



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Public Safety Council Committee

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

5:00 PM

Municipal Center

1. Call To Order

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2. Roll Call by City Clerk Donna Jackson

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Present 3 - Chris Gibson; Mitch Johnson and David McClain

Absent 2 - Gene Vance and Chris Moore

3. Approval of minutes

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MIN-17:022

Minutes for the Public Safety Committee meeting on February 21, 2017

[play video](#)

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Gibson; Mitch Johnson and David McClain

Absent: 2 - Gene Vance and Chris Moore

4. New Business

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Ordinances To Be Introduced

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ORD-17:014

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO AMEND THE 2017 GENERAL FUND TO CREATE A COURT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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Sponsors: Police Department and Finance

Attachments: [Court Services Proposal](#)

Chief Elliott stated that the Police Department is going to take on the responsibilities for Court Services for the District Court for the City of Jonesboro and Craighead County. He said that in this ordinance, we are trying to amend it for salaries for these positions. We are going to start out with three positions and we have some construction costs for modifications to the building, the Justice Complex on West Washington. There is a breakdown in your PowerPoint. Chief Elliott said he believed they all received a copy of the PowerPoint prior to this meeting.

Chief Elliott said that prior to 2017, the Justice Network administered probation services handed out by the court. Our newly elected Judges Fowler and Boling made the decision to no longer use the Justice Network. Chief Elliott said they came to him to ask if the City could take on such services. After speaking with the Mayor and others involved with this, we agreed to take on this project.

Chief Elliott said that the Jonesboro Police Department would administer probation services. Mostly what they will be dealing with will be Class A misdemeanors, which is the most serious of misdemeanors. In giving a history of what they would be handling, in 2016, there were approximately 6,000 Class A misdemeanors that were committed and run through the District Court system. We are looking at a fee of approximately \$30 per month for anyone that is on probation. Not every Class A will necessarily be placed on probation, but the Judges right now feel that most will be.

Chief Elliott stated they tried to be conservative on the number of people the Judges would be placing on probation. We are thinking a conservative number would be 1,500-2,000. As time goes on, we do believe those numbers will increase along with the whole project. We are starting out with a minimum of three staff. In 3-5 years from now, Chief Elliott thinks everything will probably double. This is a start. We are trying to get this service up and running by mid-summer. We would like to have it up by July if possible.

Chief Elliott stated that the PowerPoint shows some of the estimated costs of services. There are three positions, one of which is a supervisor, and the other two are assistant positions. These are full-time positions with full benefits with the City. The breakdown shows the starting salaries of the Supervisor and the assistants. We listed some other expenses within this project that includes uniforms, drug screening test kits, mandated training, office supplies, office equipment, minor equipment, utilities, vehicle, travel/training, and maintenance for building modifications. Some of these items are a one-time start up expense. The building will not be any expense to us other than having to make a few modifications to it. Starting this thing out at the current location is a very minimal expense to the city. If this thing continues to grow as we anticipate, we may have to look for another facility somewhere down the road. We think this will suffice for the next couple of years.

Chief Elliott said we are looking at fees of approximately \$30 per month. We are estimating that about 1,000 people will be paying monthly so you are looking at approximately \$360,000 in yearly income. You can see with the outlay, expenses starting this up, and the salaries; the net income will far exceed that. For the city, this will be a profitable venture to get into. He said it can more than sustain itself for the next few years.

Councilman McClain stated he had a few questions. How do we make sure that this is not something that just makes money and that we continue to burden people down and we continue to see people in that system? Are we doing things to help them get

out of this? Chief Elliott said absolutely there are always concerns with the way things are managed. People get on the hamster wheel and get off of it. We are not getting into an environment where we are tacking fees on top of fees. This is a fee that they will pay per month that we anticipate will cover any services that they are required. Some of these things still have to be worked out. There may be some classes involved in that. There may be an additional fee because that will take additional personnel to teach those classes. That is part of the agreement that we have not worked out with the Judges yet on if there needs to be any more additional fees or not. Right now, we are just looking to allocate money. Chief Elliott stated he thinks that under the guidance of these two Judges, he doesn't think they will have the same problems. He said we do need a mechanism in place to monitor what is being handed down from the court. We are the only ones in the county that are willing to step up and take the service on. He said that it would be for the whole county.

Chief Financial Officer Suzanne Allen asked Chief Elliott if the reason why they wanted to do away with the Justice Network was the same concerns that Councilman McClain has. Chief Elliott said absolutely because they created problems where people just couldn't get out of the system. He said he thinks the Judges have some other mechanisms in place for people. They won't be assigning as much public service if a person has a job. Someone that is unemployed will have a chance to work their fees off at a reasonable rate. The Judges are very sympathetic to the community. Chief Elliott stated he does not think this will be a problem.

City Attorney Carol Duncan said that tended to be how people got caught in the system. They got assigned public service work hours that they could not complete and then they would get more public service work hours for not completing those. Public service work was what got them caught in the wheel they couldn't get off of. She asked Chief Elliott if the \$30 per month was probation including public service work if they are on public service work or is there some other fee for public service work. Chief Elliott said that it is his understanding that the \$30 fee would cover most of this. If there is a class, there may be an additional fee. We have not made a decision on whether they have to be drug tested and if there would be any additional fee to cover the cost of that test. That is the only thing that is not clear and that we are still in the process of working it out. We are trying to keep the fees as minimal as possible.

Councilman McClain asked if this fee was in addition to the court fees. Chief Elliott said that yes, if you are found guilty in court, you are responsible for the court costs and fees as well as any probation fees. Ms. Duncan said that this would be in addition to any court costs and fees. Mayor Perrin stated that we will be working with an intergovernmental agreement that Ms. Duncan is working on that will spell all of this out. We are just trying to get the money allocated to go ahead and start searching for personnel and getting it going. There will be a MOU with the city and the court system and the county. You will know exactly all of those deals. This system will not work the same as the one before.

City Attorney Carol Duncan said there are just two or three issues that we have left. We are waiting to see exactly what classes they are expecting us to offer because I think it will be different from what was offered under the Justice Network. Some of those we think we can teach in-house with police officers. Some of those, depending upon what they are asking us to offer might require a special skill set that we might have to hire someone outside to do depending on what the class is. I don't anticipate they will order as many classes as we had under the Justice Network, but we won't know that until the Judges tell us for sure. We also do not know what our level of involvement will be with DWI court if any. That is a specialty court that they run at night, one night a month. My office is not really involved in that, but the county is and

there could be some probation involved in that. We need to know what they expect of us regarding that. The last question had to deal with drug testing. If they are going to require a specific type of drug testing, we want to understand what the cost is associated with that. If it is excessive, we will want to know if they are going to add on a cost for that when they are ordering drug testing. Not everyone will have drug testing, but if you are on a drug offense, you may have random drug testing. If it is a minimal cost, the Chief and I have discussed that might not be something you add a fee on for if it's just \$5, that may be part of the \$30. We need the Judges to weigh in on that. I don't see bringing it council before we find out if the county is on board. We need to get something drafted and get with County Judge Ed Hill to make sure everyone is on the same page and we are all in agreement and then we will try to bring it back. It is going to take a little bit, but the money shouldn't change is her understanding as far as our startup costs and employees and stuff.

Mayor Perrin said that if we don't go forward, we may end up in September trying to get out the job descriptions and posting it and all that stuff. Ms. Duncan stated and then we wouldn't know what to budget for next year. Chief Elliott said we are trying to get on board so we can get this thing up and running so when we get into budgeting in the fall, we hopefully will have a little bit better understanding on budgeting for this for 2018. He said that even when this is passed, by the time we get the advertisement on job positions and get someone to do the background checks on them; we are still going to be out 30-60 days minimum plus time to complete some building modifications. We will have the MOU long before that and it will come back before the council for final approval. Tonight, we are just trying to give an estimated cost of this project and get that pushed through so we can proceed on with the project. We did lay out there what potentially could be brought in as income to us so you can see that this is not necessarily going to be taxing the citizens of Jonesboro for any additional money. It will be somewhat profitable. Chairman Johnson said that at least it could be self-supporting. Ms. Duncan said self-supporting is a great goal.

Chairman Johnson said that they appreciate the Chief for taking on this project and it seems like the Judges are on board with it. He said he thinks it will be a good thing in the long run. Chief Elliott said that it will be a great collaborative effort. He said it has been a pleasure to work with the two new Judges and Ms. Duncan on this project. The citizens will see a huge benefit compared to what was in place.

Mayor Perrin asked if they wanted to walk on and forward to the full council RES-17:014. Chairman Johnson said it was his understanding that they were going to get their stuff together and bring it to the council by the next meeting.

City Attorney Carol Duncan stated that this resolution is to appropriate the money. The memorandum of understanding or the contract will be separate. Mayor Perrin said that it would be a separate deal. Councilman Gibson stated he would amend his motion to reflect that.

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Gibson; Mitch Johnson and David McClain

Absent: 2 - Gene Vance and Chris Moore

Resolutions To Be Introduced

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RES-17:026

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS to condemn property located at 2206 Una, Owner: Amber Tollison

[play video](#)

Sponsors: Code Enforcement

Attachments: [photo 1](#)
[photo 2](#)
[photo 3](#)
[2206 Una County Data](#)
[inspection report](#)
[Title Report - Tollison](#)

Code Enforcement Officer Michael Tyner said the property had been inspected and the father of the owner lives in town. He was trying to get a grant to rehab it and I told him I would give him 90 days to get the paperwork submitted and at least get on the waiting list. Mr. Tyner said he hasn't heard anything and hasn't seen any paperwork come across his desk. In the meantime, they have gotten several complaints about the condition of the property and open sewer lines. Given it's deteriorating condition, we need to move forward with the condemnation.

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

Aye: 3 - Chris Gibson; Mitch Johnson and David McClain

Absent: 2 - Gene Vance and Chris Moore

5. Pending Items

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6. Other Business

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7. Public Comments

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Bill Smith, 314 S. Main, stated he is making a request on behalf the NEA Bicycle Association. He is bringing this forward for that group's consideration of yours. He thinks many of the members of the council received emails from concerned citizens about a growing problem we are seeing on some of our streets, particularly our more narrow streets, even for some that are signed for "Share the Road" when dealing with cyclists and motorists. On behalf of NEABC, we need the city to start considering the usage of "May Use Full Lane" signage. This is the new trend nationwide. In particular, in places like Craighead Forest Park, we are seeing increasing cases of motorists harassing the cyclists. We see the same thing on Matthews. "Share the Road" signs may not be the solution because on an extremely narrow road, you don't have the space to share with the State passing law or common courtesy. We want the public to know the use of the road is still available for the cyclists.

Councilman McClain asked Mr. Smith to explain the "May Use Lane" sign. Councilman Moore asked Mr. Smith to explain what the signage looks like. Mr. Smith said it is a new white instead of yellow sign that you see nationwide. They are typically square with a bike on it and underneath the bike, it says "May Use Full Lane." This has become the new suggestion nationwide. The MPO folks have a copy of it as well. "Share the Lane" works great on a wider street, but when you are on a narrow road, especially one with a curb, there is nowhere to go. "Share the Lane" does not work when you have a narrow road. Councilman Moore asked if the State passing law was three feet. Mr. Smith said it is three feet from the side of the cyclist. He said that maybe the city could consider using the "May Use Full Lane" signage.

Councilman McClain asked if he wanted the signs in just Craighead Forest or everywhere. Mr. Smith said he thinks it needs to be in targeted places. He thinks this is just the start of the conversation. Mayor Perrin said they have a committee on Traffic Safety. He thinks that committee needs to take a look at that idea. We can work on that and bring it back to Public Safety. Chairman Johnson asked if they could put that on their agenda to review and ask them for their recommendation. Mayor Perrin said that they could ask the Traffic Safety Committee to do that.

Councilman Moore stated that State law gives a cyclist the right to use the full lane. Mr. Smith said it is getting in the minds of people to have them understand that you can use the full lane. When you say share, they think they can share you right off the edge.

Eric Kriner, 819 Amberwood Cove, voiced his concern about the intersection of Wood Street and Alexander Drive. He said that it is a dangerous double blind intersection on a hill. He is asking that the city consider doing something to help draw attention to the area as being dangerous. Drivers speed down Alexander and putting up signage that warns drivers of a "Dangerous Intersection" would be helpful. Mayor Perrin stated that he has sent a letter to the State Highway Department regarding the matter of that intersection.

8. Adjournment

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A motion was made by Councilman Chris Gibson, seconded by Councilman David McClain, that this meeting be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 3 - Chris Gibson; Mitch Johnson and David McClain

Absent: 2 - Gene Vance and Chris Moore