



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Capital Improvement Bonds Task Force

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

4:00 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S.Church

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call by City Clerk

Present 5 - Brian Emison; Joe Hafner; John Street; Chris Moore and Chris Gibson

3. Approval of Minutes

4. New Business

Chairman Brian Emison said, our primary reason that we are here today is to discuss the task force. Necessarily, how we want to comprise this process and the scheduling of this, along with being able to identify the experts that we want to be having to come to these meetings to be able to present facts and for us to be able to make a informed decision. So, after that, of course, we'll get into more scheduling, the time frame that we think this is going to take, how we're necessarily going to devour this well, and just the process as we push through this. Before we get into that though, I did want to point out to everybody, I did bring some documentation with us today, and this is some previous reference information specifically to the Caraway facility along with a copy of the spatial study that was done back last year in September. So, if you want to review that on your own time, we of course can add anybody else to that list of experts as we continue to go through this here. But also, very important, is that we do also have the quick claim deed of that facility along with the resolution in which we did all the renovations to the Caraway Road facility, so we've got that also to go over.

But, to go ahead and kick off and to just go ahead and get us started here is that, as we both very well know that there are two great partials of property that we had option to. And for the future of the E-911 dispatch center, which is also in the bond revenue package that we're preparing to vote on in the month of June; is that necessarily where are we going to put this new facility? And what is the future when it comes to Public Safety and whenever it comes to the police department and the E-911 dispatch center moving forward. So, I know that I've got some ideas as far as experts that I think that we do need to hear from and also be able to hear questions from the general public and be able to answer too. But I'd like to open that up for comment from the committee, and just to go ahead and begin with any statements, any ideas that you may have as far as how to proceed forward with this task force, and also necessarily who you would like to see as an expert in this field to be able to come and give us information on where we would like to see the E-911 dispatch center as it's been proposed.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, first of all, I'd like to limit our study. I think I'd like to

make a motion and us vote on it. I think our discussion is simply the location, not the need. Are we in agreement on that? Chairman Brian Emison said, yes. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, but it's part of the discussion. Like getting the cost estimates on how much it takes to develop each property. Councilmember Chris Moore said, well, the construction of the building will be the same, the cost of the development of the property would be based on the selection and I'm in agreement with that. But as far as the spatial study, the chief's recommendation that we need a new facility, I make a motion, we're all in agreement on that. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, yeah. Councilmember Chris Moore said, so I don't think we need an expert other than the chief to tell us we need a new facility. I'll accept that as... Councilmember Chris Gibson said, I think we've all known that for a long time... Councilmember Chris Moore said, if we're in agreement on that...

Councilmember Chris Moore motioned, seconded by Councilmember John Street, that the discussion is simply the location, not the need of a new facility. All voted aye.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, that simply leaves us a location. Chairman Brian Emison said, correct. Councilmember Chris Moore said, and as Mr. Hefner would say, I think we need a development cost at the existing property we own downtown and then at the proposed location. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, yeah. I mean, I just jotted down some notes. These are in no certain order, but you know, obviously, the cost estimates for the expansion for Caraway, who can give us those? Architect, construction groups, etc., demolition cost and rebuilding cost for Washington, or downtown. You know, the flooding issues have been mentioned downtown, how big of an issue are those? I would want some commercial real estate people involved because is there a commercial development for downtown land? You know, citizens concerned with expansion of Caraway property. Citizens concerned with expansion of downtown property. Are there any environmental issues with either property? Obviously with this being a bond and the projects have to be completed within three years, you know, what's the construction timeline for the Caraway project, and the construction timeline for the downtown property, you know that's a demolition and a rebuild. And then the other thing I wrote down concerning downtown is, if this task force decides to recommend the downtown area, where would we put everybody once that area is torn down and where would all the people go that are there right now? That was some of the key points that I think we need answers to.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, I think one other thing we need to add to your list is, and maybe we could get a clarification tonight, can the bond issue be used to purchase new property? And I think the mayor indicated, maybe I miss understood but the answer was no. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, that's what I believe. Councilmember Chris Moore said, but I'd like clarification on that.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, to me this comes down to just what's the best investment for the City of Jonesboro to get the 9-1-1 center, the Real-Time Crime Center, the future expansion of the police department in the best place possible, for us, you know, as an investment, where we get the best return on that investment. Councilmember John Street said, thinking about that, that's kind of where I was. I do believe we ought to have architects. I think we ought to have an engineer, especially to look at the feasibility of building on the two sides and the water issue that we have downtown. Contractors for sure. And then input from, you say, the different departments that it alluded to, police and lifetime crime center, 9-1-1. You're looking at the requirements for those buildings, too, because 9-1-1 has specific requirements for construction. And of course, citizen input. And so, we're pretty much thinking along the same lines there.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, I mean, at the end of the I think we're basically talking about building the same building at either location. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, yeah. What's the best place for it and where we get the best bang for our buck. I mean, I have not preference on where it is, I just know we need it. I want it to be in the best place possible. Councilmember Chris Gibson said, and most cost effective. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, and that's the start of the information, I think, we need for that decision. I'm welcome to review anything that has already been put together. Regarding cost estimates and stuff, I still think we need experts coming and answering questions and talking to us as a task force in a public setting.

Chairman Brian Emison said, right. I agree. So, as it stands right now, we've discussed architects, we've discussed engineers, we also discussed construction groups. Engineers, I think, checks the box for flood mitigation purposes.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, has that property ever flooded or is it just the neighboring properties? Councilmember Chris Moore said, are you talking about down on Washington? At one time, yeah. Washington floods right in front of... Councilmember Chris Gibson said, I knew that old fire station... Councilmember Chris Moore said, we basically have flood drainage issues right at what would be the door of the fire station, and of course the building, We have to consider the fact that eventually we're going to do something with City Hall and the Justice Complex.

Chairman Brian Emison said, sure. So, the flood mitigation side and then also talking about real estate, economic impact, any kind of environmental issues, I feel like engineers should be able to also address that as well. Of course, as we talk about where people would go, what people would do, we do have a lessee that's in that building being district court, so that's also part of the conversation. But also, the bond issue, can it be used to purchase new property, but we'll clarify that and we'll get that answer after the fact. But of course, we will have expert opinion coming in from chief and of course, Director Ronnie Sturch. And that's what I have on my list so far as far as experts go to invite to our next meeting.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, yeah, another group you might want to add is Downtown Jonesboro. Just their input on... Councilmember Chris Moore said, I think we would probably want to talk with the county judge or have the mayor talk with the county judge, because I think there's been some discussion about the county and the city going together and having a district court in another location across the street or on one of the properties. It may be that district court moving out of there either way. I know it seems simple when I said, we want to build downtown, not on Caraway, but it's quite complex, there's a lot of stakeholders. As far as the environmental study, I would think that would also go both ways. Councilmember John Street said, that's pretty standard construction practice. I think before you pick any site they do a level one environmental. I believe almost any contractor would have that done so that'll point out if there's anything that would require an advanced study. Councilmember Chris Moore said, even on our own property or National Guard property. I mean, that was their facility.

Chairman Brian Emison said, sure. Right. Also, on that list, you know, I was thinking about this, do we have any interests for office of emergency management from a strategic standpoint. Councilmember Chris Moore said, you know, when I talk to the chief and the mayor about it. I envision the building. What we need to do is decide what all we want in the building and what we're not going to want. Are we going to include the motor pool for instance. In my discussions, or my thoughts, it's not one or

the other. Maybe we leave the motor pool and all that facility right where it's at on the National Guard. Thus, reducing the size of the building we need downtown if we were going to select that. The municipal court moves out, our district court moves out. 9-1-1 or office of emergency management might want to move in. We just need to list, that I think, of everyone who would want to use the building and who we don't want.

Councilmember John Street said, well, and two. In constructing a new building, you don't want to build it to accommodate just your current needs, because you need to factor in the growth that you're anticipating for the next 20, 30 years and have some extra space. Like this building, we have an entire floor we can utilize if we have to. Councilmember Chris Moore said, and if you look at the plan, the original plan is just calling for building a portion of the building now. Councilmember John Street said, yes. Finish it out as you... Councilmember Chris Moore said, and it will be integrated in.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, and is there an advantage to, I don't here want to get off track here, but we're talking about doing Caraway in different phases, where if we do a demolition and rebuild do all those phases happen quicker. Councilmember Chris Moore said, well, it might be we don't have to do demolition, complete demolition. It may be that we tear down City Hall where the fire station was. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, just to be clear, he's not talking about here. You're talking about old City Hall. Councilmember Chris Moore said, old City Hall where the fire station was and leave the Justice Complex addressing the way employees will be able to continue to work. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I'm sure the construction experts can recommend a scenario such as that.

Chairman Brian Emison said, ok, so I think we have our list of experts. So, anybody that has anybody that's in those fields, if you would, feel free to send those to me, and we'll go ahead and we'll work on getting some invites out. And we'll coordinate with them as far as when we can put our next meeting together on this. Next thing, just kind of talking to parliamentary procedure here of how we want to necessarily go out this. Next meeting that we have, to kind of see all sides, do we want to take this as our next meeting, doing a pro-con on Caraway and then doing a pro-con on downtown and then having a final meeting as a synopsis of the two to render a decision, or do y'all envision us being able to basically just have a round robin and putting this together and just viewing both at the same time? Councilmember Chris Moore said, well, I don't envision getting the engineers and everybody over for two separate meetings. I would think that we would have all the experts here and we would hash them out. And then we can contemplate the information and make a decision at a later time. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I think we have to make... we have to hear a presentation from them. If they have any numbers, any of their estimates, you know, we need to see those in a spreadsheet. I think we're at least two meetings away from being able to do a pro and con... In my opinion. Councilmember Chris Moore said, we have an agreement that we're going to consider these two sites. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, and I think that's what we need to mention. I don't think we need to muddy the water by going beyond these two.

Chairman Brian Emison said, I would agree. So, that kind of lays out the outline for how we're going to move forward once we get these experts identified and we get the invitations out to them. We have them basically gather the information, and then we come back and we start our questioning and answering. In the meantime, as we identify these experts and who we're going to be reaching out to on that side, if there's any particular questions that we can supply to them in advance, just to make sure that whenever they do come before the committee that they do have that information, data gathered, and they're able to speak on it. If anybody wants to submit those questions

in advance, of course, we can go ahead and we can send those out to the experts and we can work on gathering that information, so we won't have people showing up to answer questions that they weren't necessarily prepared.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I think another important part of this is we don't need to reinvent the wheel. I mean, there's already information out there about either location, and I don't mind looking at that information that's already been prepared by an architect or a construction group. Chairman Brian Emison said, sure.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I mean, we've heard estimates in the mayor's proposal. I haven't seen the backup documents. But I don't mind looking at anything that's already been prepared about either location and then trying to fill in the blanks from there.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, Brian, do y'all have that documentation readily available? Chief Administrative Officer Brian Richardson said, we can send over everything we've got. Just let me know exactly what you need and we can get you that. Chairman Brian Emison said, ok. Gotcha. Thank you, Brian. I guess we'll just lead with all the documentation that the administration's already gathered on this, and I'll submit that out to the committee. And as we go through that, we formulate our questions. And the things that we can't necessarily fill in the blank with what we've got in front of us, then that'll give us our list of what we necessarily need to go to those experts.

Councilmember Joe Hafner said, if they can get something out to us this week, we get a week or two to review it and form additional questions and requests. Then we can get those back to you.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, would we think we'd want all of those questions submitted before we schedule the meeting? Councilmember Joe Hafner said, yeah. Sure. Councilmember Chris Moore said, we're liable to have quite a few questions... So, in order not to constitute the meeting, we'll be texting you direct. How do you want to proceed on where to send the questions? Do you want us to send them to April, to the city clerk, and then let her disseminate them to the appropriate??? Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I think that would be best.

Chairman Brian Emison said, good deal. So, that kind of covers how we will proceed and the information that we're going to be gathering as we move forward. I don't necessarily have anything else. This was more informational gathering and how we were going to proceed forward unless anybody else has anything for new business. I believe that we've got a good outline here in how we're prepared to move forward.

Councilmember Chris Moore said, well, I think it's going to be important we also make a statement at the City Council meeting tonight. I mean, our decision isn't a referendum on the bond. You know, I mean, I think it's important that we move forward with the bond. This is just strictly a decision on where to locate the building. Chairman Brian Emison said, correct, yes. Councilmember John Street said, Caraway Road, we absolutely need to do that. And we need the police station anyway regardless.

Question of where that facility will be and what it will take. Chairman Brian Emison said, right. Councilmember Chris Moore said, I had several people this week, seem to think that our meeting today was referendum on the bond. Whether or not we were going to move forward with the bond. I had calls late this afternoon, so think it would be important if you'd just make a statement that our meeting today is simply a location selection committee on that as opposed to the bond. Chairman Brian Emison said, yes, sir. And we'll reiterate that at tonight's City Council meeting. And, you know, it's not a question of, if we got a trophy, it's what wall we're going to put it on. Good deal.

5. Pending Items

6. Other Business

7. Public Comments

Patti Lack, 4108 Forest Hill Road, said, what about public comments? Councilmember Joe Hafner said, well, this is a special called meeting. Councilmember Chris Moore said, It's a... Yeah, I mean, the agenda reflected that, but we don't have... Our meeting is not for public comment. Eventually, when we hold our big meeting, I think that'd be their appropriate time for public comment. Chairman Brian Emison said, gotcha. Yes, Patti, so next meeting we will have a forum for public comments at that time.

8. Adjournment

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

Aye: 4 - Joe Hafner; John Street; Chris Moore and Chris Gibson