some of the kids that we pick up from the community had to use the bathroom, you have no space. Saw kids behind the tree, you got other parents coaching there kids kind of move away because they know what's going on, there is

*just no space at all. Out behind Parker Park we had to do some games there we had to cut some fields out there and just provide just bottom line out of the dirt rough just to make things happen for kids that don't have opportunities. We are trying to mentor and teach kids to keep them off the streets, we need this for all sports.*

*Mat Brewer, 1910 Catherine, Jonesboro. I am here representing Ridgefield Christian School. From a head of school, principal perspective I represent lots of families that choose to go a different route for education. I see kids that play every single sport that we offer, I have students that are my basketball stars that are also in our musical that is coming up. We have limited facilities and I see our students and student athletes enjoying these processes and getting to enjoy these facilities as well. One thing I do as a part of our school is, when we have potential new families when they come to look at Jonesboro and they are moving to the area or are considering different options they come looking for a few different things, one of them is private schools and education and when I am speaking to these families that are moving to Jonesboro one of the first questions they ask is what do we offer as a school, what do we offer as a community, and what are the sporting opportunities? So, we have Ridgefield Christian School, which I am very proud of, and another question that often comes up is what is available for our families to continue to have quality of living? To speak on behalf of my families that I represent this is something that many of them desire. To see that we grow as a city and to continue to see their kids, their families and to one not have to travel, I represent families that do have to travel because they are very invested in sports, but in their own back yards so to speak there is still limited opportunities. So, I see a great opportunity here, so I asked that you vote yes.*

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

**Aye:** 11 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Joe Hafner;David McClain;LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

**Nay:** 1 - Bobby Long

## **8. MAYOR'S REPORTS**

*I attended a presentation this week at Fox Meadow Schools of creative media. Let me tell you what, we've talked about youth in this chamber this evening. They officially received a designation as a certified Apple Distinguish School, and to be honest with you I had no idea what that meant until we went in and saw a visually what it was. This is a national award and it's quite an honor for schools that are learning through technology. I visited with at least a half a dozen classrooms ranging from science to ancient history, to math and geological studies and came away with many things. But, what caught my attention was the engagement of students, every kid we were talking about from 4th and 5th graders were paying close attention to their work. Folks these were on little I-pads, we had to read when we grew up, now they are on I-pads that have headphones to tell the story and the child can learn at their ability level. They can see the story and is hearing it being told and if they have to replay it they can do it again. This is not leaving any child behind right? I am so impressed with what they are doing. Arkansas State University is also an Apple School, Apple is looking for partners for cities moving forward. Again we can help and address the issues of our youth, again we have to look at ways to provide broadband for these kids when they go home so that they can have applications as well. We have to do for all.*

*Last week we also hosted 38-students from the Nettleton High School Student*

*Council. They came to the municipal center to learn about government and there interest was very impressive, they truly cared about city government and what our various departments do. I learned a lot about Nettleton this week, I was very impressed and I want to say "thank you" to all of our educators and teachers in this community. They don't get paid enough folks.*

*Over this last weekend of hosting sporting events was held at the Harold Perrin Miracle League Park, a lot of great people were there. The competitors and their families, but I want to give special thanks to the ladies of Alpha Gama and Delta Zeta Sorties, they volunteered their time, love and hard work to make even a more special day involved and I can't say enough.*

*I was proud to see another beautiful mural unveiled in downtown yesterday, today I want to say "thank you" to Vince Percy, and he's really talented. If you have seen his Coca-Cola mural on the Northside of Creegan's Wall, it's pretty awesome to see and there is a lot of history there. We are looking at hopefully endorsing that as an historical marker, it looks authentically as if it was done a century ago. We are preparing to move into Christmas in the Park out at Joe Mack Campbell Park. It is important I give a big shout out to Adam Sartin who makes all of the magic come true, and he's been doing so for over three years. It's growing and getting better every year.*

*We have been holding meetings over the past few weeks to improve city enforcement around our community. We are listening to your concerns and I agree with your complaints and I want to see results. Right now we are working on a plan to create a cleaner city, deter owners from allowing their properties to fall into disrepair and eliminate red tape to better stream line the enforcement process to make you see results faster.*

*As you know we've started an employee of the month award among non-uniformed workers. I want to thank First Security Bank, which provides gifts and donations and makes it more meaningful as they salute to the city our employees. So far our first winner was Jeff Sexton who works in the building maintenance department, and yesterday we awarded it to Brandon Carter who works in the communications department. So, congratulations to these two and we look forward to honoring more non-uniform employees.*

## **9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS**

*Councilmember Doctor Charles Coleman announced that on December the 23rd we will be giving gifts to children in the community if anyone wants to help us with that, we have done this for the past eleven years, Fisher Street Community Action along with the help of Fisher Street United Methodist Church are going to be hosting this event. We will be taking donations from December 1st through December the 18th.*

## **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*Patti Lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, Jonesboro. I know you guys have gotten a couple of memos from me in the last couple of days concerning the tree ordinance. 2018 there were a lot of things happening with the city, we got the sidewalk ordinance and we got the tree ordinance. What I would like you guys to do, I know the budget is going to be coming up pretty soon. If you remember and I know you Mayor, and Brian Richardson weren't here, but the rest of you were. Back in January 2, 2018, is that we had talked about Russell Drive, Makayla Drive in the Brownstone area. That it needed to be widened, curbed and guttered because it is a single lane road that a lot of people that*

*live in the apartments and Savannah Hills uses. The other day I was over there and I was just watching the cars going down Russell Drive, they go by fast, it's a single lane road and I was watching where they go in that complex. I've noticed what they do instead of going down Harrisburg and turning on Craighead Forest Road and coming around to the front they are kind of coming down that road really fast and winding around to their apartments. What I would like for you to do is budget enough money to make sure that we widen, curb and gutter that street. Those apartments that were being built in that corner are finally getting done and that is probably going to add another 200 cars to that road. But, also I would like you guys to look at implementing impact fees with the developers, because right now to widen, curb and gutter the tax payers are going to have to pay for it.*

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Aye:** 12 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain;LJ Bryant and Brian Emison

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Harold Copenhaver, Mayor**

**Attest:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**April Leggett, City Clerk**