



# City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center  
300 S. Church Street  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

## Meeting Minutes Finance & Administration Council Committee

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Friday, December 5, 2025

11:30 AM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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### SPECIAL CALLED WORKING SESSION

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

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

*City Clerk April Leggett said, I'm not sure. Can you see or do you see just the budget? Chairman Joe Hafner said, I can see where it says 2026 Budget. Are you talking about the screen. City Clerk April Leggett said, yeah. You won't be able to see to press your button. Chairman Joe Hafner said, oh okay. Can we just say here? City Clerk April Leggett said, I can go ahead and take it and it should hopefully. Chairman Joe Hafner said, it's just a working session. No action is going to be taken so it's fine. City Clerk April Leggett said, I have recorded each member that is here for the record. Chairman Joe Hafner said, okay.*

*\*Along with the Finance Committee councilmembers that were in attendance; LJ Bryant, Janice Porter and Kevin Miller were also in attendance.*

**Present** 5 - Joe Hafner; Charles Coleman; Ann Williams; John Street and Brian Emison

**Absent** 2 - David McClain and Anthony Coleman

#### 3. OTHER BUSINESS

[COM-25:056](#)

WORKING SESSION OF THE FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE ON THE CITY OF JONESBORO 2026 BUDGET: QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION (No motions or votes to be taken)

**Sponsors:** Mayor's Office and Finance

**Attachments:** [2026 Budget - Copy.pdf](#)  
[Budget 2026 Powerpoint.pdf](#)

*Chairman Joe Hafner said, I'll go ahead and turn the floor over to the mayor. Just please make just make sure you're recognize before you start asking questions so we can keep this thing moving along. I think we have kind of a little before 1 o'clock. Brian, don't you have a 1 o'clock meeting? Councilmember Brian Emison said, right I do. Chairman Joe Hafner said, so we just need to be done by 1, but as I mentioned on Tuesday evening during the Council meeting, you know, this is just a question answer session as they present the budget. It'll be on the Finance Committee agenda next Tuesday, and that's where action will be taking on whether or not to forward it to full Council. So, there'll be multiple opportunities to ask questions about the budget. All*

*right. Mayor Copenhagen it's all yours.*

*Mayor Harold Copenhagen said, all right. Thank you, Councilman Hafner and Council I appreciate you showing up on Friday afternoon. And it's important that, obviously, you engage yourself on what we're proposing for year 2026. But I first want to start off with the 20,000-pound elephant in the room. And I do have a statement and then we'll move on to the budget statement. So, following a city staff meeting that was had with the Department of Justice, the city is prepared to serve as a trustee for the City Stars financial activities. The Department of Justice expressed no concerns with the protocols in place with the city and the handling of public funds. We do expect to have this as a budget impact but have no way to predict what that will be until the baseline of that is established. The city continues to work closely with authorities and legislative audit to ensure youth sports continues without issue during this time. Our children are our number one concern. It is my understanding that the City Stars Board has recently voted to work with the city on this transition. We appreciate their help in this matter, and their shared efforts in supporting the thousands of youth in our community that enjoy these programs. There won't be any further statement.*

*All right. Council, as we begin for the next year, it's hard to believe 2025 has already gone by, but it went by very quickly. I think the key word throughout this budgeting process is going to be consistency. Council, this budget will find, that you'll find that it's very consistent with previous budgets. A consistent revenue stream supports those consistent reoccurring expenses. The Finance team, I challenged them to develop a practical plan where a concept for measured utilization of reserves will fund only capital infrastructure improvements and not operations. I also challenged them to hold the budget at a consistent operations structure versus expansion of systems and personnel. This will ensure a better utilization of current systems to meet the challenge for each department to provide expanded and more efficient public services. You will notice that there are no new revenue streams and the most impacting expenses increase is continuation of the annual salary increases for all employees. While increased costs across the board are inevitable. And I hope that in the financial packet that you did read my letter to you the Council, and the city as a whole. Obviously, we're very fortunate in a lot of ways in Jonesboro, compared to a lot of communities throughout the state that haven't had the positive trends that we still continue to have. But, as we requested, the significant providers, we also asked them to maintain and hold further increases for further evaluation. These will be assessed as the timing of contractor renewals, and perhaps the first quarter results we'll see what next year's going to be looking like.*

*So, my mayor letter states, additional consideration will be given to the budget requests at the end of the first quarter and growth trends once they have been gathered, if necessary. So, at this point in time, I believe Council, our CFO Steve Purtee, does have a plan of action for 2026. And Steve, if you'd please come forward and present that to Council.*

*Finance Department Director Steve Purtee approached the podium and said, thank you, mayor. You each have the hard copy of the slide in front of you at your table, so you can refer to that. I'm sure it will be on your screen as well. So again, we'll just kind of work through that as the mayor indicated, the process is really just kind of a consistency of what we've done, where we've been, and where we're going. So, we're happy to... appreciate the opportunity to mayor, to assist you in providing (\*someone hit microphone and could not hear the next couple of words) budget. And we feel like, again, that this is an indication of what we expect for 2026 and certainly as he's indicated that will always be open for readdressing and emphasis moving forward after*

*results continue to come in. Your binders were available to you a couple weeks ago, a week and a half ago, so hopefully you've had some time to spend some time with those. There are 110 pages in that binder. That same document is available online with our resolution, and I appreciate our city clerk for making that available to our public. So that is out there as well, and we'll make this presentation part of that as well for the Finance Committee on Tuesday. So, you can look forward for that as well. So, we do invite our public to spend time with both of those documents and help us in garnering the very best financial position that we think is available for 2026.*

*I want to just kind of move right on into our overview. There are about four or five slides of just simply overview of various functions of our budget that we want to go over today. I'll just kind of go down through these and if you have any questions, certainly just stop me. Again, we want this to be an informative session, and if you have questions for anyone, any of our directors, we want you to ask those. We'll invite them up to address those as well. And our administrative staff are available also. So, the very first bullet on here, again, this is just kind of an overview of the budget in total, as indicated there are \$85,000,000 in total expenditures in this document. There's \$72,000,000 of that is represented in our O&M expenditures. Our capital improvements are \$1,100,000, planned for 2026. We'll talk in a later slide relative to other capital improvement opportunities that we have available in this current, this next budget cycle and future budget cycles as well. As for our revenue stream, for this it'll be the basically the third year in a row that we've just forecasted the same revenue stream, relative to our sales tax returns. While we did see our seventh month of consecutive growth year over year, we wanted to factor that in as well and while we were normally operating with about a 3.3%, year over your budget increase, because of that growth, this manages that down to about 2.5% and that's what this third budget bullet or the bullet under the revenue area indicates. But we're seeing an increase of about \$800,000 over last year results, and that'll be about 1.7% over the previous actual. So, we are pleased with those returns. Again, we monitored that for the first few months anticipating those negatives, and fortunately, that did turn around.*

*As the mayor indicated in his letter, a very key point for him is taking care of our employees. And we did include in this budget a 2% annual step increase in salaries, and then a 2% cost of living adjustment as well. That is in this document, in our Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday, that agenda also includes a resolution that will amend the salary administration plan. Very simply, that document is in there to include these updated salary ranges. As we indicated, there were no personnel requests in this budget, as we will hold those for a first quarter review after we get results. The final bullet relative to our benefits, our entry into a captive insurance program has been very successful. We saw our overall claim activity decrease \$2,000,000 from the previous calendar year. We were able to take that under consideration. We were seeing market increases of anywhere from 13 to 15% in national companies. So we did likewise in our captive program or the self-funded program. Yes sir mayor.*

*Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, so, Steve, if you would, just expand just a little bit more on that and when you mentioned \$2,000,000. Can you make council aware, if we had not have made that decision our claims would have been at a higher level? Director Steve Purtee said, yes sir, and that's an excellent point. You'll recall our conversations, this time last year we were anticipating insurance premium increases. The fully funded insurer at that time was projecting at minimum 25% increase. They said that based on our plan activities, it would be more closer aligned to a 45 to 48% increase in premiums. There in... Yes sir Dr. Coleman. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, go ahead. I'll ask when you get through. Director Steve Purtee said,*

*there in lies the reason for entering into this captive program where we have the ability to manage some of that activity as well. As it's been indicated, the immediate impact or benefit to going from fully insured to self-insured or self-funded, is you're not paying the overhead cost to the fund manager. In this case, it was Blue Cross and Blue Shield. While they are still our TPA, we were able to save that 13% and contribute that directly to our plan and help us with responsibilities in that. We did see our claims go from \$10,000,000 to approximately \$8,000,000 in 2024 compared to 2025. We'll have more results on that. We'll actually be presenting an overview of our captive program right after the year concludes so that we can kind of see all of that activity. Yes sir Dr. Coleman.*

*Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, okay, the question I always have about the step increases. Is there a reason that we just went to 2% instead of another number? I always ask that question because I think about the HVC people, the IT people, and Sanitation, you know. One thing, I am thankful that I see this because I actually had emailed the mayor and Brian early about this. But I think comparatively for those type people that work in the community, it's just a question. Can we not do more or would that fall out of a different regulation for the same thing, because nationally we got an increase the community as far as economics is just outrageous right now. And this 2% just seem a little lower for me. Director Steve Purtee said, that's a good question, Dr. Coleman. If we go back in history, there was not a supported program to address salaries until 2016. That was when the step plan was adopted, and that plan provides for an annual incremental increase of approximately 2% per step, and that has been used as a management tool since 2016. The one thing that we are seeing is that in addition to that prior to 2021, there were, 2022, there were no adjustments for a cost of living adjustment added to the step plan. Since then, every year, we have provided, in addition to the 2% step, a cost of living adjustment that layers on top of the step program or the salary administration plan. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, so we're not really using that plan... I can't, in my head remember. Chairman Joe Hafner said, the Johansan plan. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, the Johansan plan. We're not really using the Johansan plan anymore? Director Steve Purtee said, no sir. We haven't used the Johansan plan for, I'm thinking this is our third budget cycle relative to that. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, well, I kind of see that. I just want to make sure that's clear, because a lot of people don't know that because, you know, personally, I never voted for the Johansan plan. I can say it now. But I think the increase that you're doing is well. So I want to make sure this is not against it. It's just that I sometimes when I look at the HVC people, the IT people, electrician people like that, I'm not saying they should be getting paid more than anybody else, but I think that the comfortable pay that they should get, because they can go back into the industry a whole lot more money. Without those type people, I don't think we'd be able to survive what we're doing. Director Steve Purtee said, we appreciate that affirmation of what we've been doing relative to taking care of our staff. The one thing that we have done is, you know, two or three different times we've done competitive salary reviews, we've addressed our uniform personnel at certain times, relative to that. We also did similarly for our non-uniformed employees. Those salary ranges at that time were anywhere from 6 to 13% increases in addition, over our step plan layered on top of that. And then since then, and as we have done all along, we take the opportunity to regrade positions, check the competitive landscape. We did something similar to this for our JETS program in 2025 relative to adjusting their salaries to make it less of a competitive pressure with other similar aligned jobs. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, well, that's good to hear. But again, you know I think I ask these questions because publicly, the people need to know that we're not just, our employees are getting comfortable pay rather than just be here. And I think 90% of the people that's here are here because I think we have good insurance*

*program, we have a good retirement program, but at the same time those questions do need to be asked. Director Steve Purtee said, the mayor's letter, I'm going to reference it real quick. He has a nice little overview in that letter. It's on the second page, that shows basically the 10-year trend relative to those salary groups. And what we are seeing relative to our Sanitation and entry level workers, that that's been nearly a 40% increase over that 10-year period. We hope we're doing a good job, and we always appreciate the input to always do that so thank you. Any other comments on this particular page?*

*We'll move on. This next slide here is basically we just want to kind of give an overview of our various appropriations that are included in this document. Primarily, we have infrastructure improvement, we have capital improvement fund carry over, then we have our depreciation fund. We appreciate that the traction that we're gaining relative to our capital improvement program, as well as our depreciation fund, we see these funds becoming living funds, if you will, and we are able to use these in upgrading or maintaining the quality of our equipment in our fleet that related to our assets that our employees are using and our public has a benefit of. As far as the infrastructure improvement, the one thing that we do want to remind is our financials include a \$17,500,000 dollar bond that this City Council authorized, ordained, back in 2025, mid-year. Again, that will fund capital improvement opportunities for the three areas that we're all very familiar with. The E-911 Safety Center, Caraway Road expansion and the pedestrian trail connections. We'll have a slide later that will dig into more details relative to those. One other thing that we are including in this particular budget is a utilization of reserves that are set aside after year-over-year results. We're taking \$3,000,000 of those reserves and we're dedicating those to overlay and street improvements. And so that is referenced on page one of the financial data. In addition to that, we have specifically appropriated \$250,000 for sidewalk improvements that would be ADA compliant, and this should take care of any specific requirement that we have relative to an annual incurring of sidewalk rehabilitations. And then the last thing here is part of the budget process is we took \$1,100,000 of our current operations, and we set that aside for recurring capital improvement, miscellaneous drainage in our industrial rail maintenance program, and then finally our economic development arm that we handle with the Chamber of Commerce. As for our carryover funding for capital improvement, that fund currently has a balance projected at year-end of \$18,700,000. We had, we expended nearly \$6,000,000 in 2025. We'll end the year with an remaining appropriation of just a little over \$11,000,000. Those are all identified in our financial results on a monthly basis, and they are identified in this budget document as well on page 12 or 13, I can remind myself of that later. One other final point here, our depreciation fund, we had approximately \$7,500,000 of request. We were able to fund or requesting to fund \$4,400,000 of that through a 2025 appropriation. This will allow us to purchase 37 fleet unit replacements. Again, we are replacing existing equipment. There are no new units in that fleet alignment. 25 of these units will be specifically for our Police Department in assisting them in updating or upgrading their fleet relative to some older units that they're managing. And then the final point here is that request included 52 fleet replacement, and we were able to budget or approve approximately 70% of that at 37 units. One other thing, our Fire Department, we've had several meetings that where there's been discussion of new fire apparatus. That again, is a resolution that you're seeing in the Finance agenda for next Tuesday to approve those purchases. That's about \$2,500,000. But we did find one-fourth of that in the 2025 budget, we're asking, or the 2024 appropriation, we're asking to appropriate the second installment of that for an additional \$625,000 in this 2025 appropriation. This will give us about \$1,250,000 of that total funding necessary. And then our great partner, City Water and Light, has agreed to fund the remaining \$1,200,000 over two budget cycles. Yes, sir, Dr. Coleman. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I guess the only*

*question I just basically so that even if we have an open meeting so the public would also understand. That our reserves is going to still be intact while we using the bond money, right? Director Steve Purtee said, yes, sir, we'll have a slide here in a minute will show us our reserve position after absorbing this budget. You're correct, yes.*

*Chairman Joe Hafner said, but Steve, I have a question on the capital improvement carryover fund. Director Steve Purtee said, yes. Chairman Joe Hafner said, I know some of the projects, like the University Heights, and stuff is that they just take a while. But, you know, our carryover fund seems to be growing. You know, it went from, you know, at the end of last 2024, the carryover was \$6,300,000 and now we're up to \$11,100,000. But I've noticed that there's several, I won't say several. There's a few projects on here, I've mentioned some of this before, like the 50 spot parking lot, the overlay back half of Loop Road at Craighead Forest. I mean, those have been on there a while, and we just keep carrying them over. I mean, when is some of this stuff going to be actually, the money spent and the project closed. I mean, it's good to have the money set back, but it's better, you know, get the project done when we can. I know stuff takes a while. I'm not saying, I'm not ignoring that fact. I'm just saying, it seems like our improvement fund's growing at a faster rate, then we're spending the money. Director Steve Purtee said, that's an excellent point Chairman Hafner. That is a review that our Engineering Department is assisting us with. The periodic look at the fund, the various projects, and then with the idea that if we decide we're not going to do something because of whatever reason relative to asphaltting the back half of the Loop Road or whatever at Craighead Forest, we would be able to have the opportunity to realign or reassign those. Obviously, the University Heights Trail is going to require a little more funding. Chairman Joe Hafner said, yeah, that's a long process. But it seems just some of this smaller, what I call smaller stuff, has been on here probably two or three years. It doesn't seem like there's much activity being done on it. Director Steve Purtee said, yeah, we have had discussions with the specific directors relative to a few items on this list, and you will see that we'll go through a process of realigning those as we conclude the year. And again, our Engineering Department has conducted earlier overview meetings with us, they'll continue to do that relative to this fund and how projects are going. Chairman Joe Hafner said, thank you.*

*Director Steve Purtee said, alright. So, I think the last bullet on this particular screen is relative to just our maintenance equipment and replacing that. You can see the trend here on the dollars relative to that. Let's go into this next, this is an overview of our franchise fee capital improvement revenue bond. As we talked about earlier, you'll recall that we approved a par value or par amount of \$17,595,000. Basically, at the end of our bond, we will repay that principal amount, and that will expire or satisfy those bonds that were issued. From that issuance, we had net issuance proceedings of \$17,417,000. Again, this is a schedule in our monthly financials, that you can kind of track that activity through the month as we go along. On to service that debt, it's going to take an annual debt payment of \$1,147,000 that does come from our franchise fees. And recall franchise fees are those fees that utilities pay the city relative for their use of our right-of-way, that city property. So, it's not a taxpayer dollar, it's a utility funded opportunity. And I think the mayor's letter referenced that as well. We always appreciate being able to address that, that we're able to accomplish these \$17,500,000 in projects utilizing funding from utility companies. And again, that just helps us expedite our process of capital improvement. And again, we talked about the three areas that we're focused on that were issued relative specific for that bond. The true interest cost of that bond is just under 5%. Recall this was issued in mid 2025. A final maturity of that bond is August 1st of 2055. It does have prepayment, opportunity after year 7 of the debt life. So, you know, obviously we will have those mechanisms in front of us if there are a considerable rate adjustments, that type of thing. If my fellow*

bank officer looked at the market today, he would tell us that a 30-year bond today is trading somewhere around 4.7%, 4.76% in that range. So again, we're about 20 bases points off of that, but obviously you have to choose a point in time when you have to issue the bond and that's exactly what we did. Now, obviously, if interest rates go considerably lower, where it makes it advantageous or economically feasible, we can always look at refinancing this debt obligation in a different market. Obviously, a 20 basis point improvement is not anything you refinance on. And, but again, we do have that opportunity after this prepayment window expires. Yes, sir, Dr. Coleman.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, in reference to that refinancing, my question is will we have to do that again? It's back with a question I asked earlier. It's like, we have a lot of things that we have not finished, start but have not finished. I think that if we ever have to refinance something to that caliber. I was hoping we would do it with the bond we approved even though I was for it but I'm hoping we get in a position that if we have to go that route again, that all these things that's behind that we've been doing for years and not finish will be taken care of, you know. This is a consideration statement that needed to be made from a council person, because we're always saying, we finished this but we didn't finish this. So we keep carrying over. Some things I think we have to carryover, but there's some things I think, it's like the sidewalks because you got a lot of sidewalks going no place as far as I'm concerned. You know, but that's just my personal opinion. It's good to have, but I think we have just really gone a little overboard. Director Steve Purtee said, I'm understanding your comment that there are a lot of other things that need to be done as well. And that's exactly correct. Unfortunately, as we've talked about, our revenue stream is very limited. The one utilization that we were able to do is take these franchise fees and compound those for \$17,500,000 in projects. That doesn't get everything as you've alluded to, but it gets an assortment of things that are on our schedule of needing to occur for our city. Again, obviously, those three things, we were moving along on one of them, and that is pedestrian trail connection. Obviously, our Caraway Road expansion was on the long horizon, not on the short horizon. Now it's on the short horizon. And then, obviously, our E-911 Safety Center, you know, while we issued our bond, and then we had this significant situation occur as well, that just kind of gave us that we had some forethought in what we were doing at that time to advance that facility. So, the one other thing that we would have available to us would be the issuance of a general sales tax relative to other programs and those types of things. And again, that's something that's always debated as to, you know, what would be able to be done relative to that revenue stream. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, well, I think as the community increases, our community is increasing, I think the census was totally wrong in the first place on how many people we have in Jonesboro. But I think the taxes that we already have, the increase of people that's coming into Jonesboro is probably going to satisfy some of that need. Director Steve Purtee said, and we have other very specific things that were part of this budget request, that we weren't able to do because there's not a dedicated revenue stream that would support that. So, we're hopeful that we can revisit some of these things. Again, maybe the first quarter of reviews, kind of that process, to springboard us into that conversation, and then looking at other resources that we might have available for revenue opportunities. Those are excellent points again.

Chairman Joe Hafner said, hey Steve, I have a question. On the additional, the remaining \$1,600,000, that's available for additional projects, etc. Is that \$1,600,000 also need to be spent in the next three years? Director Steve Purtee said, the bond program requires completion of those, that suit of projects within that three year window. Chairman Joe Hafner said, the \$1,600,000? Director Steve Purtee said, the \$1,600,000 is also including about, at this point, about \$300,000, about \$264,000 in interest earnings. So, we're growing that. Obviously, there's an arbitrage clause that

comes into play with this as well. At a 4.96% interest cost, we'll never have an arbitrage issue where we make more money than we spend relative to the interest costs. Chairman Joe Hafner said, I just got to think about that \$1,600,000 and if it was something that needs to be looked at, you know, sometime in 2026, early to mid 2026 just to see if we need to identify more projects that we need to get completed, in the next three years if that's the requirement of that \$1,600,000 is under, even though it's not one of the three identified projects. Director Steve Purtee said, we obviously, we anticipate increase in cost, of course. You know, that's, again, can we do an E-911 Public Safety Center for \$5,500,000. We think we can. That's what the projection is, but... Chairman Joe Hafner said, yeah, I'm just saying if there's any remaining funds. Director Steve Purtee said, exactly, yeah. Chairman Joe Hafner said, proceeds. When do they have to use by? What are some of the, you know, priorities that we have to use them on? Director Steve Purtee said, you're correct.

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, and Steve and councilman, I think I'd like to just make a comment here. Is that as we move forward with the budget, you know, we have a definite revenue stream, and with that revenue stream, Dr. Coleman, in essence, we are maxing out its potential to provide. And so, the additional increase with the nature of what's going on in the economy, from tariffs, and everything else, the outside industry is increasing faster than what our revenue is doing. And so those are the challenges that we are going to be facing as a city. And again, I think this budget is showing you that we are tight. And the projects that we will continue and we'll have Engineering present you on the updated projects, and where they're going, why they're delayed. He's got a whole layout of that sheet, and we're very much up on that. But the bottom line is, I think you and I both realize that we need additional revenue stream. We were presented last week with the firemen's potential for a long run long time range plan for them, that didn't come at free of cost. And so, we have to start phasing in and need to as a community. So, what this council is really going to need to help the administration and the community understand are the needs that we need to provide. First of all and foremost, I'm very prideful of our employees. They maintain a level for our community of service from Sanitation to Streets that are competitive to none. Bottom line. The resources to pay those individuals are very strapped, and so the 4%, which is, what, 400,008%, it's two and two. You know, that is a priority of this administration is to reward our employees for that work, because they are the frontline people. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, well, that's the reason I asked that question, but the other part of that is that projects, I'm not sure if this is tied to the employee pay or not, or are there projects that we can cut out now that we don't really need, number one, but are there also, I mentioned it a time before that even in our Engineering Department are there more people that we need to take care of what we need to do and get it done. Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, that's right. Okay. Thank you. Thank you Steve, I'm sorry.

Chairman Joe Hafner said, Can I just say one thing? I'm sorry, Steve. I know you're trying to get through your... But, you know, we talk about, you know, our sales tax all the time, and we know we have one of the lowest sales tax in the state. I mean, it is what it is, so, you know, when at work, you know, in the business world, when we look at revenue, you know, we always look at, okay, how come our revenue went up? How come our revenue went down? And there's really two components to revenue, right. There's your rate, how much you're charging for your product and your volume. So, you know, right now, I mean, the only way to get our rate change is an election. And, you know, that's always a chance you take there. The other way is volume. So as Dr. Coleman kind of alluded to, you know, we get our sales tax up through getting more volume coming through our stores, our restaurants, etc. And I think things have been done to help drive that volume up. I mean, just little things like the improved trails out



at Craighead Forest Park. I mean, you got people coming here all the time from out of town now to ride our trails. You know, the RAC, the Ridge Athletic Center is going to be huge. Hopefully in 2027, you know, we see a nice increase from that volume. But I'm just saying, our sales tax, our 1% city tax, it is what it is right now, but we've got to keep improving our city, other ways to get people coming here. You know, if the mall, you know the people that brought the mall, somehow the mall reopens, you know, or more stores were open. I mean, that's going to be nothing but coming here, I mean, we're pretty lucky that our revenue stayed kind of flat when we had no mall. So, people don't come here to shop like they used to. I mean, we have a lot of nice stores and strip malls and standalone places, but I think we've been really fortunate to be able to have the results that we've had the last, you know, five years, you know, since the tornado. When was the tornado 2020? Yeah, it was 2020. So, anyway, I'll be quiet for a little bit.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman. Chairman Joe Hafner said, yes sir. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, kind of along those lines, and the mayor said this and made a good point, and I've thought about it. Conway just had an election, and I was reading a lot of what Conway said, which is similar to what the mayor said. I mean, you need \$70,000,000 dollars in economic activity to come up with \$700,000 or whatever. I mean, that's unbelievable. I mean, granted, Target might do \$70,000,000, but if somebody opens a boutique that does \$400,000, I mean, you're going to have 140 boutiques open in the next 12 months, and even if we do, we're only going to get \$700,000. And everybody faces that challenge, right. And we're lucky. John and I were talking about this, I mean, Conway suffers when Searcy gets a Target, and Conway suffers when Russellville gets an Academy, and fortunately, we don't have some of those same sufferings from the towns around us. But this is a loaded question that I have no idea what the answer is to, but I know we're doing some long-range planning. When we look at 3,000 lots that'll come online in Valley View in the coming years, maybe 300 houses a year over 10 years. How do we look at the economic impact of that, as far as what those sales tax dollars are versus what services we'll have to run out to Valley View? And I know part of that is the conversation we'll have around impact fees and stuff, but do we have any thoughts about what a resident contributes in sales tax dollars versus how those services grow? Director Steve Purtee said, the only thing that we are able to concretely look at, and that is our run rate, if you will, relative to our market. Our run rate on an annual basis considering our 1% local tax, is about \$2,600,000,000. When you compare that to the other five larger cities, if you will, our run rate is about third and fourth position, depending on how Conway is doing and Rogers occasionally. Really those are... We're kind of neck and neck with those three cities. Those three cities are kind of neck and neck relative to that run road. The one thing, again, that they have going for them is their run rate at about \$2,600,000,000 produces another stream of revenue because their rate is 2%. Instead of 1%. But relative to that, then looking at it based on residential values, what a homeowner brings relative to the spending power, we certainly anticipate that every household that happens, every door that opens and is approved, becomes part of that run rate to increase that \$2,600,000,000. Obviously, it will sustain a little bit as far as what that looks like, and relative to a comparison of the cost, the infrastructure costs that we, the city have to maintain to do that. That's a real good question, and I could probably ask our Planning Department to kind of help us with some of that statistical analysis if we'd like to see that. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, when does the impact fee study come back? I know that's a little bit outside of what we're talking about here, but it is and it isn't. Director Steve Purtee said, I'm not aware of that answer, so we can... Planning Department Director Derrel Smith said off camera at his seat, the first of the year.

*Chairman Joe Hafner said, I said I'd be quiet, but I just to throw one more thing out there that I think, you know, as Charles always says, the public needs to hear be reminded of. Every one of those cities that you mentioned also have, I believe, also have sanitation fees that the residents pay and general property taxes. We have no sanitation fees, that's \$5,500,000 \$6,000,000 budget and all our property taxes are earmarked for specific items, we have no general property tax. So, we're doing a lot on the 1%, plus the share of the county that we get. So that's not a small, small task so. Councilmember Brian Emison said, it's a challenge.*

*Councilmember Ann Williams said, this has come up before about sanitation fees that apartment complexes get free sanitation, and some cities don't provide that. Even if they provide sanitation, free sanitation services to residents but they don't, that doesn't apply to complexes. And I think there's been plenty that's been brought up before, there's a lot of pushback on it, but it's something I think people need to be aware of that that is not generally done providing it free sanitation services to basically a business which is what a complex is. Chairman Joe Hafner said, I've looked, and not to get too far off topic, but I think it's a good discussion. You know, back in 2000, I think, when our sales tax was passed, North Little Rock passed a sales tax, you know, about the same time, and they also gave up sanitation fees for residents, for residential. But they've continued to charge, because I called down there one time. They've continued to charge their apartment complexes. I mean, because you know, they consider apartment complexes commercial units, you know, it's a business, like Miss Williams said. I went through one time, I think I got a spreadsheet from, you know, the Sanitation Department, and, you know, kind of put some rates, you know, according to what service they got since I kind of know a little bit about that. And I think, you know, it was about, you know, this is probably six, seven years ago. It was like \$1,500,000 a year of free service that we were given to apartment complexes. And any other city in the state, they would be paying that. Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, well, councilman, I think you remember when back in maybe 2021 or 2022, we did a study on the cost of the sanitation and the services that we provide to the community and the cost to the city to do so. That's why we've made those initiatives to have the neighborhood cleanups and things like that on monthly basis. Of course, they're not going to save a whole lot, but we're also paying the tipping fees for our community as well at the sanitation facilities. And so, again, it's an internal cost that we pay for the community. And again, we can bring that study back out, I think it'd be good to look at again. Chairman Joe Hafner said, I think last time I looked at the sanitation fees, you saw like, you know, when we go to the landfill and we show our driver's license, you know, we're like, great, that's free. Well, the city gets charged that. That's correct. And I haven't looked at the spreadsheet in a while, but I think it for some reason \$250,000 a year or something, sticks in my head, I don't know. It may be, that number may be way off, but once again, another benefit that our residents receive, that they may not be aware that the city pays for. All right. Go ahead, Steve. Sorry.*

*Director Steve Purtee said, I appreciate that. One thing that, you know, Brian and I were comparing notes real quickly there, you know, Councilmember Bryant, if you think about that 3,000 household neighborhood, you know, pick the number of what that spending power might be, call it \$50,000 for math purposes, over an annual period that produces about \$1,500,000 on that 3,000 unit neighborhood in sales tax at \$500 coming off of a \$50,000 spend. So, can we service a 3,000 unit neighborhood for a \$1,500,000? I don't think so, but you know, someone would have to lay down the analysis for us to kind of consider that. Again, I think that's just, again, reminding us of how expensive it is, our infrastructure, relative to serving our communities and that's before we think about sanitation costs. Chairman Joe Hafner said, public safety cost. Director Steve Purtee said, yeah, public safety costs. Chairman Joe Hafner said,*

streets. Director Steve Purtee said, so again, it kind of seems like we're... Councilmember LJ Bryant said, yeah, and I think just staying ahead of it, I mean, the Bentonville headline, I mean, Bentonville, you know, just got a \$250,000,000 loan from Alice Walton. Now granted, they own the utility company and they had a sewer problem. We don't own the sewer system, but just staying ahead of that day and hopefully in 10 or 20 years from now, somebody else doesn't have a problem, because we didn't do what we needed to do you know. Director Steve Purtee said, exactly. Yeah. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, we'll all be gone by the time that happens. Director Steve Purtee said, that is true. Chairman Joe Hafner said, you're still a young man. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, well not dead, but maybe just not here.

Director Steve Purtee said, this slide here, basically, we just kind of want to recap our restricted revenue replacement fund. Again, you know, we knew this as ARPA until the end of 2025 or 2024 rather. So we have about \$582,000 in that fund. Again, there's a specific schedule that outlines this as well in our financial packet. We did have a request for upgrading our tornado siren system by Director Sturch. And that system is in dire need of the transition to a digital radio set up, but also there are four areas that aren't what he calls adequately covered relative to that. This is about \$261,000 that we are planning to appropriate from the revenue, restrictive revenue replacement fund. We'll have a, obviously, we'll have a resolution for this as that comes about later after the beginning of the new year. If that is approved after the City Council's actions, that'll leave us about \$321,000 in this fund at that point. Here's kind of that reserve analysis, Dr. Coleman, that we were alluding to earlier. You know, it basically, it just shows the four various funds that, while we may have assigned the funds relative to capital improvement or depreciation fund, if necessary for whatever reason, our City Council could unassign those funds and reassign them somewhere else. In theory, that makes them available as a reserve function. So that gives us just under \$30,000,000 forecasted at the end of the year. But again, \$17,000,000 of that \$30,000,000 has already been assigned, we would have to unassign that. So again, that gives us about \$13,000,000 available in that regard. Considering all of that, we have unappropriated reserves of about \$20,000,000 after we consider our \$9,800,000 restricted reserve or required reserve rather. And you'll recall that the required reserve is an indication by the Municipal League and the Government Finance Office where they say you should have one to two months on reserve that is required. And so, you can see in this category here that our required reserves are about 1.8 months of serving the city at \$5,400,000 annual spend out of our general fund. And then the unappropriated portion of that is about two months worth of spend. So all in all our \$20,000,000 will satisfy our current spend at about 3.8 months, so we're well ahead of the one to two month category. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, do we draw interest off that money? Director Steve Purtee said, yes, sir. All of our funds are held in a bank and they're currently earning a 2.8% interest. Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, and that is on all accounts, councilmen. Checking accounts. Every account.

Councilmember Kevin Miller said, yeah, I'm just trying to clarify so I can keep it straight keep in big numbers. We have X amount in the reserves. Part of that is earmark for certain things. We also have a 15% that we require for reserves from that. Clarify to me again, I'm looking at a lot of numbers. How much do we have that is unrestricted, not by our self-imposed 15%, and what's recommended, or not earmarked for another project? How much are we anticipating having in reserves at the end of the year? Or even this year? Director Steve Purtee said, if you take, from this slide here, if you take the general fund of \$12,500,000, and you take the \$200,000 street fund, that gives you about, call it \$12,500,000. Councilmember Kevin Miller said, the street fund is restricted simply for streets. To me, I'm assuming that is a restricted fund. So take that one out of the equation. Director Steve Purtee, you can do that. So

\$12,500,000 still, because the street fund's only \$170,000 projected, because we, basically, we spend everything we can, and then some needed relative to supporting our street programming. Councilmember Kevin Miller said, so we have, after we take out our reserves, we're holding everything back, we have \$12,000,000 unrestricted? Director Steve Purtee said, we have \$12,000,000, but then you have \$9,300,000 restricted. So, in theory it gives you, call it \$4,000,000. Councilmember Kevin Miller said, \$4,000,000 that's unrestricted for any other earmarked project. Director Steve Purtee said, correct. But again, in addition to that, you have nearly \$18,000,000 that's just been assigned, that again, our City Council can unassign it. Councilmember Kevin Miller said, yeah, that's earmarked for something else. So, we have ballpark about \$4,000,000 that's not assigned or not restricted to anything. Director Steve Purtee said, that's correct.

Councilmember Brian Emison said, Steve, I'll piggyback just a little bit on your previous statement. You know the interest rate that we're getting on that, of course, what was that 2.85%? Director Steve Purtee said, 2.8%. Councilmember Brian Emison said, okay, 2.8% for liquid funds and being fully FDIC collateralized, that's saying something in today's market. So, I mean, everything to be liquid. From the reserve fund standpoint, and as often as we have to dip into that, would there be an opportunity for us to, I don't necessarily know the rules surrounding reserve funds as it pertains to the municipality itself. But have we ever taken a look at doing any kind of short term CDs to put, even if we just took, let's say 25% of the reserve fund, I mean, some of the specials that are out there today, which you still have to figure in collateralization to accompany it, so lower it probably by 7 to 10 basis points on that. Those are still in the high threes. Is there an opportunity there for us to be able to get a better return on our funds that are sitting around? Director Steve Purtee said, the short answer is yes. And, we, you know, it's been a few years now, but our current provider has always provided us about 100 basis points below the fed curve in yield on our accounts. They're completely liquid. They're 105% insured, and so you know, that was some of the factors that we considered relative to that. When we did look at this about three years ago, we really didn't have any institutions that were interested in that, because of the collateralization and obviously the interest markets have changed a little bit since then. At that time, I was recalling, you know, 4% rates, those types of things. So, you know, we were earning quite healthy on our funds then. We can look at that. That's a great point for us to, if we did nothing, at least we've done our analysis and make sure that we are considering that. Now, again, our current provider also does all of our services free of charge, so there are no fees for any wire, not wire, ACH activities or anything like that. No check costs, nothing. No monthly service charge, anything. Councilmember Brian Emison said, and once again, I applaud the 2.8%. I think that's a great rate for where we stand today, and I would hate to cannibalize that rate or to upset the apple cart if you will if we have the 2.8% based off of certain criteria and that's also earning us no fee structure or anything else on any kind of account analysis fees there. I just didn't know, necessarily with the reserves, how they stood or if that was overarching umbrella for the full financial picture in our agreement with our current provider. Director Steve Purtee said, we will look at that. That's a great point. Councilmember Brian Emison said, sure. Thank you. Director Steve Purtee said, any other discussions about reserve?

These next few slides here just basically kind of lay out our current budget compared to previous budget. Obviously, you can see some of the revenue differences here. Obviously, the one that stands out on this page are franchise fees. And again, that's simply a function of moving \$1,100,000 into our capital improvement bond for that debt service. We do that on a monthly basis. We move over just under \$96,000 into our capital improvement bond fund, and it's held at First Security Bank, who is our bond

trustee, in Little Rock and they're assisting us with that. And the current yield on those funds is 3.6%. So that's even a better rate than what we're getting on our checking account today. So, there is an opportunity for those funds to be earning as well while they're coming out of our general fund, they're going into that bond fund. Obviously, our payment is due every August, and so that fund gets zapped every August to make that annual payment. The other thing on here, basically fines, miscellaneous, those types of things. Permits and fees. We take the current year trend, we forecast that revenue, and then we apply a 2% growth. So, obviously, permits and fees, we've seen some activities there that maybe the year over year trend was a little bit different, but then after applying our 2% growth, it still comes in slightly under our budget projection from the previous year. So again, that's just something that we manage and monitor through our process here. Again, the grid here kind of shows the makeup. As we alluded to before, our sales tax routine makeup, we call it 70%, it's more like 68%, the actual makeup of our revenue stream. So again, 70% of our revenue comes from sales tax that supports about almost 70% of our public safety sector as well, we'll see on a future slide here.

Speaking of, here's a, basically, a chart that shows by type of expenditures. Again, personnel is the line share of the increase here again, and that is basically an indication of our 4% increase in salaries, 2% step, 2% cost of living adjustment. Chairman Joe Hafner said, hey, Steve, quick question on the expenditures. I know, you know, historically, we've always compared it to budget, you know, the prior year budget. You know, when you look at projecting out the rest of this year, do you have any concerns that the 2026 budget needs to be adjusted in certain areas based upon our projection, rather than just looking back at last year's budget or do you feel comfortable with it, that things are kind of in line? Director Steve Purtee said, we feel good about that. Again, you know, obviously, when you start layering on capital improvements, you know, that takes a big chunk out of the general and the street fund. And then again, the 4% is, you know, it's a run of about 400,000 per 4%, so you know, we've got that in here as well. But as far as after that, some of what we're seeing on some of the differences is basically challenging our directors to look at fixed assets a little closer, those things that looking in those categories. And those are the primary ones we're seeing are coming in under budget, which are supporting some of the cost increases relative to higher equipment, parts, and labor and those types of things. We're not seeing anything that is alarming. Chairman Joe Hafner said, yeah, I guess the one example I can think of is last year when the 2025 budget was done, you know, the whole self-insured group insurance was a brand new thing. So, you know, as you looked at this year's budget, or next year's budget, you know, did you base it upon kind of how things are running and the lag and you know, how you know, being, you know, ten months into it now, do you still feel good that the 2026 for group insurance is an adequate budget? Director Steve Purtee said, yes, we do. And again, our planned manager, Hatcher Agency, always cautions us specifically the Finance Department because we're the ones that are real quick to say, "Is this going okay?" And they always caution us that, year one, you're just getting your feet under you. Year two, you begin to see some routines and activities. Year three, is when you really start being able to analyze that. Chairman Joe Hafner said, yeah, because when you're fully insured, you don't have to worry about the lag and any of that stuff. Because we're self-insured where I work and you know, you can have claims coming in, you know, well after the end of the year, you know, before that year, almost sometimes for the year before. So just, I know it's a learning experience. That's why I just wanted to ask, make sure we were, you felt good about it. Director Steve Purtee said, we feel good about it. It's a liability at this point of about \$1,500,000, but that's through 12 months of activity, and we've still got premium routines coming in, obviously from our deductions and the city match. And then we will begin to see some of that lag come in

*in the February March time frame, and that's when we'll be able to look more heavily at it. And when we look at that same \$1,500,000 exposure, if we had stayed fully insured that exposure would have climbed up to \$5,500,000 \$6,000,000.*

*This is our last slide here. Basically, we look at our department categories, and we line this up here. And again, in our public safety sector for both our fire and police, we're just under 60% relative to that. So again, those are the key areas there. Parks and Recreation, while you see a slight decline here, actually in the Street Department as well. That's more a function of Parks Department managing part-time salaries. Looks like they're planning to manage those better for 2026, as well as they came in with a lower ask on depreciation or fixed asset cost, those types of things. And that's similar for highways and street as well. Chairman Joe Hafner said, so it looks like fixed assets were down like almost \$200,000. Director Steve Purtee said, yes, they are overall. Chairman Joe Hafner said, compared to last year for Parks.*

*Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, alright, I have a question. Director Steve Purtee said, yes sir. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, on the law enforcement part of it, is our projection from a nationwide or the projection from surrounding counties on possibly hiring more officers, that type of thing? I guess basically, how far have you projected from the financial standpoint of maybe hiring more people? Director Steve Purtee said, we prepare our budget based on fully staffed. So, we base our budget for law enforcement specifically, that's the question, as if our departments are fully staffed. I think Chief Elliot will indicate that that's something to aspire to be, but it doesn't always happen. So relative to that, we expect that department will be fully staffed and that that will take care of, from a budget perspective, that possibly will take care of some of this increasing that you're talking about. And so... Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, well, I guess I look at the fact of Jonesboro growing. I'm not sure. I'm sure the chief can answer that question better than any of us, but from a five-year perspective, possibly how many more officers do you think we'd need? Police Department Chief Rick Elliot approached the podium and said, thank you for that question Dr. Coleman. The same question was opposed to me by another council member. As Mr. Purtee related to becoming fully staff is the problem. Across the country right now law enforcement faces a concern of finding qualified people to go to work. It's not just a problem here, it's a problem across country. Today, I am 15 short. I've got five, maybe six in the backgrounds for higher later this month. We process over 350 application last year and I got 10. So, finding that qualified applicant by the set of standards that we have in place for an applicant. What I look for in an applicant, I'm not going to take just a body to fill a slot. I have certain criteria that I look for as in most agencies do. So, during my tenure as chief, going on 12 years, we have been fully staffed for two weeks. That's it. So, that is our struggle. Yes, the city's growing. Yes, I'd like for those numbers to grow at some point. If we ever get to the point of fully staffed and staying fully staffed, then that is certainly something we'll look at, and I will be glad to come to the council and go hey we're at the move to ask. When I hit that point, there is some federal money out there, these cops for hire grants, that will pay 70% of those salaries for the first three years and then we pick up the rest. We've been successful in those grants in the past, but I can't apply for that grant until I get fully staffed from where I'm at. So, I know there's some opportunities out there, but I got to get people in the door first, fill up what I have in place, and then we'll go from there. But it's just getting to that point with qualified people is the struggle not only here, but anywhere, any chief or sheriff you talk to anywhere in the country, that is the current struggle.*

*Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Chief, I know you talked about this once and my memory short. I mean, I know just the way it works in any profession, people don't*

*stick to any kind of job anymore the way they used to. People used to stay forever. So, what does it typically look like in a year? How many veterans do you lose versus how many people do you on board? When you already have the vacancies, I guess it's just hard for these things to go up, right? Chief Rick Elliot said, so, it is. It's a, you know, our patrol division, biggest part of our patrol division, is five years or less out of 130 something people in patrol. They have five years or less of experience. So, what we're facing here in the next two years, the upper level of our department, including most of our command staff, we're going to be retiring. So, we're, you know, I'm at a point of trying to get the upcoming rank trained in leadership skills and those things ready to move up and take our place. So that's the struggle, is keeping the senior people here, which we've done a good job, but you know what, they're at the point of retiring out. And this year, we have six eligible to retire, whether they do or not, don't know, the next year that number will be eight. So, you know, we're going to be losing a lot of experience over the next few years. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, what's the sweets spot? Once you keep somebody, what amount of time do you usually get to keep them for a long? Chief Rick Elliot said, well, you know, right now, prior to implementing our health and wellness program, we were losing them at three to four years. What these officers see day in and day out on the street, sometimes it's they get PTSD. It's hard to process, the death and destruction. The things they have to face on the daily basis. By implementing out health and wellness program over a year ago, that has had a huge impact on our retention. So, it's recognizing things like that, taking care of your own within, by those means. Not everything's salary related. You know, we did a study several years ago with ASU, and health and wellness ranked above salary. I'm not saying salary is not important, but that health wellness was ranked higher. So, we do have that in place. That is a mechanism that has paid off for seeing huge dividends. The Fire Department's looking for the same thing right now. They're facing the same issues that these firemen, they roll up on the scenes, they're dealing things. You know, these young firemen, police officers that come in at 21 years old. It's more than they can process over a period of time. You see a lot over a short period of time. And, you know, average person in your lifetime, you may have eight to ten traumatic events in your lifetime, and a policeman or fireman will have, you know, 800 plus. So mentally, it's kind of taxing on the individuals, and that's why we had a burnout rate at four and five, but if we can help them process these things and get through that, we're seeing longer retention. So, it works for the most part, there are still those that after a few bad incidents, they just throw their hands up and like, I can go work elsewhere, make more money and not have to deal with this.*

*Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, you know, I think chief, to over the last, almost half a decade now, we've really invested, and worked well with the department on the mental illness aspect. Also the time frame, five on four off. As I continue to listen to the officers in here, I mean, they want to come back to work, and so it provides the pride. But one thing area that council has, and I want y'all to be aware, we train these officers now more than other communities are eligible or ability, or have ability, to train their officers. And so, they really appreciate that because now they're training within themselves more and they're qualified more to do their job. Chief Rick Elliot said, you're absolutely right mayor. And training is always a big issue, especially when it comes to lawsuits. The training always comes up. We exceed, probably more than any agency in the state, because we have built in, for our patrol, every month they're doing six hours of training. That's built in. The state only requires 24 hours of training a year. So, we do six hours a month, so we exceed that, plus these officers have other opportunities to go to different classes throughout the year. We exceed that level, equipment wise, here we are in budgeting. We had a good budget year last year, a good budget year this year, so I will stack up our equipment against any other agency in the state. I think we meet or beat what anybody else has in place.*

*Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I think the mental health part is more exciting to me, because the PTS thing is not, people think it's just for military people but it's for... Chief Rick Elliot said, no it's the same. Anything that's traumatizing to the individual, you know, face it, you'll roll up in these scenes or you go to death cases, it's disturbing and you see that over and over and over, you know, it weighs heavy on you. And then you start getting kids involved, and you know, it takes a toll on people. And the average citizen has, doesn't really realize that that aspect of policing. So, our chaplain program that Dr. Coleman's a part of, that has been very beneficial, the health and wellness. So, again, we're one of the first in the state to kind of get this up and running, and others have looked at what we're doing and why and the benefit of it. So it's now becoming a trend across the country that everybody's jumping into it. And I just had this conversation with Dewayne Douglas today and it's like hey we'll try doing this city wide. So you know, there's other things that, out there that will benefit our employees, and now that the Fire Department's embracing the concept and looking at the rest of the city, applaud the mayor and staff for broadening that scope and having seen the importance of this and the benefits of it. As the mayor said, you're always looking to take care of the employees the best way we can. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I think the City Council needs some of that too. Chief Rick Elliot said, well, maybe. Once we get it in place we'll be there. But, the short answer to the question of adding staff, yeah, if we can get fully staffed, that day comes, I will be the first to come up and go, hey, we're here and yes, I am ready to move forward. Trust me, I will not miss that opportunity. You know me well enough.*

*Chief Administrative Officer Brian Richardson approached the podium and said, I just want to add something that Chief Elliot is probably too proud to say in his own support, but you know, when you look at the number of police officers that we have on staff, and the fact that we're 15 short, that's nothing more than testimonial to him and his department. Being able to manage such a transitional workforce, you know, with what all we've seen across the state in the salary wars and the races there to be less than 10% short of our total staffing. I would take that in a lot of city departments as we stand today. As far as, you know, your actual absentee rate in open positions. Just a pat on the back to he and HR and Finance and administration for working closely with both the police and fire department, really all our departments, and making sure that we do everything within our limited powers to be able to entice people to come here and stay here. Just like to pat chief on the back for those efforts and appreciate Council for a lot of the resources to make those efforts happen whenever it's financial things, but when it comes to recruiting and talking people in to staying, that's all those guys.*

*Chairman Joe Hafner said, we've got about five more minutes. Does anybody up here on the Council have any questions regarding the budget or comments?*

*Councilmember John Street said, I would like to say something. We're talking about making sure people understand something. We only get one cent sales tax. We get a heck of a return on that one cent as citizens here for that investment. And I think the staff does a great job of managing those funds. We all would like to see more thi*

**Filed**

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

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



**Aye:** 4 - Charles Coleman; Ann Williams; John Street and Brian Emison

**Absent:** 2 - David McClain and Anthony Coleman