



# City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center  
300 S. Church Street  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

## Meeting Minutes Public Services Council Committee

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Tuesday, July 18, 2023

4:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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### 1. Call To Order

### 2. Roll Call by City Clerk April Leggett

**Present** 5 - Chris Gibson; Joe Hafner; Brian Emison; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

**Absent** 2 - Ann Williams and LJ Bryant

### 3. Approval of minutes

[MIN-23:060](#)

Minutes for the Public Services Committee Meeting on June 20, 2023

**Attachments:** [Minutes](#)

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

**Aye:** 4 - Joe Hafner; Brian Emison; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

**Absent:** 2 - Ann Williams and LJ Bryant

### 4. New Business

### 5. Pending Items

### 6. Other Business

[COM-23:031](#)

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM JETS

*JETS Director Michael Black approached the podium and said, I don't really have a whole lot of new, but I will update you on our ridership numbers. Year-to-date, we are at 42,060 trips. This time last year, we were at 37,881. We are still tracking about a 10% increase over last year. Our summer youth program, we have provided 286 trips. Right now, I have five full-time driver positions open. I have two open in my administrative area, primarily our paratransit area, and I have six in entry-level driver training. After today, they will have 16 hours. It's required to have 40 before we can schedule their tests in Newport. Plus, we are continuing to work with FTA to put this procurement package together for our hybrid vehicles.*

*Chairman Chris Gibson said, what is the update on the new buses? Mr. Black said, well, I've got two regular recip engine buses on order. They are anticipated to be*

*delivered somewhere between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Our hybrid buses, I am working with FTA, primarily Eddie Chavarria to put together our procurement package, and actually determine whether we want to put out a letter of interest or what we want to put out to advertise it to get the bids in. So hopefully we will have that completed in three weeks or so.*

*Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I have a question if you don't mind, Chairman. Mike, you mentioned the youth summer program. I apologize. I am not read up on that. Mr. Black said, our summer youth program, 18 and under can ride anywhere we go for a quarter. And of course we go to the pool center. We go to all the community centers. We have a stop at the library, so the youth can ride anywhere we go for a quarter or 50 cents round trip. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, you said that is up as well? Mr. Black said, yes, sir. Due to the pandemic, we hardly had any at all. Last year, if my memory serves me correctly, all summer long was about 125; and this year, we are at 286 right now. And we've still got until the Saturday before Labor Day to go.*

*Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, one other question, to just kind of follow up on the earlier mention. With the other buses potentially coming in soon and not enough drivers, do you think that will help? I mean, I am just trying to figure out whatever I can do and what we can do to help get the word out that we need more drivers and help and so on and so forth. Because I don't see us getting new buses and all of that if we are still running the same. Mr. Black said, hopefully within about three weeks, I've got six in the entry-level driver training. Once they get through with that training, they can go test; so I've got my fingers crossed that at least four of the six pass and that will again begin building up our full-time driver base. I do have part-time people right now. I've got three that are fully licensed, but they are not interested in going full-time. But they are driving almost full time right now just because we need them. But we are continuing to interview people, bring them in, get them started on the training. And, of course, entry-level driver training actually cannot begin until they pass their written general knowledge and passenger endorsement side of it.*

*Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, great, and I'm sorry, Chairman. One more question. So I also thought about the new trailway and all that we are trying to do with the trailways and the park system and so on and so forth. Are you in those discussions? Mr. Black said, for the most part, no, I'm not. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, and I ask because I know we've been talking about new parks and other things that we're trying to do for quality of life obviously here. I think it would be prudent for us and you to be part of those discussions, especially seeing how we can get citizens to those areas and those routes; and talking about it now before or by the time we start adding those parks, trailways, whatever, then you would be in those discussions to make sure that we have some kind of transportation for citizens in Jonesboro. Mr. Black said, yes, we've been looking at some logistics around some of the areas. We tried at one point in time to even have a route go out to Craighead Forest, and that didn't go over very well at that time. We are working on a pilot program to service the industrial area. I'm also working on the logistics to get a vehicle out Southwest Drive, at least out to Alexander Drive to turn around and come back. I know there are some transit-needy or transit-dependent people out at the Willows, so we need to try to figure out a way to service them here in the next eight months to a year at least. We are working on the logistics. The downfall of it is the gentleman that was helping me for the most part resigned and decided to take a job in his degree field, so I've got all the information but we have to get somebody in there to kind of start from scratch again. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, thank you, Michael. Just a recommendation. I think it would be great for you to be a part of those conversations*

*just to hear what they are implementing and trying and new ideas. Obviously transportation is a big part of that. Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.*

*Chairman Chris Gibson said, anything else for Mike? I've got one other just real quick question. In the youth ridership program, where is the most of that ridership going? What destination? Mr. Black said, the public library and the pool center right now. Chairman Chris Gibson said, okay. Thank you.*

**Filed**

[COM-23:032](#)

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM PARKS AND RECREATION

*Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales approached the podium and said, good afternoon. So quick report on what Parks has done this last month. I'll just kind of go through some of our projects and then I'll go into programs. But the Jonesboro Rec Center and Pool Center, we've had a couple of things going on there as far as the full remodel of what we call the old 'Y'. That is the Rec Center. We are currently waiting on the finalization, the final walkthrough to get our CO, so we can actually get in that facility. I believe, if I'm correct, that is going to happen tomorrow afternoon; and they will do a walkthrough and hopefully we will be able to get that open to the community and utilize that facility. The pool center, we've done quite a few renovations to it up to this point. There are a few more things when we get finished up on the deck. What we are going to wait for is for the season to be over with; and then we will bring the deck crew back in to resurface it, get a little bit more silicate into the clear coat, and make it have a little bit better grip. The first coat they put in didn't have as much grip as we thought it would, so it's a little bit slippery, and it's going to help make that a little bit better. They are also updating the electrical system in that facility so that we can add heaters to the restroom facility at the pool. That way, as our swim teams continue later into the cooler part of the season, the restroom facilities can stay open longer along with that. We won't have to shut them down for winterization.*

*Joe Mack Campbell restroom and concession facility, currently we are building that on the northern part of the park, and the block work right now is almost complete. So that facility is moving pretty quickly. I don't have the timeline of completion at this point, but it is moving extremely fast. I'm very proud of the work that they are doing out there. If you want to get a chance to see a project that is moving quickly, that's one to go and look at. But the block work is up. So now it's moving on to getting the roof on and interior work.*

*Shooting range maintenance shop, we are in that shop, moving in, getting things set up for the staff to work out of. There are still a few things, getting IT wire ran out there so the guys can have a computer in the office. But we are in a facility, a very, very nice facility. It's going to be great for our equipment. Keep our stuff in there, but it's also holding all the clays that we need. If you all don't know with the trap, we usually order those by the semi-truckload; and so we needed a large facility to hold all the clays we needed.*

*Craighead Forest Park, the bike trails. If you haven't seen the new bike trails, they are in full process. If you haven't had a chance to watch the video out, Craig Rickert was gracious enough to go out and shoot a full video for the bike trails. I know it's on our website and on Facebook, but it's also at the JU website. It's a really nice shot of a bunch of bikes riding through the trails, very professionally shot advertisement for our trail system. Also we've got fence work going on out there. If you remember, if you turn left into the park, you saw a bunch of chain link fence all along the left hand side right there along the roadside. That has been moved off into the woods a little bit deeper*

where you don't see it as much. It has made that section of park look much better.

The master park plan, we are basically about two-thirds the way through that process. August 15th, I believe, is our next scheduled meeting for here. You should get a request from us soon to potentially have this meeting maybe 30 minutes earlier, so that you will have plenty of time to have a full presentation from our group. They are wanting to have about an hour of your time to be able to present that whole plan; but that is what we are looking at is having the first presentation of it on August 15th. Chairman Chris Gibson said, what kind of community participation are you getting? Mr. Kapales said, we've actually had quite a few public input meetings as far as that is concerned, but we also had a survey. We've had well over a thousand folks go in on the survey; and then not only did we ask for folks to come to us, we went to the public. So when we had softball events, we went to the softball events. We were out at Craighead Forest. We set up different locations out there, and folks that were enjoying the park, we spoke to with them. Let them have their input at that location. We had soccer events, we went to the soccer events basketball. We made sure we got out to the public activity, so that they didn't have to come to us. We actually went to them. So, yes, quite a bit of input from the public.

Union Park downtown, that park is just about finished finally. It's been a long process. Really, what we are waiting on now is the playground structure to be complete. It is here, just waiting on the contractor to put it up. If you go over there right now, you'll see the fall surface which is artificial turf is in place. All the concrete, the sod, pavilion, everything is done there. Thank you to the engineering department for helping with that and handling a lot of the project management as far as getting the drainage and the concrete and the sidewalks and curbing and all that. It's become a beautiful park.

Winter Wonderland, as part of that, we are working with Leadership Jonesboro. I've got a group from them that is working on donations and some planning with how we're going to do some updates with Winter Wonderland, also to add some planters around the park downtown. We also had the current owners of the mall property donate all the Christmas decorations that they had inside that facility. They donated those to the parks system, so we are going to utilize a lot of that to redecorate Winter Wonderland this winter. That will help out quite a bit. We also had a donation from Ritter Communications. They donated a new tree for downtown. Since the property that we were using across the street from United Way has been sold, we are not going to be able to use that for that large tree of lights. Ritter ended up purchasing a tree that we will be able to set up in a parking lot and utilize for this year. That is something we will have from this point forward. And then we are in the process of adding Wi-Fi to Joe Mack Campbell and Southside with hopes for future parks to have Wi-Fi. But those two parks will have Wi-Fi here soon. As far as programs, we're currently in the midst of City Stars basketball and 3v3 soccer; and we are currently taking registration for fall soccer, tackle football, flag football, cheerleading, youth and adult softball.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I don't have a question, Chairman, but I would say that I appreciated meeting with the group that is doing the master parks plan. That was quite enlightening, so I definitely look forward to that presentation. Thank you.

**Filed**

## **7. Public Comments**

Patti Lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, approached the podium and said, a concern that I have, and I was going to attend the MPO meeting today at 10 o'clock, but I heard that

*it was canceled, is that one of the things that I think you guys really need to look at, and I know that the MPO and the city is looking at getting bus covers or covered areas for our bus stops and stuff like that. Some of our bus stops don't even have benches for our people. And if you remember the rain that we had last week, we had five inches, and I saw a poor individual on Harrisburg Road getting drenched because there is no cover, no bench, no nothing there. I think for a city our size needs to at least have benches other than just a sign and then also too some covered areas. I know that we are working on it and trying to get a grant; and I know we were going to talk about putting Wi-Fi around it to make it really fancy and all that. The people don't need that. All they need is cover. They need something from the sun, they need something from the rain, and pretty soon, I don't know whether we are going to ever get snow, but they need something for just coverage and for sitting there waiting for the buses to come. So I hope that maybe we can take it from either, I don't know whether the capital funds. We seem to take money from somewhere to fund something. I can't say that they would be that expensive, but we need them for the citizens who ride the buses here in Jonesboro; and we need them sooner versus later, especially if we are going to get some really nice hybrid buses for our community. I think we have to show the whole picture. So I hope you guys can move that along a little bit. I don't know if that was going to be discussed at the MPO meeting of how the grant is going, but sometimes we can't wait for that grant money to come into our city. I think that's a necessary need for our community and for the citizens that ride our buses, and maybe our bus ridership will go up if we have something like that. So I hope you guys consider that. Thank you.*

*Chairman Chris Gibson said, thank you. Duly noted. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, Mr. Chairman, at the last meeting, Mr. Bryant asked about the bus shelters and the grant, and Mr. Black said that it was still in the hands of the FTA. They are picking through it. As soon as they get any notice of any changes that need to be made or anything, we will get that taken care of and get it on the table as well. I mean, we've been awarded the grant. Any idea when we will hear back from the FTA? No? For the record, he shook his head no. But anyway that is still going on.*

*JETS Director Michael Black approached the podium and said, yes, we are still working with FTA on that grant, letting them pick through it. This hybrid bus, the first grant took almost a year to come through. We are getting close to a year on our shelters. We've got 50 locations picked out for the advanced covers. They say where right now we are at 22% sheltered stops, and the national average is 17% sheltered stops. So we are going to blow that out of the water once we get that. Now there are some locations of our stops that we cannot do anything because there is either not enough right of way, or it is on private property. But none of those were chosen for our locations. Chairman Chris Gibson said, Ms. Lack made a comment that those are fairly inexpensive. Just for the record, can you give us an estimated cost of those shelters? Mr. Black said, well, originally they were sadly enough, they were looking about \$25,000 to \$30,000 per shelter, but that was when we were talking about the Wi-Fi and the electrical outlets and the closed circuit TV and all that in there. I think some of that has kind of come off the board, especially in some locations, but if we did something similar to what we have now, that would be about \$12,000 to \$15,000 per shelter.*

## **8. Adjournment**

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

**Aye:** 4 - Joe Hafner; Brian Emison; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

**Absent:** 2 - Ann Williams and LJ Bryant