



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Public Services Council Committee

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

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. ELECTION OF A CHAIR

A motion was made by Councilmember Ann Williams, seconded by Councilmember Brian Emison, that Councilmember Chris Gibson be nominated as Chair of the Public Services Committee. All voted aye.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[MIN-24:106](#)

Minutes for the Public Services Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 2024

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

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. PENDING ITEMS

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Chris Gibson said, we're going to go a little bit out of order because Lee is running a little bit late.

[COM-24:064](#)

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM JETS

Sponsors: JETS

Chairman Chris Gibson said, Lee. You're going to have to talk fast brother. You've got five minutes. Jets Department Director Lee Wells approached the podium and said, so, I will make mine real brief. Just to kind of touch back on last year. Last year was

kind of a renewal and upgrade process for us. We had a lot of opportunities that we were able to take advantage of, thanks to you guys for allowing us to do so. By upgrading our fleet and allowing us to be able to get the rolling stock in that is needed for us to be able to operate, just what we're operating, to be able to bring in just some of the new software and things to get us just up to date on where we should be currently. Also, we've done a lot with trying to reach back out to the community. I know our marketing person and also our paratransit person has worked diligently on growing our paratransit program. They've done a lot of work with going out to various communities and really talking about that side of our business that a lot of people don't realize.

This year is going to be all about growth and expansion. We do have, we did recently go to four routes, we are going to five routes here at the beginning of the year. I think we have a date set in February for us to be able to go to that. We're also going to be getting out some new routes with the trolleys. We also have some partnerships that we're looking into, to be able to reach out to some of the groups in the community to find ways to help us and to assist us and providing that next level service for everyone in the community. Again, just really trying to make this year the year of growth and impact for us, and on that side note we did, just as a reference, last year we did increase our revenue by 12% and also our ridership by 19%. And that is compared to the previous year, and that was with us not having full service and not having all the extras that we did running with some of the older fleet, when we were running with those. So, that was a very successful year, and I look forward to being better this year. Chairman Chris Gibson said, trolley fleet looks great. Director Lee Wells said, thank you. Three minutes.

Filed

[COM-24:065](#)

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM PARKS & RECREATION

Sponsors: Parks & Recreation

Parks Department Director Danny Kapales approached the podium and said, good afternoon. All right, so this past quarter has been pretty busy even though it's been... you usually think of parks and rec being a little bit slower during the winter months, we are not. So, I'll just kind of step into this past weekend. First off, I'll start with the Icebreaker tournament. Anybody here notice a lot of young ladies around town over the weekend in restaurants and hotels were full. Well, we had 98 teams over the weekend here in town. From what I'm showing there were 83 teams from out of town. Of those 83 teams from out of town, 43 of those teams were from out of state. And so, with those teams we were utilizing all of our community centers. We were utilizing Jonesboro Schools, Nettleton Schools and the Valley View Schools. While we were utilizing those facilities, we also had to... I don't want to use word hirer but really we had a lot of volunteers, we paid quite a few people, we had a lot of the high school coaches, junior high coaches, staff at the different schools, but it was somewhere in a number of 86 different people help us with that tournament from these different locations. That's what it took to make this tournament happen over the weekend. But it is a huge economic impact for just a Saturday event that started first thing eight o'clock Saturday morning, and we were out finished eating with the few staff remaining right at eleven o'clock at Buffalo Wild Wings. It was a late night, we were finished, we were done, cleaned up and out. So, it was a really good Saturday for volleyball. We've got another one coming up February the 8th, so that should be just as nice. Right now, I currently have 86 teams registered for it. One of the neat things about both of these tournaments is, I was kind of expecting them to be a little bit smaller this year. Just because Cabot has opened up their new facility and they've got a great facility down there. Both weekends I

have tournaments they picked those weekends to have their tournament in their new facility. And so, I was expecting a little bit of a dip. I didn't have a dip. Our number stayed solid and actually had some Cabot teams up here in my tournament, so that was kind of nice to see as well.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, hey Danny. I anticipate, hopefully, here in a couple of years when the sport complex opens up it should make your life a bit easier, right? Director Danny Kapales said, in honesty, it will. Because for me when it comes down to having these volleyball tournaments, as you know, I do this more as a volunteer. I do this because there's really nobody else that wants to host the tournaments in town because of the difficulty of making these tournaments happening. You have to really get in with all the coaches, the ad's. Get approval from the schools, our facilities. It's just, honestly, a nightmare to get it all into place. We were using 22 different courts scattered across town. So, getting the scheduling in place, getting all the teams where they needed to be. You know I would basically finish up my normal work about five or six o'clock in the evening and then I'd be at the office still until about one o'clock in the morning, working on the scheduling and all the details for the last two weeks to get this point on the tournament. So, I'm looking at hopefully one more year of me doing this. And then we have a facility opening, and then somebody else will be taken over these tournaments because it will be in one facility. At that point, you know, we should be hosting six or eight of these tournaments here in Jonesboro. At that point we'll have 200 teams coming to town. I really, 100 teams is max. I can't have more than 100 teams in a tournament here in Jonesboro with what we currently have. And then we'll go to a two-day tournament at that point, possibly even three-day tournaments which will increase the, you know, weekend stays. The nightly stays in the hotels and makes it much more economic impact at that point. So yeah, you're right, it'll help tremendously with that facility.

Councilmember Dr Anthony Coleman said, question. So, I know we had talked about increasing staff. So, wouldn't one of these assistant directors or other person, wouldn't they be the ones handling? Director Danny Kapales said, potentially yes. The one that's going to be over the programs will be somebody that will absolutely help out with that. And hopefully, I'll be able to bring somebody in that has that ability and the knowledge to be able to do the tournament next year and help out with those tournaments. Absolutely. But that would be next year. Currently, I don't have that at this point. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, sure. So, my follow-up question is, are these Jonesboro invitational tournaments or is this something that the school does? Director Danny Kapales said, no, no. This is Junior Olympic Volleyball tournaments. So, these are registered travel teams that travel all over. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I guess I'm just trying to figure out how did it come to Jonesboro. Director Danny Kapales said, how did it start in Jonesboro? Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, why did they choose Jonesboro? Director Danny Kapales said, good question. I mean, Joe was around when we hosted them. I would like to say we do a pretty good job of hosting tournaments, and I will say that right now we have a pretty good niche of the group that we bring in. We set in a spot between Delta region which is where we currently, Jonesboro is part of the Delta region volleyball. And we're right below what's called the Gateway region in volleyball. And those are two different regions. So, when you look at the tournaments that we host, we're split about half and half between Delta teams and Gateway teams. So, we're in a really, really nice spot for those teams to meet and be able to play. A lot of times there's teams meeting that never see each other in other tournaments or other events that meet right here in Jonesboro. So, I think that's part of the answer of why teams are choosing to come to Jonesboro, even though we don't have the bigger facility. They choose to come here, because it's an opportunity for them to meet here.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I asked Mr. Chairman, sorry I didn't recognize. Chairman Chris Gibson said, no, no, go right ahead. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I only ask because, I'm thinking down the road and years from now, like if this is some type of template on inviting other groups, organizations, whatever, to consider Jonesboro, I just wondered. That's why I asked was it a Jonesboro Park invitational. Director Danny Kapales said, no, no. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, because definitely want others to come in, so I just think we ought to... Director Danny Kapales said, we do and I'm going to add to that, that something beyond just the fact of hosting it. Because yes, I enjoy doing it and I know that we try to do the best we possibly can. But I have to give our local coaches and our local schools a big compliment on what they do with our local volleyball. Jonesboro, Valley View, Nettleton, Westside, Brookland are very competitive across the state when it comes to state tournament. When it comes to how they compete and that seen elsewhere. And so, when they start seeing that, they also see those are our local J.O. Teams outside of this area. They go and compete elsewhere. People want to come back and play against that competition. So, when they know a tournament is happening in the area that those teams are from, they want to travel to that area to be able to play against that competition. Cause when you're playing in a competitive sport you want to compete against the best. And Jonesboro produces some of the best volleyball players that there is. So hopefully that answers your question. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, yes sir. I'm just thinking beyond volleyball, I'm thinking, you know, other sports too. Director Danny Kapales said, absolutely. And I think other sports can play off of that as well, yes sir.

All right, so with volleyball we go on to some of our other sports. We're looking at basketball, we've had three tournaments so far with the elementary basketball. We haven't hosted all of them. We've hosted one of them so far. We're about to host another one. Two of them were hosted by one of our local principals that actually he host a couple of tournaments as well, but within our facilities. But with those three tournaments, which we've had, over 200 teams come through our facilities. And so, that's just since the middle of December. So, we're really talking about within a month we've have 200 teams through the facilities. So that's with elementary basketball. That's your third grade through six grade. Next, for basketball we'll start up our recreational basketball, that's our City Stars. We've got just under a thousand kids participating in it. We should start in the middle of February with those games. That'll be February, March, finishing up sometime early April and then transition right into soccer from there.

One of the things that we can really brag on is our junior high programs. Our softball program has really grown in junior high. To the point that we're going to be a little over 30 teams, and we're seeing that junior high program get picked up by Central Arkansas now. Nobody else was doing it. We started up here and now all of a sudden Central Arkansas is going hey. It makes a whole lot of sense, because there was such a big gap in softball. Anybody that's been part of softball knows that you had those travel teams that were really big traveling playing and then all of a sudden you hit that 12,13-year-old group and they just fell off, there was nothing. And so, by adding the junior high program, that we did quite a few years ago, those kids started to have a place to go. They started playing for their school, and now all of sudden they had that seventh, eighth, ninth grade opportunity. Now the school has three more years of those kids to get prepped and ready to play on the high school team which has elevated our high school softball. The rest of the state has seen that. So, they've started doing the same with that. Same thing with our soccer program, you're seeing it across the state as well.

And then I commend Jonesboro Baseball Boosters. They're doing the same thing with baseball. They run the seventh grade and eighth grade baseball, and those numbers are continuing to grow up. So, you just look across Northeast Arkansas, and we're bringing all those teams from those different towns throughout the week. They come to Jonesboro to play either Joe Mack or Southside and play all their games. So just think about the economic impact on weekends and events, but those are through the week. Those are teams, people driving here during the week just to have their game. So, you know, they're going to eat, they're going to gas up their car. They're possibly going to shop and they're spending time in Jonesboro. So, finding different ways to just get people into Jonesboro and see what we have to offer. First baseball tournament, we're looking at having our first baseball tournament out in Joe Mack in February, right at the end of February, so it's right around the corner, we're going to be back in the season.

Currently working with Loins Club on a pickleball tournament that's going to happen right at the end of April. That was originally held at ASU. Some adjustments have happened, so we're going to be moving it over to Alan Park. So, I've got Alan Renshaw and Anthony. I'm sorry, not Alan. Anthony Renshaw and Randy Johnson are going to be tournament directors, working with them to make sure that tournament happens.

And then just some meetings that are happening for me. Just real quick. I'm meeting with tennis tomorrow. I think they've got 55 teams in tennis. So, I'm going to meet with those coaches tomorrow afternoon at 5:30. Meeting with the Arkansas Soccer Association director. I'm meeting with him tomorrow at three. And then turn around, going to meet with the district meeting right after the tennis meeting tomorrow afternoon. I've got the local soccer board we're going to meet tomorrow evening. So, tomorrow there's going to be quite a few just organizational meetings we're trying to get done. Make sure everybody's on the same page as far as facilities, scheduling, what they're going to be doing, how the season looks, what their numbers look like and make sure we have what they need. Covering all their bases.

As far as projects, a lot is going on. If you've had a chance to be out at Criaghead Forest, you know that the lights are going up. There's a lot of poles stood up everywhere out there. Getting much, much closer to them being lit up. I think we got the message today that I think maybe down to one last pole getting stood up and we're trying to secure whether we missed that when it got delivered or what the case was. So, we're going through the number to find out if by chance, maybe in the bundle we were missing one light pole. So hopefully we'll figure that out and get it in place. But if you go out there now, you'll see lights are starting to come on around the park. So hopefully real soon we'll have a fully lit trail all the way around the park. Every time I'm out there I have people stop me and they're thanking me for what's going on. So, I thank y'all for allowing this opportunity to get that taken care of. Because that's just going to be a great, great opportunity for folks that want to go out there early in the morning, or as y'all know, starting in the fall through early spring, it's dark at five o'clock. Now you can actually go after work and be able to utilize that trail.

Joe Mack Campbell Park. If y'all hadn't been out there lately, the baseball facility, the restrooms had been, you know, kind of tired. They were built back in 2000, and so with the help of Ronnie with maintenance, we were able to go in and do a full remodel of those restrooms. Cleaning those up, make those look much nicer. Our next step is to go to the soccer facility. Same thing, tired. It's time for them to be updated, so we should be getting those done here over the next couple months and ready for the soccer season. And they'll be updated, new countertops, paint, doors, just everything new, fresh, ready for everybody to come in.

Trees. I know there were some statements about trees before. I just want to touch on that a little bit. We're Parks and Recreation, we deal with trees, we planted, last year in our park system, 299 trees. So, think about that, that's a lot of trees and we put them throughout our park system. We've got a couple of grants coming into play. We met this morning; I think that we're putting somewhere around 50 trees in. That's going to happen here soon. And then there's like another 140 that's going in with another grant. So, trees are being put in throughout the park system. We're making sure that we continue to add anywhere that we can, anywhere it makes sense, into the park system when it comes to trees.

Shooting range. If you go out there, if you haven't had a chance to, you'll see that any opportunity to beautify that park space has been unified. Tracy has done a great job out there. Just anywhere into the drives, any of those spots has been updated. Even the welcome to Jonesboro sign. He has updated it and beautified it. So, he's just taken hold of that and taken ownership all the way into the park and it's just done a great job in making that park look great.

Octavius Mitchell, I probably need to bring him in and introduce him to y'all. He is the new concession manager. He was working part time through part of last year and became the full-time concession manager. And he has just taken our concession stands to a point where it's truly an asset to us now. He's got the right people working in the right spots, he's cleaned everything up, he takes care of our inventory, he's just done a wonderful job. So, I'm very proud to have him as part of our team.

A little bit later tonight, at about 6 pm, if we happen to get council over within time, please join us down at the New St. John's Missionary Baptist Church. We're having an MLK meeting about the trails and about the monuments. We're going to be discussing what those should look like, what they should say. Basically, I want to make sure that we have full community input before we start getting that design completed by Arkansas State. Their Art Department is doing that full design. But they want to make sure that they have that community input before everything gets done. And then we'll have something extremely unique to Jonesboro, that's been designed by Jonesboro, built by Jonesboro on a Jonesboro Trail System. I think that's something really, really neat for us.

Parker Park pool. If you go over there right now, you'll see that we finished the pathway that went through. I know when we first opened it up, it looked great, everything was wonderful within the pool, but we hadn't quite finished the driveway that went around the front, that little circle drive. That is now completed. It's landscape. So now, if there are folks that come in with bus system, things of that sort, they can pull right in, drop the kids off, and then go right in the front. While we were doing that, we went ahead and added a trail which runs right between Parker Park and ARcare here. As Chris will tell you, there's always people walking through cutting back and forth. So, one of the things we want to do is create a nice safe avenue for folks to get through from the park behind, which is called Miles Park, and then there's quite a few apartments and houses and things back there. And so, this actually provides a safe walkway that goes right between the two facilities and gets them up all the way to the sidewalk on 141. That way they can actually go to different shops that are there on 141 and get a chance to get to those stores.

And then grants. I can't give Grants enough credit. This year we've been able to receive the Outdoor Recreation Grant, The Legacy Outdoor Recreation Grant and currently they're working on a grant for Lions Park. If you know, quite a few of our

playgrounds, they were installed in early 2000's. And at this point, it's time for them to start getting updated. And so, we're seeking out different grants. We're also going to be utilizing what's put in place in the budget this year. We're going to use both of those items to be able to update these different park systems. And so, University Lions is one of the first ones. It was unfortunately... it was a low bid playground. It was put in, we started as soon as we put in, we had to do some things to keep it usable. And so, it's one I want to make sure it gets changed out so it's safe for any child on that side of town. And one of the things that we're doing, is we're adding those berms within the turf, so that there's not just the playground features, there's going to be a lot of what feels like natural and adventure style play over there in that same location. So, looking at just any park, any ideas that y'all see, anything that y'all want to see done, I want to make sure I do that. So please let me know if y'all see it.

Councilmember Ann Williams said, yeah, I am going back to the pool at Parker Park. What are the plans? I've been asked this by people in my ward about swim lessons for kids. What is the plan as far as those? Director Danny Kapales said, yeah. No, we plan on having swim lessons at both locations. Part of it is making sure we have the appropriate staff. But we're also working with Jets and Swat, as we did last year, to continue to add to... Obviously, they've got the trained coaches but adding to that inventory of classes. But I think Parker Park is going to be one that we really need because of the zero-depth entry and the opportunities to do swim lessons there. To give you the exact dates, I can't give you that. Councilmember Ann Williams said, it be sometime or after Memorial Day or afterwards. Director Danny Kapales said, oh yeah, we won't start anything until after Memorial Day when it comes to actual swim lessons. But I do know that there has been conversations with both swim clubs about potential of some sort of recreational program that would also be kind of targeted at those swim lessons that would get children into the pool that maybe has never swam before. Get them those lessons and then get them into a point where they're actually potentially even competing by the end of that opportunity. Councilmember Ann Williams said, that would be wonderful. Well, is Red Cross still involved in swim lessons? I know in the past they have been. Director Danny Kapales said, they are involved to the point of they provide all the literature you need and certification. You still have to go through them to have everything that you need certified wise. As far as the folks that do the training, actually, my staff is the one that does all that training through the Red Cross. Councilmember Ann Williams said, I know they use to train people to get certified as lifeguards, is that right? Do they still do that? Director Danny Kapales said, yes, that's actually, my staff is the one that does that through the Red Cross. Currently Stephen Davis is the lifeguard trainer and he's our soccer coordinator. But he's the one certified to do all the training. I know, I think, some of the Jet coaches actually have to go through that certification with him to be able to be out there on the deck.

Chairman Chris Gibson said, just mentioning those two swim clubs. I just want to give hats off to both of them. There were several sectional times and state times that were met at the Memphis Meet this weekend by both of those clubs so congratulations. Director Danny Kapales said, absolutely.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Chris Gibson said, yes sir. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, quick point. And I know it sounds like I'm the only person crazy enough to do this. But during the snowstorm I went and ran 12 miles, and I thought I was the only person crazy enough to do it, but the Run Club actual was out there. So, I think they're actually, it doesn't snow very much, it snowed more than normal, but I think there would be an opportunity for us to clear at least the interior trail there. Because there's a handful of crazy people that are willing to, and I say interior, probably the exterior. The paved trail not the chat trail. Director Danny Kapales said,

yeah. Potentially, I know it was difficult just to get the road cleared. I will say that. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, it looked like it got cleared to the RV Park. Director Danny Kapales said, yes. Councilmember LJ Byrant said, it's kind of closed for a bit, because I was there for a couple of hours. Director Danny Kapales said, yeah that was a challenge just for us, with the equipment that we have for us to get it cleared just so we have a 9-1-1 entrance and exit to the RV Park. That was our priority. Just in case somebody had an emergency there. As far as clearing the whole trail, I understand completely. It will take more equipment than what we have to make that happen. I will say that. But I do understand trying to get out and run on that, because I was out there at the park walking in it and I can only imagine going around the trails. I know later in the afternoon it was much better, but early in the day it was not. It would not have been passable for sure. So yep, appreciate that.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, Chairman. Chairman Chris Gibson said, anything else? Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, yes sir. I'm sorry. Two questions, one... just real quick. Director Danny Kapales said, yes sir. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, funds for the improvement for those bathrooms and things like that, does it come from general fund? Director Danny Kapales said, yeah it will come from the budget. Yeah, so yes general funds, yes sir. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, second, I know John asked about a gate. So, I definitely would like to hear... Director Danny Kapales said, yeah, I'll go back too... I'll emphasize. One of the things that I want to make sure before we just throw up a chain link gate or anything of that sort, is I would much rather look at that whole front end and look at a redesign of the front end of the park. Maybe it's the house, a really nice column gate, wrought iron, something that's more... it's got more proof that it's going to be able to open and close safely. Currently we're testing a gate at the Miracle League, and I'll be honest with you, I've been at that gate a lot in the evenings to reopen it for folks that get stuck on the inside. And so, I don't want that same opportunity. I don't want to be going out to Craighead Forest to just open up gates because somebody needs to leave the RV Park to go somewhere in the evening. So, I want to make sure that whatever we use, that we're doing it right so when we do it, I want to design something that looks right, looks good for the park and is going to be very functional for the park. That is, let's just say, foolproof at the point, and what that is I don't know so that's going to be really bringing in probably somebody that has a lot more knowledge and experience than I do to design that correctly. And it will probably tie into the old house that's there at the front. I think the house needs to either look at being remodeled into a welcome center so that we have a place that folks can come in potentially reserve the pavilions, reserve their campsite at that point. Maybe, even have that as a spot where you can pick up a bicycle, a kayak or canoe and be able to get things for the park itself and utilize. Put a small grocery store inside it and just make it more of usable facility. So, make that whole front end designed with that store. Hopefully that helps out a little bit. But it's not going to happen soon. I guess is what I'm saying. It's going to take a lot more thought than just putting a gate up.

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8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Patti Lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, approached the podium and said, this is really for all of you and then also for Lee. Is that last week at the MAPC they voted down the large storage facility that was going to go right next to the neighborhood Walmart. One of the reasons why they named that was it was a different site plan than what they had proposed earlier in the year in 2024, that was one of the reasons. But I think another one of the reasons is that area is so dangerous because it has limited exits and entrances. And I actually had a police report on the number of accidents in that area

within a two-year period, and on Elmhurst on the one by the gasoline station by Walmart and Gladiola. There were 60 accidents in that area in a two year period, that's 60 more than what we need. And with that area growing is that we've got to think of one how are we going to make that better before they start widening that. They're going to start widening that mid-year in 2026, so we've got a year in a half to go. But one of the things I want to bring up to Lee, is that Ann and I started talking about it, is that the people that live in the Gladiola Apartments they're going to have to cross over four lanes of traffic, and a center turn lane to get to the bus stop. I know that Ann and I were talking about how successful that the Hawk has been on Johnson. And that, whether or not we get it through a grant, but we need to start thinking about that now in the future because it's going to be here before you know it. Because they're putting in the lines right now for the traffic signals. So, I just want to put that into Lee's mind. And then, also too, we talk about one time about changing the bus routes around, so they don't have to cross. But we have to start looking at that now, instead of waiting until it's done. And then we think, oh we should have, would of, could of. So, I just want to put that into all of your mind right now. So, thank you.

9. 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