



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Finance & Administration Council Committee

Tuesday, October 8, 2019

4:00 PM

Municipal Center

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call by City Clerk Donna Jackson

Present 6 - Charles Coleman; Ann Williams; John Street; David McClain; LJ Bryant and Joe Hafner

3. Approval of minutes

[MIN-19:091](#)

Minutes for the Finance Committee Meeting on September 10, 2019

Attachments: [Finance Meeting Minutes 09102019.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman; Ann Williams; John Street; David McClain and LJ Bryant

[MIN-19:097](#)

MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL CALLED FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING ON OCTOBER 1, 2019

Attachments: [SC Finance Minutes 10012019.pdf](#)

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

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman; Ann Williams; John Street; David McClain and LJ Bryant

4. New Business

ORDINANCES TO BE INTRODUCED

[ORD-19:056](#)

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY OF A ONE QUARTER PERCENT (0.25%) SALES AND USE TAX WITHIN THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS; TO PROVIDE THAT ALL NET COLLECTIONS DERIVED FROM THE SALES AND USE TAX SHALL BE USED TO FUND THE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR, EQUIPPING, AND IMPROVING OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS OF A PUBLIC NATURE FOR CITY'S POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS, AND FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE AND STAFFING OF SUCH CAPITAL

IMPROVEMENTS

Councilmember Bobby Long said, first of all. Thank you guys. I appreciate it. Back on May 23, 2019, I asked both the Police and Fire Chief for their five year strategic plans and I was provided with a booklet from the Fire Chief. I took page 12, which was the summary of those costs for the five years. I also received an email back from the Chief outlining what he calls a quick look at immediate needs. I took those amounts and I put them in a spreadsheet and I extrapolated out to 2024 because I knew 2019 is about over with. I added all of those up for the five years, 2020-2024. The total cost is outlined for the five years worth \$31,315,000. At one council meeting, I had given you a spreadsheet that had four proposals on it. The first four proposals, all of the proposals have the permanent 1/4 percent. Several of the proposals would not meet the needs or the 1/4 percent would not meet the needs on their own. It wouldn't do it, not as projected by the two chiefs, it would not. However, if the city were to reallocate a portion of the one percent that it does get, it would meet those. And, there were four proposals there that outlined the outcome of what that would be. The quandary I think we get into and this sales tax is no different than any. Well, first of all, this sales tax is a single issue ordinance. It is specific to new capital expenditures for fire and police only. And, I am open to placing it on the ballot for March 2020 which would require no special election. I still operate under the ominous that when Calvin Coolidge said collecting more taxes than is absolutely necessary is legalized robbery. So, what I did was I took these five years and I put them in a spreadsheet and I tried to figure out how we could meet those needs. The dilemma I think with any tax proposal and I think something that was evident and will probably continue to be evident is that with any new tax proposal, there is public perception that we have to address. Whether or not the public perception is accurate, it is still public perception. I think one is, "will the funds be spent as they were proposed?" And, I think that just goes to a fundamental trust of us. The second is our current funds being spent wisely with consideration to future needs. In other words, are we spending ourselves into a situation of necessity? And, is it a spending problem or is it a revenue problem? The third thing that I think we have to consider when any tax is proposed is the external forces. With external, I mean outside of the city. External stresses on household finances. Back in July, the internet sales tax came about. We are paying that. On October 1, 2019, we are now paying three cents extra on every gallon of gasoline and diesel six cents. In 2020, there will be another 1/2 percent proposed tax increase from the state on the ballot. And, then, after even these proposals, I believe there is three additional separate millage increases on personal property. So, I think the fourth thing to consider is when we impose a tax, are we taxing ourselves out of any competitive advantage that we have with the surrounding cities. And, what I mean by that is if lets say you own a heating and air business and you sell a heating and air unit for \$5,000, in Jonesboro, the sales tax rate right now is 8 1/2 percent, but if you get the same quote for the same thing and it costs \$5,000 in Brookland, then more than likely the person is going to go with the business in Jonesboro because Brookland's sales tax is higher than ours and it would cost more. So, as we raise our city's taxes, we have to be cognitive and aware of the fact that we don't want to tax ourselves out of any competitive advantage that we have.

I have got two ordinances on the agenda. The next one over this would require zero additional money from the city. But, this one, in order to meet the needs of the police and fire that they have outlined on Page 12 of the police/fire future five year spending and then what I got from the police chief, there would be additional funds needed from the city in order to make this happen. Even if it were an 1/8th of a percent city reallocation, over to 2024, it would still produce \$33,750,000 assuming a \$4.5 million per year revenue at 1/4th percent. The 1/8th percent would be \$2.25 million. When you extrapolate that to 2024, you still have over \$2 million in additional funds in excess

of what was said here. But, there was some things that the police chief was not able to give me prices on so I thought that it would be fair to allow for extra money for those. So anyway, that's what I have got. They are straightforward. They are simple. They are single issue ordinances. They do not require a special election. And, I think it could be placed on the ballot in March 2020.

Chairman Joe Hafner asked, are you open or ready for some questions?

Councilmember Long said, sure. Chairman Hafner asked about the spreadsheet that Councilmember Long gave them. Councilmember Long said, there was one error on the spreadsheet that I gave you. I did not pull the totals over on that one. Chairman Hafner said, I was going to say on the new officer line, you have \$300,000 across there every year. So, are you just thinking that we are going to hire officers in 2020 and no more? Because if you hire \$300,000 worth of officers in 2020, and you hire another \$300,000 worth of officers in 2021, you have \$600,000 worth of expenses. And, then you have \$900,000 in year three, \$1.2 million in year four, and \$1.5 million in year five. Because I don't think anybody is just going to get paid the first year and to decide not to get paid anymore. Councilmember Long said, I believe, here is the thing. This is additional money over and above what the city is spending. Chairman Hafner asked, are you saying we are going to hire five officers a year or how many? Councilmember Long said, no, I would say that would be an additional \$300,000 in addition to what the city should already allocate for personnel. Chairman Hafner said, okay. I thought in something that I saw from the chief or something that talked about hiring additional officers each year. That is why I was wondering why that was straight lined across. Councilmember Long said, I think if you look at the way that this ordinance is constructed. It is for capital expenditures and to staff those new capital expenditures. Chairman Hafner said, right. Councilmember Long said, and it is not for hiring additional officers that would not go to fund and to equip and staff those things that did not have any association with new capital expenditures. Am I right? Chairman Hafner said, I don't think so. Councilmember Long said, if the ordinance says for to fund acquisition, construction, repair, equipping, and improving of capital improvements of a public nature and for the operation and maintenance and staffing of such capital improvements. It seems to me that if we hire new staff, then it should be to staff new capital improvements. Chairman Hafner said, but if we are hiring new officers each year to staff those capital improvements, then your expenses will go up. Councilmember Long said, as capital improvements are built. Chairman Hafner said, if you build a new justice complex, which I believe the chief had on his paper, but I don't see on here and you have to hire five new officers per year to staff that, at the end of five years or four years, you do twenty officers, but you are staffing that. I am just saying I don't know if your payroll expenses are increasing. That may be something that needs to be looked at. Councilmember Long said, and I agree, but all I had to go on was what I got. I didn't have anything else to go on. If I had more information to go on, I could have probably been more accurate and we could probably come to some sort of agreement on that, but I did not have that information available.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, Bobby, let me ask you a question. You said you didn't have that to look at. Did you look at the whole budget, the whole city budget that has all of their information in it? Councilmember Long said, well, on May 23, 2019, I asked the chief, could you give me some estimate on the dollar amount you will need for new equipment for the next five to ten years. I am trying to get an estimate on what that would equate to in a percent of sales tax over ten years. So, I asked him and that is what I got. Councilmember Coleman said, that is not what I asked you. Did you look at the whole budget that included all of the other departments and their needs when you had this ordinance drafted? That is my question. Councilmember Long said, no sir. Councilmember Coleman said, okay.

Councilmember David McClain said, I have a couple of questions. One for clarity sake or the city attorney if she doesn't mind to give me some clarity. If I am understanding correctly, the quarter cent is for only capital projects, buildings, staffing? Chairman Hafner said, it is basically the same wording of the ordinance that didn't pass. Councilmember McClain asked, would it include people? Chairman Hafner said, yes. Councilmember McClain said, okay. City Attorney Carol Duncan said, it can include people and we even had an opinion from the Municipal League and others in Little Rock that a police car is considered a capital improvement so if you needed to put a police officer in that car, you would be staffing a capital improvement. Councilmember McClain said, you said Mr. Long, you made the statement that we could reallocate the one percent that we get. What would you suggest maybe taking time and looking at the budget to reallocate money, what would you reallocate? Right now, we all know that we are running a pretty lean budget. My question would be what would you suggest that we reallocate? You made the comment that you know, are we making sure that we are spending our money wisely. We look at that budget every year. You have been part of the council for how long now? Councilmember Long said, two and a half years. Councilmember McClain said, alright, so in two and a half years, we have looked at the budget and have had an opportunity to see each year, increases, decreases, and all of that. What would you suggest we reallocate from the current one percent that we are collecting?

Councilmember Long said, I know that in the past, five years ago, the city operated on a half of a percent. When the half of a percent for capital improvements designation was rolled into that, that is how we got to the one percent that we have got now. And, I don't think it is unwise to look at some of the core functions of city government. I think a couple of those core functions are public safety and sanitation, the police and fire and sanitation, so an allocation of just an 1/8th of a percent of that budget would more than suffice for the five years. But, that is how come, the second ordinance is on there as well. It would require no reallocation of the existing one percent. First of all, the reason I put this on here, well first of all I gave two reasons. One, I think, when you look at public perception and you try to get any type of sales tax issue passed, what we are asking the citizens of Jonesboro to do is dig a little deeper and to come up with a quarter of a percent more and pay more. We are asking them to pay more because we fill that this is the need. I think that it is only, I think that it would fair well if the city said, you know what, we are asking you to pay more taxes, we are going to do the same and we are going to tighten our belt and allocate this and put money with you and work with you, not against you on that. Of course, that is one opinion.

Chairman Hafner asked, where would you recommend that the city cut?
Councilmember McClain said, that is my original question. Where would we reallocate?
Chairman Hafner said, you talked quite a bit about essentials versus nonessentials and stuff like that. But, what is your thought on where we could do those cuts?
Councilmember Long said, well, I think, there was a couple of things. I think if we look at our health insurance that we have got right now, we have a \$600 deductible. We don't have any type of deductible on our prescription plans. I think we can look at the benefit package. I think that would be a place. Chairman Hafner said, so you are saying you can shift the cost and cut the benefits back? On the health insurance, are you saying don't provide as good of benefits? Councilmember Long said, well you are asking me where to look and I am giving you something. Chairman Hafner said, I am asking for clarification. When you say cut the premium, are you saying, just lower the benefits? Councilmember Long said, well, here's the thing. There are a lot of decisions that have to be made in the public sector as well, and, that is one of the places that you look. Another is attrition. Do we hire people or rehire people for positions that

retire? There are other ways.

Councilmember Coleman said, Bobby, let me ask you a question. Councilmember Long said, first of all, I want to say that I appreciate the questions that are being asked because I think this is a great dialogue and so I appreciate that.

Councilmember Coleman said, I appreciate you saying that. Here is the thing that bothers me ever since I have been on the council period. We are losing good staff and some staff we can't hire because we don't have enough money now to even pay. The other side of the story is that I want to make sure that I am saying this right because we have the media here. You know how they write things up. I want to make sure that you understand that the people that are working now are doing a great job with the salary that they are getting now. But, at the same time, I still have actually fought for them to get more money. If we start cutting back with the people that we have, even in administration, I am not talking about the Mayor or Mike Downing. I want to make sure that is clear too. I am talking about the real working people like sanitation, people on the streets, you know, that type of thing. I am being comical, but from a serious side, they are not being paid enough. To cut their health benefits down, that would really bother me. I am not sure. I very seldom tell anybody how I am going to vote, but that would really bother me if you cut benefits from individuals because right now, our health insurance is going up, not just for the city, it is going up for the public period.

Councilmember John Street said, they did bear some of the cost on the increase last year. But, too, Bobby, one of the things that bothers me is like you mentioned public safety. But, again, being competitive. I mean, yeah, we can pay less, but we are going to lose a lot of the people that we have and we won't be able to recruit any because it is very competitive. In police and fire, both of those departments, I wish they ran for half of what they do, but I mean, there is only so much that you can cut. With the technology required, that we have to put new radios in, that is a big expense. All of the body cameras, that is public safety and a public demand that officers have body cameras. When you hire these individuals, you have to equip them and place them in cars. You have to have vehicles. You have to replace the existing that you have, just like the fire trucks. The fire chief is here, but he can tell you that we have to build two new fire stations within the next few years to maintain ISO ratings.

Councilmember Coleman said, it is the same thing, but I am not just talking about the fire department and the police department. I am talking about everybody across the board in the city is not getting paid enough as it is. I mentioned once before to the mayor that I thought even the secretaries should get more money because when they put up with us and they put up with the mayor and they put up with Mike and somebody else over there to the point where they need a raise. But, at the same time when you start cutting across the board, if you start cutting insurance for Bill or Mike or me or whoever who are city employees, that is to me going backwards instead of going forward. Councilmember Long said, I wasn't in no way trying to indicate that people that we have are not doing a good job or that the people we have on staff are not worth more money. Councilmember Coleman said, you might not say that, but a lot of times, you know, it is not so much what you say as how you say it to the fact that employees when they hear maybe some of them don't have what we have in another way, but when they understand that they go to the hospital or they have to pay for a prescriptions, even administrative staff, they have got to pay for prescriptions and going to the hospital. The hospitals and the prescriptions are not getting any cheaper. If you talk about cutting back now, because I think if I am not mistaken unless someone can correct me, when we deal with insurance and prescriptions or whatever, it is across the board. Bill, am I correct about that? Is that across the board? That affects everybody in the city. For people who are on low salaries, that is even going to hurt them a whole lot more. Taxes, and I have said this once before to the media, taxes really don't

bother me because of my background and being professional in other fields. But, at the same time, I am up here to serve all of the people, not just the people of council or administration, but you have got people that has worked for the sanitation department and they do a great job. So, I didn't come to talk about what type of job they are doing. My argument is I am very careful about dealing with money that is going to cut their insurance, cut those type of things. I am not sure, even if there is a tax raise, because it seems like, I am a lot older than you so I can say this, it seems like the more we do something different, taxes go up, whether it is nationally or city wise. We have got issues.

Councilmember Long said, the question of where do I think we need to look, I think we can look. It doesn't mean we have to do anything. These were just areas that I think we could look at whether we do anything about it, that is regardless. I think the issue and I totally understand the premiums increase. I have been in Human Resources for sixteen years so I understand that. I understand that rates go up 25% on the average. Some are getting rate increases of almost 100% for health plans that are common in this area with deductibles of over \$1,000, sometimes \$2,000 and \$5,000 deductibles. So, I totally understand the dilemma with benefits because I work with them every day and I see the impact that they have on every one. So, I totally get that.

Chairman Hafner said, one thing, when people start talking about essential versus nonessential services, I think a lot of that goes back to personal opinion. As Chairman of the Public Services Committee, you heard Parks Director Danny Kapales give a presentation and on the amount of participation that we have in our different programs. So, if someone considers Parks and Rec nonessential, I would say that it is very essential to the people participating in them. If you go out to Craighead on any given night or day, and the people out there using those, I mean, I think Parks and Rec are very essential to providing a well-rounded quality of life for your citizens. I think it is kind of like a football game. You don't need cheerleaders and a band and concessions and all of that to have a football game, but that is part of what makes the environment of a football game. That makes people want to go. So, you mentioned earlier and this is probably beside the point and I kind of talked about this last year during the budget cycle, you mentioned do we have a revenue problem or do we have an expense problem. You can always look at a \$50 million budget and say you shouldn't have done this and you could have cut here. But, I think the Mayor and his staff would tell you that they look at every single thing that they spend and make a decision on whether or not they spend it. I mentioned last year that when it comes to revenue versus expenses, we do a lot of stuff with one percent that other cities have one percent or more plus they have other stuff. They have sanitation fees. They have prepared food tax. They have stuff like that. I understand why we don't have sanitation fees. That was part of the vote in 2000 that also did away with a 3.1 mill property tax that was \$2 million a year. You look at what we are doing with our one percent and I think to say that we need to reallocate part of that away, I don't think that is very feasible.

Councilmember Long said, I have one correction. What I was talking about was the dilemma of with any new tax proposal and I was talking about public perception. Now it can appear, I think we all understand what happens as far as in the budgetary process and things like that. I am talking about public perception and if we don't get that message out to the public, then, if they do think there is a spending problem, then, if we don't get that message out that yes, there may be places in a \$50 million budget where we could have done this and not done that. At the end of the day, if a guy walks into a voting booth and he thinks that there is a spending problem, then there is a spending problem and he is going to vote like that.

Councilmember Coleman said, you know, you keep saying that and that bothers me

because it is like that we don't know what we are doing up here as a council as far as the money is concerned. We are doing as much as we can and know how to do. All of us may not be accountants, but we can count. So, that kind of bothers me because it seems like it is telling us that we are not really adequately spending the money right and we spend as much as we can. The second thing that I was going to ask was that on this quarter percent sales tax, just a question. You have brought up this 1/8th of a percent twice. Why did you not or did you ever think about doing 1/8th of a percent for the police and the fire and 1/8th of a percent for the parks and recreation? Did you not think about that or did you not even bring that until the conscientiousness of anything. Councilmember Long said, say that one more time. Councilmember Coleman said, you have got a quarter percent here. Councilmember Long said, yes sir. Councilmember Coleman said, my question was you are just talking about the police department and the fire department and so forth which is in my head number one. But, at the same time, what about the other things that people need? I think the gentleman was talking a few minutes ago about the parks and recreation. When those people come in, that is finance that we use and we still don't have adequate enough places to do so. Was there ever a thought about doing a 1/8th percent for each, parks and recreation and also 1/8th percent for the fire department. Councilmember Long said, or we could do a 1/8th percent for sanitation, 1/8th for this, or 1/8th for that. I mean we could. We could 1/8th percent ourselves all the way up to two percent if we wanted to I imagine. Councilmember Coleman said, I didn't ask that. I asked you if you thought about this right here. Councilmember Long said, no, I did not. I did not. My concern was for the \$31 million that we need to take care of the fire and police for public safety because if you do not have public safety, you can have all of the parks you want to. No one feels safe to go there. You just have a park. Councilmember Long said, that is my opinion and I respect your opinion and I hope that you know that I am not trying to be argumentative or anything. I am just trying to respond.

Chairman Hafner said, Bobby, I have a question. I am looking at Keith Inman's article right here from Sunday. Chief Elliott sent me a text beforehand. I will read it to you. He said, "I am currently at the emergency room with my wife. Therefore, I am unable to attend the Finance meeting today. My concern over Mr. Long's proposal is that it will not meet our needs. We have yet to sit down and discuss this. I would suggest that a comprehensive study be done and then returned to the committee with an ordinance that will meet our needs." Chairman Hafner said, Chief Elliott said he thought Chief Miller would not be here, but he is. My question is, Chief Elliott mentioned that this will fall short of what he thinks the police and fire department's needs are. You mentioned getting the message out to the voters, otherwise, they won't vote for this. With any election or any campaign, they don't just happen on their own. If we have a proposal that it doesn't appear that the police chief and I am not going to speak for Chief Miller, he can come up and speak, you know that he doesn't feel is going to meet his needs and you as a sponsor indicated that you don't plan to campaign in favor of the proposed tax increase if the council places it on the ballot. Who is going to push? If these go to a vote, who is going to push these? Who is going to campaign for them? Who is going to raise the funds? Councilmember Long said, first of all, I would trust the people of Jonesboro to make the correct decision. It is a very simple ordinance. It is a quarter of a percent for the fire and police only and it is a permanent tax. There is not a whole lot to it. Since back in May when the prior proposal came about, it has been in the paper quite frequently so people understand what it is. So, I really don't think there is going to be a lot of need to campaign. I do want to say that since the prior proposal that was defeated come about that I have heard from many people that they had wished they had went the another way that would have been split so that is what I was trying to achieve here is a split that the people I believe would vote for.

Councilmember Coleman said, but, we have heard the same thing from just the opposite. Councilmember Long said, I know and that is why we are all here and we are all individuals and we are not the same. Some of us have different opinions and that is fine. However, that is what I was trying to achieve. But, would I campaign for it? I don't think I need to. What I was wanting to do was to give people an option that they did not have with the other. Councilmember Coleman said, that makes sense. Councilmember Long said, some of us felt the need to put them together and some did not. I did not. It has been a heavy price, but that is ok. You are a representative, everybody up there is a representative. You have to do what you feel people elected you to do regardless of whether you are the only one or not. And, I hope that you can respect that. I wasn't trying to be defiant or anything. But, my main point was that many felt that it should have been separated and got to vote on one or the other or both or neither. That didn't happen. So, this is an attempt to give people an opportunity to vote on that which I think that they would have liked to have seen on the floor. That's it.

Chairman Hafner said, I understand that. I am just saying that if they don't feel that it is an adequate proposal to fund their needs, then who is going to support it? My thought would be and Chief Elliott said, it hasn't been a month since the election. The election was September 10, 2019, correct? Councilmember Long said, yes. Chairman Hafner said, why wouldn't we take a little bit more time and sit down with the groups and make sure that their needs are adequately supported? And, then propose something that they can feel good about? Councilmember Long said, if I had the information provided to me when I asked for it back in May, I would have probably tried to have done a better job, but I went on what I had in front of me with the information that I had and that is all that you can go on. I am not going to tell you anything that you don't already know. You know, we can propose and I hope that I am just preaching to the choir here, we can propose anything that we want to, but whether or not the public will accept that and decide to go along with it is another matter. So, there were reasons that the other one did not succeed. I don't want to sound like I don't think everyone up here knows what they are doing or anything like that. I am just saying that there are reasons. I believe that this proposal is \$4.5 million over and above and that is how come the second ordinance, ORD-19:059 requires absolutely no reallocation from the city at all. And, if that was the case, then it would supply about \$40.5 million over five years. The total amount was \$31.315 is what I calculated and now let's say I was off. I mean I don't know I am \$9 million off and that is what I was presented and that's what I had to go on. If there is other information that you guys know, then I would be willing to take a look at it. But, like I said before, we could come up with 1/8th percent for everything. If the city is having to look at struggling people who already don't make enough money, they are pay 3 cents more a gallon for gas. Internet sales tax on purchases on the internet are another 1/2 a percent. There is a half of a percent possibly coming down in 2020 and three more millage increases for their personal property on this agenda alone. It will not be long before they say, enough is enough and I am not going to vote for anything. Chairman Hafner asked, are you talking about the millages on our agenda? Those are reoccurring. It is not anything new. They have been on there. Councilmember Street said, they have been on there forever. Councilmember Long said, yeah, that is right. Chairman Hafner said, they have been in the budget forever.

Councilmember Street said, in several discussions with Chief Elliott, maybe there is something that you didn't get that he has got in his list. But, he does have serious concerns and that is why him and the fire chief, Chief Miller, they got together. They were pushing for the 1/2 percent, a quarter percent a piece. Now, I can't speak for him either. He is here and he can probably articulate the department's needs for the fire. But, Chief Elliott, if you were to sit down with him and go over what he has got, he is

very adamant and that is why they supported that. They didn't support a quarter of a percent. They supported a half of a percent, a quarter a piece to cover the needs that they have to have. I don't think he had a lot of fluff or frill and I think Chief Miller can tell you the same, he doesn't. But, again, from listening to people out there, and I respect people's opinion on the vote, I told them to vote your conscience, but without exception. I didn't have a soul tell me that they did not intend to support public safety. They did and they didn't say, oh, but a half cent is too much. Maybe, it would have been better if it was separate, but wasn't. That was a proposal that came from Team Jonesboro so it went forward as they intended it to go forward. But, the fire and police both campaigned hard for that half cent and I don't think they have found any less need for funds since that election. I would love to hear from Chief Miller since he is here, but too, something else a lot of people don't understand Bobby, they will look at Jonesboro and Conway, and population is pretty close, but Conway has half of the land size. We have 82.5 square miles. We are the second largest city in the state of Arkansas. Councilmember Long said, we are fifth in population. Councilmember Street said, and fifth in population and we are probably going to be scooting up to fourth before long, but we have to cover with city funds every square foot of that property. We have to provide police, fire, sanitation, animal control, mosquito control, garbage pickups, street maintenance, code enforcement. And, so, everybody, whether its sanitation to fire to police, any of those departments, their resources are stretched so thin and its not funny. With the exception of parks, and you heard the presentation that Danny Kapales gave, they are stretched thin. That is why you have so many part-time people. Heck, if I had the means to waive my hand and do and I know they need it done, and Chairman Hafner talked about Craighead Forrest being used and it is. We actually need a full-time ranger or somebody over there to enforce the regulations. I mean, we have got the population out there every day. I was out there earlier today. It is incredible. I mean it is wonderful that people use it, but you have to have someone out there enforcing things and we don't even have anyone to do that. So, there are plenty of things that we are doing without because the budget is so tight. But, we are not Conway. I guarantee you that if you cut our land area in half, we could do a whole lot more with the resources we currently have. But, everybody is stretched really, really thin and our population is continuing to grow at a pretty good rate. The taxes that they are paying are not compensating for the demand for the services out there.

Councilmember Long said, I think, that over time, as we grow into our skin, you know that our sales tax revenues will continue to be at record levels because as we grow into our skin, people are going to buy houses. They are going to pay property taxes. More people are going to move in. More shopping, more this, more that and we will continue to grow into our skin and grow into that 80 square miles. I think we have growing pains right now. Councilmember Street, said, yeah, we do. If you get City & Town magazine, I think you get that every month, if you look into the back, it will show you every city and the sales tax rate they pay. We are one of the cheapest in northeast Arkansas. We are one of the cheapest in the state for a city our size and you can only do so much. Heck, I am a taxpayer too and I don't want to pay any more tax than anybody has too, but I fully, and I mean from the bottom of my heart, I know from serving on this committee right here for the last sixteen or seventeen years, we truly need these funds. It is not a frill for police and fire. We need them in other places. The fire and police, and as you said earlier, public safety is extremely important. If you don't have adequate public safety, you don't have a city. People want to know that their property is protected and their lives are protected. Councilmember Long said, and that is one of the main reasons that this focused strictly on fire and police and not on any of the others.

Councilmember McClain said, I think this ordinance fails to meet needs and with that

being said, I don't see how we can support, in my opinion, inadequate funding. Part two of what I want to say is that we have got to understand that quality of life is not a bad term. It is not a term that we should shy away from. We have to understand that places that have a higher quality of life, they have great parks. They have things that people enjoy as Joe said. It is about the experience of where I live. It is not so much as I want to live somewhere. I have to enjoy it. I have to feel safe. I also have to enjoy going and doing things. My kids and I were trying to figure out one day, what are some things that we can do? We sat down and said well, we can go to Hijinx, we can go to the movies, or Craighead. That is pretty much it. Councilmember Coleman said, and we have one swimming pool. Councilmember McClain said, I think the thing that we are missing is that we have to invest in certain things and we have to be willing to look at other sources of funds. I think impact fees, which Councilmember Ann Williams, has brought up before would be great to have to help pay for parks and pay for things that make our city better. Not just, yes, we have got to feel safe. You look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, right. One of the things that you have to feel is you have to feel safe. So, I get that piece. But, at the same time, we have to look at what can we do to improve our city and be the best city we can be. Number one, this isn't enough. If this doesn't get us over the hump and we are already cutting, I don't see how we support it. I don't see how we get behind what I would call bad legislation. We cannot afford to miss the mark and continue to miss the mark. Yes, there are probably tough choices that we could make in terms of the budget. But, at the same time, we have to be willing to invest in other areas.

Councilmember Long said, let me speak as to quality of life just a little bit since you brought it up. I think quality of life is one of the most ambiguous and personal things that we can talk about. Councilmember McClain said, that is fine. Councilmember Long said, you were talking about what you could do with your kids, Hijinx, pool, Craighead. I remember one of the best times I had was setting up a table out in my garage and painting pumpkins when my kids were five. It didn't cost me a dime. I spent time with them, right out there in my driveway. That is memories I have with my kids. Another kid and taking them hunting. Doing things with them. Councilmember McClain said, I get that. Councilmember Long said, hang on. I enjoy Craighead and I enjoy Hijinx. I enjoy doing those things. But, quality of life is way bigger than a park. Quality of life is way bigger than what we are talking about here. Does it help? I think it does. And, I am not against those types of facilities. I am not against having those things. What I am concerned with is that we provide those things, but yet we still have tremendous needs of core things like public safety. I think those need to be taken care of first. And, I am not against those other things. I think they would be great. One of the things that excited me the most was a children's museum. But, does the public need to be involved in operating and funding a children's museum? Councilmember Coleman said, yes, if they are paying taxes. Councilmember Long said, let's say that it operates at \$1,000 a month deficit or you charge exorbitant attendance fees so only a portion of the population can go there. For every \$1,000 of deficiency that a public entity operates at, it takes \$100,000 of new money just to make that up at one percent and that is money that would have not been spent in Jonesboro otherwise. That is new money coming into Jonesboro. So, I am not against those and this is not a quality of life discussion. I think we will probably have that again. But, quality of life is such a personal thing. I am not going to sit here and say that would I not like to see some of those things. I would. But, I think, even in my own household, I would like to have a swimming pool in my backyard. But, when your roof is on fire, you have to put your roof out first before you go build a swimming pool in your backyard. That is all that I am saying.

Councilmember McClain said, I get that, but like I said, at the same time we have to

be willing to invest in things that make our experience better and make simple things. I was riding with the Mayor recently and we were looking at sidewalks around Nettleton Schools, Junior High and High School. We need to improve those and that is something that if we have the funds available, then those are some things that, those are small steps that would make that area better, the area that we represent. I would think that looking at stuff like that would be something that yes, I understand the need to make sure we are safe, make sure I can pick up the phone and get the police at house pretty quick. One instance, I like to spend some time riding with the police from time to time. I am not taking Joe and John Street's route and being sworn in or anything like that. I will stay in the car. Councilmember Williams said, me too. Councilmember McClain said, one of the things that really astonishes me when I am riding with them, you have a limited number of people working at any given time, any given shift. Councilmember Long said, right. Councilmember McClain said, I think if the public knew how limited we are working with and what kind of limits we are working with, it would blow their minds. Councilmember Long said, maybe that needs to be a tax that we, that someone else can propose that would go straight into the general fund that would help fund those things. You could do that. Councilmember McClain said, well, we could, but at the same time, then we should have had, this should have been written to where it is enough. That is the thing that we are missing. It is not enough and we have to be willing to do more and we have to be willing to invest more. Councilmember Long said, that is the thing. This has absolutely nothing for sidewalks or anything like that. Councilmember McClain said, I know. I know and we should. Councilmember Long said, but we are not. Councilmember McClain said, we should.

Councilmember Street said, Mr. Chairman, I know we can talk about this for the rest of the day, but I do believe after talking with Chief Elliott several times about this, I think his request to postpone temporary until we can sit down with him and Chief Miller and maybe even the rest of the council and come up with a consensus on what they truly need or feel they need before we pass this to the voters. We have got until March before the next election so. Chairman Hafner said, we don't actually have until March. It has to be approved 70 days. To have an election, it has to be approved 70 days prior to the day of the election. Councilmember Street said, right, but we still have time to do that. I move that we postpone temporary until we can sit down with them and get a consensus of what we need. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said second. Chairman Street the motion is to postpone temporary.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Chairman, I was going to make a comment if I could before we vote and I will be quick. I appreciate what Councilmember Long says that perception is reality. That is an unfortunate truth in politics or business or whatever the case might be. A couple of quick points because I know we are trying to move on. I think that public safety and quality of life can often tie together because as Councilmember McClain said, it relates to sidewalks and pedestrian safety and our kids having a safe place to play. I think those issues are often more interrelated than we might think. I think to Councilmember McClain's point and Councilmember Street's point, we need to be pretty comprehensive when we go to the voters again because we can't constantly go back and forth. The voters can vote it down and we can go as many times as forever if they continue to vote it down, but I think we need to try to make our best efforts to be concise and to present them with something that will meet our needs and obviously, that is a discussion that we will need to continue to have. One last quick point I think I would have is if somebody were to go to Jonesboro.org and click on the government tab and look at the city departments and you know, if we essentially put aside for just the biggest departments where we know that we are overtasked, police, fire, sanitation, whatever and you look at some of the other departments, whether it is inspections or maintenance or finance, those are largely

small departments that are pretty overtasked so there is not much room to move the needle there. I think maybe one last point along those lines and I know recently in the maintenance department, we wound up bumping up a salary to try to be more competitive and in the grand scheme of things, we actually felt like we saved money because the amount of money we would have spent going to the outside. I think it is important to note that everybody in the city has a job, and if you eliminate that job, we may outsource to a third party and spend three times the money.

City Attorney Carol Duncan asked, are you postponing temporarily or you postponing to a certain date? Councilmember Street said, postpone temporary is what he asked. Do you have a certain date, Joe, that you would like to see it back by? City Clerk Donna Jackson said, don't you want to kill these and start over? Ms. Duncan said, what is the desire of the council? That is our question. Councilmember Street said, okay. That probably makes more sense. I move that we postpone indefinitely. Councilmember Coleman said, second. Ms. Duncan asked, so we are on the first one? Right? Chairmain Hafner said, motion to postpone indefinitely, all of those in favor say aye. All voted aye. So, ORD-19:056 is postponed indefinitely.

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Charles Coleman, that this matter be Postponed Indefinitely . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[ORD-19:059](#)

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY OF A PERMANENT ONE QUARTER PERCENT (0.25%) SALES USE TAX AND THE LEVY OF A TEMPORARY QUARTER PERCENT (0.25%) SALES AN USE TAX EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2023 WITHIN THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS; TO PROVIDE THAT ALL NET COLLECTIONS DERIVED FROM THE SALES AND USE TAX SHALL BE USED TO FUND THE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR, EQUIPPING, AND IMPROVING OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS OF A PUBLIC NATURE FOR CITY'S POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS, AND FOR THE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE AND STAFFING OF SUCH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Chairman Joe Hafner said, I am going to read it by title only because the language is basically the same as the other one. If it is not, then write a letter to the editor. Councilmember John Street said, again, based on the same rationale, I would move that we postpone indefinitely. Councilmember David McClain, seconded the motion. Chairman Hafner said, I have a motion and a second to postpone indefinitely, all of those in favor say aye. All voted aye. Councilmember Bobby Long said, I appreciate the discussion.

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson David McClain, that this matter be Postponed Indefinitely . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

RESOLUTIONS TO BE INTRODUCED

[RES-19:150](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXTENDING THE AGREEMENT WITH SC REALTY SERVICES, Inc., DBA SG360, FOR THE PURPOSE OF JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Attachments: [SG360 Janitorial Services Agreement, 2016.pdf](#)

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, I have a quick question. Do we charge back the increases to our tenants in the building? Chairman Joe Hafner asked, do you mean like on a square footage basis? Councilmember Bryant said, yes. I didn't know if they are paying a triple net or if they pay a flat lease. Maintenance Director Ronnie Shaver said, the cleaning is done simply on the city owned property. The tenant on the second floor has their own cleaning service. They maintain their own. This is just for our business.

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Charles Coleman, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[RES-19:151](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE (BJA), AND ACCEPT THE FY 2019 BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT

Attachments: [Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant 2019.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Ann Williams, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[RES-19:152](#)

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE 2019 OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FY2019 JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG) PROGRAM

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Ann Williams, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[RES-19:153](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH THE ARKANSAS STATE POLICE AND ACCEPT THE 2020 SELECTIVE TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM (STEP) SUBGRANT AWARD.

Attachments: [STEP FY20 Award Packet.pdf](#)

Councilmember David McClain said, I have a question. Just reading through it, it says we are going to have three laser measure speeding devices. Is that something that is going to be permanent or are we just doing something that is a temporary thing? They are permanent? They just show you your speed? City Attorney Carol Duncan said, they are radar guns. Councilmember McClain said, okay. I was trying to make sure.

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Ann Williams, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[RES-19:154](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO LEVY A ONE-HALF (.5) MILL TAX ON ALL REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

FOR THE LOCAL FIREMENS PENSION PLANS

Chairman Joe Hafner said, just to be clear, this is not anything new. It has been around for a while. It is the same with the next two.

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Charles Coleman, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[RES-19:155](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO LEVY A ONE-HALF (.5) MILL TAX ON ALL REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY FOR THE JONESBORO POLICE PENSION PLANS

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Charles Coleman, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[RES-19:156](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO LEVY A 2 MILL TAX ON ALL REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY FOR THE PUBLIC LIBRARY TAX

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Charles Coleman, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[RES-19:157](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO APPLY FOR A ARKANSAS COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GRANT

Attachments: [Application for AEDC Grant, Union St Park, Brief Narrative.pdf](#)

Chairman David McClain asked, Danny can you come up here and explain this a little bit? I have looked at this before. So, we are going to have, I am looking at the design, this isn't a full on rendering or what will actually be there is it? Parks and Rec Director Danny Kapales said, this is basically, this design was done in-house. It is not a final rendering. Once we actually get the grant, we will do a more detailed design, but the plan is actually to have a pavilion large enough to the United Way that could be utilized for different things as far as the ice skating rink can go under it so that way in the month of December when we have a lot of chances of freezing rain or snow, we would actually have a dry area that actually holds the ice skating rink area. We could also decorate it. That would also be a place that would be set up to where we could have a stage. There could be a staging area where bands could play and have the open space in front of it. So, it would be another little event location downtown. We are also doing a playground to the side of it that is more of an active type of playground. That way, kids downtown, can come and play, but they would be busy the whole time instead of sitting in a swing, swinging back and forth. We are looking at the street in front of it actually shutting Monroe down and turning that into a green space all the way down in front of Winter Wonderland and now you actually have a full green space for people to hang out and enjoy. By moving the skating rink over there during the winter months, you would actually have everything in a safe environment and the parking lot out in the front would be usable, the entire parking lot would be usable at that point. Councilmember McClain said, okay.

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson Charles Coleman, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

[RES-19:158](#)

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A FACILITY USAGE AGREEMENT WITH CHRISTMAS ATTRACTIONS, LLC FOR JOE MACK CAMPBELL PARK

Attachments: [Agreement, Christmas Attractions LLC.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Councilperson John Street, seconded by Councilperson LJ Bryant, that this matter be Recommended to Council . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant

5. Pending Items

6. Other Business

7. Public Comments

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Councilperson LJ Bryant, seconded by Councilperson John Street, that this meeting be Adjourned . The motion PASSED with the following vote.

Aye: 5 - Charles Coleman;Ann Williams;John Street;David McClain and LJ Bryant