



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

5:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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

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

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION

3. ROLL CALL (ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE) INITIATED AND CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

Present 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

5. CONSENT AGENDA

[MIN-26:009](#)

MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JANUARY 20, 2026

Attachments: [CC Minutes 01202026.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Gibson, seconded by Councilperson Brian Emison, that this Minutes be Passed . The motion PASSED BY VOICE VOTE

Aye: 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

RESOLUTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED

[RES-26:007](#)

RESOLUTION TO SET JUDGES, CLERKS AND ALTERNATE WORKERS FOR THE 2026 CITY, WATER AND LIGHT ELECTION

Councilmember John Street asked to be recused from voting and discussion on RES-26:007 due to the fact that he serves on the CWL Board of Directors.

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

Aye: 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

Recused: 1 - John Street

Enactment No: R-EN-025-2026

[RES-26:008](#)

A RESOLUTION TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE ABANDONMENT OF A DRAINAGE EASEMENT LOCATED IN PART OF LOT 5R OF THE SECOND ADDITION OF BLOCK C, SOUTHERN HILLS, JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

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

Aye: 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

Enactment No: R-EN-026-2026

6. NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING

[ORD-26:004](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-1 TO RS-7 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1306 CHARLES DR. AS REQUESTED BY WESTON WAGNER.

- Attachments:** [App_1306CharlesDr](#)
 [Staff Report- RZ-26-01](#)
 [MailReceipts_1306CharlesDr](#)
 [Rezoning MAPC 1.13.26](#)
 [Receipt](#)

Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember Chris Moore to suspend the rules and offer ORD-26:004 by title only. All voted aye.

Held at one reading

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING

[ORD-26:001](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, ARTICLE III, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, PROVIDING FOR A CHANGE IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM R-1 SINGLE FAMILY MEDIUM DENSITY DISTRICT TO C-3 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 2620 ALEXANDER, JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, AS REQUESTED BY PAULA THOMPSON

Attachments: [App 2620Alexander](#)
[MailReceipts 2620Alexander](#)
[Staff Summary RZ 26-02](#)
[Rezoning MAPC 1.13.26](#)
[Receipt](#)

Councilmember Brian Emison said, Mayor, I do have a question on this item. Actually, if I could have Derrel Smith come up. We were going to discuss the possibility of the 25 ft. buffer regarding this property. Planning Director Derrel Smith said, at the Planning Commission meeting, one of the requirements and I didn't see it made the minutes, so I wanted to make sure that it got on the record, was that one of the conditions was that it kept a 25 foot natural buffer along all the residential sides of the property. And so we just wanted to make sure that got in the record. Mayor Copenhaver asked, that is in there? Mr. Smith said yes, sir. Councilman Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I do have a question. I know that one of the property owners next to them were talking or had discussion with that property owner about the rezoning, and I know they had some questions as it relates to the overlay. Is that the same thing you all were just talking about? Mr. Smith said, it's not. This is in the overlay district so it will have additional requirements. It'll have building design standards. It'll have additional landscaping and it'll have signage requirements that normal C-3 will not have.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, so, if this citizen, this property owner next to them, is having discussions about it, would that necessarily... I guess I'm answering my own question. But... I was wondering if it would make a difference with this actual ordinance itself and that type. Mr. Smith said, the actual ordinance is for C-3, it doesn't, and it allows anything that's in the C-3 zoning. There is no, no limited use overlay with this ordinance. It was, they did ask about it at the Planning Commission. The representative at the time was not able to speak with the clients, and so he asked that it go forward as C-3 and the Planning Commission went ahead and since it does meet the Land Use Plan, they went ahead and forwarded it to City Council. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman responded, gotcha. Thank you.

Councilmember Kevin Miller said, I just want to follow up on that. And I know I spoke to you earlier, if we still have another reading on this, if they do come back and want to propose an overlay, would that require this whole ordinance to go back again and start over? Or could it just be amended? And that may be a legal question. City Attorney Carol Duncan said, and I may want to take a look at that. That was posed to me right before we started. I mean, I do think that's somewhat of a significant change, but it might not have to go all the way back to first reading, because it's becoming more restrictive versus less restrictive on the property. But if there's an agreement between the parties, we might hold it at third reading for one more time, just so everybody knows what the limited use overlay is that it's proposed, but I don't. Mr. Smith said, right, I would like to see what would be proposed as far as the agreement. Ms. Duncan said, to see how big a change it is. Councilmember Miller stated, give them opportunity, within reason, if they're going to do this overlay, what are the changes, but also having an opportunity. Ms. Duncan said, for people to come and speak if they want to speak on it. So it might need to stay at least one more time at third reading, it might not have to go all the way back to first. But I would need to see what the changes are that are being recommended.

My name is Cheryl Rogers, 2815 Wood Street. I live adjacent to the property, and I am the one who emailed all of you today. I'm sorry, Derrel, I didn't get a chance to include you in that email. We did have a discussion with Dustin White, the realtor, this morning

just to open discussions. Maybe they would be open to an overlay was my understanding. And so I wanted to let you know that, that hopefully, we can come to some kind of agreement that would be satisfactory to all of us in what we could live with with that. So, that's it. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you.

Held at second reading

[ORD-26:002](#)

AN ORDINANCE FOR THE APPROVAL OF A PRIVATE CLUB PERMIT FOR MONARCA'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT, LLC

Attachments: [Application Redacted](#)
[Lease Agreement](#)
[Receipt](#)

Held at second reading

[ORD-26:003](#)

AN ORDINANCE FOR THE APPROVAL OF A PRIVATE CLUB PERMIT FOR WALK-ON'S SPORTS BISTREAUX

Attachments: [Application Redacted](#)
[Lease Agreement](#)

Held at second reading

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

Mayor Harold Copenhaver reported on the following:

So, good evening, everyone, and I want to start my remarks tonight with something I feel sure everyone can agree on. It sure is good to have a milder temperature outside and see that ice and snow is melting away. We appreciate those who were patient and understanding when we made a decision to close a municipal building for a few days, for the safety of as many citizens and staff as possible. Of course, we have the staff warriors, who still must get in the middle of the discomfort and danger of a big winter storm. I want to talk about their contributions. The type of snow and ice we were subject to is the kind that's the most difficult to deal with. If you prepare the roads too soon, the sand mixture can blow off. If you have ice under the snow, you can't scrape off the ice. And when you basically have an ice and snow sandwich, in most places, the snow plows can't do so much. Which they did. Our street crews were out 12 to 16 hours a day for a while, and we appreciate Steve Tippett, and I don't know if he's in the room or not. I appreciate your crew, and, of course, I always enjoy visiting with them during that time, but they're steadily at work, and they do a tremendous job. So we appreciate, and we appreciate the community, because you had patience. Now, driving a sanitation collection route is a whole lot and it's a different story in itself. And coming off of the Martin Luther King Day holiday started an unusual collection route a day late. So, the combination, certainly tested the patience of some residents. Those of you saw the sanitation department in action, know the difficulty of the job, and I'd be remiss in not thanking them as well. A snow and ice storm, like we experienced, presents serious personnel safety challenges to everyone, and our Police Department, Fire Department, E-911 Center, stayed constantly busy. The work was extraordinarily. The cold took toll on heating units, and many of the those used for proper precautions with space heaters, fireplaces, electric blankets, and even kitchen stoves resulted in an increase in calls to the Fire Department. E-911 stay busy dispatching all those emergency calls as well. Meantime, our community center was serving as warming

shelters during the day, while our JET Service transported those in need to warming shelters. Later, if needed, they received rides to the Salvation Army for a place to stay overnight. When JET buses weren't available, Jonesboro PD stepped up to help.

Speaking of dedicated employees, I want to acknowledge and congratulate a coworker who retired yesterday after 41 years of service. That's what I thought. Steve Kent. We want to wish Steve wonderful years in his retirement, 41 years in that office in Finance. That's quite a commitment to our city. So, thank you, Steve, and I'll miss seeing all your work every day.

On January 19th, I was honored to speak at the Martin Luther King Day ceremony on ASU campus, which was preceded by a parade. Now we're into February and observing Black History Month. I'd be remiss if I didn't say I look forward to the day soon. I hope when the E. Boone Watson Center is fully open. The center is a historical hub for recognizing important contributions and breakthroughs in the African American history in Jonesboro.

You may have seen, in the news recently, that \$3.5 million in federal appropriations were signed into law by the President. Now, that comes to the City of Jonesboro, to the E-911 Real Time Crime Center needs. It's been a long wait, but we're very excited. I want to thank our senator, John Boozeman, for his tenacity and diligence, in seeing this funding through as well as Congressman Crawford and Senator Cotton.

I want to close with some wonderful news, and I'll move forward because I have further comments. Today, from the Jonesboro Unlimited and Chamber of Commerce. InnvoAsian Cuisine Enterprise, Incorporated, will build a state of the art, frozen food manufacturing facility in Jonesboro, Arkansas. This is a major development. It will create approximately 200 jobs strengthening the region's position as a vibrant hub for food manufacturing. The foods will be found in grocery freezer aisles nationwide, making it easy to bring family, favorite Asian dishes to the table, with restaurant inspired flavors. The company says the new facility will significantly increase production capacity for its high growth, multi-serve entree line, supporting the company's continued growth in the U.S. market. President and CEO, Joe Kent, says the new Jonesboro facility will allow the company to meet growing demand for high quality cuisine while creating meaningful jobs in our community. The facility will be about 175,000 square feet located in Craighead Technology Park. I was very pleased and honored to be a part of the conversation early on, and the commitment of Jonesboro is very important on the reason why they're here. After the competitive multi-state search, citing speed to the market, a skilled workforce, and a strong local and state supporters, were key factors. Governor Sanders commented that Arkansas was proud to be a state where farm products are turned into value added food and tables across the United States, and that's something we all believe in.

So, I'm bringing my comments to a close. Council and the City of Jonesboro, I'm here before you tonight, to make comments. In two weeks ago, binders were presented at the last meeting, and they warrant review. Several people have mentioned they'd like to hear my side. Which I interpret to mean, they would like to know more of the facts involving City Stars. So, I've spent some time confirming facts that dispel some of the misperceptions and misunderstandings. The Jonesboro City Stars Booster Club was organized as a private, nonprofit organization, and registered with the Arkansas Secretary of State in December of 2001. Organized as an independent entity, it had its own members, and finances, and was led by a city employee. City Parks Director, Jason Wilkie, was the original registered agent. Look it up. The original agreement between the City of Jonesboro and City Stars Booster Club was approved by City

Council in 2004. That contract established mutual agreements, including, including the goal of providing athletics at no cost for Jonesboro youth. And working together to do so. It also outlined the use and maintenance of city parks and fields, among other things, such as a declaration that the City Stars Booster Club shall operate its own concession stand. And all revenues generated from such use shall belong to and be for the sole and exclusive use of the City Stars. From the very start, their revenue was their money, their business, not the cities. Look it up. In the spring in 2025, members of the Arkansas Revolution Football Club, a subsidiary, nonprofit, organization of City Stars, organized for the Revolution travel teams met with me and proposed a creation of a new private entity to oversee all youth soccer in Jonesboro. Despite maintaining independence from city control and oversight, the proposal sought public funding of \$500,000 annually, which would have covered \$190,000 in non-coach payroll and another \$125,000 for coaches. The proposal is FOIAble from the city. Look it up. Shortly after that meeting, Matt Daniels resigned. In his resignation letter, he stated, in his incorrect beliefs, that, one, the city controlled the City Stars budget. It did not. And two, the city was already spending a large portion of the \$500,000 in the proposal he and others made to me. The city was spending zero. Look it up. In April 2025, the entire board of the Arkansas Revolution Football Club issued a joint resignation letter. And stated, they're incorrect understanding that the City of Jonesboro has city employees to run various programs under the City Stars umbrella. The Arkansas Revolution Football Club Board said they presented City Stars financial statements to my office, requesting clarification and account separation, and said to their knowledge, that my office declined to take any action. Fiduciary duties fall to the boards and management of private, nonprofit organizations, and cannot be delegated. Giving them full and exclusive authority over their own money, and how it is handled, and how their chart of accounts is organized, and how their accounting entries are made. Look it up. I did ask the management of City Stars to voluntarily undergo and pay for an audit by a respected, certified, public accounting firm. They agreed. And the firm of Thomas, Speight, and Noble completed its audit of City Stars finances and presented their report to the City Star's board of directors in June of 2025. The independent auditors report expressed the opinion that the City Star's financial statements present fairly in all material, respects, and assets, liabilities, net assets of the City's Stars Booster Club. In other words, clean audit. This report was also presented to this City Council. Incidentally, Thomas, Speight, and Noble also conduct the annual audits for the Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission. Look it up. To put it plainly, it was not Mayor Brodell's business how City Stars manage their money, nor Mayor Forman's, nor Mayor Perrin's, nor mine. No matter how much parents or Revolution board members might have assumed, hoped, or wished it was. Criticisms of me or the City Council regarding City Stars management are misplaced. My responsibility, as Mayor, is to administer city operated programs, which City Stars was not. In accordance with City Council approved budgets, which we don't include City Stars. I presented verifiable facts, not feelings, not understandings or beliefs like many of the documents presented at the previous City Council meeting contained. I understand some people may have honest questions about City Stars operations and funds in the past. Those questions should be properly directed to its own officers and board of directors, which had the full fiduciary responsibilities and duties. Part of all the confusion has come from people asking questions, or emailing, or texting complaints, and concerns about City Stars to the wrong place. The Mayor's Office did not have answers about the accounting or handling of money of City Stars. And I never meant for it to come off as dismissive because we didn't have the answers. We don't have answers for Jonesboro Baseball Boosters, Arkansas Junior Volleyball, or the Foundation of Arts. And even though, like they, like City Stars, and many other private non-profits, they utilize city owned facilities. So let's remember, the reason, and I haven't forgotten, that City Stars was formed in the first place. It was to help kids who didn't have access to and couldn't

afford other athletic program options. And it's done very well for 25 years. Tens of thousands of children have benefited as the city and City Stars work together. This should be an exciting time. For that program and the upcoming generations and our youth need it. Moving forward means moving beyond the past. And now we need to focus. Because we have now transitioned City Stars, as December 5th, to a city program. And we are working with various groups, boards, council, on how to achieve the best process we can go about that. Folks, we have a good model in place with the city softball program. Which, for instance, has done an exceptional job managing cash transactions common to sports clubs. So I conclude. I have great confidence. I do. That a year from now, all sports, that all youth sports numbers and processes will show continued improvement. Now, Council and community, my love and passion is for the youth in this community. It always has been and that won't change. I won't change my integrity and I won't lie. This is the commitment that I have said and I will continue to have for this community as your Mayor. I want to say thank you for the opportunity to stand before you this evening and give what I feel is important and they are facts. That's all I have to say this evening on the matter. Thank you.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Councilmember Chris Moore said, Madam Clerk, I'd make a motion that we move agenda item 10, public comment, to be placed before agenda item number 9, council comments on tonight's agenda, and that I be placed last on the council comments. Councilmember Chris Gibson said, second. Mayor Copenhaver asked for that motion to be repeated. Councilmember Chris Moore said, I'll make a motion to move agenda item 10, also known as public comment, to be placed before agenda item 9, also known as council comments on tonight's council agenda, and that I be placed last under council comments. Mayor Copenhaver asked for a roll call vote. The vote was as follows: Street – Aye; Miller – Aye; Bryant – Aye; Hafner – Aye; A. Coleman – Aye; McClain – Aye; Gibson – Aye; Williams – Aye; Moore – Aye; C. Coleman – Aye; Emison – Aye; Porter – Aye. All voted aye to move item 10, Public Comments before item 9, City Council Reports.

My name is Bill Campbell. My address is 463 West Matthews. Come by sometime. My old friends. I felt because of this situation in 10 years of working with two mayors, that I could address what it's like for these people to be the victim of rumors. And I know that we've got an actual investigation, a federal investigation going on. But, you don't interfere. You don't jump to conclusions with a federal investigation. You let it play out and find out what if anyone, is responsible, you know, and I think you'll have plenty of time to know that. Now, I also know that you guys have to deal with your people in your wards and people across the city, and you hear things, you go out, and you hear people with ideas. I can tell you there's some coffee shops where a lot of people try to impress one another about how much better they could run the city than the directors and the teams that do that. One of the first things that I was given when I came here in 2016 was to review City Stars, not because I have...just as a favor to the previous mayor, and I don't have any accounting background. But I talked to Wixon Huffstetler in the last week because he managed this program before Danny Kapales, and he said this was exactly what he got. It operates the very same way that it did with him. I have talked with Mayor Perrin about it, and he says, this is the way that he knew it to run. I think it may have been set up with some flaws, but I can also tell you how difficult it is when you've got a three or four person management team trying to keep all these things under control. You know, when you've got 20 something departments, and you've got people calling, and some people repetitively, and there is a factor that in Little Rock, they call it the STPs, the same ten people who will wear you out with emails, calls, texts. You know some of them. And I'm not saying they're wrong. They

have the right to be a part of the city, but they also have a moral duty to tell the truth. You know, I want you guys to make sure that you have the patience to find the truth because you're not going to get it in a place where we already know it's being investigated by a federal agency. And that's my only observation as somebody who... We heard so many things. You'd hear so many things. People want to gossip. It's a natural thing. Before I took this job in Jackson, Mississippi, the Communications Director said, Bill, public service is a thankless task. So, okay. And you guys do that and you probably feel that in some ways yourself, too. But I also remember when a director or a chief or somebody is working on something, we got all this going, trying to make sure that it got to you guys in a clear, understandable way, was... It required a lot, and it requires a lot, but I think also, it requires patience, because you're hearing things from outside. I've heard things from outside. I don't know what the answers are. I do know that you have a mayor who has had clean audits every time you have a finance director who's had clean audits every time, and this is every department in the city. So I think I would lean on that until you know something different. And we can't pretend we know something different. Thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments.

Jeremy Terrell, 909 Pinecrest, said, so, one thing I want to say, well, a couple things I want to say. One is, is, Mayor, you forgot to, you left out that you had been contacted before about this several years ago. And so I want to read something real quick, and this is the law, and these are facts. So I asked a friend of mine that knows government law, if it's illegal to do business with an organization or a 501 C-3 that you know is doing illegal activity. This is the response I got back from him. Yes, it is illegal to, it is illegal or a severe breach of law, and for fiduciary duty for a city government to knowingly do business with an organization, including a 501 C-3 non-profit, that is engaging in illegal activity. Such action exposes city officials to potential criminal charges, civil lawsuits and public corruption, investigations. Here are the key legal and ethical principles involved. Breach of fiduciary duties, public officials are considered fiduciaries who must act in the best interest of the public which includes responsibilities, managing taxpayers' resources. Knowingly funding a criminal enterprise is a violation of this trust. Misuse of public funds, using taxpayers' money to fund organizations, engage in illegal act, can be considered mismanagement or embezzlement of the public resources. Government contracting laws, government have strict procurement integrity standards. Agencies are generally required to avoid or terminate contracts with contractors or non-profits who engage in unethical or criminal behavior, often leading to disbarment, which means no more contracts or anything with the city. Conspiracy and racketeering, if a city knowingly conducts or continues to do business with an organization that is committing crimes, fraud, embezzlement, drugs, and so forth, city officials could be potentially be implicated in conspiracy or racketeering charges. So, this I don't understand why some act like this isn't a big deal. I don't know why some people think that this is some sort of like, hey, we're trying to get you or hey, you know, somebody lost a mayor's race and now they're mad at you. When it's serious, it's serious. And for anybody that can stand up here and say when the FBI gets involved, that we don't know anything's happening. Well, I can promise you something's happening. And it's... (Off camera, Bill Campbell is speaking, but you can't hear what he is saying.) This is my time. This is my time. This is my time. Bill, this is my time, buddy. So listen, man. Mayor Copenhaver interrupted and stated, no comment, no comment. Mr. Terrell continued, here's the deal. Something's happening. We do know that it was brought to your attention years ago. We do know that you were asked to take a look at it. And you did nothing. That makes you responsible. This is funded by taxpayers money, period. And yes, you did, you got this. You were given this. I say everybody that was involved from when the embezzlement started till now, I don't care who was Mayor. I don't care who was the Director.

Everybody should be involved and we'll see and find out what when it's all said and done who is involved. But the truth of the matter is Mayor, I wish you would have come out and said, man, this is, this is bad and take some sort of responsibility and say, we're going to get to the bottom of this. And the buck stops with me. But that's not what happened. We keep continuing to push things down the road. We keep continuing to act like it's not a big deal and we keep just acting like you don't have any responsibilities. You do have responsibility. I just read you the responsibilities. It is your job to make sure that whatever taxpayer's money goes to whatever organization, that that organization is acting in the best interest of the public. 100% is your job. Now, this is nothing personal. I don't even know you. We've had 12 conversations and they're great and cordial. This is about the responsibility that you hold, and that the city council hold, to make sure that taxpayers' money is being dealt with in a manner that is proper and legal, and everything that goes along with it. And so those of us that are asking questions, we deserve answers. Period. And that's not a bad thing. That's actually a good thing. And we'll continue to ask the questions. Thank you.

My name is Dean McDonald, 5555 Macedonia Road, Apartment A-2, and I want to thank the Council, Mayor, and the city staff, for your time this evening. I want to, just for a second, agree with, you know, the previous speaker and some of the sentiments that are in the air tonight, that it is very serious. Any allegations of misconduct are serious and should be investigated, and they are being investigated. But what I don't take seriously is the way in which some of this dialogue and discourse has broken down over what we've seen in the past month or so. And here's why. I come to you this evening, as a previous supporter of our current mayor. But I also recognize the City Stars issue for what it is, and it is a baseless witch hunt in the way that it is being framed and teed up by people that are politicizing what is a serious matter, and that is, our children, who play soccer, and those who are in athletics. It's very serious. But, like a lot of you in this audience, I've read every single word from top to bottom in the dropbox link that's being shared and proliferated on social media. I've read everything, all of these text exchanges, which, if you want to read them afterwards, you can. These are not my investigations. I'm sharing the documentation of people who disagree with me. And that's okay if they disagree. But here's why I disagree. When you look at these text conversations in the way they've broken down, this is not a serious discussion about how to vet what has been going on in City Stars, as well as overhaul it, and put it under the umbrella of the city, because, as previously stated, this organization, over the past two and a half decades, was never under the umbrella of the City of Jonesboro. It is a very well known organization, and City Stars, as it's named, might confuse the public, and that's very understandable, because as the public, we're quite confused. I'm candid in admitting that. That's a real thing. I'm here to clear the air on some of that in the fact that not only do I have how all of these conversations broke down, I also have the proposal that was mentioned earlier, as the Mayor said, you can FOIA it. I'm sorry to the City of Jonesboro. I don't mean to make more work for you. But the reality is, is you need to read it, because I have. And in that proposal, you see a very good vision statement of what I think very good and honest men, who I disagree with tonight, are trying to propose, which is the soccer program. And in their vision statement, they say, it is to provide a comprehensive and inclusive soccer program for the residents of Jonesboro, fostering community engagement, youth development, and a lifelong passion for the sport of soccer. Who could honestly disagree with that? That sounds like a lot of good stuff. I'd be foolish to disagree with them. And here's why I will be foolish, and I will disagree with it, because I know the facts. It was mentioned earlier tonight that the City Stars vision was for, quote, youth at no cost. And part of youth at no cost does not entail a proposal where, again, you can read it, a \$500,000 line item budget stipulated for a handful of soccer programs, which are very important, but that is now a taxpayer funded entity that is going to expect

\$500,000 from the City of Jonesboro and their taxpayers annually. In that proposal that was made to Mayor Copenhaver and his staff, which you can read for yourself if you look it up, if you FOIA it. If you read it, there was going to be \$195,000 a year stipulated to, presumably, three new jobs that are funded, again, by the city taxpayers of Jonesboro. And while I understand the importance of soccer, and I understand how enriching it is to youth, if you have \$195,000 that are going to three now glorified soccer coaches that are on the city dime, these same people that, in their text, they're making this proposal. They clearly didn't get their way. And now, you've seen a lot of sour grapes about it. And I tee it up like that to say that I just take a lot of issue over the fact that this is being framed as a whistleblower or whatever kind of investigation or event. The investigation belongs with one individual who was not overseeing anything that had to do with something that had city authority over their budget. That's where the investigation lies. And I just, I really take a lot of issue with the notion of whistleblowing because a whistleblower does not seek to be enriched by the so called alleged shooter. Thank you for your time. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments.

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember Chris Moore said, Madam Clerk, I'd make a motion that we move agenda item 10, public comment, to be placed before agenda item number 9, council comments on tonight's agenda, and that I be placed last on the council comments. Councilmember Chris Gibson said, second. Mayor Copenhaver asked for that motion to be repeated. Councilmember Chris Moore said, I'll make a motion to move agenda item 10, also known as public comment, to be placed before agenda item 9, also known as council comments on tonight's council agenda, and that I be placed last under council comments. Mayor Copenhaver asked for a roll call vote. The vote was as follows: Street – Aye; Miller – Aye; Bryant – Aye; Hafner – Aye; A. Coleman – Aye; McClain – Aye; Gibson – Aye; Williams – Aye; Moore – Aye; C. Coleman – Aye; Emison – Aye; Porter – Aye. All voted aye to move item 10, Public Comments before item 9, City Council Reports.

Councilmember John Street said, I'd just like to echo on what the Mayor said previously about thanking the department's Public Safety, Fire Department, Police Department, E-911, and Street Department for the excellent job that they did in this catastrophic snowstorm we had. I can't thank them enough. I know it didn't make everyone happy. Some people don't understand the complexities of removing that much snow off the street, but I can assure you, the Street Department worked 12-hour shifts, 24/7, and did a great job. So I appreciate all their efforts. That's all I've got, Mayor. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you, councilman.

Councilmember L.J. Bryant said, oh, lots, but maybe only a few things. We had some of this discussion at Public Services today, so not to be repetitive, other than a lot of folks in the room might not know we had the discussion. But I used this example recently. We had to vote to waive allowing a city employee to work on city cars. I voted against it, because I think when you work at the city, you shouldn't be doing business with the city. And I know I learned today that city employees, if they have outside employment, they have to disclose it, potential conflicts of interest, and such, they have to disclose that to their supervisor. So, we act like we don't know about City Stars. I mean, they're involved with the Christmas parade. They're involved with all these things and there's pictures all over the internet of us promoting City Stars, signing up, and promoting, giving money from the Christmas parade to the City Stars program, and our city employees are all over the place working for this non-profit. So somehow, we have a city policy that comes to the city, that we have to have a vote, if

you work for us, and want to work on one of our vehicles and make money, which I'm also against. But when our city employees are using your taxpayer dollars, your resources, your cars, our city vehicles, all of our city resources, and computers, to do this program inside of a 501 C-3, and then even to Jeremy's point, when it's brought... I mean, I feel like this whole thing's like some sort of gaslighting thing to make us feel crazy that we shouldn't take this serious. I mean, Matt Modelesky, I've never met the guy, never talked to the guy. He's a Copenhaver donor and a Copenhaver supporter. So, the whole effort's being led by a Copenhaver donor and a Copenhaver supporter, and the other person who's been a whistleblower in all of this, is Jerry Morgan. Jerry Morgan's one of the most respected members of this community, and I would argue, with no offense to anyone else, I would argue that Jerry's maybe one of the most significant people in this community from a public service perspective. We wouldn't have the Ridge Athletics Center without him and his vision. So, I mean, these two fellas, you know, there was a reference earlier to the ten people in Little Rock, or the ten person rule, or whatever, to making it seem like there's only a handful of people that care. I believe that both Patti Lack and Jeremy Terrell both shared screenshots of their post. I think Patti's has had 10,000. I think Jeremy Terrell's has had hundreds of thousands. So just because all these people don't email us, they're scared. I mean, I talk to people, and they say, man, I'm so upset about this. I wish I could email the Council. I wish I could talk to the Mayor. But I'm scared. I've got business before the city. I've got permits before the city. They don't want to be punished in any way. So the public cares and despite any of the gaslighting going on tonight, the FBI doesn't show up for no reason. So we're in a very serious situation and as the stewards of the taxpayers' resources, I feel like we have to take action.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, yes, I've got a few things to say and these are probably in no particular order, but first of all, on the city, the whole City Stars arrangement, I believe when this was set up back in 2004 that there was a lot of good intentions and somehow this agreement kind of fell by the wayside when it wasn't renewed after it originally expired. But, you know, the Mayor referenced the agreement. One of the things that says, like, in the fourth sentence or fourth paragraph on here is whereas the city is the administrator of free recreational youth programs that own the City Stars. And the definition of administrator is the person responsible for running a business organization, et cetera. As I said, I think this was the original intention. I think, when this agreement expired, like, in December 2008, I believe, that was right at the time when Mayor Perrin was coming into office, so, you know, Mayor Perrin may have never seen this agreement. I don't know. But, you know, just to be clear on a few things, you know, it states that city and Jonesboro City Stars agree that city officials may be JCSBC officers and members of JCBC may perform duties that benefit both the city and the JSBC while under the employment of the city. Which means they can, you know, parks and rec people can do this. You know, I think, you know, some other things it talks about is that city, you know, the booster club funds shall be administered according to city finance policies and procedures. I don't think, you know, I think that's one thing that wasn't done and led us to this potential situation that we're in right now. Not potential situation, but the situation that we're in right now, and, you know, waiting to see how that plays out. Another thing that's mentioned is upon signing this agreement, JCSBC will provide to the city, current bylaws, financial review of expenditures, and revenues from previous year with City Parks Director, Assistant Director for Programs, and Mayor. And number 3 was an annual review from a third party auditor. As y'all may or may not know, a review is just kind of a step below an audit, but the audit that was performed last year was the first time an audit has ever been performed on the City Stars program. The review was never done. Which is sad, like I said, this agreement has some good intentions, but it failed, but the thing I want to stress is, just because, this is my opinion. I'm not an attorney, but if city employees

are involved in every aspect of this entity, even though it's a separate C3, if you're the major stakeholder and it's your facilities that are being used, it's your employees that make up all but maybe one position on the board of directors. If there are allegations made, I think you have every right as the city, as the Mayor, to ask questions. I don't think you can, I don't think it's right to put your, you know, for lack of a better term, to say, nope, that's a separate organization. I can't do anything about it. You have every right to ask questions in my opinion. If that, if you don't, I mean, you can force actions, you can ask for their board for things because you're the one with the facility. You're the one with the assets. I think, you know, this was brought up originally back in, you know, to, according to our little binder we got back in, like, April or so of 2023, or February of 2023 is when Revolution started asking questions. I'm disappointed that it's dragged on until April or February of 2026 with really no resolution. I think, as a, you know, I've supported Cope. He knows that. But I feel the CEO of the city, you shouldn't let things drag out that long. You have to, I mean, you don't, you don't not get back to people. It's our job, or your job, to make the hard decisions, and not just, hey, I'll get back to you in a couple weeks and never get back to people. I think that's one thing that definitely needs to be improved and that's let something fester and become a big, it turn into, look, from a little snowball into a big avalanche. And now that we've got the public here, you know, with eroded public trust, you know, just frustrated, you know, the problems have escalated. And, you know, I don't take that lightly. The other thing, too, is, you know, obviously the relationship between the Mayor and the Council is one that's built on trust. I mean, we have to be transparent with each other or else we're not going to get anything done. And, you know, I don't know if it was a misspeak, or you just, you read it wrong, or what? But at the January 6th meeting, when you said that you had spoken to several members of the Parks and Rec Advisory Board, I had people the next day come up to me and say, Joe, I haven't spoken, I haven't spoken to the Mayor about this. On what day did I do it? Just a couple weeks ago...trying to reference my notes here. It was January 21st. I called nine members of that committee. I didn't call Dr. Coleman. I mean, he's on that advisory committee. I called nine members. You know, after you had said you had spoken to several and you had spoken to one. I, only, only one told me he had spoken to you and then one member had said they had spoken to Jim at a basketball game. So, like I said, I don't know if that was intentional or not intentional, but it has raised questions in my mind about why you would say that over something so simple and trivial that you didn't have to say that. Just say, I meant to speak to him, I didn't get to it, but, I mean, obviously, I just think there has to be, we have to do better. I said at the last meeting, there was plenty of opportunity for improvement. And I think that improvement comes from being better communication, open, honest, and taking care of business. We can't just keep kicking the cans down the road. You know, when it's hard decisions. I mean, you have to be the place where the buck stops here. I mean, you have to be open and transparent with us, so... that's all I have to say about that. That's all I have to say about that right now. Thank you.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, yes, thank you. So I like some of my colleagues have shared, I think it was probably a good thing that I wasn't here that week. I was late getting back to town and couldn't make it. But it allowed me to...read, hear, listen, without and I'm going to use this term perception because I am one guy that understand perceptions and how people perceive because it doesn't not, it doesn't necessarily give an indicator of who the man is or who the person is. And I understand that more than, more than many, because even sitting at this seat for the last four years almost, many have perceived me to lean certain ways, and to have certain, because I've had certain relationships, that I have certain thoughts about whatever. And I've shared with the Mayor that, even privately, that I supported him, and we're with him, and praying for him. So that's... all I have been and all I have done. And but when

it comes to perceptions, it does make a difference. And I say that because I'm going to be honest with you, Mayor. I was waiting for a response that week. I wasn't here. So I couldn't have any opinion or know what happened or anything, but I was waiting for a response that said, that indicated adamantly, that's not true. Or this is not me or this is what happened. And I didn't get that. And so I was left with my own mind to think, whatever, based on, based on the readings and the, the social media and all of that. And, but I'll be honest with you, one thing that I do, and I try to do, is make decisions based on principle and facts. And so I appreciate you for sharing today. That helps me to hear your side because while many are saying that it's a political, it's politically motivated. You know, some of the response that I heard, even on KAIT, Mayor, some of that was, it sounded politically motivated, or a political response. And I just wanted to hear the man. Hey, I did it, didn't do it, whatever. So I'm just trying to figure out the actual facts. And so whenever I look at all of this, I try to make it simple for me to understand. And that is, did the Mayor, did we as city, or whatever officials, did we have the responsibility of, I understand fiducially, maybe not, but to oversee and all of that. And I had to go back to being a father and being a grandfather. When I made calls to register my son, register my grandson, all I saw was Jonesboro, Jonesboro City. So, for me, we do have a responsibility. We do have something to say as it relates to, to the City Stars, and maybe not handling a lot of it fiducially, but we do have a responsibility to share, to talk, to ask questions, to make certain that we are doing what's right for our children, because my perception was that it was a Jonesboro City thing until I learned when I came to Council. And I asked that question specifically, and it's on the record. I asked it specifically, about two years ago, when I found out that City Stars was not run by the city. And so, you know, my decisions, like I said, are not based and is not an indicator of the man. It's an indicator or it's based on leadership. And that's important to me. And, that's all I have. Thank you.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, I think pretty much everything on this particular topic has been hit on, in my opinion. I did have a couple of questions that I think have already been somewhat answered, but I do want to report that Public Services did meet today, in conjunction with the Park's Advisory Committee, to kind of look at forging things, moving forward. The Parks Department was represented as well. I think we've got a good platform to build on moving forward and I'm very optimistic about our future.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, okay, I'll just kind of bring it all to an end here. It's important for our community that we restore trust between the Council, the Mayor's office, and the community. I think mistakes have been made here, Mr. Mayor. I think if you'd have read that statement a year ago that you read at the podium tonight, I don't think we'd be in the position we're in right now. If not a year ago, when Patti Lack and Jeremy Terrell both came to this podium, and they expressed concerns, if you'd have read that statement that you read tonight, we would not have this problem. I don't know why you didn't. I would have, if I'd have been Mayor, I would have wanted to clear it up right then, that we had no authority. There have been people in the community that have been upset about it. I think you should have addressed it sooner. But I think we have to find a way to move on. That'll be all.

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, if you don't mind, Council, I'd like to make some comments. And, I appreciate the input from City Council. And I strive every day to make the right decisions for this community. And we as Council, and the Mayor's office, and the city employees have worked hard together the last five years. And we need to continue moving forward. I am always up for constructive criticism. And it's hard for anybody to put themselves in anybody else's shoes. This was not anything that I was aware of as far as it was all new to me as well. I depend on my directors for

their skill set, their leadership. And I apologize to this City Council because the last thing I ever want to do is draw a wedge between us. Because that does not benefit our community. I am excited, though, from this standpoint, we are now with City Stars under the leadership of Jim Stearns. Very positive. We have a good onset moving forward. Council, so thank you again for your conversation tonight. It was open. It was apparent. And I think you know me as who I am. And I will take it to heart. And I don't know of any leader that doesn't always want to improve. So thank you.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Moore, seconded by Councilperson Joe Hafner, that this matter be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Excused: 12 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman;LJ Bryant and Ann Williams

_____ **Date:** _____

Harold Copenhaver, Mayor

Attest:

_____ **Date:** _____

April Leggett, City Clerk