



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Public Services Council Committee

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

4:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL (ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE) CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

Present 7 - Chris Gibson; Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[MIN-23:083](#) Minutes for the Public Services Committee Meeting on August 15, 2023

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

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

Aye: 5 - Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

Absent: 1 - Joe Hafner

4. NEW BUSINESS

5. PENDING ITEMS

6. OTHER BUSINESS

[COM-23:044](#) MONTHLY JETS UPDATE

Sponsors: JETS

JETS Director Michael Black approached the podium and said, good afternoon. So far, this year, year-to-date numbers, ridership is 57,560. This time last year was 54,601. We are still tracking about a 5.5% increase over last year. Our student youth program, we finished out at 589 trips. So that is pretty good. That is better than it has been in quite some time. That is pre-pandemic. The Red Wolf Express, the Memphis game turned out a lot of people. We logged 298 trips. Sixteen of those trips were Memphis fans. Chairman Chris Gibson said, how does that compare to our ridership in the past for those same? Mr. Black said, for Memphis games, it is about average. And of course, a lot of our ridership numbers depends, if you remember in years past, they have thrown Tuesday night games in on us and Thursday night games in on us. The

ridership on those games was very low. The most we have ever had in the history of the program was when Mizzou came up, and we had 406 trips for the Mizzou game. The Miami game, we looked for huge numbers with it, but the hurricane shut everything down and the game was canceled. But for Stony Brook last week, we had 166. This week, I look for about the same, of course a lot of it is going to depend on weather. They are calling now for 50% chance of rain on Saturday evening, so we will just kind of play that by ear. I've got three that has completed our entry level driver training and waiting to test through the state. I've got three that are still in training; and I did just put in the cue today a licensed driver that we have interviewed a couple of times. And we are going to try and bring him on board. Thank you.

Filed

[COM-23:045](#)

MONTHLY PARKS AND RECREATION UPDATE

Sponsors: Parks & Recreation

Chairman Chris Gibson said, Danny, are you ready with your PowerPoint?

Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales approached the podium and said, Chris and I talked yesterday and he informed me that he would like to have a verbal report today. Is that correct? Yes, and so basically, I've got a busy week and that is why we were kind of joking about that. I have a conference that I am hosting that starts first thing in the morning. Actually, it has been going on, getting prepped for it for quite a while; and once we are done with Council tonight, I am heading over to the Embassy to start getting everything in place and set up and ready for folks to come in. We are doing a bus tour tomorrow. We've got a golf tournament at Ridgepointe. We've got folks going out to the shooting range. Then at the end of all that tomorrow evening, I am going to have all the folks. ASU is going to let us use the tower, and everybody is going to go be in there for a dinner. And the team has set up a practice for us, so they are actually going to have their Wednesday night practice on the field while we are having dinner in the tower, so it is a really cool event for folks coming from all parts of Arkansas that is part of the Municipal Parks System, state parks, and Arkansas Game and Fish to be able to come in and actually be part of what the Red Wolves are trying to do there on campus. Then from there, we start the actual conference the next day with keynote speakers and classes and award ceremonies that will basically start first thing seven o'clock in the morning and finish about midnight Thursday night and so on on Friday. But there is a busy week ahead of me, and I am ready to get started with it.

But as far as a report with what we've got, September is always a busy month for us, whether it be Local Fest that we've had. I don't know if you all had a chance to make it down to Local Fest and see the activity and all the performances, but it was a really good weekend. Lucas Clonts that actually runs that program is a great director. I think he does a wonderful job bringing in talent and getting folks out there, putting on the event, getting us schedules and staying on top of it. And as you all know, we have got Barbecue Fest coming up weekend after next, so another great event ran by a couple of good guys who has done it for quite a while, and so I am expecting to have another good weekend and have downtown filled up. I was down there for Local Fest all through basically Friday night and Saturday. Then I went back on Sunday after church and had lunch just to see the event, but also on Sunday I made runs around with some of the local businesses and talked to folks. From what I got from them, they enjoyed it. They said they saw folks that they hadn't seen. They had foot traffic that they hadn't seen, so that is exactly what those events are for, an economic generator for us. And that is what that activity was. It brought people to downtown that normally wasn't downtown.

This past weekend, we had our Harvest Cup Soccer Tournament. It wasn't really large, but it was 34 teams from Arkansas, Tennessee, and Missouri for Saturday and Sunday. The park was great for it, and just a busy weekend. We started our tackle football program, and something we've done a little bit different with that program is we have divided our, in the tackle program, our third and fourth graders are playing at Joe Mack on the smaller fields; and our fifth and sixth graders are playing at the local schools. Jonesboro and Nettleton are working with us on that. So they are playing their games there on those sites; and that way they get a chance to start playing with a little bit larger field and getting prepared for moving up in seventh grade. Then currently we are working on the flag football, which I know we've got some more conversations there to get in place; but we've got some teams and coaches. We are still trying to get everybody sorted and taken care of. Softball, I don't know if you all have heard, but I'm in the point right now we are trying to find a softball coordinator. Karla has moved on, taking a coaching and teaching job in Oklahoma and will be moving there, so we are currently in the hunt for a new softball coordinator to help continue to move that program forward.

As far as facilities, the restroom and concession out at Joe Mack is almost complete. We are down to just a few items that are on backorder that unfortunately is going to keep us on hold. I believe some of that stuff is November, early December before we get all of it here. Hopefully it will come early, but that is kind of where we are is we are waiting for it to get here. The trails out at Craighead Forest, the group that is working on those are supposed to be here first of November to start back on the trails. They are basically waiting for the temperature to drop a little bit, the leaves to start falling off and I guess for it to feel more like Minnesota weather before they start back here working on the trail system. I know we had some damage on those trails from the rain, some of the washouts, and our crew has gotten out there, filled in some of the heavier ruts and packed it down. But we are trying to be cautious on filling a lot of those in until they get here and see some of the damage, so that they can make some of the adjustments. What we want is for them to see where the water is washing, so if there is something that needs to be done, whether a drain gets put in or something of that sort to make that fix, we want that to happen now while they are here, not something we have to call them back for later on.

But, yeah, we just continue to move forward with our facilities. I know the YMCA building, the old YMCA building, which is now the Jonesboro Youth Center known as the Y is now open. We've got people coming in using it every day. We've got renters that are calling to rent, not only basketball, but also turf facilities. So it is up and operational. Then we also have a swim meet on this weekend. Really, if you look at it, it is kind of late in history for us for a swim meet, but hopefully it's just kind of that start moving forward with people understanding that we can have swim meets later in the fall because, not only having a heater in the pool, but the weather being nice enough to actually have a swim meet right now. To me, I think it is about perfect weather to have a swim meet and to have swimmers in the water.

Chairman Chris Gibson said, I was out at that facility last Friday, and the fire alarms went off. Do we know what caused that issue? Mr. Kapales said, yes, so not only there, but we are having some of the same issues at our cemetery building. And for me to say, do I know, I don't understand the fire alarms, so I wish I could answer that, but we are calling out the service and they are working on them. I do believe that the Y facility is taken care of. They are still working on the cemetery facility, trying to find out where that connection, something with that connection gets interrupted and then the alarm goes off. So currently like with the cemetery, I am getting three calls a day.

There is no fire and no alarm, but they are just letting me know that some test has went off. And those calls are happening midday, they happen in the afternoon, and they happen about three o'clock in the morning. So I am really wanting to get it taken care of pretty soon. Chairman Chris Gibson said, I just know that there were about 30 or 35 kids out there playing basketball last weekend. I am glad to see them out there, but it was disrupted, so just curious. Anything else for Parks?

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, question, Chairman. Thanks for the report, and glad that things are going well. Thank you. What about the trail coordinator? Have we found anyone? Mr. Kapales said, yes, I can speak on that. Craig, would you like to speak on that? Do you want me to? Yes, so Ryan Parsons seems to be a really good kid, sharp kid. He does work in Craig's office, so he is actually working under Craig's guidance and working with me, right beside me on everything that we are moving forward with. And I know we say trail coordinator, but he works on quite a few of the park activities that we have. It's not just trails. Yes, it is great to say that we have a trail coordinator, but it is also helping us with whether it's going to be a park design, a dog park design or whatever it is. It's having somebody that is going to have that ultra-focus on parks so that we have somebody with that experience that we are not having to constantly hire out to get those designs done. I would say that he has been extremely busy with his first two months.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, if I may, Mr. Chairman, this is a follow up on that. My understanding is that he doesn't have a whole lot of experience in this type of position. I sent the mayor an email about this, and I don't know if this is more for Craig since he is his supervisor; but are there some plans to have him spend time, like going to any seminars or going to Northwest Arkansas and spending time with people who have done this for a while so he gets that experience and knows what to look for? Mr. Kapales said, I'm not sure if he is coming to this conference. I hope so, because I asked him to look through it since I have trail coordinators going to be here this week. That would be a great association for him. And I know that we use the term trail coordinator kind of like we use the term pocket parks. Sometimes it's just kind of a cover for just the overall of what we think is our achievement; but when it comes to trail coordinators, it's a hodgepodge when you look across the state. A lot of these places that we think have a great trail system, and you find their trail coordinator and it's a part time position. It's a part time employee that is dealing with that position; and they actually aren't doing what we think they are doing. It's a community effort. It's not that one person that is handling it and managing. A trail system is multi-faceted. It's between engineering. It's between the trail coordinator. It's between the parks director. It's between the council. It's between the mayor. It's between the committees that we put in place. We all have to be working for a true plan moving forward, and we all have to have the information in front of us as we are going to move forward. And the next step is, and you brought up a great point the other day, is we can spend the money and have the trails, but if we are not maintaining them, and we have people in place to maintain them, we are not doing what we need to. So as we move forward creating these trails, one of the big pieces that we have to look at that all these other cities are doing is they actually have a trail department. They have somebody that actually leads a crew that maintains these trails, that's keeping these trails clean, keeping these trails cut. And they know when asphalt needs to be repaired, when a trail needs to be updated. Right now, we do a lot of this stuff with our part-time crew or with a supervisor that is actually handling cemeteries and handling all the urban parks. He is also overseeing what currently is out trail system. So, as we do with a lot of things, we're taking somebody and spreading them really thin.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, well, I will say this, and I guess I am just speaking

for myself, but I think trying to establish a better trail system, especially when we have ASU to downtown that has been going on six years now. We have University Heights and hopefully we will have a few others going on. I understand he may be working on some other things, but his focus needs to be on the trail system as much as it can be. I mean, I don't want it to get to where he is working on this other stuff and he hadn't looked at trails in a month or two. I know people get spread thin, but that position was created for the trails and it needs to focus on the trails. Not saying that it can't have some other duties, but it needs to be on getting the trail system done that has been approved. Mr. Kapales said, I agree.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman, a question for Danny. Are we getting some applicants for the softball coordinator position with the salary that we are paying? Mr. Kapales said, we do. We do have some applicants. I have not unfortunately had a chance to go through those applicants with what is going on this week. The goal is to start going through those next week, and see if we can narrow it down to a few folks. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, when does softball season begin? Mr. Kapales said, we are in the midst of it, so we are handling softball right now. Fortunately, Karla left us in a good spot. Even though she left before the season started, she did help get the teams put together and the schedules and everything else before she left. So now we are just handling the day to day activities.

Chairman Chris Gibson said, just one more comment and then we will try to wrap this up, I think. And I know that you and I already talked about this, but I want to say it publicly. The last time we had a baseball tournament at Joe Mack, I had a colleague or an acquaintance that was bring the team in; and I asked him about the fields and how he liked playing out here. He said his one criticism was that when they travel anywhere else, they've got somebody staying on top of trash. He said when they come to Jonesboro, trash is usually overflowing and the park goes from looking very nice to very not nice. So let's just kind of keep that in mind moving forward, not only there but at Southside as well and at our other events please. Mr. Kapales said, I appreciate that; and to speak of, we probably have one of our biggest baseball tournaments that will happen for this year coming up the same weekend of Barbecue Fest.

Filed

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

8. ADJOURNMENT

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

Aye: 6 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter