



# City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center  
300 S. Church Street  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

## Meeting Minutes Public Services Council Committee

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Tuesday, December 20, 2022

4:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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### 1. Call To Order

*Councilmember Joe Hafner said Chairman Chris Gibson is tied up at the moment so he asked that I get this meeting going.*

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

*Chairman Chris Gibson joined the meeting at 4:40 PM.*

**Present** 4 - Joe Hafner; Ann Williams; Brian Emison and Seth Speer

**Absent** 1 - Chris Gibson

### 3. Approval of minutes

[MIN-22:087](#)

Minutes for the Public Services Committee meeting on Tuesday, September 20, 2022

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

*City Clerk April Leggett said it isn't giving me any kind of vote for anybody, so we'll just do a voice vote.*

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

**Aye:** 3 - Ann Williams; Brian Emison and Seth Speer

**Absent:** 1 - Chris Gibson

### 4. New Business

### 5. Pending Items

### 6. Other Business

[COM-22:041](#)

PARKS & RECREATION UPDATE

**Sponsors:** Parks & Recreation

*Director of Parks and Recreation Danny Kapales approached the podium and said good afternoon. How are you all doing? So, Parks and Recreation, what we'll do is we'll start with, I guess, projects and just kind of go around from each facility and talk*

*about some things we've done this last quarter. So we'll go to the shooting range; and currently at the shooting range, we're in our last phase of getting the range building open. I know last week there was a walk-through to look at some of the finishing touches they are trying to finalize. I think there was a three page list of items that needed to be finished, retouched on, just things that needed to get it to where we can actually open that facility and it can be handed over to us. The maintenance shop is still underway. They are out there working on it right now. The cold weather is not slowing them down, so they're in the process. We're waiting on the trap machines to come in. That way, we can finish up the last six trap fields. That will put us at nine trap fields on that facility. I will be putting out a closed bid for five stand machines to go on fields one, two and three. So that will actually make fields one, two and three capable of being trap or five stand, which will make that very universal for folks. Those three fields will be universal for those two. Fields four, five and six will be trap and skeet; and then seven, eight and nine will be just trap. And so then all nine of them will have a use. So when you leave that park and go to Allen Park, we're currently waiting on the tennis court lights to come in. That's been a waiting process, but we do have LED lights ordered for that facility. What they're doing is we're leaving the same poles in place, but they're coming in with a new head unit that should angle up a little bit more, replacing the old lights that were, even when they were installed, they were not a good unit. The ballast would constantly burn out. They were burning their lights out, and it was a constant battle of just keeping the ballasts and lights replaced. So going to an LED system is going to brighten them up. It'll be a system that we should keep lights on a lot longer and much better and use less power so that's coming. That's something that should be, I would hope next six weeks, but we're waiting on the units to get here. Wagner Electric got the bid on that, so they are the ones that will actually be installing those.*

*Go from Allen Park, let's go to Southside. So currently at Southside, the guys are working on the fields. What we're doing on the field right now is, they've come in, they've edged all the infields, which I know they're still dirt. They've been edged all the way out nice and clean, so they have a nice clean line. Then they dug out the pitching rubbers; and we're putting those, not like bricks you put on your house, but they're actually clay bricks so they're solid but they tend to break down over time. They're coming with those clay bricks in creating a solid base and then covering it back up. That way, you don't get as much sinkage for the pitchers, and they're doing the same thing around home plate. And that'll make it for maintenance purposes much better. Plus, when kids start digging out, you don't dig down as deep. It's easy to come in and it holds up, especially in weather when it gets muddy, it'll be much more firm. So that's what we're dealing with right now at Southside.*

*Go on to Craighead Forest Park, we've had a few things happen out there. We've added the walking trail at Access Five. That is a connecting trail that goes from the hard surface trail all the way down to the parking lot by the playground and pavilion; and what that's provided is, that was a road that a lot of people were either parking and walking back up to the trail to walk, or you were seeing people come from the trail trying to get down to the restrooms. So there was a lot of folks walking on that road, and that's a very busy road just for folks to get to the playground. So adding that trail, we're pulling people off of the road. We gave them a nice little trail to walk on so it made it much safer. Now parents with strollers have a place to walk and not have to worry about traffic at that zone. You go on down that way, we had a pier that was in pretty bad shape. It needed to be replaced. As you all know, year before I was working on that. We couldn't get the amount down to a point where we needed to; and with a great partnership with the county, Judge Day was kind enough to have his crew actually put in the piers, which brought our cost down dramatically. And then we ended up*

*bidding out the rest of it and Allscapes came in and built the rest of the pier; and it's absolutely gorgeous. If you haven't had a chance, go out there and see it. It matches up with all the bridges that go around the park. So now that pier really looks like what we need to do with the rest of the park. We need to go around and take every one of the piers and match them up to that one, because it looks just like the rest of it. If you go on from there, as you all know, the elbow tree, last winter we did lose it in, not saying the storm. It was due to the tree actually dying, but it did fall during that time period. We knew we had one out in the woods. It was just hard to get to for folks, so we've spent this fall cutting a new trail, pouring chat, and now we've got a walkway to get to a tree that was actually, if you go back and follow the history, was actually bent in 1823. So 200 years ago, that tree was actually created the way it was by the Native Americans that had come through at the time, and has grown into the tree that it is now. It's pretty neat. If you haven't had a chance to see it or get a chance to go on the Parks and Rec Facebook page and look at it and see what's being talked about. It's pretty cool. There's already folks going out there. I know one of our local realtors have gone out there and did one of his video casts from standing in front of it. So it's become a new attraction, a place to go and have your Christmas pictures just like the old one was, so it's an opportunity.*

*You leave Craighead Forest Park, you go out to Joe Mack Campbell Park. Right now we just finished up last week actually on Friday the baseball mounds. That was something that we had an issue with. We put the hard mounds in when they first did the turf and realized that was a mistake. We've dealt with it for the last five years, and fortunately we were able to change those out this year. Crew came in, took out the hard mounds, returf the surface, and then we've got portable mounds now. So that way we're able to move the mound forward and backwards; and that way it can be adjusted to whatever age group is going to be there. What the issue was with the hard mound was we had to move just the rubber on the mound. So when you had a younger kid that might have been a little bit taller playing, when they would pitch, they would step off in front of the mound and they'd hit the flat surface and it was creating a really bad playing area for that child. And that's the last thing you want is for any team to come in and go, I don't want to play in this tournament because it's not the right surface to play on. So we fixed that. The other issue we had was our lighting system. We were dealing with two different lighting systems. We had Eco-Link and then we had Control-Link that turned our lights on in the same park. Well, Eco-Link was actually going out of date and was going to have to be updated. And so instead of updating with that company, we went ahead and updated to Control-Link. That way, everything was under the same system. The nice part about that, is that same system speaks to Active, which is our reservation system. So now if you go in and reserve a baseball field, and it falls within that timeframe of the park being dark, that system is automatically going to turn the lights on. Now we don't have to go in, reserve it, and then go to a new system, make sure the lights come on; because we do have that issue. Sometimes we have if somebody's doing a reservation, they get a phone call. They may forget to go back in and turn the lights on. Now we don't have to worry about it. They're going to come on, so that's an update for us. That's customer service; and it's going to be good for our citizens to be able to use.*

*So that's kind of our projects. I'm sure there's quite a few more, but those are the ones I think are going to be pretty impactful right now that's happened this last quarter. When you start looking at programs, we came out of a really good soccer season. We were somewhere in the low 200s coming out of last year with our travel soccer, which is revolution. This fall, we went up to 325 kids. We added right at 100 kids into that program, which I think was a great step. I mean, that's a high percentage increase. We still had somewhere in that 1500 plus range of kids playing City Stars. So soccer is*

*still just that growing program that a lot of people are involved in, people really enjoy. Part of that is we have really good programmers, really good coaches and volunteers, and we've got a good facility to play in. So folks are coming from all over Northeast Arkansas to be part of that program. Football was another program that was successful this season. We run the elementary program, so it's broken out into each one of the elementaries. You play for Jonesboro, Nettleton, Westside; so you kind of broken down to those teams. Flag football, we had softball, really strong season in softball tournament wise. I can't tell the exact number. I don't have that in front of me, but basically you go out there, we had just about every weekend, there was a softball tournament going of some sort, whether it was youth or adults. It seems like for the year, it seems like somewhere in that range of 20 to 22 tournaments total for the year. So you know that's a lot of tournaments. We're really utilizing the best part of the year to have events. Right now, we're in the middle of elementary basketball; and this past weekend we had, I believe, 63 teams playing elementary. That was Friday and Saturday. We used four facilities for that, long day for the staff. The next elementary tournament is going to be on January 7th, and we plan on using our facility, most of the Jonesboro school facilities, potentially even Nettleton. So that tournament should be pretty large. Following that, we'll have a junior Olympic volleyball tournament with the Icebreaker. I know, Joe, you've been to that a few years ago. That tournament's already filled up. We're at this point now that registration is filling up extremely quick for bringing an event like that that's volleyball related. I'm getting a look at brackets already right now three weeks in advance, which is pretty nice to be able to sit down and start working on that activity; but that will be Parks, Jonesboro, Nettleton, Westside, and anywhere else I can find a gym, because it'll take 20 plus facilities for me to make that tournament happen. So it's going to be busy the next few weeks. As soon as we get past Christmas, we will be running with making sure activities are happening.*

*Chairman Chris Gibson said any questions for either one of the gentlemen on the committee? What about trail connectivity? Can you bring us up to speed on trail connectivity? Director Danny Kapales said trail connectivity. So obviously also we had the wonderful groundbreaking here recently, so that one is real close. I know Craig probably has more detail on that than I do. But, yeah, that's our next step. That is one that's been long waiting. I know when I came into this position that was a piece that we've gotten a couple grants for. We moved some money over from another trail to make that happen, getting enough money there. So at this point I believe, if I'm speaking correctly, this spring we should be breaking ground on that, is what I am hearing. I know I've said that a few times in the past, but I'm going to feel like we're holding to spring this year that we are breaking ground and moving forward with that trail. And that's going to be huge, Creath trail connecting to ASU is big. And then from there, we've got soft surface trails. I believe that we're working right now getting some finalization on some trails out at Craighead Forest, trying to update those working on a loop around. So if you're a mountain biker, you can pull into any parking lot out there, unload your bike, and make a loop. And that way, you can come right back to your vehicle, and really maybe looking at that trail being universal where, if you're a biker head like me, you don't want to have any jumps, you don't want to have a whole lot of extra activity, you just want to ride, you can ride it. But if you're somebody that rides all the time, you want to have a few extra jumps and adventures, it's going to have that right alongside it; so that way, a couple folks said that right at different skill levels can go ride together.*

**Filed**

[COM-22:042](#)

JET TRANSIT SYSTEM UPDATE

Sponsors: JETS

Director of JETS Michael Black approached the podium and said good afternoon. As to date, actually yesterday, ridership total for the year was 81,244. Last year, same period, was 68,833. So we're continuing about a 20% increase from last year. We do still have quite a few different challenges for this year. Rolling stock is number one. Buses, as we use the medium duty cutaways are just not available. The parent company called Forest River is the main manufacturer. They had seven manufacturing facilities under several different brand names at one point in time pre-Covid. During Covid, they shut down five. Now they have two. Pre-Covid, they were getting about 30,000 chassis a year. Post-Covid, now they're getting between seven and ten thousand chassis, which there's a tremendous demand out there, not enough to build. So ATPA and several other transit organizations across the country got together and has written a letter to FTA to try to step in to help this. Another reason that Forest River is not building transit buses is because they lost a subsidy. The government was giving them, well Ford was giving them an \$8,000 per chassis subsidy and they quit doing that for some reason. But they're supposed to be working on that; and plus right now there is no state bid. But we do continue to work on our low no emissions grant. FTA put out a question to us. What is useful life of a hybrid medium duty vehicle? I've looked everywhere. I don't see that it changes anything. FTA standard is seven years, 250,000 miles, but they're not acting like they want that. So I'm having to continue to research and work with Sharon with FTA to try to determine that. As soon as we get that determined, we'll continue answering their questions and get this grant ready to go so we can spec out a medium duty trolley hybrid and get a couple of them on order. We have a brand new paratransit vehicle that I just kind of stumbled on because I've been calling several different places around the country looking for vehicles because we're in bad need. I've got three vehicles out of six right now that are almost at 300,000 miles, and that's pretty high mileage for a gas burner. But I did find a paratransit vehicle to replace the one that was totaled back last April. This one however is a Ford Transit 350 single rear wheel mid roof. Our other one was a dual rear wheel. It was an HD dual rear high roof. The high roof did cause us a little problems sometimes not being able to get under some of the awnings around some of the medical facilities. I think we're going to work through this one quite a bit better. In all actuality, we just finished it up today. We've got our decals on it, got the fair box in, got everything set up, so it will be on the road tomorrow. So that's going to help our paratransit side tremendously. It's difficult to do the volume we do with paratransit in two vehicles. We really need three, and so now we finally have our third one back. Our second challenge is personnel. In the past six weeks, we've had 36 applications, and this is for driver only. We've tried to contact all of them. We had 28 interviews, or we set up 28 interviews. Fourteen of those 28 were no-shows. They didn't call, they just didn't show up. We have hired five new employees, and two of those five have all their ratings, CDL with passenger doors. We've got several in our new entry-level driver training class that was imposed by the feds and DOT last February, which it's new to us. It's new to them, so we're all kind of learning as we go on this. But I do still have two full-time driver positions open. And I've put a challenge to our new employees. The ones that actually get their ratings first will be the ones to be considered for the full-time position first, so kind of create a little bit of competition there. I'm excited about the new budget. I hated to have to double my auto expense in the budget, but I don't have a choice when I've got as many miles on these vehicles as I do. The older they get, the more expensive the upkeep is; although I have a tremendous lead mechanic and I feel like we have a second to none maintenance program that is very proactive. And they can still only go so far. But that's all I got, if you all have any questions.

Councilmember Ann Williams said I do. Is there any plan, and I know it's difficult under these circumstances, to expand the routes on the weekends? You know, there's

*been discussion in the past.*

*Michael Black said yes, our next step, of course, once we get our personnel back in place, would be to take our Saturday service to the same level as our Monday through Friday, except on our limited hours. Of course, that would be awesome for summer, but wintertime ridership just kind of dies off. I'm almost worried about Thursday and Friday as far as ridership. I mean, it's going to be so cold out there people are not going to want to get outside at all. We're working on another grant to enhance our bus stops, so that may help out a little bit. But none of them are going to be completely enclosed. But we also have a need out south of town, primarily down Southwest Drive. There's quite a few transit needy communities out there that we could actually add a route and service that part of the city as well. But, yes, that's always on the table and ready to go as soon as personnel comes up. I think we've got another person that drives for the school that's interested in just driving Saturdays. It would take a little bit longer to train them on all the routes, but if we can get a few more of those set up, that would be great. We could probably take that step a little bit quicker. Thank you.*

**Filed**

## **7. Public Comments**

## **8. Adjournment**

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

**Aye:** 4 - Joe Hafner;Ann Williams;Brian Emison and Seth Speer