



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, August 1, 2023

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) CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT

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

4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Consent Agenda

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

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

[MIN-23:068](#)

MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON JULY 18, 2023

Attachments: [CC Minutes 07182023](#)

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

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

[RES-23:132](#)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO ACCEPT THE LOW BID AND ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH BAILEY CONTRACTORS, INC. FOR THE FORUM RESTROOM RENOVATION (2023:22)

Attachments: [Bid Tab](#)
[2023-22_Forum Restroom Renovations-OWNER-GC-CONTRACT](#)

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-151-2023

[RES-23:134](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE JONESBORO MUNICIPAL AIRPORT COMMISSION AND THE EAST ARKANSAS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT TO APPLY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) FY2023 DISASTER SUPPLEMENT FUNDING TO CONSTRUCT A NEW AIRPORT TERMINAL FACILITY TO REPLACE THE PREVIOUS TERMINAL THAT WAS DESTROYED BY THE MARCH 28, 2020 TORNADO

This item was passed on the consent agenda.

Enactment No: R-EN-152-2023

RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA

[RES-23:133](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE FY2023 CDBG ACTION PLAN

Attachments: [GRANT AGREEMENT FY2023 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN.pdf](#) mayor

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

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

Enactment No: R-EN-153-2023

6. NEW BUSINESS

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING

[ORD-23:027](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO THE CITY OF JONESBORO TO PLACE VARIOUS TRAFFIC SIGNS AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS AS DETERMINED BY THE TRAFFIC CONTROL COMMITTEE

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

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

Enactment No: O-EN-029-2023

[ORD-23:028](#)

AN ORDINANCE FOR A PRIVATE CLUB PERMIT FOR ROYAL OAK 237, INC. d/b/a LEMONADE HOUSE GRILLE - JONESBORO TO BE LOCATED AT 237 SOUTH MAIN STREET, JONESBORO, ARKANSAS

Attachments: [Lemonade House Grille Application Redacted](#)

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

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

Enactment No: O-EN-030-2023

[ORD-23:029](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM RS-4 TO RS-7 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5213 E. NETTLETON AS REQUESTED BY WILLIAM CONRAD

Attachments: [Application Packet](#)
 [Photos receipts address list](#)
 [Sign Photos](#)
 [Rezoning Plat](#)
 [Staff Summary - C.C.](#)
 [USPS Tracking](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson Chris Moore, seconded by Councilperson Brian Emison, that this matter be Passed. The motion PASSED with the following vote.

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

Enactment No: O-EN-031-2023

8. MAYOR'S REPORTS

Mayor Harold Copenhaver reported on the following:

We are continuing our highly successful neighborhood cleanups, 8:00 a.m to noon on Saturday at Parker Park. So, bring your big stuff, the beds, washer, old tires, and let us take them to the dump for you.

I have contacted the Disease Control and Prevention State Agency to meet with our local mosquito services on procedures and seeking ways to improve abatement. Right now, the work that Vector does on the air and in the ground remains critical, but no more than to each resident. We need to be doing everything we can for our residents

and we need the residents to eliminate standing water. If you have 5 oz. of water in a tire or in a hole, that can breed thousands of mosquitos. So, everyone, please be diligent as we look for a greater solution.

Joe Mack Campbell Soccer Fields – We have received a long awaited turf that should be installed within the next two weeks. Union Park is now complete short of some smaller amenities. The playground is now open. The picnic tables and a few other things are being opened for the grand opening.

The certificate of occupancy has been approved for the "Y" which is the name we have chosen for the former YMCA that the city owns and rehabbed. It will be opening soon and will have a big celebration and I hope you all can attend. Our park staff deserves a big thank you for these projects.

Public Works addressed our Downtown ASTATE Trail. The University Heights Link trail is next. It will require acquisition rights. The soft trail at Craighead Forest is at almost 75% complete. I will say if anybody has been out there, I think you will be set back by how nice it is and how we are able to compete with other communities that have been in this for a long time. I am really proud of our amenities. I want to say thank you, Council, for allowing the last two years, the investment to be made. A few other future investments came along with the projects. So, I appreciate your time and willingness to invest in that.

Our Fire Department has 29 new candidates that recently completed hiring testing. These 29 will be the first hired when openings become available over the next year.

A new Citizen's Fire Academy is being organized aiming for early spring and we believe it will be a great addition to educating our community about the tremendous work of our firefighters and what they do.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Mark Young will address the City Council at our next meeting. He will tell us the good things they have in store. That will be at the August 15th meeting.

In closing, I want to congratulate our Arkansas State Wolfpack Cricket Club which finished a mere two runs from a second straight championship falling 174 to 172 on Saturday to the Indian Lions of Memphis. Not many people know that we have a first class cricket club in Jonesboro. These guys are great and we are proud of them.

9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilmember John Street said, Mayor, I will go along with what you said and congratulate Danny Kapales in the Parks Department on providing the atmosphere for such a great trail and being a big promoter for that to start with. I have heard nothing but great things about it. I would like to congratulate you. I mean really. You worked hard at this and your staff and Steve Purtee and Chief Elliott, Mitch Johnson, Joe Hafner, the Council, who thankfully, you know, talked to and allowed to have input on this and it has been needed for a while and I'm glad that it has put us in a position it is. So, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Public Safety is critical to the City of Jonesboro. I mean if we don't have that, it is our primary function. So, I think the citizens of Jonesboro will be grateful as well. So, thank you again Mayor. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you Councilman.

Councilmember Mitch Johnson said, Mayor, as you know, we had a Special Called

Public Safety Council Committee meeting earlier. An item came out of that we want to bring forth for consideration tonight by the full council. So, I would like to suspend the rules and offer RES-23:144 for consideration. Councilmember John Street said, second. Mayor Copenhaver said, we do have a motion to suspend the rules and offer this for consideration, all in favor say aye.

All said aye. There were no nays verbalized.

City Attorney Carol Duncan read the resolution. Councilmember Chris Gibson motioned to approve, seconded by Councilmember Brian Emison. Mayor Copenhaver asked if there was any discussion.

[RES-23:144](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO AMEND THE SALARY AND ADMINISTRATION PLAN BY INCLUDING REVISED PAY GRADES AND SALARY RANGES FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND AMEND THE 2023 BUDGET

Attachments: [2-JPD Revised Pay Grades & Salaries effective September 2023](#)
 [3-2023 JPD Step Grid](#)
 [4-2023 JPD Revised Base Salary & Total Benefit](#)

Councilmember Mitch Johnson motioned, seconded by Councilmember John Street, to suspend the rules and walk on RES-23:144. All voted aye.

Councilmember Mitch Johnson said, Mayor, just briefly, again, not to keep singing your praises, but this came to us, in two month's time, you answered the call when it came out, you and your staff, Mr. Purtee and the whole Finance staff, Mr. Hafner, and myself, I feel like I played a small role in this, just as being committee chair which I'm grateful to have the opportunity as well and for everyone on the Council who took the time to meet with you individually to look at your plans. So, once again, very commending to yourself and your staff, Chief Elliott, everybody as a whole. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments Council and I concur that it is a group effort and that is what makes Jonesboro what it is. So, thank you.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, Mayor, I have a question as well. Thank you and I do concur, excellent job on you and the administration with presenting this. There was just one question I had. I did attend the committee meeting, the Public Safety Committee meeting and I heard Mr. Purtee explain in detail, the steps and all of that. That was good. I just need to know in layman's terminology, when I look at the salaries and I think some would like to know and I know I've been asked, how is it, just a very simple question, how can like sergeants make less than a non-supervisor as an officer according to this? Mayor Copenhaver said, there is a history with this going back with the step plan that was initiated in 2016. Now, as well, we had to make adjustments in the last two years on compensation initiatives to move forward onto how to better compensate as well. But, I think Chief can give you a better historical reasoning for that.

Police Chief Rick Elliott said, certainly. First, you go back and look at officers of the department. You know, we don't work just 20 years. We a minimum of 28 before they can retire. So, we have officers that have been here and have maxed out and will max out on this. I think it promoted, then there is a \$5,000 raise. If you have a sergeant that may not been in that position but a few years, there is a possibility that it will exceed that. But, again, you are taking a senior person versus a person who may have been here a fraction of the time longevity wise, but still in a position. So, that overlap, there is that, but on the other end, most pay plans across the state, there is not a

clear definition in some cases. So, when you look at our senior staff compared to the rest of the department, it's a small number. And, as time goes on, some of this will work its way out. The steps for patrolmen are going to stop, but the sergeants go up to \$78,000. So, that will eventually separate. That sergeant has a chance to separate from that overlap issue. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, thank you. Follow up question, have you seen any change in morale or anything because of that?

Chief Elliott said, absolutely. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, okay, is that good or bad? Chief Elliott said, it is for the good. This has been watched by officers across the state. We received phone calls for job inquiries. From my understanding, we have five applications today alone from another agency. So, I think by passing this that it is going to get us back to the staffing that we need. Law Enforcement is a very competitive market across the country. This step has closed the gap that we were competing against every agency in the state. We have now narrowed that gap down. So, overall, it is a good plan. I understand that there might be that issue, but again, with time, it should separate itself out. There is that opportunity for those supervisors to move on up further than the patrolmen will. So, when we take a plan like this and make as large of a move as we did, there may be an issue or two, but it is relatively small compared to the overall plan and with what the plan was set to accomplish. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, thank you. Mayor Copenhagen said, thank you Chief, I appreciate it.

Chief Elliott asked, anything else? Mayor Copenhagen asked, any other questions? I see none. We do not have an electronic ballot due to this item being walked on. It will be a voice ballot.

All voted aye. There were no nays verbalized.

Mayor Copenhagen said, before we finish on this subject, I would just like to say thank you for the support on this issue. I appreciate the efforts that we all went to, to ensure our police officers are appropriately compensated and appreciated. I am happy for this that it is resolved and we can again focus on projects that grow for our city as well. We have projects in the works and we were momentarily delayed, but will be presenting those to Council in short order on a next 3-5 year plan that we are working on. So, again, thank you Council for being willing to work on this. I appreciate it.

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

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

Enactment No: R-EN-154-2023

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS CONTINUED:

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, I think Mayor you just hit it. You did a good job here. I hope everyone was a little unhappy and that's the way these things are supposed to go, right, in a negotiation. But, hopefully, this makes us competitive and puts us where we need to be. And, I know I referenced a study recently in the National Association of Realtors and public safety is ranked number one. Mitch Johnson said that, I mean, there's no doubt that's number one. Mayor Scott was on tv last night in Little Rock

saying that he lives in a bad neighborhood and he doesn't mind. But, he also has 24/7 protective detail. He left that out on tv last night. People want to live in a safe place. If you look in Arkansas Business this week and look at population trends, in Northeast Arkansas, things are good for us and things are good for Greene County. Things are not good for our other friends. And, that impacts us as there will be potentially less people, as a result of those places, to shop in Northeast Arkansas. So, I know with our sales tax growth, it looks good and hopefully can fund this, but I know there will be other needs that I know you will be bringing to us. I know one of our neighboring cities might have a sales tax proposal to bring their fire up and bring their dispatchers up. So, I know we will continue to have some of those challenges and we can face them as we go. But, thanks for your hard work on this Mayor.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I think you have heard enough from me, Mayor, on this subject. So, thank you.

Councilmember David McClain said, Mayor we talked briefly after the Public Safety meeting, but I to make sure that we make a commitment to looking at the police pay every 2-3 years, making sure that we don't have to always do things in a pinch, but making sure that we are planning it out and are thoughtful about how we do that. So, I appreciate the conversations we have had, even the ones that we may not have agreed on something or we did agree on something. I think that is good. I think it is good to have some discourse. So, I appreciate the work that Steve and Chief did. So, I appreciate it. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, just real quickly, the Public Services Committee meeting on August 15, 2023 will be held at 4:00 p.m. instead of 4:30 p.m. They are going to be here to present the Master Parks Plan and I have asked Mr. Hafner to Chair that committee meeting since I will not be in attendance.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, Mayor, a couple of weeks ago at the meeting, I asked about the exit report on the \$25 million grant we lost. Have we received that or any information? Mayor Copenhaver said, we have and Tony, do you want to give an update on that too. So, we just received that at the end of last week. Of course, that comes from the federal government. So, we have set that up in collaborative effort with Paragould. Chief Operations Officer Tony Thomas said, well, actually we received notification that they are at a point where they are willing to schedule a time for an exit for us. At this time, we have not received an actual date and time. That has not been communicated to us yet, but we know that is in process. We have been told it could be anywhere from 4-6 weeks as far as scheduling is concerned. And, as soon as we are aware of that, as the Mayor indicated, we are collaborating with the City of Paragould who was a partner and our Grants Department, to ensure that we have everybody at the table to receive information in regards to how our application fared in their process and ways that we can improve that as we move forward. Councilmember Moore said, absolutely. Mayor, if you will, when you receive that information, if one of your staff will just make a report to the council. Mayor Copenhaver said, absolutely. Councilmember Moore said, because I know we put in a lot of effort on that. Mayor Copenhaver said, you bet, thank you. Councilmember Moore said, thank you.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, the only thing I have is to thank Danny for allowing the guys to come out and help us with our event that we had this weekend. I appreciate you all.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Patti Lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, said, I have two things that I would like to share with you. I think our neighborhood cleanups have been a big, huge success. The one thing that I might want to suggest, instead of planning it, I don't know if the city could have maybe 3-4 designated locations in our city, put a nice fence around it, and have people be able to put their items in that dumpster and then have it picked up instead of having it on a weekend. I think weekends are perfect for some people for cleaning up, but if we had a nice location, maybe north, central, and east side of town, 3 or 4 of them, maybe we could do it and then people could bring it at one time versus having to schedule the Sanitation Department and the work crews because I know that is a lot of work, extra work on weekends on that. So, just a thought. Just an idea. On July 18th, at the Public Service meeting, when we heard a little bit more about the JETS Program and the bus program, it was kind of funny because I got a couple of people telling me that in 2017, our old MPO Director, Erica Tait, I think some of you remember her. She was really good. One of her service projects for the Jonesboro Leadership Program was to build a bus shelter and that bus shelter happens to be located here at 2010 South Church Street, right there in front of the Earl Bell Center. If you have gone by it, from 2017, it looks pretty good right now. It gives shelter, there is a bench, and it's a cover. And, it was a service project. So, the cost of that back in 2017, probably, is a little bit more, but they probably got items donated. So, I hope that's maybe some consideration because one, it would involve people, to get people more involved with our community. And, maybe, that is another project that the Jonesboro Leadership Program could do or maybe some other groups. But, then, on the other side of it, it also gives us the shelters for the bus stations. Because, once again, you know, you are going to be caught in the rain, the heat, and hopefully maybe not snow, but at least they have some type of shelter and they have some place to sit versus waiting right there in the middle of nowhere waiting for the bus to come. So, I thought that was really interesting, that was 2017, and it's still standing and that still looks pretty good on there. So, thank you. Mayor Copenhaver said, thank you for your comments.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Harold Copenhaver, Mayor

Date: _____

Attest:

April Leggett, City Clerk

Date: _____