



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

5:30 PM

Municipal Center

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

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

3. ROLL CALL BY CITY CLERK DONNA JACKSON

Mayor Harold Perrin was in attendance.

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

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

[COM-20:012](#)

QUARTERLY UPDATE PRESENTATION FROM MARK YOUNG, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE JONESBORO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Attachments: [M Young](#)

Mark Young, President and CEO of the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce, said, thank you Mayor. I appreciate the opportunity to be with you today. I look forward to the opportunity to be there in person with everyone in the near future. Zoom works, but I like to be together and I know you do too. First of all, I want to thank you for your continued support of economic development. You all know that over the years, the city has provided financial support to growing our economy in Jonesboro. And, those companies that have located here, created jobs here, continue to thrive and be prosperous today because of all of the investments that you all have made over the years. So, thank you for your commitment to growing our economy and to improving economic development in Jonesboro.

I wanted to briefly talk tonight about this past quarter's activity. And, then, if it is ok with you as well, while I cover that information, I will also cover information in regards to COVID-19 and our response to businesses and their needs and then also related to the tornado relief as well. So, first, we will start with just the activity of this first quarter. I will remind you guys and you know this, projects that we work on, that we start working on today often don't come to fruition for a year or two or three years or even longer. So, this is a long term project. But, this quarter, we have had significant activity. So, for the first quarter, you can see the number of industrial inquiries that we have had, prospect visits, market research requests, and business retention and expansion. I will talk briefly about each of these. The inquiries are manufacturing

inquiries. We continue to market the community. We continue to move that forward and have great conversations. What is interesting and you will see this in our next report, next quarter, we have actually in April, and I was extremely surprised by this, we have had more inquiries in April than we have had in this last quarter which I would not have anticipated. And, so, I think there is some pent up demand moving forward which is good. Prospect visits, we have and continue to talk to folks. Obviously, travel has been all but stopped now. And, so, what we find ourselves doing is that we are working differently than we were before. But, for the first quarter, we had one prospect visit. What we are doing now is we are having many of these same kind of meetings through zoom. We also have the capability of shooting drone video. So, instead of that individual coming to our community and maybe seeing the industrial park and the community first hand, we are able to shoot video and share that with them. That, currently, is the next best thing for us to be able to do. So, we have tried to improvise and deal with that situation in a positive way. The market research requests typically are retail projects. So, we continue to see a significant amount of activity there. And, then obviously, especially in March, we have had a significant amount of business retention and expansion. We still work with several of our companies who are in the process of expanding now and continue to work with them. Obviously, since COVID-19 happened, we are dealing a lot with retention as well and hoping and helping those companies continue to be in operation.

So, we will move on to the next slide. So, a couple of pictures of a couple of projects that I mentioned previously. Delta Peanut, you will see at the top right-hand corner, continues to make progress. If you have not been out to the industrial park in the last month or so, I would encourage you to drive by. As you know, their storage facilities have been completed and they have stored peanuts on site, but their shelling plant continues to make progress. They should be complete with this project this summer and shelling product this fall. And, so, we are looking forward to that. And, again, they have made incredible progress. Often, the weather has not cooperated, but they continue to do extremely well. On the bottom of the screen, you will note that Ritter Communications, their data center continues to make progress. And, again, if you have not had a chance to drive by there, I would encourage you to do that. It is important for our community, all of the different services that they will be able to provide helps our existing companies and our community in a significant way. But, in addition to that, it will help us with our recruitment efforts for IT companies and help our local IT companies continue to grow and expand. And, so, we are excited about the progress that the two of those companies have continued to make and there are others as well. Also, I will mention that in February, we hosted a site consultant in our community. This is someone who actually does a lot of food processing projects. And, so, he had not been to Jonesboro before, so we wanted him to know a little bit more about the community and so, we worked with him in February and he was extremely impressed with the infrastructure that is in place, both at the industrial park, as well as, the utilities because those are key to those food processing types of projects. So, that was a positive for us as well. I also want to mention a couple of infrastructure projects that are important to the industrial park and the city has done a great job with these. I want to credit Craig Light and the Mayor for this. But, we continue to work on two rail projects in the industrial park or one is nearby the industrial park and the other is in the industrial park. One is to continue to make plans to construct a rail storage facility. As you all know, Burlington Northern Santa Fe's rail yard downtown has some limitations to it. So, by having this rail storage, off-site, if you will, this is going to enable us to provide access and space to other rail users in the future. And, as our existing companies continue to need rail that is really going to help them grow and expand as well. So, that is an important project. The city received, as you are aware, \$2.3 million and some additional funds are being sought as well to assist with that. In

addition to that, the termination point for our current rail that the city owns will be moved in the near future from just east of Risever or along Barnhill Road to south of there across C.W. Post Road and then go to Delta Peanut and then go further south. Again, this opens up additional property long-term for additional growth. There is 150 acres south of Delta Peanut. It is important that it has access too so that is in the process of happening as well. So, we are pleased with those projects and are excited about that.

In light of COVID-19 and the tornado, I think it is important too to recognize the impact that those two items have had on our economy from an unemployment standpoint. Our Metropolitan Statistical Area, our unemployment grew from 2.8% to 3.9% in March. And, as you guys know, really we had an impact of about two weeks in March, so our April numbers will challenge us as well. This is across the country. And, I think the good news is if you look at the numbers and the statistics, we actually have more people working in March of this year than we had in March of last year. So, the jobs that have been created along the way over the last twelve months have had a positive impact. Having said that, it is obviously important long-term for all of our folks to have the opportunity to get back to work. And, again, as you have seen, these issues have affected many of our companies in different ways. We have so many essential services and essential companies that are providing product, not just to our community, but to the world and I cannot give them enough credit. They have done a phenomenal job of continuing to operate in a safe manner. We had an opportunity to have a round-table discussion with eight plant managers in late March. And, I was very pleased they allowed us to capture their best practices and share with all of our other manufacturers. So, as people continue to make plans to deal with, quite frankly with a lot of this being unknown at the time, it was extremely helpful. We revisited with that group again in late April and again, some of their projects and their programs have changed and so we sent that out to all of our existing companies as well. So, I have been really thankful and grateful that our companies have been so responsive to each other, to their employees, but also to their neighbors as well. I think that is a great indication of the kinds of companies we have in our community and I am very proud of that. So, as we move into the numbers for April, we will probably receive those at the very end of May, normally around May 22nd-May 25th is when we will get that information. So, we will be sharing that with you guys as well. But, again, we continue to work with all of our companies to try to help them get folks back to work.

So, we will Segway into discussion of COVID-19 and a couple of things that we have done and continue to do. And, then, the tornado relief resources as well. I am going to start with the tornado relief. Early on, right after the tornado hit, obviously, we had many businesses that were impacted. I want to give a shout out to Donna Holt. She did an incredible job trying to document the number of businesses that were impacted by the tornado. By our estimate, it was 109, that includes all of the businesses in the mall. That does not count all of the private planes that were in the airport, but a significant number of businesses were greatly impacted. And, we went to work to try and contact each and every one of those in a variety of ways. Communication was difficult at times, but whether that was through phone calls, texts, emails, Facebook posts, etc. to try to make sure that those businesses had what they needed at the time initially. And, then to assist them long-term. The other thing that happened early on and the Mayor is well aware of this, there were some unscrupulous businesses that descended upon Jonesboro to claim to provide help to some of our residents and businesses. And, so, we were asked to put together a list of local contractors, etc. So, we linked the NEA Homebuilders Association directory along with all of the folks that are members of the Chamber and the different capacities that they had as a way for local people to find numbers and contact information for people who might be able to

help them. I think the processes that were put in place by the city as well helped significantly deter some of that challenging times in terms of having some folks that came in that might not have been, not have Jonesboro's best interest at heart. I think the process the city put in place was great and I appreciate all of your work as city council and the Mayor's work as well. So, we continue to work with those companies impacted by the tornado. As you guys know, FEMA did their work with their assessment. They have since sent that information to the governor. The governor has made a request for Jonesboro to be declared a disaster area and we are waiting on final approval of that. One of the reasons that is important is that if that is approved at the federal level, the SBA typically will come in and open a field office to provide support and resources for those businesses that were impacted. We have been in constant communication with the SBA in Arkansas and the public information officer that has been assigned to us. So, they are waiting on that final approval if you will and after that, hopefully, then they will be able to be in our community and helping the companies that need it quite frankly the most.

So, with that I will talk a little bit about the COVID-19 as well and some of the things that we are doing and some of the things that we will continue to do. As you all know, there has been just a tremendous wave of information and it seems like often it changes by the hour. So, part of what we have attempted to do is to communicate on a regular basis with our businesses in the community and surrounding area by providing good information from credible sources whether that is information on best practices on how to operate your business, whether that is information on different programs that are available through the federal and state government. We continue to reach out to all of those companies. We have communicated again in multiple ways to make sure that message is getting out there. Most recently, the Ready for Business Grants that were available today and tomorrow as well, we, again, have tried to help our companies and businesses in our community be prepared to respond to that and apply for that because it can provide some needed resources for them to get up and going as they have to take special measures to open their businesses.

Another thing that we have done that has been helpful, as we put out a series of videos called Compass and the direction you need now. And, again, it is a different way for us to communicate. So, the fifth one will actually be published this week. The first one we highlighted Laura Miller and Robert Bahn to talk about the resources available in our community for small businesses and to answer questions that small businesses had. The second one was a panel of bankers to talk about how small businesses could get prepared to talk to their local lender to apply for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) that the federal government offered through the CARES Act. The third one that we really focused on employment and that whole process. Mike Preston, who is the Secretary of Commerce, was our guest for that particular one. The fourth one was Dr. Shane Speights. We asked him to provide good resources and information for employers again on how to reopen in a safe manner and to keep their employees safe and keep the customers safe. And, then this next one coming up this week is actually the Mayor and the County Judge. They will talk about the initiatives that both the city and the city council have taken on, the next steps we are taking, and answer questions that our business folks might have as well. So, we have been pleased with that project and we have had great feedback from our businesses in terms of how it has helped them. I have to give a lot of credit to our staff. Our folks have been working really hard to make sure that we are doing everything we can to support our local businesses and we will continue to do that. So, I appreciate you guys giving me the opportunity to Segway just a little bit from a traditional quarterly report and to a couple of items that I normally would not cover. But, with that, I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, I have a question Mayor. Hey Mark, I certainly understand that there might be, you might have to be careful on how you answer this one. I wouldn't ask you to say something that was confidential certainly. But, do we have any sense of the direction of where the mall is going? I know there has been some press articles where they haven't had much comment, but is there at least some communication, you know, between you guys and the mall ownership? Mr. Young said, yes. The short answer is yes. You know, I think there has been multiple times that folks have reached out to have conversations with them. I have not heard a definitive direction yet that I can provide. But, obviously, it is important. It is an important part of our economy. Those businesses are important to us. The other thing that I would share and again, I think all of us know this, Jonesboro is a great market. And, for many of those businesses within all of the markets that they operate, they do extremely well in Jonesboro. So, we are looking forward to that to continue to move forward in a positive way. And, as I know more official things, I will be happy to share that with you guys as well.

Councilmember Bobby Long said, hi Mark. How are you doing? Mr. Young said, I am good sir. Councilmember Long said, I know this is a question that has been raised in other council meetings as well and I would just like to get your comments on some of the questions that I have jotted down here as you were speaking. I know a lot of times in economic development, the services that you provide to the businesses are a lot of times intangible. You know, you can't measure like a job saved, you know, or something like that, but there are some questions because later on in economic development, I believe that we have got an ordinance coming up, you know, to where we are going to provide up to \$400,000 or close to it per year into economic development and we are looking at this and I am not as familiar with it as I need to be, but some of the questions that I would have in those categories that you have, you have inquiries, visits, requests, and then business retention and expansion. So, as part of that money that the economic development gets from Jonesboro, close to \$400,000, what percent of that is administrative costs or fixed and variable costs and what percentage actually goes to the services that you provide? Mr. Young said, so, if I understand your question right and I don't want to misspeak on our nomenclature, but about a little over \$200,000 of those funds go directly to support the industrial park, additional land, providing additional infrastructure improvements, drainage, etc. The rest of those funds go to NEAIDC. They allocate those funds for direct services. So, that remaining goes to services that we and other entities provide. And, to your point Councilmember Long, much of what we do, we market the community. We continue to work with all of our existing industries. I think that is something that is probably not understood and often not talked about, we probably spend about an equal amount of time, if not more time, working with our existing companies to help them. And to your point, whether that is retention of jobs or whether that is helping them to expand, that is an extremely important part of what we do. To work, with to also insure that there is a long-term pipeline of skilled workers to meet the needs, not just today, but three years from now, five years from now. For the kinds of companies that we have here today and the kinds of companies that we hope to have in the future, that is an important part of that process as well. So, all told, you know, to your point, some of that is extremely measurable and often times some of the things that we do that aren't quite frankly measured are extremely important and certainly, working with our existing companies, working on talent attraction, but one of the things that is in some information that I forwarded to you guys is a link to a series of videos that we have done for talent attraction. It is extremely important that we continue to grow our own talent here in our community, but in addition to that, to look for ways to recruit talent to the community as well, especially in certain areas, like engineering and accounting and

IT Services. And so, we have a plan that we are implementing that we continue to do and that is part of that. So, when I come on and give you guys quarterly reports, I often times talk about statistics because those are things that you can look at and measure, whether it is the unemployment rate or the number of jobs that have been created over the last year, etc. But, at the same time, there are lots of other work that goes on behind the scenes as well for sure. I hope that answered your questions. I'll be happy to answer any other questions.

Councilmember Long asked, on the inquiries, the ten inquiries that we received this quarter, how many of those did we actively solicit and how many of those sought us out? Mr. Young said, about six of those ten, we actively solicited. To get into how this sometimes works, sometimes it works this way and sometimes it doesn't, but if a company is looking for a new location or for an additional location whether they are going to spend a million dollars or they are going to spend \$100 million, often times, they contact the state first so the state economic development entity, so in our case, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission. Often times, those companies have geographic considerations to make. Often times, they have other considerations, the type and size of the community, an available building, there are many, many various kinds of aspects that they delve into. In those cases, the state of Arkansas looks and says okay, based on the criteria, here are the three communities, four communities, ten communities, whatever it is that we recommend based on their criteria. And, then, often, as you know, they are not just looking at Arkansas, they are looking in the states that touch us and sometimes even states that go well beyond our touch states. So, we are competing not only with communities in our own state, but most often, quite frankly, we are competing against communities across the U.S. So, again, on this particular occasion, I think six of those were generated by ourselves and four, when you say sought us out, they went to the state of Arkansas, which, in turn, sent us a request for information an RFI which we responded to. Councilmember Long said, I am glad that you are able to do this and not only educate me a little bit more, but hopefully, everyone listening as well. Do we have any idea about how many industries are approached by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission? How many times we were actually put on the list to be looked at versus how many of them we were not? Mr. Young said, off of the top of my head, I don't know that number. I would be happy to try to get that for you. Again, a lot of it is geography. And, I will give you an example of that. Not that long ago, within this last year, we worked a project that we received an RFI, responded to that RFI, by the way, I will mention this and this is more than you guys want to know, but when we receive an RFI, it is not to tell us how great the community is. They are requesting extremely detailed information from us on a wide variety of topics, whether that is real estate, infrastructure, work force, etc. And, so we respond and every one of those are custom built if you will. But, in this particular case, they were looking at communities within a certain geographic region that included multiple states. Ultimately, we were eliminated from that consideration. So, we always go back to those companies or that consultant and we ask what could we have done better? Why were we eliminated, etc.? And, in this particular case, it had to do all with geography. We decided and we did a logistics study and you are too far west. Well, as everybody on the call knows, we can't move our community. So, if we meet their guidelines from a geographic scope that's great, but if for any reason that sometime in that process that scope changes or they have determined that we are too far east or too far west or too far wherever, then in that case, we are eliminated from that search. So, there are a lot of factors that are considered for each of these projects and all of them are different, every single one of them. There is not two ever that have been alike and that is part of what makes it a little bit challenging, but it also makes it fun. Councilmember Long said, well, alright, I appreciate you and the work that you do and thank you for answering the questions and giving others some insight

into you know exactly what you guys do over there. I have just one more question that I had jotted down. When you were talking about business retention and expansion, what are some of the functions that occur when you help a business toward retention of employees? Mr. Young said, so one of the things that we do, I will give you a couple of examples and there is far more than these couple. But, one of the things that we do on a regular basis is we conduct our own wage and benefits survey and those companies that respond to us, then we provide that information back out to them. And, so, from a retention standpoint, I will give you an example. Several years ago we had a company that was having, quite frankly, a little bit of a challenge in terms of their recruitment of qualified staff and when we shared the data with them, they realized that for the types of professionals that they were hiring, they weren't paying where they need to pay. So, in that particular function, we assisted them both with retaining their current workforce, but we also assisted them with expansion because they were able to better understand what they needed to do to be competitive from a wage and benefits standpoint and to also better understand where their workforce and the where the workforce in our community was coming from. It is not just Jonesboro. It is twelve counties that are a part of our labor shed area. And, we helped them, in that particular case, understand how maybe they could be a little more effective in recruiting that talent to their particular company. That is one example. The other example that I would give for both retention and expansion is again some of the state programs that are available through incentives are made for our existing companies specifically. And, often, many of our companies are unaware of those. So, as we have constant dialogue with our companies, we want them to better understand those programs that are in place that can help them whether that is training. So, we have had occasions where companies were using new technology and they needed to revamp and retool, if you will, and to bring on people with some different skill sets. And, we have been able to work with them and other economic development partners in the state and locally to receive funds and to receive training assistance to get their workforce up to speed so that again, they can hang onto those great workers and continue to grow and expand. So, there are lots of different ways that we do that. Those are just two examples. Councilmember Long said, good deal. I appreciate it Mark. Thank you so much. Mr. Young said, yes sir, I appreciate you. Thank you.

Mayor Perrin said, Mark, again, we appreciate all that you do and we want to continue to work with you very much, you and the Chamber, NEAIDC, JDEC, AEDC and all of those that help us not only retain our employees we have here if they want to expand, but also to market our city and try to get new ones to come into Jonesboro. We appreciate that very much. Mr. Young said, I appreciate all of you. I appreciate the support. And, again, anytime you have questions, feel free to let me know. I do appreciate your time today and I appreciate your continuous support. Thank you so much. Mayor Perrin said, thank you.

Read

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

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

[MIN-20:036](#)

MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON APRIL 21, 2020

Attachments: [CC Minutes 04212020](#)

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

[RES-20:049](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO AMEND THE 2020 ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Attachments: [Lease Agreement - 2319 East Matthews Ave 042220 02](#)
[Lack Comments_email for Finance 04282020](#)

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-046-2020

[RES-20:052](#)

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS GRANTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FY 2019 STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT (SAFER)

Attachments: [5 Year Costs for Safer Grant](#)

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-047-2020

[RES-20:053](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE (BJA), AND ACCEPT THE FY 2020 CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING PROGRAM GRANT AND AMEND THE 2020 BUDGET

Attachments: [Award Letter, DOJ Fy20 Coronavirus Supplemental Grant - Police Dept \(Wal](#)
[Budget Summary, DOJ Fy20 Coronavirus Supplemental Grant - Police Dept](#)

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-048-2020

6. NEW BUSINESS

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[RES-20:050](#)

A RESOLUTION FOR THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO APPROVE THE 2020 CDBG ANNUAL ACTION PLAN THAT INCLUDES THE 2020 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROJECTS, ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET

Attachments: [2020 CDBG Action Plan, DRAFT](#)
[2020 CDBG Action Plan FINAL](#)
[Application for FY20 CDBG Action Plan, SF424](#)
[Assurances for FY20 CDBG Action Plan, SF-424-D](#)
[Certifications for FY20 CDBG Action Plan](#)

Mayor Harold Perrin said, before we get a motion on that, I would like to get a motion to postpone until May 19, 2020. Let me explain to you why. After the agenda was put together, we received notice that we are going to receive an additional \$362,524 to add to that \$616,257 based on COVID-19. So, if we could do that, then I am sure that Grants will go back and add other items or put additional funds in some of these areas here. So, if I could get a motion to postpone until May 19, 2020, I think that is our next council meeting.

Councilmember Bobby Long asked, is this RES-20:050 or RES-20:059? Mayor Perrin said, it is RES-20:050 and this is on the CDBG. Actually, what we are doing is approving their action plan for 2020. We did get the first round of \$616,257. However, after this budget was done on Thursday of last week, then Friday, we were notified to the Grants division that HUD has added another \$362,524 to that so we can divide that money up as well. And, that is based on COVID-19. Councilmember Long said, that is good. I just wanted to make sure we had the right resolution. Mayor Perrin said, yes sir.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, that item is non-debatable. The postpone temporary is not debatable so I call for the council to vote. Mayor Perrin said, I love my parliamentarian. I love it. That is wonderful.

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Gene Vance, that this matter be Postponed Temporarily . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

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

[RES-20:051](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, FOR THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE NORTHEAST ARKANSAS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (NEAIDC) FOR FUNDING OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Attachments: [Agreement, 2020, City, NEAIDC](#)
[NEAIDC - City agreement 2020, Executed](#)
[Lack Comments email for Finance 04282020](#)
[Lack email 05052020](#)
[NAIDC Report 1st QTR 2020](#)

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, hey Mayor, I know, I think some of us, at least some of us received an email today. Is that something that needs to be read by somebody? I know that Mrs. Lack asked that it be read. City Attorney Carol Duncan said, I didn't receive it. Mayor Perrin said, I have no problem. The City Attorney would be glad to read it. Do you have it Carol? Ms. Duncan said, I don't have it, no. Mayor Perrin said, I'll give it to her. I think that was an email that was sent to everyone, right, this afternoon, if I am not mistaken, from Patti Lack. Councilmember Hafner said, yes. Mayor Perrin said, we will read that.

City Attorney Carol Duncan read the following email:

Resolution 20:051

For the City of Jonesboro to enter into an agreement with the Northeast Arkansas Industrial Development Commission for funding of Economic Development Services. The attachment reads that the City will make one installment prior to 6/30/2020 for \$167,250 for economic services and \$227,500 for capital improvements. The total being \$394,750!

I know that Mayor Perrin said in the Finance Meeting last week that we've funded this since that 1980's. In reading the email that I received from Mike Downing on April 29, it said that the NEAIDC was created by the city and county in 1968 and the city and county have provided funding since then. I realize that the NEAIDC is one that affiliates with the Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce and Jonesboro Unlimited to perform services of promoting economic and industrial development.

I viewed Mark Young's presentation to the City Council that was on July 18, 2019. The highlights of the presentation are:

- 1. When looking at his presentation, Mr. Young talked about the only new company that had come to Jonesboro and that was Delta Peanut. I read that they are expected or maybe already have started shelling during Spring of this year. Delta Peanut is expected to employ 125 people.*
- 2. Ritter Communication was an existing company here in town and added a Data Storage Center. So I'm not sure what role NEAIDC played with their expansion?*
- 3. Corinth Coca-Cola had continued growth and employs about 100 people. They will do well wherever they go!*
- 4. Risever received revenue bonds. That is one of the purposes of an Arkansas IDC and that they have the ability to issue federal tax-exempt industrial revenue bonds for manufacturing companies. So that is the part of the State of Arkansas IDC vs. NEAIDC. Mr. Young said that they will hire 130 but it will take 3 years to get to that number.*
- 5. The workforce development program is great for the 7th and 8th graders. I know that many of the schools have similar work programs. But with schools stopping after Spring Break, I assume that many students weren't able to have that opportunity from either the school or the NEAIDC.*

I looked to see who is on the Board of the NEADIC. There are 4 committee members and they have been on this board since 2009. When Mr. Young showed the overhead during this council meeting on July 18, I was truly disappointed and thought to myself and I remember many others did as well, and I can't imagine some of you also that during January-June 2019, the NEAIDC had: 15 Inquiries; 4 Prospect Visits; 26 Market Research Requests; 16 Business Retention and Expansion. I didn't hear any number on business commitments. So if you divide 4 into 15 for the percentage of Prospects coming to visit Jonesboro-you get 26.7%, but NO commitment! I don't think that's a passing grade. I just don't feel that we are getting a BANG for all those BUCKS! And that's a lot of BUCKS- \$394,750.

When you look at the state of our country and Jonesboro, people and businesses are in DAY 2 of possibly getting back to the new normal. Several business in Jonesboro

have been destroyed because of the tornado, and it will be up to them of whether they are going to build back or not-without help from the NEAIDC. Many businesses will not be reopening because of not being able to sustain the virus shut down-and that is all over our country, not just Jonesboro. I saw that the unemployment rate for Jonesboro in March was 3.7%. I would imagine that it's higher in April.

I would like to consider postponing the funding for the NEAIDC until the beginning of next year, 2021. And then, evaluate the state of our city and decide whether the program is ready to get funded then or consider another funding another program. As mentioned above the Chamber of Commerce and Jonesboro Unlimited will still be available to operate. All of us need to and especially you, leaders of our community need to focus on getting citizens and businesses back to full swing and learn how to live and survive in the "new normal". There won't be many, if any new businesses that will be coming this year.

I realize that the funding was already in the budget for this year. But sometimes we have to stop and evaluate whether that is the best use of our city's money. Thank you for your time and consideration of holding off the funding for the NEAIDC until January 2021. - Patti Lack

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

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

Enactment No: R-EN-049-2020

ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING

[ORD-20:012](#)

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING BY REFERENCE THE BASE LEVEL ENGINEERING (BLE) STUDIES FOR THE ST. FRANCIS, CACHE AND L'ANGUILLE WATERSHEDS

Attachments: [Cache BLE Report](#)
[Cache Discovery FRR](#)
[L'Anguille BLE Report](#)
[L'Anguille Discovery FRR](#)
[St. Francis BLE Report](#)
[St. Francis Discovery FRR](#)

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 - Ann Williams;Charles Frierson;Chris Moore;John Street;Mitch Johnson;Gene Vance;Chris Gibson;Charles Coleman;Bobby Long;Joe Hafner;David McClain and LJ Bryant

Enactment No: O-EN-019-2020

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

Mayor Harold Perrin reported on the following items:

Mayor Perrin said, I just have a few items. First of all, it was in the paper today, but I do want to say I think you all will join me in congratulating Deputy City Clerk April Leggett who did get her certification, certified city clerk. It takes a long time to get that. And so, hats off to you April for getting that certification. Mrs. Leggett said, thank you very much. I appreciate that.

In building permits, we had \$5,578,682 or 44% in residential building permits and \$6,997,693 or 56% in commercial building permits. So, we had over \$12 million in building permits this last month which I think is great.

Next, I know you all have heard it before, but the Ice House, we do have a confirmed date on that. They should be moving in on May 18, 2020 to get the Ice House demoed.

Also, this is the last week, this Friday, that we are going to do the curbside for all debris. We feel like we have done a great job. My hats off to the Street Department, Sanitation, Code Enforcement and all of those that have been working on this project. They have put in a lot of hours. Once that is done, we will go ahead and do post-closure for the dump area that we had in our old landfill with ADEQ.

Also, in the Street Department, not only are they mowing now and doing some of the repair work, but they also did over 17 miles of striping this last month.

In the Parks area there, in the pool and the ballparks, we are monitoring that when we need to get ready to open that. Obviously, we are working along with the Governor's phase in.

The sales tax, I think, many of you all have received that, but just in case, the first four months on sales tax compared to last year, we were up \$549,635 which is about 4.8%. As compared to budget, we are up to \$553,619 or 4.9% or almost 5%. And, that is exactly what we had put in the budget for growth on the sales tax.

Also, the Census, I do want to remind everyone, if you have not done so, please, everyone needs to be counted. That is a lot of money. I think it is around \$3,700 per head, I believe that is right that would come back to the cities, for the hospitals, the city, the county. We certainly need those funds. So, if you have not done that, please do so.

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember John Street said, Mayor, at the Public Works meeting earlier, we had a motion to walk-on RES-20:054 to tonight's agenda. I so move. Councilmember Chris Gibson seconded the motion. All voted aye.

[RES-20:054](#)

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING FREE UTILITY SERVICES FROM CITY WATER AND LIGHT FOR A POLICE DEPARTMENT FACILITY

Councilmember John Street motion, seconded by Councilmember Chris Gibson, to suspend the rules and walk-on RES-20:054. All voted aye.

Councilmember John Street asked to be recused from voting on RES-20:054 due to the fact that he is on the Board of Directors for CWL.

Councilmember Charles Frierson asked to be recused from voting on RES-20:054 due to the fact that he is legal counsel for CWL.

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

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

Enactment No: R-EN-050-2020

Councilmember John Street said, I will echo what you said and congratulate April. I know that is a heck of an accomplishment that she not only got it from the International, but she got it from the state of Arkansas. So, congratulations April on that hard work. Mrs. Leggett said, thank you.

Councilmember Mitch Johnson said, I would like to congratulate April as well and just thank her for the great job she does for our city. Mrs. Leggett said, thank you.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, I read Arkansas Business today and congratulations to you for building such a good relationship with Lori Tudor that Arkansas Business would feature yall's friendship in the article. Mayor Perrin said, well, thank you. I appreciate that.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I just want to say something real quick. I mentioned this at the Finance meeting the other day, but I think a great job needs to go out to James Bickham and his crew that did operation Full Bellies. For 16 straight days, they used 18 different restaurants. They gave out over 3,500 meals. Nearly \$9,000 was donated by roughly 60 donors. They fed about 400 people in a day. They roughly fed 800 pizzas, 450 steak dinners, 1,800 chicken dishes, 800 burgers and 700 cookies, brownies, and desserts. I know that was a huge thing not only to these restaurants that were able to serve this food and get some business coming in on slow days, but to also to feed a lot of families that had a great meal in an otherwise rough time right now. So, a big thank you to James and his team. Mayor Perrin said, I appreciate that and I did have that down. I talked to Mr. Campbell about trying to do that at the next council meeting, to have a proclamation or some type of recognition and I appreciate you bringing that up.

Councilmember Bobby Long said, I have nothing but congratulations. Mayor Perrin said, thank you.

Councilmember David McClain, I have nothing, but I echo what everybody has said about April. Congrats.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, I have nothing other than saying congratulations. Mayor Perrin said, thank you.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, thank you April, congratulations on your hard work. Mrs. Leggett said, thank you.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, thank you April.

Councilmember Gene Vance said, yes, I will be in trouble if I don't say congratulations to April and you also. Mayor Perrin said, thank you.

Councilmember Charles Frierson said, I congratulate all of us for struggling through this. Mayor Perrin said, thank you.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Deputy City Clerk April Leggett said, I just want to say thank you to everybody who said congratulations. I appreciate that. Mayor Perrin said, you are quite welcome.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

_____ **Date:** _____

Harold Perrin, Mayor

Attest:

_____ **Date:** _____

Donna Jackson, City Clerk