



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, November 7, 2023

5:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

PUBLIC HEARING AT 4:30 P.M.

The podium microphone went inaudible at approximately the 2:56 minute mark when Mr. Ryan Bowman is speaking and it stays inaudible through the remainder of the Public Hearing at approximately the 11:38 minute mark. The Council Table microphones were working throughout the Public Hearing. NOTE: There was an audio recording that was a backup so the minutes will reflect what conversations were had during the entire Public Hearing process.

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, good afternoon everybody. First of all, I'm want to say thank you. I have a meeting upstairs with the Boy Scout troop and I thought, well, what a better way for them to come in and see what government is really like. So, again, thank you for being here and we will excuse ourselves after this meeting is over with and we will go upstairs and visit shortly before I have to return to another meeting. So, ladies and gentlemen, this is many of our City Councilmembers. They represent you in the community and your vote. And, so, this is a process. Again, thank you for being here and we will go on with this evenings meeting. I will go ahead and call this public hearing open at 4:30 p.m. This afternoon's public hearing is the first formal action of the bonding process. I want to repeat again for the record and clarify that franchise fees are not new fees. A bond isn't increasing those fees either. The city already collects these fees. Traditionally, the funds derived from franchise fees are just processed into the general fund. I am proposing that we leverage those toward a bond to provide an immediate ability to dedicate more than \$17 million to projects. There is no vote tonight. It is simply the first of several public requirements of the bonding process. What stands before you this evening are diagrams of four projects. One of which is a new E-911 and Real Time Crime Center Complex. Number two, an expansion of Caraway Road from I-555 to Fox Meadow. It would be five lanes to the Links and three to Fox Meadow. A clubhouse building at the Shooting Sports Complex, this facility will complete the complex as proposed in 2018. And, then funding towards the construction of new trails. I will open up the podium in a minute. But, after Ryan Bowman from the Friday Firm comes and presents his statements and then also Paul Phillips from Crews and Associates will follow-up and then I will open up the podium for public comment. And, then if there are and questions after I close, then my staff and I will be available on the floor to address any questions you may have about the projects. So, Mr. Bowman, if you would, please come forward. Thank you for being here this evening.

Mr. Ryan Bowman, attorney with Friday, Eldridge and Clark, said, thank you Mayor and City Council. As the Mayor mentioned, I am Brian Bowman and I am with Friday, Eldridge and Clark Law Firm. We are proposing to serve as bond counsel to the city in connection with this bond issue. As required by state law, before the city could issue revenue bonds, in this case, secured by the franchise fees collected by the city from public utilities, there must be a public hearing allowing citizens to comment either for or against the bonds. Notice of the Public Hearing as required by state law was published in your local newspaper at least 10 days in advance of tonight's public

hearing. So, that is the reason for legally for the public hearing. As the Mayor mentioned, Mr. Paul Phillips will provide some information about the bond issue. I am certainly available to answer any questions that you might have with respect to the legal structure of the bond issue. So, I will turn it over to Mr. Phillips to allow him to provide some comments before it gets opened up to the public. Again, I am here to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you for the opportunity to work with you and the City of Jonesboro. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you Mr. Bowman.

Mr. Paul Phillips, representative of Crews & Associates, said, thank you Mayor and members of the City Council. Just a little bit of a refresher and a reminder for everyone, I am Paul Phillips with Crews & Associates. I am serving as the financial advisor to the City of Jonesboro in connection with the issuance of bonds. If you will recall, I was here at the City Council meeting on October 19, 2023. At that particular point in time, we gave an overview of how we arrived at the sizing of the bond issue projects that were being evaluated for funding at that time. In that process, it took a long period of time to arrive at that stage. So, since that time, we have formulized the documents. We have an official timeline which will lead us to a point of selling the bonds on Monday, December 4, 2023 and then on Tuesday, December 5, 2023, we will come back to the City Council with the bond ordinance. The bond ordinance will contain the final terms and conditions. As I mentioned in our previous conversation about that night, that is where we will lock in that interest rate. Interest rates move every day in this business. So, that night we will lock in those rates. In order to do so, we will have to ask for three readings and the emergency clause and with that approval, then we would move towards the closing of the bond issue on January 9, 2024. At which time, you will have the proceeds to fund your projects over a period of up to three years of taxes and proceeds. As just a quick refresher, in terms of franchise fees, Mayor, you are absolutely correct in about how you described that. Just to put you in good company, those cities that have franchise fees collections in nature that you guys have in \$1 million+, with a very common structure for them to fund capital improvements. Congratulations, I guess, are in order for not having to do this or incurring indebtedness for 25 years. You should be very proud of that. With a lot of growth and a lot of good things happening, it is just hard to keep up with that and you have to pay as you go sometimes. I am happy to take any questions after the public hearing to discuss that process and where we are at, but I feel good about where we have been and where we are at and looking forward to a successful sale from this point forward. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you Mr. Phillips. At this point and time Council, I will go ahead and open up the hearing to public comments and that is simply that, comments about the issue and they will be duly noted for the record. Is there anyone in the audience who would like to make a public comment at this time? If you would, come forward and state your name and address.

Rachel Anderson, 120 CR 477, said, I first off want to introduce myself as the Senior Video Analyst in the Jonesboro Police Department Real Time Crime Center. I have held this position for five years and I have worked for the city for a total of seven years. I have some things I want to share today, but I want to first mention that this is not in opposition to the bond, it is just kind of an opposition to part of it, part of the plan. So, I have worked in the RTCC since before there was an RTCC. I was there for our very first camera installation and I have been here for every camera installation and onboarding project since then. We are up to, as you know, probably over 700 cameras now in the real time crime center. In the RTCC, our job is twofold. We monitor calls for service and we analyze videos during investigations. It is a misconception that has come up in the last year or two that we work closely with dispatch. We don't. That's not true. If anyone were to come to the RTCC for any amount of time, they would quickly see that we are a function of the Criminal Investigations Division. We work very closely

with detectives on their investigations and we are often the ones who break a case wide open with the information that we gather from videos and license plate readers and things like that. Like I said, it is just a misconception that we are dispatchers even real time tactical dispatchers and things like that. Most of our work happens hours or days after the event is over. Taking us away from the Criminal Investigations Division would be detrimental to our efficiency. We don't want to move. We have expressed multiple times that we need to be close to CID Detectives. And, putting the RTCC in a building with dispatch across town or apart from CID is not what the RTCC needs in order to be successful. This sentiment has been expressed multiple times, but it seems like it has fallen on deaf ears unfortunately. The people who work in the RTCC, myself and Wade Shapp, he is not here tonight, but he has approved everything that I have said. We don't want this new building. No matter how fancy it is, no matter how many millions of dollars you might commit to it, the RTCC cannot function without CID. Of the 1,100 cases the Mayor and Chief boasts that we helped on last year, over 1,000 of those were investigations. Less than 100 were real time incidents like active pursuits or missing persons. I venture to say that it was even less than 50. The vast majority of what we do is investigations. If anyone were to have asked our opinions, we would have told them, but no one asked. We want to stay where we are and we can patiently wait until the police department might get a new building in the future. We have heard rumors. You know everyone has heard rumors. We don't want to be separate from the officers and detectives that we work closely with. Like I said, we don't work closely with dispatch. And, we were never asked about our workflow and we were never asked to weigh in on this new safety building. It is disheartening that our concerns have been kind of disregarded though we are the ones, literally myself and one other person would be the ones benefitting from this new building. Our jobs, my job would be completely uprooted and changed. I will go somewhere else every day. I will have to change everything I do with CID. Like I said, no one has asked and we have not been included in any of the conversations about this new building. I have heard that there are floorplans. I haven't seen them. There has been all kinds of meetings about where it will be and what it will look like and we have not been asked or brought in on this at all. I didn't even know about this public hearing until I saw it in the news. So, in conclusion, please consider the wants and the needs of the people actually doing the work in the Real Time Crime Center. Plain and simple, we don't want this new building. No one has asked our opinion on any of this. So, I felt like coming to this hearing was kind of my last resort. And, we enjoy the work that we do and where we do it and we are proud of the difference that we make in our community. That is all I have. Mayor Copenhagen said, duly noted. Would anyone else in the audience like to make comments? I see none. I will go ahead at this point and time and close the meeting. If there are any questions there and about the projects, we will be happy to assist you on the floor and answer those questions. Thank you so much.

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

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

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

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

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

[COM-23:055](#)

PROCLAMATION HONORING THE 6A STATE CHAMPION JONESBORO HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS TEAM

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, well, good evening Council. It is always good to stand before you especially when we are able to honor those in our community and I think this is a precedence that we need to continue especially when they are young adults that persevere and rise to the top. So, I would like this evening, I have got a proclamation for the Jonesboro Boy's State Championship Tennis Team. If they would, please come forward.

Gentlemen, good to see you this evening. Many of you I have known since you were little men and so you have grown up to be fine young men. So, I am really proud of you. The City of Jonesboro is very proud of you as well. You are very thankful that you have fellowship with your parents in the room, hopefully grandparents as well. We are all proud of you. This evening I appreciate you coming here and I want to read this proclamation that the city is going to be presenting to you tonight as well.

It is with great pride that we acknowledge the Jonesboro High School Boys Tennis Team for winning the share of Class 6-A State Championship this season and; whereas, tying for first place with Bentonville and Rogers Heritage, Jonesboro won a team championship trophy for the seventh time in a row and 15 of the last 16 years creating a new pantheon of individual champions to join what is clearly a state dynasty on the tennis courts; whereas, Senior Ethan Richardson won his second consecutive overall state championship and became a four-time state champion over his high school years. Seniors Carson Fowler and Win Gibson won third place in the state's double competition and Drew McElhaney reached the tournament with Ben Baker in doubles; and whereas, other senior team members: William Allen, Adrian Gonzales, Jace Johnson, Cade Johnson, Timothy Miles led the 17 member team which also makes Jonesboro proud with a collective GPA of 3.95. (Impressive, impressive, job well done.) I, there, now for, Harold Copenhaver, Mayor of the City of Jonesboro, by the virtue of the authority vested in me by the State and the laws of Arkansas do hereby proclaim this JHS Boys Tennis Day in the City of Jonesboro, AR.

Read

[COM-23:057](#)

RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERS BY MRS. KATHLEEN COPENHAVER

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, next Council, I would like to begin a tradition in the City of Jonesboro and everybody needs a support system. I am proud to say that I have one in my wife and she has made it evident to me that we need to continue to support those who give of their time in our community. And, so, because of that request, I am going to ask her to come forward and make a statement on the first ever "Thanks for Giving" awards in our community.

Mrs. Kathleen Copenhaver said, good evening y'all. Thank you for having me. The "Thanks for Giving" Community Volunteer Award is a recognition to volunteers in the City of Jonesboro government who directly aid the work of our various departments. These volunteers give of their time, talents, expertise, and other resources in ways that

benefit the entire community and our city directly. Without them and the countless service of others in the community, many programs and important work they are involved in would simply not be successful. Thank you to our sponsors, Centennial Bank for collaborating with us to recognize these deserving residents as outstanding community volunteers. John Matthews volunteerism is known citywide. Within the city itself, he aids the Police Department with the building rapport and relationships within the community. The upcoming 6th Annual Community Meal at Temple Baptist Church from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on November 11th has been an ongoing effort from John's heart for the city. Beverly Parker works in conjunction with the Code Enforcement and Sanitation Departments as she heads the Keep Jonesboro Beautiful Commission, always searching for ways to enhance the beauty of the City of Jonesboro. Wannnda Turner dedicates hours volunteering directly with the Animal Services Department. As the Director of the Northeast Arkansans for Animals, her wealth of knowledge and experience has helped Jonesboro Animal Services become a pacesetter in Arkansas for Animal Welfare. We want to express our appreciation for your service and volunteerism to the City of Jonesboro. You're making indelible influence in the city as you invest in good work that makes a difference. Thank you so much for giving. Mayor Copenhaver said, again, I want to say thank you for the bottom of our hearts in the city. People don't realize what volunteerism means and you three set the standard. I appreciate your commitment and again it needs to be recognized and there are many others that allow you the ability to do that from your families and the confidants that you work with in each and every field that you are in. So, we want to say thank you. Centennial Bank wants to say their appreciation as well. So, thank you again.

Read

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Councilmember Chris Gibson motioned to removed RES-23:217 and RES-23:220. Councilmember Moore seconded that motion. Councilmember David McClain motioned to removed RES-23:215. Councilmember Chris Moore asked, is that the only items to be moved? If it is, I will make a motion that we adopt the Consent Agenda with the exception of those items. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman and Councilmember Brian Emison made a second to his motion. All voted aye.

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

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

[MIN-23:101](#)

MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON OCTOBER 17, 2023

Attachments: [CC Minutes 10172023](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

[RES-23:216](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 01-144182-01610 ON ALLEN, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144182-01610, OWNED BY OSCAR

MANUEL MENDOZA IN THE AMOUNT OF \$365

Attachments: [01-144182-01610 on Allen](#)
[01-144182-01610 on Allen](#)
[01-144182-01610 on Allen Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-235-2023

[RES-23:218](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 414 N. BRIDGE, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144181-08500, OWNED BY DOWNSTREAM INVESTMENTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [414 N Bridge](#)
[414 N Bridge](#)
[414 N Bridge Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-236-2023

[RES-23:219](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 416 W. FORREST, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144073-28700, OWNED BY LENA KERSEY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [416 W Forrest](#)
[416 W Forrest](#)
[416 W Forrest Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-237-2023

[RES-23:223](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 500 ALLEN, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144181-30100, OWNED BY KENNY L. COLEMAN IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [500 Allen](#)
[500 Allen](#)
[500 Allen Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-238-2023

[RES-23:224](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 500 WOODROW, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144073-18400, OWNED BY ANTHONY O. MGBODILE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [500 Woodrow](#)
[500 Woodrow](#)
[500 Woodrow Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-239-2023

[RES-23:225](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 602 S. FLINT, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144183-30200, OWNED BY D & G RENTALS, LLC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [602 S Flint](#)
[602 S Flint](#)
[602 S Flint Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-240-2023

[RES-23:226](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 616 E. OAK, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144191-17500, OWNED BY JOYCE SCARBOROUGH IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [616 E Oak](#)
[616 E Oak](#)
[616 E Oak Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-241-2023

[RES-23:227](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4304 RACE ST., JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144271-19900, OWNED BY CHARLES CRAIG CONYERS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [4304 Race St](#)
[4304 Race Council Letter](#)
[4304 Race](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-242-2023

[RES-23:228](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 922 W. JEFFERSON AVE., JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-143134-29200, OWNED BY JAMES W ROBINSON, JR. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [922 W Jefferson](#)
[922 W Jefferson](#)
[922 W Jefferson Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-243-2023

[RES-23:229](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1225 S. CULBERHOUSE, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-143241-17100, OWNED BY J&M FOSTER PROPERTIES, LLC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [1225 S Culberhouse](#)
[1225 S Culberhouse](#)
[1225 S Culberhouse Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-244-2023

[RES-23:230](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1313 PARDEW, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144212-20200, OWNED BY MICHELLE NUTT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [1313 Pardew](#)
[1313 Pardew](#)
[1313 Pardew Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-245-2023

[RES-23:231](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1712 NATIONAL, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144223-18200, OWNED BY RODNEY CRANFORD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [1712 National](#)
[1712 National](#)
[1712 National Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-246-2023

[RES-23:232](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2501 MARY JANE, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144272-24200, OWNED BY KENNETH L. & DENA BRADWAY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [2501 Mary Jane](#)
[2501 Mary Jane](#)
[2501 Mary Jane Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-247-2023

[RES-23:233](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2905 TURTLE CREEK, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-143264-25500 & 01-143264-25600, OWNED BY PATRICK S. MCDANIEL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$550

Attachments: [2905 Turtle Creek](#)
[2905 Turtle Creek](#)
[2905 Turtle Creek Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-248-2023

[RES-23:234](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3406 MEADOR, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144281-35600, OWNED BY HAZEL WATSON IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [3406 Meador](#)
[3406 Meador](#)
[3406 Meador Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-249-2023

[RES-23:235](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3507 ODEN, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144103-13000, OWNED BY STEPHANIE L. & JACOB MIZELL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$335

Attachments: [3507 Oden](#)
[3507 Oden](#)
[3507 Oden Council Letter](#)

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-250-2023

[RES-23:236](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO WAIVE COMPETITIVE BIDDING AND AUTHORIZE A CONTRACT WITH ARKANSAS BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD TO PROVIDE MEDICAL INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR CITY EMPLOYEES FOR 2024

This item was passed on the Consent Agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-251-2023

RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA**RES-23:215**

RESOLUTION BY JONESBORO CITY COUNCIL TO AMEND THE CONTRACT AGREEMENT WITH HALFF ASSOCIATES INC. TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TO INCLUDE A SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH ACCELERATOR PLAN INTO THE MASTER PARKS PLAN FOR THE JONESBORO PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT.

Attachments: [Jonesboro PRMP SCHEDULE 10.02.23](#)
[Jonesboro PRMP Exhibit D-1st AMEND 10.02.23](#)
[First-Amend MEMO 10.02.23](#)

Councilmember David McClain said, I was just curious. How far are we with the Master Parks Plan and also, that is a pretty significant increase. I know it is coming from a grant. However, I thought that was pretty significant. I would like to know, can they explain why it is so much? Mayor Copenhaver said, we can do it in two areas. We have Danny here and then Alejandra can address it as well on the grants side of things. So, Danny, if you would like to come forward and answer the first part of his question, I would appreciate it. Thank you. Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales said, so, yes, as far as the Master Parks Plan, I know we had intentions of being done by the end of November to the end of the year for the Master Parks Plan. It looks like, by adding this, it is going to push it to the end of January is the only extension that we are adding. We are looking at potentially an extra month of the add-on. And, what we are looking at with this plan. It is taking us from being a city that has access to parks to parks that have all-inclusive play. So, instead of just being able to allow folks to be able to get to the playground, we are going to allow all folks to be able to play on the playground with this. And, so, it is going to give this group a chance to look into all of our facilities, all of our playgrounds and make sure and give us a plan moving forward to make sure that those playgrounds are all inclusive. Councilmember McClain said, did we ask them to include this part from the beginning or was this something that they discovered we needed to do once they were in the process. Mr. Kapales said, no, this was something, this was a grant that we had applied for and had gotten the grant after we had already processed, I believe the timeline was after we had already started the process on the Master Parks Plan and we were looking at doing this planning internally, but once we kind of dug into the process, we realized there were some professional help needed to move forward, the CDC. Councilmember McClain, said, you mean that part you were trying to do internally? Mr. Kapales said, we were going to try to do it internally and then as we dug into that grant and that process, we realized that we needed a little more help. And, so, by stepping out and getting a professional company, it is going to allow us to add that to the parks plan and just make that parks plan that much better. Mayor Copenhaver asked, does that pretty much answer your questions? Councilmember McClain said, yes, thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, okay, all right, you bet.

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

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

Enactment No: R-EN-252-2023

[RES-23:217](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 308 B VINE, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-143134-25400 , OWNED BY DAVID & GAIL OESTERBLAD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [308 B Vine](#)
 [308 B Vine](#)
 [308 B Vine Council Letter](#)

Councilmember Chris Gibson motioned to table indefinitely RES-23:117 and RES-23:220. Councilmember Joe Hafner made a second to his motion. City Attorney Carol Duncan said, Council, just to update you, both of those owners of those properties are deceased. That is why we can't move forward with placing a lien at this point. The ownership will have changed hands. All Councilmembers voted aye to table indefinitely RES-23:117 and RES-23:220.

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Gibson, seconded by Councilperson Joe Hafner, that this matter be Postponed Indefinitely. The motion PASSED with the following vote.

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

[RES-23:220](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO PLACE A MUNICIPAL LIEN ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 417 W. FORREST, JONESBORO, AR 72401, PARCEL 01-144073-21000, OWNED BY MITTIE L. STALLINGS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$275

Attachments: [417 W Forrest](#)
 [417 W Forrest](#)
 [417 W Forrest Council Letter](#)

Councilmember Chris Gibson motioned to table indefinitely RES-23:117 and RES-23:220. Councilmember Joe Hafner made a second to his motion. City Attorney Carol Duncan said, Council, just to update you, both of those owners of those properties are deceased. That is why we can't move forward with placing a lien at this point. The ownership will have changed hands. All Councilmembers voted aye to table indefinitely RES-23:117 and RES-23:220.

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Gibson, seconded by Councilperson Joe Hafner, that this matter be Postponed Indefinitely. The motion PASSED with the following vote.

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

6. NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

[ORD-23:039](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO WAIVE COMPETITIVE BIDDING AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH RITTER COMMUNICATIONS TO PROVIDE FIBER CONNECTIVITY AND CLOUD SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF JONESBORO

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

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Chris Moore, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-23:039 by title only. All voted aye.

Held at one reading

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

[ORD-23:037](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-1 TO I-1 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3315 WILLOW ROAD AS REQUESTED BY TED DICKEY

Attachments: [Application](#)
[Rezoning Plat](#)
[Certified Mail Receipts](#)
[Publication Fee](#)
[Staff Summary - C.C.](#)

Held at second reading

[ORD-23:038](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-2 TO RM-12 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5601 PACIFIC ROAD AS REQUESTED BY SOUTHARD CONSTRUCTION, LLC

Attachments: [Application](#)
[R-2 SITE PLAN](#)
[RM-12 SITE PLAN](#)
[Rezoning Plat](#)
[Property Owner Notification](#)
[Certified Mail Receipts](#)
[Sign Photos](#)
[Staff Summary - C.C.](#)
[Publication Receipt](#)

Jennifer Easley, 5910 Pacific Road, said this rezoning is about a ½ a mile down to the west of me. First of all, I do want to tell you that unfortunately, I had no choice, but to support this and the reason I say that is because it is already zoned for apartments. There is nothing that we can do with a neighborhood. It is now, one-story or two-story and that's the option we have. Two-story does not conform with anything in the neighborhood. So, we kind of feel like our hands are tied. It is a no win situation for us. We have issues with traffic out there. The five-lanes going through, everybody uses our neighborhood as a cut through and they have for years. This property is going to add to that. We have drainage issues out there. The drainage in front of this property, the ditch is about two foot deep and it has not been cleaned out in years. We have water coming over the road on Pacific. We had seven inches of rain in the last two weeks. We have got some serious concerns out there and the more that this property out there is developed and it has been undeveloped for years, we are going to have some

issues. So, I am here to ask, yes, please do rezone it simply because like I said one story is better than two, but I also ask, I am kind of begging you for the five family members that I represent who have about 100 acres on that road, we need the city to come out and look at traffic. We need you to come out and look at drainage and things like that because as that five-lanes comes through Commerce or Martin Luther King, Jr., we have got some concerns that are going to have to be addressed. And, I have got a family member behind me here. She lives next door to the property. She did get to meet with the owner finally yesterday, but again, he is going to build apartments regardless and that is not what the neighborhood needs. We already have about 700 out there. And, unfortunately, it is zoned for it. The land use plan that was adopted years ago, it is just going to explode out there. It is undeveloped. It is rural. And, I know Nettleton School District can't handle a lot of those apartments that are coming in because of the influx of kids. I work for the Brookland School District. We are on the north side of Pacific. The influx of kids that we have is also a challenge. Students are welcome, but at the same time, it presents its challenges too. So, I just ask that the Council remember our part of the town out there and as we grow and as we expand, please put some resources out there to take care of some issues that we do have. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you Ms. Easley for coming forward with your concerns. And, I will pass the word on as well because the MLK is a state highway as well and so we will pass those needs and concerns on. But, what we can do in the city is we will definitely go out and look at it. Thank you very much.

Penny Newton, 5701 Pacific, said, I live right beside where the apartments are going to be built and I just wanted to say that I did get to meet with Mr. Southard and we did talk about everything. The last time we had mentioned that we wanted to have a meeting with him. He did tell me that he is going to put up privacy fences along the sides of the apartments. That is exactly what we wanted, is to put up privacy fences. I am just asking you guys to vote yes for this because we don't want two-story apartments. We want one-story apartments. We feel like that is best for the neighborhood. As far as the recreational area, I think Dr. Coleman had said something about it and I believe that he is going to try to do something so the kids will have some type of little activity area. We did have a good meeting and I do appreciate all of his concerns too about our neighborhood. But, all we ask is that you do vote for one story apartments because we definitely don't want two-story apartments out there. We just feel like it would be better for our area. I appreciate anybody that went out in our area and looked. I know I asked all of y'all the last time if you would drive out there and look and I do appreciate y'all coming out and looking if you did come out there and drive in our area. So, thank you. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you Ms. Newton. And, again, I think that just shows the efforts of people working together. We can all come to resolve an issue. So, thank you, thank you very much.

Held at second reading

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

Mayor Harold Copenhagen said, next we will move on to the Mayor's Reports, and I do want to make a comment here. We do have legislative audit report, and Steve is here with us this evening. Council, is there anybody, if you've taken a look at it? Again, I am very pleased, and I commend Steve and his entire staff. Listen, folks, they do tens of thousands of transactions and we were not noted for one, one flaw in those transactions. And that is a very commendable leadership under his directorship, and as well as for his employees. So thank you, Steve, for that. Council, do you have any questions for Steve? I don't see any. Thank you, Steve.

Next, we will move on to Mayor's Comments. Brian, have you passed out? If you want

to go ahead and pass those out, if you don't mind, sir. Council, I will go ahead and be brief on some mayor comments about events that occurred in the city; but then I want to get to talking points on the capital projects and walk you all through this. This is just for your information this evening, and then I want you to gather it, think it through, and then we will move forward with taking your questions and answering them for you in detail.

First of all, I would like to say among grants we have received this week was recently a \$550,000 mental health grant for partners with the city and Arisa Health. This will allow us to create crisis intervention teams designed to better handle incidents involving people with mental health and substance abuse disorders. Other grants include about \$250,000 in equipment and provisions for the Jonesboro Police Department that will keep both our officers and public safer. I congratulate our grants department for their continued work even without a director at the helm, but the past two months and their hard work, and I appreciate your excellent work, Alejandra and your team. Also, to add to that, our future director has been engaged already with the team. They are working on projects that we have worked on in the past, and they are formulating a plan of action, which I am very pleased to see. I think Jeremy is going to do a great job in that role. So I am looking forward to his leadership beginning next week. If you haven't congratulated him already yet, Rick Elliot received the Jonesboro Exchange Club Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award in October. Chief Elliot, that is an honor that invokes pride, and you do so with your service to the entire city of Jonesboro on the police department. Thank you very much for that, and congratulations for that honor.

The Arkansas State Convention and Pastor's Conference was held this past week at the Walnut Street Baptist Church. I welcomed a group and admired the good people of Walnut Street who did a great job representing Jonesboro on this occasion; and folks, that brought in 500 pastors from all across the state for three days to our community. So they got to see a lot of our community, many of whom have never been here. Last month's animal services vaccination clinic was extremely high turnout, and I am going to thank the volunteers like we earlier recognized and the staff of Larry Rogers for their commitment to that wonderful cause. And Larry, we have another one coming up in November, is that correct? Okay. We held a public involvement meeting last month concerning ARDOT projects on the city's I-555 corridor study. The public viewed these displays, asked questions and offered comments on the preliminary findings concerning the need for visibility and infrastructure improvements and interchanges. Now, Council, for those who weren't able to make it, these were interchanges at every intersection along I-555, so we are prioritizing those intersections. They saw the need, and the priorities are rising to the top such as Southwest Drive, Caraway Road and others. So these are conversations that are not funded yet. These are projects that have not been funded, but they are on the table; and with open communication, hopefully we will have that partnership, and we can bring that to the table.

We commend Jonesboro A&P Commission for hiring Craig Rickert as the executive director. Craig is well known in Jonesboro and will be recruiting great events to Jonesboro. It is important to note that the growth and value of the A&P Commission the last few years, and I am really proud and pleased of the service that Chairman Jerry Morgan and the rest of the commission do. They are doing great stuff for the city, and I can't wait to see what Craig brings because he is going to make it even better. Parks put a new cage of kayaks at Craighead Forest Park located on access one and two near the boat ramp and dock. It's a great addition for a fun activity while enjoying the park. Meanwhile, the Forum upstairs bathrooms remodel continues and the Parker Park pool work is moving along briskly. We are also making swift progress on the new dog park behind JHS. As you may have noticed, I put out a press release that

Jonesboro hotels set a new record for September revenues this year, a sign that our industry experts call a result of both growth in the hotel industry and partnerships created through the city and private entities. Collectively, Jonesboro has 31 hotels. We saw receipts of 3.7 million in September, a 15% increase over the 3.2 million collected in September 2022. Year-to-date, the hotels have had a gross revenue of close to \$30 million. This exceeds last year by 5.3% when gross revenues were at 28.1 million year-to-date through September according to the STR National Hotel data rating service.

Project Care, schools and local businesses collaborated to create a job fair in Nettleton Baptist Church. That was held this afternoon; and let me tell you, there were over 50 vendors for over 400 possibilities of youth that might have some disability of some nature to have an opportunity to a career and to provide a job service in our community. These were kids that were in the 10th to 12th grade, and they were met by more than 50 vendors. They work together to connect special needs for high school students at entry-level jobs continuing education upon graduation. Listen folks, that is a heartwarming thing that we do, and I am very proud of those volunteers and the non-profits that work with them. I want to thank you again to our A&P. We broke ground on two soccer fields at Joe Mack Campbell Park. A lot of youth and adults play out there, and they will be thrilled with this improvement. Many of us attended the Nettleton High School Veterans Day program Friday morning. These students and teachers at Nettleton High School do a fabulous job celebrating and entertaining our veterans. Retired Colonel Steven Beaumont was a guest speaker and he talked about the impact of the Army and the value of serving our country, the importance of veteran families, and offered students a few words of advice. Halloween produced two events that saw huge crowds. Boo in the 'Boro hosted by the Youth Council and JPD's trunk or treat were met by thousands. I won't mention which councilmembers I saw trick or treating. Finally, the city will be closed Friday in observance of Veterans Day, so this also means that your trash collection will be delayed Friday until early next week. Sanitation doesn't take long to catch up, so bear with us a couple of days and we will be back on track mid next week.

That is the end of those comments. Now, Council, before Brian passed out, he gave you a list of capital improvement proposal projects; and as I had mentioned to you earlier in many communications, I want to commend all of you that have stepped up and engaged yourself in the process, the community as well. And I want to bring forward with you, I'm just going to read this off this evening, so stay with me. And then again, like I said, after, we've got an entire month to discuss this. I want you to collectively or individually, if you have questions concerning these projects and how we are going to get there, what they are. And we have another detailed list of projects that you had also mentioned, that we can add in the years to come.

So as I mentioned in recent meetings and discussed with most of you personally, today I present the administration's proposal of a multi-layered capital improvement plan that utilizes four separate funding streams: a revenue bond, ARPA funding, an allocation from city reserves, and yearly budget appropriations. The process would improve multiple approvals, as follows. First, a vote by Council to pledge roughly 75% of routinely collected franchise fees and debt service for a revenue bond. This would create roughly \$17.5 million in projects. Revenue bonds are a common way for municipalities to fund projects. Second, a vote by Council to allocate our American Rescue Plan funding toward specific projects or plans. Third, a vote by Council to allocate reserves to restricted accounts for specific projects. And finally, yearly votes by Council on specific projects as identified in our annual budget. It is important to note that this plan consists of multiple actions and funding sources. Just because a

project is not listed in the bond proposal, doesn't mean that it can't be funded through one of our other streams. The earliest date that each of these actions could be voted on by Council is December 5th. ARPA and reserve appropriations would just be a resolution that would run the normal course similar to past ARPA actions. Once approved by you, these two sources would involve a restricted capital improvement fund. At that point, individual project funding and contracting would follow the normal requisition path similar to our appropriations from the capital improvement carryover fund. The revenue bond is only about \$17.5 million of the allocations pie. The other consist of \$8 million from ARPA funding, \$5 million from reserves, and placeholders in the next three budget cycles.

So let's begin with the revenue bond. Council, if you would take your spreadsheet; and I will just briefly go down this. Projects funded by revenue bond are limited to those that can completed within a three year window. Considering the planning and process related functions requiring for municipal projects, this is a notable detail. For that reason, projects that require a longer term build out don't fit that application. A three year completion window typically means that these projects are already in the advanced stages of planning design and primarily lack only capital infusion. With that in mind, it would be unrealistic to anticipate that the full 10 or 11 million in a proposed trail or pedestrian pathways could be completed within that timeframe. So that specific area will span multiple funding streams. Cost estimates are based on recent professional projections by third party firms. To be clear, estimates are simply that: estimates. With the city's bidding requirement processes, unknowns always exist until bidding is opened and certified. The plan proposes the funding of completing the shooting sports complex by building a clubhouse, (I believe we have a diagram over there behind Chief) estimated at \$3.5 million. Additional funding is being sought from the Arkansas Game and Fish. I was on the phone with Director Booth as recent as yesterday afternoon. The estimate is for the full cost and was recently reevaluated by Brackett Krennerich Architectural Firm. This facility will complete the project as originally presented and approved by Council in 2017. Additionally, a tenth trap field will need to be added to qualify the facility to host high school state tournaments. Cost is not anticipated to be high on that expansion. And, Council, I will also make you aware that Danny has provided us with an updated list of the improvements of what we are seeing activity wise; and please I ask that I'm going to share that information with you so you can see the progress that we have been making with the shooting sports facility.

The new E-911 real-time crime center estimated at \$4 million. The current facility is outdated, small and inadequate. It is past time to replace this facility. With the city's continued commitment to public safety and technology, the proposed facility would include space for a real-time crime center. Last year, our city was recognized with an Arkansas Trend Setter award for becoming the first city in the state to establish such a center. The state of the art facility will expand the ability for police fire, and it's coming from recommendations of our police chief and assistant chief. And it helps in our streets to keep informed decisions on critical matters. The facility will include 24-hour staffing, so our infrastructure is always monitored. This is especially important for our parks and our city facilities that we have so heavily invested in. Dispatch centers have distance restrictions. Let me say this again, dispatch centers have distance restrictions in relation to railroad tracks. For this reason, locating the facility on the campus of our police complex is not an option. That's fine. Many cities intentionally separate the complexes. This would be the first piece of a plan to remove all city assets and personnel from West Washington Justice Complex campus.

Street and road improvements. This would be item number three, the expansion of Caraway Road. Six to seven million dollars per recent cost estimates by the Pickering

Engineering firm that was just done recently. For years, the widening of Caraway Road has been on an unfunded project list for the city. For the better part of a decade, the city has approved significant amount of funding for right-of-way acquisitions, utility relocations, engineering work, and design plans that are 100% complete and ready for execution. A Caraway Road expansion would be funded by multiple streams to ensure the three year compliance. A final settlement would likely be needed in 2025 when the road hopefully is completed. This request of a \$5 million bond appropriation and a \$1 million budget appropriation in 2025, the current recommendation is to take five lanes out to Fox Meadow coinciding with ARDOT interchange adjustments at I-555. The current two lane road is handling more than 15,000 vehicles a day and has been identified for some time as a need in the master street plan passed by Council. While the original plan did not include non-motorized accommodations, this one does. Another option explored was to narrow the street down to three lanes at Latourette, but this only reduced the project cost by \$700,000 and it would be much more expensive to readdress this in a few years when congestion and safety concerns arise. And let me give you traffic count numbers as recently as yesterday. The old Highway 1 that ARDOT originally had requested years ago to be widened, the traffic count is about 12,000 vehicles. And Caraway Road is about 15,000 and new Highway 1 or Red Wolf Boulevard is about 18,000 vehicles. So we are seeing the utilization of that; and with the new infrastructure upgrades that are happening in the center of town, this is even more important at that point in time.

Trail funding and pedestrian transportation projects, \$5 million revenue bond. This category will need to be funded through multiple outlets due to the time restrictions associated with the revenue bond for a total of \$13 million in four different areas. This is a huge investment in the city. Connections that seem to be most frequently discussed by Council and phased in by the connectivity master plan are connecting downtown to Joe Mack, creating A-State connection, expanding trail connections to Craighead Forest, and fast tracking construction of University Heights trail link. We feel that these can be completed in a three-year window, thus the \$5 million revenue bond appropriation. The connectivity advisory committee is reviewing and researching routes for a specific consideration by Council on numerous undeveloped portions of the connectivity plan. Additional connections will be funded out of the ARPA and future budgeting cycles.

Now, Council, let's move on to the next column. This is the ARPA column, the American Rescue Plan Act allocations. As of October 31st, the city of Jonesboro has roughly \$8 million in available ARPA funding through 2024. So far, these funds have been used primarily for quality of place and public safety investments. Staying with that mindset, the administration is proposing the balance be appropriated in the following categories. Land Bank funding for development incentives, \$500,000. In recent years, the Land Bank has increased activity considerably and has proved to be a valuable asset for protecting sensitive properties. This proposal would allow more than a robust line item budget and Council would then approve individual appropriations instead of repeated budget amendments for each transaction. Pedestrian, street, trail, and sidewalk projects, \$4.5 million. Similar to the appropriations described in the revenue bond, ARPA funding pedestrian improvements will focus on pedestrian safety. Funding would be intended primarily for crosswalk pedestrian improvements that would include full trail and sidewalk projects, shared youth paths, and street projects with a notable pedestrian benefit. Item number three, indoor turf facility, Lacy Park, multiple funding streams, \$2.5 million from ARPA and \$1.5 million from reserves. Interest in soccer and youth football leagues as consistently increased over the years, creating a need for more investments in our facilities. A regulation size indoor turf would allow for numerous competitive sports to continue even during inclement weather. Additionally,

the facility would host a number of events that would require a large open floor plan. This plan proposes setting \$4 million aside for a specific capital improvement fund to go toward an indoor complex. Based on current estimates, this estimate would provide a little over half of what the facility cost would be and should help position the city to see grants and private donations to complete the funding for construction. This would be the first piece of building out the Lacy Park property near the soccer and football fields. The next piece is the humanitarian support of \$500,000. In addition to community development block grant fundings, ADFA allocations and pass-through grants, Administration proposes that Council place \$500,000 of Rescue Act funding in a restricted account solely for humanitarian support. Individual withdraws from restricted accounts would follow city purchasing and procurement processes, and any allocations above \$35,000 would require a contractual agreement or a subject to Council approvals and should stand on their own merit as a benefit to the intended protections. Funding could be used for support programs that focus on emergency relief, 501(c)(3) programs, facility construction, humanitarian focused grant matches, and partnerships with other government entities toward humanitarian support.

Next, Council, we will move on to item number three, and that is reserved appropriations. Jonesboro ordinances require that the city keep two months of emergency reserves. Reserved funding is also available for specific city infrastructure and personnel investments. Reserve funds are also used for matches to federal grants and ARDOT projects. Total reserves held by the city are \$33.2 million, of which \$9.6 million are required by ordinance. The required amount will increase as more projects are completed. In addition to projects, it is important to consider that in the next three to five years, the city will likely be asked to participate in multiple highway projects. We will also need a new fire station after ISO reviews us in 2025, and to purchase or construct a new JPD facility in the future. This capital improvement plan proposes \$5 million in non-required reserved funding toward multiple quality of place in recreational projects. The first project is East Jonesboro park facility, \$2.2 million in reserves, \$750,000 in the 2025 budget allocation, and an additional grant funding requested, which we have ongoing at this current time. For more than a year now, the city has been in discussions about a park behind the Journey and Cornerstone Church facilities near Baptist Hospital. Earlier this year, the city applied for another outdoor recreation grant that will provide an additional \$1 million if the application is successful; and I will say on top of that, in a year and a half ago, the ladies of Junior Auxiliary committed \$100,000 dollars toward this project. After discussions with park staff, \$3 million will fund significant improvements on the current raw undeveloped property. The plan under review would create roughly a 25 acre space that is sorely needed in East Jonesboro. This area has a good blend of open space and forest, and it will be an excellent foundation of a premier park. Long term plans for the park include a community center similar to others in the city. Plans and cost estimates for a community center have not been commissioned and likely will need to be addressed in separate allocation when that time comes.

Forum renovations, \$250,000. The proposed capital improvement plan seeks to invest in renovating existing city facilities. Over the last three years, more than a million dollars, including this \$250,000 of city funding has greatly improved the functionality and stability of the Forum Theater. Discussions with the city facilities management and the Foundation of Arts have identified the need for seat upgrades, audio equipment improvements and balcony space renovations.

Soft surface trails. This will be Phase Two. In 2022, the city partnered with Jonesboro Unlimited to create a soft surface trails master plan for Craighead Forest. The plan consisted of multiple phases and has received funding from outside entities.

Construction on this system started last spring, and Phase One will be complete later this fall. While primarily intending for mountain bikes and trails, they have proven to be enjoyed by walkers and joggers as well. The one million requested for soft trail funding will complete the network proposed by the International Mountain Biking Association to provide funding for further soft trail development in the city. If funding exceeds the final cost of Phase Two, then it would remain in the restricted fund for future soft trail developments.

Now, Council, we will move on to capital improvements and budgets, 24, 25 and 26. The fourth and final funding stream consists of a road map for budget allocations over the next three years. Endorsement by City Council for these items would be a part of the regular budgeting process. These consist of projects that will take multiple years to complete, our generalized areas of commitment, and will fund yet unidentified specific projects. As part of a multi-year planning process, Administration is projecting the total capital improvement dollars available from annual revenue streams must account for recent commitments of increased personnel for uniformed and non-uniformed employees, decreases in revenues from franchise fees and decreases in interest that would have been earned by the allocation of city reserves. Resources placed in a restricted fund will continue to generate interest until completing the purchasing process.

Increased street overlay funding, \$2 million in each of 2024, 25 and 26 budget cycles. Prior to '22 the city spent an average of \$500,000 a year on street overlay in refinishing projects. In the last two budgets, Administration and City Council have increased street infrastructure significantly. In '23 street project investments were up more than 400% resulting in better roads for residents, businesses and visitors. The proposed capital improvement plan seeks to continue the same high level of emphasis toward the city's large network. Recent studies commissioned by the city created a systematic order of priority via technology based graded system. These studies will be used to determine which streets are addressed with priority. I expect a new study will be commissioned in two to three years with updated road grades and information.

Implementation of the master parks plan, \$3.5 million in 2024 and 2025. We have \$1.5 million in '24 and \$2 million in '25. As mentioned earlier in tonight's meeting, we are coming together with the finality of a parks plan; and we need, again, how many times have we always heard 'we have plans and we never implement these plans?' Well, this is what this is doing. So this will provide immediate funding capability for the master parks plan, and we can prioritize the projects that they seem that is necessary. Earlier this year, the city contracted with Halff & Associates to create the master parks plan to help provide a roadmap to important quality of place improvements. It is fully anticipated that implementation cost will be significant and take several years to fulfill. While the final plan has yet to be presented, Administration is proposing we prepare and set aside funding for projects, staffing, and equipment recommendations. It is important to note that items funded as a part of this process will follow normal city budgeting and purchasing guidelines. An extension of our master parks plan is placing a priority on improving current facilities. It is evident that the city needs to put our parks and playgrounds on what resembles a depreciation schedule. While Jonesboro parks are among the best in Northeast Arkansas, they do need to be periodically updated. This plan proposes that each year, the city will set aside funds to help reimagine a park space, much like rotating fleet equipment. Parks need to be in a state of reliability and modernization to ensure they remain safe, fresh, modern and compliant with ADA advancements. This will ensure that all children have wonderful opportunities for recreation in Jonesboro. Full implementation of the master parks plan will be a long-term process included in the annual budget discussions and planning.

Now we come to another part, fire department investments, \$1.5 million annual increase. During research of capital improvement projects, many discussions and planning sessions were held with JFD leadership regarding ISO equipment and facility needs. In the most recent ISO review, the largest concern noted was total firefighters on the scene of a structure fire, not the response time. To directly assist this, Chief Hamrick advised the city to create 12 new firefighter positions across ladder companies in the city. This would increase on the scene responders by as much as 25% in help, ensure that staff remains fully operational and effective in the event of injury, illness or vacation. In addition to the increased firefighter head count, the city will decline to trade in a new engine during their purchase process of new firefighter's apparatuses. This will allow for a second engine company to operate in the event of a large-scale emergency. There is little doubt that when ISO returns for the next review in 2025, the new fire station will be recommended. While fire leadership knows general areas with a growing need, their recommendation is to wait for exact guidance to the most beneficial site. The additional positions created will have more than a year of experience at that time and will create a seamless staffing transition. The staffing investments detailed in this proposal along with planned salary increases for the existing JFD personnel will total about \$1.5 million annually. And I do want to say, Chief Hamrick, we've spent a lot of time together in going over this, and I appreciate his input in this and the firefighters' willingness to see this through. Their recommendations, I believe, are very solid, and their number one interest to the citizens of our community.

Police facility and operations planning. In 2023, noted investments in police salaries and recent facility acquisitions. The city must plan for relocation of operations currently housed in the justice complex in the old city hall building. Both structures are in need of significant repairs. At a minimum, many of these structural challenges facing both facilities merit either a full rebuild or a full relocation. As a result, City Administration has commissioned a facilities review for a new patrol division facility. This study will include a long-term needs of a new facility and provide location guidance. Conversations are in process on multiple properties. Once a location is identified and a fair price negotiated, Council will be presented with a proposal for consideration.

In closing, I look forward to further discussions with you in the coming weeks; and I want to thank all of our city administrators, directors, and staff members who spend untold hours researching, studying, and seeking ways to find the best for Jonesboro while being responsible stewards of our taxpayer dollars. Thank you so much for your time this evening, Council.

[COM-23:056](#)

2022 LEGISLATIVE AUDIT REPORT FOR THE CITY OF JONESBORO, AR

Attachments: [Legislative Audit 2022 - City of Jonesboro](#)

Filed

[COM-23:058](#)

PRESENTED PROJECT SPREADSHEET (HANDED OUT TO COUNCIL AT 11/7/2023 MEETING)

Attachments: [Presented Project Spreadsheet](#)

Filed

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, just a housekeeping item. It has come to our attention that Options on Main has found a new option for their permanent facility. So, I would like to table ORD-23:036 indefinitely. Councilmember Chris Moore seconded the motion. All voted aye.

[ORD-23:036](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-2 TO C-2, LUO FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 312 E. NETTLETON AVENUE AS REQUESTED BY GARRETT DUNNAM WITH FISHER ARNOLD ON BEHALF OF OPTIONS

Attachments: [Cover Letter - Rezoning](#)
[Rezoning Appeal Letter](#)
[312 E Nettleton Rezoning Application signed](#)
[312 E Rezoning Plat](#)
[Staff Summary - C.C.](#)
[Staff Summary](#)
[Rezoning Property Owner Notification Letter 9.7.2023](#)
[Rezoning Property Owner Notification](#)
[312 E Certified Mail Receipts](#)
[312 E Resolution for Publication](#)
[312 E Nettleton Rezoning Ordinance](#)
[Receipt](#)
[Citizen Emails regarding 312 E Nettleton](#)
[Nichols email 10172023](#)

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

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

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Rennell Woods, 3926 Brandywine Drive, said, thank you Mayor and Council. I had to turn around. I was going home, but my son gave me the wrong time, but just to come back and say thank you. I missed, I think maybe the last council meeting. The new pool that you guys invested in over in north Jonesboro. Sometimes, you can easily turn your head, man and I know sometimes its not tough decisions to invest in communities where maybe it is seen as not beneficial, but when you as an individual and you see the whole totality of everything. I was out one time with Mr. Danny at the Park at the Y. It was so crowded, he had to come home from whatever he was doing and I just happened to be there, but you guys are causing relief when you are doing these things. And, Councilman Moore and Councilman Coleman, thank you so much. I know it's your ward and I know sometimes its tough to get things through anywhere. But, I know you guys work as a team, but I want to say thank you. I don't know how much more development in that area, but I can see a great development continuing in that area and it causes a lot of relief, pressure, and stress for our city that we can really enjoy and be able to continue to develop our quality of life. Thank you all. God

Bless you. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments.

Patrice Oliver, 430 North Allis, said, I have never been here before so I didn't know what to say. I have a lady that stays next door. I pressed charges on her and they told me to come in and talk to the city counselor being about her cameras and how she sets alarms like every time I come out my home. What am I supposed to do about this? Mayor Copenhaver said, we have got an officer right there, Chief Elliott and so after the meeting is over, then you two can visit on that. Ms. Oliver said, okay, thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for coming forward ma'am.

Beverly Parker, 3803 Sawgrass, said, thank you so much and thank you Kathleen. I also want to mention my fellow commissioners who are here, Shelly Lamb, back there, Kim Alexander, and many others who have helped me along the way. I also want to mention Parks. They didn't get mentioned early on and they have been incredible in their amount of help that has gone into this collaborative effort and that is what has made it work so well is the collaborative effort. So, I can't pass up an opportunity to mention a few things that are upcoming. I want to mention, I think all of the Council knows, speaking to the public, we are still moving from plastic lawn bags to paper lawn bags. That is not only going to decrease our plastic use, but also help sanitation in terms of its processes. Those paper bags can go directly into the incinerator. I also think that we are getting new welcome signs. We have been talking about that for quite some time. I see some smoke signals about that. So, I just want to mention that I hope that these can be added quickly at the plants and the other things that can really accentuate these welcome signs can be added and we will be happy to work on that with the city or whoever is responsible. November 15th is the American's Recycles Day and we will be having some information out to the public about that. But, I want to mention the fact of reduce, reuse, recycle. Recycling helps prevent unnecessary items from going to the landfill. It gives new life to things that can be reused. Particularly I want to reach out to people and say remember aluminum. Aluminum is the thing that can most easily be recaptured and can probably be, maybe within even a month, put back into use. So, please, if you are not recycling, I would like to ask the public to please consider during this celebration to call the city's office and get you a blue can. I also want to mention litter. The Mayor is really working hard to decrease our litter. I talk a lot about preventing litter and I want to mention what I think is maybe a mistaken thought about litter. I think everybody thinks it is coming from people pushing it out the car window. I'm not saying it doesn't come from there. But, as Pogo (the cartoon) said, we have met the enemy and it is us. Really, litter comes from our household habits, the way we put out our trash. Our recycling, make sure our lid is down; our dumpsters, make sure are covered; trailers and other things that haul various materials need to be covered. I want to make this point. I don't see a lot of people pushing boxes out of their car window, right. Has anybody seen that? I have not. But, you look around and you see a whole lot of boxes on the side of the road. So, that tells me that this litter is not coming from people throwing it out the window. So, I just want to ask everyone to be very careful with their trash. Help your neighborhood. Take it upon yourself to do one more thing to help our city look better. And, if we all did that daily, we could have a cleaner and more beautiful city. And, again, thank you for the recognition. I really appreciate that on behalf of the commission. Thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you Ms. Parker. And, thank you for the commission for being here in support as well. I will have to say that this past weekend, my grandson and I did use paper bags and they were much easier to fill than plastic bags. So, they worked very well. So, everybody needs to try them.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

_____ **Date:** _____

Harold Copenhaver, Mayor

Attest:

_____ **Date:** _____

April Leggett, City Clerk