

STATEMENT REGARDING 3% COL

This administration has made fiscal responsibility our top priority. We have worked diligently to streamline and improve efficiencies in reporting, been completely committed to full transparency, and have made daily management of cash and expenses en route to a balanced budget our primary goal.

I am proud of what we have accomplished. Throughout that process, we have been battling a softer than normal economy, which has presented challenges and opportunities on a multitude of levels. One such level has been our ability to continue to provide cost-of-living adjustments and pay increases to city employees.

We recognize that during a down economy it is all our responsibilities to share in the struggle. We feel that our employees have done that; and have done so with a willingness to not only maintain, but increase the level of service we provide to our citizens. I am proud of how each and every member of our team has responded under these conditions.

Still, it has been almost three years since we were able to provide any sort of across the board adjustment. During that time, we have continued to cut expenses and expand services whenever possible. Now, we are hoping to in some small way begin to move in a forward direction in terms of employee compensation.

After a diligent review of finances and early projections for 2012, it is our request that the City Council Finance Committee consider a 3% cost-of-living increase across the board for employees of the city of Jonesboro. This increase would become effective retroactive to October 1, 2011. This increase would serve as the increase for 2012, meaning there will be no additional increases during the next budget cycle.

I know that as we average this out over the years' of receiving no increase at all that it minimizes the impact; but these have been and continue to be challenging economic times and in all fairness I am convinced that this is the best we can do for both our employees and the citizens that we serve.