



# City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center  
300 S. Church Street  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

## Meeting Minutes City Council

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Tuesday, May 19, 2026

5:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

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### **PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE BOND ISSUE FOR INNOVASIAN CUISINE AT 5:25 P.M.**

*No one spoke for or against during the public hearing regarding the bond issue for Innovasian Cuisine.*

### **1. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR HAROLD COPENHAVER AT 5:30 P.M.**

### **2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND INVOCATION**

### **3. ROLL CALL (ELECTRONIC ATTENDANCE) INITIATED AND CONFIRMED BY CITY CLERK APRIL LEGGETT**

**Present** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent** 1 - Ann Williams

### **4. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

*Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, so next we'll move on to item number four, and these are items under special presentation. And Mr. Fowler, if you would, please come forward. He's support of the Guard and Reserve. I'll meet you down front with Marty Hamrick. He does have an award and presentation to provide. Lieutenant Colonel Retired Gil Fowler said, good afternoon, it's my pleasure to be with you this evening. I'm Lieutenant Colonel retired Gil Fowler, also known as Santa Gil. And tonight I want to make a special presentation to the Golden Helmet, I guess, division, organization here in Jonesboro, their Fire Department. Basically I represent a group called the Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve. We're a group of most of us veterans whose job it is working under the Secretary of, I think it's Defense, but maybe its Secretary of War, nonetheless, to address the importance that our citizen soldiers bring to the local community. ESCR has chapters in all 50 states, in Australia and Europe, throughout the world. And our job, again, is to basically help support our men and women in uniform and recognize the importance and value that they bring to the local community. Our all-volunteer force today basically has a lot of challenges, being away from home, being away from family, being away from community, and doing the things that are necessary for our society to exist and continue. Since 9-11, over a million citizen soldiers have served our country, in addition to, of course, the regular force, 24-hour all-purpose soldiers. Today I want to pay special attention to Chief Marty Hamrick and present him with what we call My Boss is a Patriot Award. He was nominated by Spencer Saul, one of his employees, who serves with the 1036th Engineer Company here in Jonesboro. Basically, in his nomination, that goes forward to the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of War's office, and it takes several months to, in essence, be evaluated to ensure that one, he is a legitimate person and, at the*

same time, Spencer Saul is a legitimate soldier. We want to ensure that both of those components fit together in making that nomination. But he says, Chief Hamrick ensures that all rules and regulations pertaining to service members are followed and is very supportive of the employees who serve in the Arkansas Army National Guard. They recognize the work with me when I have a military commitment. The Chief is a one-of-a-kind manager who goes above and beyond. He helps facilitate times that I have to be away and is fully supportive of my service. Having a supervisor like that makes being a military member easy. He's done a fantastic job making guardsmen and their families feel welcome and appreciated. He's a true patriot, an outstanding supervisor, a professional at what he does, and yet he takes the time to get to know you and your family as a person. Our workplace is both a team and a family. So tonight it's my pleasure to recognize Chief Hamrick with what we call My Boss is a Patriot award. Now, it's a three-part award. The first part is basically a certificate specifying that he has been recognized by the Secretary of War and by the State of Arkansas and our soldiers as being one who truly respects and understands and works with our citizen soldiers when they're not here. Secondly, we have what we call a statement of support for the Jonesboro Fire Department that we hope he will put up in a prominent place so that when soldiers and guardsmen and their families come in, they will see the seals of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, et cetera, and say this must be a good place to be. And thirdly, we have a patriot pin. Now, these are controlled items. You all know what a controlled item is. It's very simple. You don't lose it. You sign for it. This has been given to me to give to, if you will, someone who has been recognized as a true patriot. It's my pleasure to pass it along to him so that I am no longer responsible for it. Because if I lose it, I'm accountable. Now I'm going to make him accountable. I hope when you see someone with one of these patriot pins, you too will say, thank you for helping our citizen soldiers. Now, and, in the same process, at the end, I want to congratulate members of the City Council, members of Jonesboro and our citizens for also being patriots. Whenever a soldier is called to duty, whether it's training, active duty, or whatever it has to be, someone has to step up and take their place. And in so doing, we're all in the process of supporting our men and women in uniform. So congratulations to all of you. Chief Hamrick, here's your pin, and I'm tickled to death to no longer be responsible for it. Certainly we have the statement of support to the Jonesboro Fire Department, and I couldn't get golden helmet on here quick enough, but nonetheless we are most pleased with your recognition statewide and nationally for what you're doing in leading that department here for Jonesboro. And certainly, the certificate that I hope you'll put in your office in a special place, saying in essence, I have been recognized not for myself, but what my workplace does to support our citizen soldiers. Sir, thank you so much. Mayor Copenhaver said, it brings back the foundation of our country with the 250th year approaching, sacrifices that many have made before us so we can enjoy the evening that we have here in our community that's each and every night. So, Gil, thank you again for your service to our community and our country as well. Thank you.

[COM-26:032](#)

BUILDING CODE REVIEW AND PERMITTING PROCESS ASSESSMENT STUDY  
PRESENTATION BY MATRIX CONSULTING GROUP

**Attachments:** [Permitting Process Efficiency Study - Matrix Final Report with Appendices 5. Jonesboro Permitting Efficiency Council MATRIX Presentation 5.18.26.pdf](#)

Mayor Harold Copenhaver said, next, council, I'd like to move on and I've got Allison Brekke here. She is the manager of the Matrix Consulting Group, and if you remember, last year City Council contracted with the Development Advisement Group named Matrix Consulting to review our processes from a plan submission to final inspections of construction projects in Jonesboro. Now, this goes way back. I mean, we've always had questions on how we can make improvements, and so I'm excited to say that Ms. Allison is coming forward tonight after a long period of time

*and conversations and in-depth detail for this. I'll be leaving after her presentation, and Councilman Moore will be taking over the meeting from there. But the primary goal of this study is to make Jonesboro a clearer, more defined, and efficient community to invest in from a construction and development perspective. The firm dug up and really went into detail on our codes, our processes, our structure, and our strengths and weaknesses. We should expect that we only allow safe, quality structures to be built in Jonesboro, but we want it to be clear and an easier process on the front end. At the same time, we ask that if we are not overly burdensome in some areas. So we wanted to hopefully have her presentation this evening, which you've all received. We're going to ask that if you have questions, to hold to the end of her presentation. And so, Ms. Brekke, the floor is yours.*

*Allison Brekke, Manager at Matrix Consulting Group said, thank you so much, Mayor, and thank you, not only to the Mayor, but all the Councilmembers for having me here tonight. My name is Allison Brekke. I'm a manager at Matrix Consulting Group, and I'll be presenting the findings and recommendations from our Permitting Process Efficiency Study for the City of Jonesboro. Matrix was retained, as the Mayor said already, to conduct a comprehensive review of the permitting and inspection activities within the city. The work that you'll hear summarized tonight reflects several months of analysis, including staff interviews, customer surveys, a review of workload data, benchmarking against comparable jurisdictions, and analysis of building codes. And the result is a prioritized, actionable set of recommendations to help Jonesboro deliver faster, more transparent, and more consistent permitting services. So we always like to say at Matrix, it's a very important step for the city to actually do this study, because that's the exciting beginning of lots of good change. So a quick just agenda for tonight is going to be a really brief background about Matrix Consulting Group and why you're selected. Then we'll walk through the scope of the study, deliverables and methodology that we took. Key findings, that's really, I'm going to identify what you all are doing well, and some top areas for improvement or opportunities for improvement. And then tonight's discussion, and I do recognize it will be lengthy, but we are going to just focus on those high-priority recommendations and then have questions and discussion to follow.*

*So real quick, Matrix Consulting Group, we're actually based in San Mateo, California. We've been doing work and have completed 200+ dedicated studies, evaluating development review, permitting and inspection operations, code enforcement too, across the country. I think one of the top features about of Matrix Consulting Group is that we were past government employees. So my bulk of my career as a professional planner in local government, both city and county governments. This is the largest council I've presented to, so congratulations there. But we do have that real-life experience that helps us as we engage with our clients to ensure we know what questions to ask and can identify issues pretty quickly.*

*So as the Mayor already mentioned, really some top priorities here was to enhance the process, make it more efficient, make it more predictable. Probably the top thing that we hear from customers anywhere really is to make the process more predictable. I just need to know how long it's going to take and what steps are required. So that was one of our focuses. Also to improve the customer experience. We certainly understand it's very important here in the City of Jonesboro, making sure that the development and business community find the city is easy to work with. Third, to identify opportunities for technology integration and workflow improvement. So that's really what we talk about now for that process step, the steps of a process. It's very technology-based now, really post-COVID, and so it's just making sure the system is as integrated as well as it can be. Fourth was to assess the staffing capacity relative to workload, ensuring the city has the right people in the right roles as well as the right number of people to handle the current demand. And then there*

was also a unique analysis of your local building and fire codes, a very in-depth appendix that you can read later, but it was actually very helpful to identify gaps between local codes and state requirements, and so the city can work on those efforts into the future.

So deliverables, we really ensure that we have deliverables throughout our entire study that staff can review and ensure that we're getting accurate along the way. We don't want to end up at this final stage without these interim deliverables for staff, and we really keep that communication line open throughout the whole process. So initially, we created a current state profile and best practice assessment. We built a detailed profile of current operations so identifying staffing levels, roles and responsibilities of staff, workload volumes, that's permit numbers, application numbers, and performance metrics. And then we compared those against industry best practices for permit review, technology, customer service, and management. These are industry best practices that Matrix as a firm has created, not only from our experience across the country but also through our membership with professional organizations like American Planning Association, Public Works Association, and the International City and County Managers Association.

Next, we did a comparable jurisdiction. So we compared Jonesboro to five comparable jurisdictions and primarily looked at review timelines and then also looked at the software that the other cities were using. We also had a customer input stage. So before, when I was here on site, we did in-person focus groups. We also had an online survey. We sent this out to past customers, so past applicants, and we also just had some individual conversations. But it's really important to note that these recommendations in front of you definitely have perspectives that we received through that customer outreach effort.

As I mentioned, we did a building code analysis, so conducted an analysis of the city's existing building and fire codes to identify gaps in state requirements and best practices. Then we really analyzed staffing capacity. We actually did an internal survey to staff, just really asking them to explain how they spend their time reviewing the workload and permit counts, just to help us understand the percentage and breakdown of how staff is spending time. And that helped us evaluate the overall organizational structure of permitting functions even more. We then go into further analysis to create final findings, and that's compiled into that report. Then we have a prioritized implementation plan, really giving the city a roadmap for action into the future.

So it's really important to, before we talk about challenges and recommendations, it's really important to recognize what you as a city is doing very well. So the first thing that we recognized was that you're utilizing a permitting software system. That is absolutely best practice. So you're implementing both ProjectDox for digital plans, submittals and review, and then also iWorQ for permit tracking issuance. And so the city has made a meaningful investment into this technology, and staff have incorporated these tools into their workflows, and that's a really good first step. So now the next task is just to make sure that those tools are being used fully and consistently. Also, your staff is meeting, development leadership is meeting weekly to review current permitting reports and address stalled or delayed projects. You're proactively actually reaching out to applicants that aren't responding. You have a staff member that is specifically tasked in doing that, so that's very customer front-facing and absolutely a strength. You're also doing same-day inspections, actually, that came out of the comparable jurisdiction. That is a best practice, and also you are exceeding when you are compared to those other jurisdictions. So that was one we wanted to call out. And then, as I mentioned just previously, you do have a dedicated construction outreach coordinator position. It's actually a really unique position. We

*don't see this type of position in most of the cities we work in, but you have actively created a position to help the development community navigate the process, and that's absolutely should be called out as a strength. It's a real asset that you can continue to build upon.*

*So with strengths, there's always opportunities for improvement, and, of course, that's going to be the bulk of our report and recommendations. But the top one I wanted to talk about here is just that you have no defined performance objectives. So what does that mean? You have no really goalposts or understanding of what you're trying to aim for, and that's really important not only for your customers to have that predictable process, but for your staff so they understand what is expected of them. So right now, city currently lacks clearly defined performance targets for permitting timelines, and management dashboards are not consistently used to track progress against goals. We are continually seeing how dashboards and pushing out information to the public is very helpful for a city because you're being very transparent with your information, and it helps educate, really, the community as a whole. But without data-driven oversight, it is difficult to identify where delays occur, how you can hold staff accountable, and demonstrate improvement to applicants and leadership. So this is really what you have to institute so you can keep looking at how you're improving and the metrics that are changing.*

*You also have a very fragmented application intake. And, it likely just happened, you know, over time, and especially as you move from a very paper-based system to a digital process. But you have four different positions in three different departments, Engineering, Inspections, and Planning. And, they're all in charge of the intake process. So when that front-line level of staff, when a permit or application comes across the counter, even if it's a digital counter, you have four different people doing that, and that is creating inconsistencies in how applications are received and reviewed for completeness, and applicants may receive different information depending on which staff member they contact. So our report is recommending a consolidation intake center. It's basically a centralized permit center. You have an outdated fee schedule. The fee schedule has not been updated since 2017, and we also indicated and noted that a plan review fee is not collected before permit issuance. So what's essentially happening is your staff is reviewing permits. They may be ready to be issued, and then the project never happens. So staff time was spent before actual fees were collected, any fees. Also, the other thing we identify is just the parallel operation of ProjectDox and iWorQ is as creating some inconsistencies. Staff has been spending a lot of time in trying to address those inconsistencies, so there is, essentially the recommendation is to figure out with maybe some customer support from each software system how to better integrate the two or consider a replacement. But these challenges are interconnected, and the recommendations throughout the report talk about that.*

*Okay, so we're going to move into the next section of the presentation, where we're going to talk about the high-priority recommendations, and each one is categorized. Essentially, it's meant to be parallel to the order of the report. So we're going to start with the permit review process and the high-priority recommendations, and some of these I've touched on just with my opening remarks. So the first one we see as being a really important recommendation, hence why it's high-priority, is to establish a centralized permit center as a single intake point for all applications and permits. So talking to staff, we did hear that it's still very important in the City of Jonesboro to have a physical counter, to have a place where customers can come in and know where they can start the process. That you're going to also replicate that in the digital world, but it's also very important for the City of Jonesboro to have that in-person interaction. The good news is you have space in this building to do this. It's just a matter of actually improving that space. So you can also create kiosks, or basically little computer areas to help people with intake, because the goal is to have all intake*

*of permits and applications be digital and not paper. So there's just ways that you can do that, and it basically becomes a public facing space in City Hall that's known as the permit center.*

*The next thing was just reducing or replacing, excuse me, a double completeness check. So you're having this intake process take longer than it should, linked with the multiple staff people that are doing the intake process, but you're creating redundancy and delays without adding value. So the report recommends replacing this with a single, clearly defined completeness review that you can clearly document for the record, and then one accountable staff person who makes that final call before it moves into further review.*

*So review comments, these are comments that staff are making during the review process. These comments eventually get to your customer, to your applicant. So all review comments and project communications should be consolidated across departments and documented within the permitting system. So two really important parts to this. It's not only having your staff making those review comments and making sure that they're consistent with one another. It's also making sure that they're in the permitting system, so that that can be your database, your record of the process. That goes back to that metric, that data-driven Phase 4. It's just making sure you're having the data there to check how you are performing. Applicants should receive one unified set of comments rather than fragmented feedback from multiple reviewers.*

*So, as I mentioned, you're doing same-day inspections, but the scheduling of inspections could be improved. There could be establishing some minimum request timeframes, just so that people know when they have to actually get a request in for an inspection. And then also making sure that there's just a little bit more predictability for contractors giving them the option if it's a morning or afternoon. Also, we looked at the Certificate of Occupancy signatory. Right now, you have actually two people acting in that capacity, but we recommend that you designate the Chief Building Official to be that person. And then you also should be defining temporary CFO, Certificate of Occupancy, eligibility criteria. The staff is using criteria, but it's not documented. So, temporary CFO is when you might have something that's outstanding, but you're able, safely, to allow occupancy or partial occupancy. It's very important for the city that you establish a very clean line in the sand of what it's going to take for the applicant, the owner, to get that full Certificate of Occupancy. It's one of those areas where you want to be customer-friendly, but at the same time, is to protect the city and make sure that you have documented CFO's in place for all occupancies.*

*Okay, moving into technology. So, this is where we're going to talk about those two permitting software systems that you're currently integrating. That's ProjectDox and iWorQ. And so, the recommendation is essentially to either better integrate these two platforms together or move to a single, unified platform. I know that's a big recommendation and can have even multiple pieces to what that looks like. But just from our discussions with staff and just seeing how the two are working together, we think, first of all, to start with just working toward better integration and then seeing where the gaps remain. You want to enable paperless submittals, so paper-free for all application types. So, some permit types are still requiring paper submittals to be coming in across the counter. Of course, when we say paperless submittals, you're always going to have exceptions for someone that doesn't have access to a computer. You're going to have exceptions to just whatever the case might be. But the standard should be paperless and coming in digitally, so over the digital front counter. And they should all be coming through ProjectDox, and that's going to reduce manual steps and improve tracking of permits and applications. Also, you*

should activate online inspection scheduling. That is a feature that is available to you in iWorQ, I believe. It's just a matter of turning the switch on and having that be an option for people so they can schedule in the freedom of their own time to schedule that inspection rather than calling. So all inspections are coming in via the phone right now.

Staff training, so it's just really important as technology becomes more complex that you are ensuring that your staff understand how to use the system so they're not just learning from each other. Of course, they can always improve and build upon their skills by their fellow employees, but it's really important that the city provides standardized training. And you typically work with the customer support of each software system to look at options there. And then lastly, it's consolidating the application category, so these are options that are coming up in the system for your customers to choose from. Basically, there's too many types, too many categories, it's become too granular, and this just creates automatic confusion for applicants, and immediately is why someone feels like they have to call a staff member to help them. So, streamlining and consolidating these categories will simplify the submission process and improve data reporting.

Okay. So, next is customer outreach, customer service and outreach. So, as I mentioned, really important for the City of Jonesboro to have that in-person aspect, that permit center where people can come in and receive customer service, but you also need to create that on your website, and have a digital front counter, essentially. So, right now, applicants must navigate multiple departmental pages, so individual webpages on the city website to find permitting information, forms, and checklists. So, the report is recommending you create a single comprehensive development service website, or webpage, you could call it the digital permit center. There's many ways that the city could choose to brand it, but you basically have a one-stop shop where everybody can find the resources in one location. This is becoming even more important, as people are using cell phones and tablets for their primary system, so having to navigate through multiple tabs or webpages can become very complex for your non-savvy developer. I always think of my dear mother, who would apply for a permit. She wants to make it as simple as possible. But this page should include links to all application forms, your checklists, your fee schedules, contact information, and status updates. It's where you could put dashboards showing progress for current permits and applications that are being reviewed by the city. Also, you want to make sure you have staff that are assigned to update this website. So, creating the webpage is the first step, but you have to make sure that it stays current. That's becoming very, it's a big responsibility, especially as cities and counties are being asked to ensure their website is accessible per federal law. So, it does require someone to ensure that you're keeping it current and accessible. But just designate that ownership up front. And then, comprehensive checklists. So, what we mean by this are documents that can help an individual. It's basically the document they're going to review before they submit. So, yes, in the paper world, you used to print out these documents. You would have boxes and check them off, and then attach the papers of the components that you have checked off. But you still need to have this guidance, we have found. It's very important for applicants to have this. It's basically providing that predictability of what is required. And essentially, if they're able to put that into the system digitally, then they would be able to move through the completeness check process faster, which is a good thing for the applicant and staff.

Okay, we're going to move into management and administration. So, these next two sections, it's management and administration, and staffing and workload. They're complex and there's some, you know, sometimes some deep rooted issues, but it's important that we still talk about them. So, we did see that job descriptions are not kept up with actual responsibilities. So, these staff members, so it's the

responsibilities your staff is carrying are not in alignment with their jobs description. So, we're recommending that all permitting position job descriptions are updated, and then, of course, as HR would likely recommend, evaluating whether compensation is appropriately aligned. This is foundational to recruiting and retaining qualified staff. I know it's a very high-budget reality for a city to do this, but it's also very important that you can keep making sure that you have the best qualified staff.

We also need to standardize the supervision and backup coverage and onboarding. It's all grouped together, but basically, there's no formal onboarding program for new permitting staff, and training is inconsistent across departments. The report recommends implementing a structured onboarding program. It might be something that is developed for the city as a whole, but then something that is specific also created for permitting staff members. You also need to make sure that you have backup coverage for your critical functions. That is not in place right now. And you need to make sure that you have standardized supervision expectations across all permitting departments. So, that's making sure that staff is being held accountable when you have that supervision in place. You're also going to define, need to better define the application coordination functions. That's a mouth full. But basically, we would like you to just really understand and making sure staff understand their roles in the process. So you go through a responsible, accountable, consultant and informed matrix that clarifies who owns each step of the process. As we do this work, we are finding more and more than ever, especially after COVID, when we were all not communicating as well as we could have, there is this tendency for staff just to start creating their own responsibilities. And so it's very important that as a collective group, each staff member understands their roles and responsibilities. It will make them feel more comfortable reaching out to their supervisor when they need to. It also just helps the team as a whole to understand each person's component to the larger puzzle. Also, as I mentioned probably at the beginning of the presentation, just making sure that you have formal performance metrics. So making sure that you are able to tell an applicant how long it should be expected for them to get it approved. So target review timeframes. These should be provided for all permit types, all application types. And then making sure that you're tracking those the performance against these metrics consistently. And that's again, going back to the dashboard concept. You can start with dashboards that are just internal facing. Again, going back to that leadership group that's meeting weekly, making sure that they are seeing the progress of the timeframes, making sure that they are being met, finding out when they are not. Then also, this is where you can push out information to your community to better inform them. But basically, without defined targets, you don't have a way to measure how you're improving. I think that becomes very important to you as a Council, right, just to have those metrics to know how you're improving. Staff can come to you and report on those metrics. You are able to report back to your community members. That's where it works.

The other thing that we would see is very important is really creating a cross-departmental management lead. This is going to be linked with the restructure we are recommending or reorg that we are recommending. But you need to have a designated single leadership position, excuse me, with cross-departmental coordination authority. It's not in place right now, but it is informally, but not formally. And so it's really important that with the reorder that we're going to talk about in the next slide, that you think about that top leadership role who is coordinating the overall process because the overall process is always going to have different disciplines, subject matter experts, and it's really important to make sure that you have that contact person, not only for staff, but for your community, to know who is in charge. And like I said, that's going to be discussed a little bit further.

So staffing and workload really linked to, initially, it was the findings that we saw with

*the layers of intake that are occurring, and over different division lines. It led to us to recommend an organizational restructure of the permitting functions within the city. So right now, they're all in different departments and we are suggesting that you have a slight merge to create a true permitting department. This is going to, of course, be linked with a structured transition plan with updated job descriptions, staff engagement plan. But that is our top recommendation out of the staffing and workload category. The report recommends creating a new Development Services Department. Again, the name can be called whatever the city thinks is best. But you're consolidating key permanent functions under a Development Services Director. We present two alternatives in the reports, alternatives A and B, but both alternatives address three core gaps: the absence of a designated cross-departmental management lead, the fragmented distribution of intake, technology management and coordination responsibilities, and the lack of a unified really institutional identity for the permitting function for the city. And so we think that that would work well with also the recommendation to create a permit center. Those two combined will work very well for the city. And of course, as I mentioned, it is a transition plan, that would be a part of this reorg for all affected positions. Definitely engage with staff and see how they think. They have ideas, is what I will say. Also, we found the need and these two are really joint-related, but right now, it would be best to reduce the Chief Building Official's actual plan review times, the time that they are spending on reviewing plan sets and actually pass that workload over to a Commercial Plans Reviewer. This will allow your Chief Building Official to become a true manager. Again, they are obtaining that greater oversight of the Certificate of Occupancy process, as I mentioned before, but basically, it's offsetting some roles and responsibilities from your Chief Building Official to a Commercial Plans Reviewer.*

*Okay, this is a lot. I appreciate you hanging in there with me. So I created some slides just to show you, you know, really what this looks like in terms of implementation for as soon as quarter three of 2026. So I have the gold highlighted because that's the org restructure. I recognize that was at the end of the report, but we felt that was actually good to have it there because all of the findings and recommendations building up to that really supports the reorg. So again, that's a new Commercial Plans Reviewer, that CBO reallocation of duties, a transition plan that's very much linked with the idea of creating a centralized intake permit center, so that having that physical presence within City Hall, as well as having it on a website, that's your customer service and outreach. And then linked with that, of course, is the technology and ensuring that you have the best integration of those two systems that you can, iWorQ and ProjectDox. But linked with that is just making sure you enable paperless submittals and activate the online inspection scheduling. That was just two things that can be very helpful for the customer, just knowing to expect that.*

*Then in 2027, you know, we still have some things, you know, start with a permit center, but then you can work on that development services webpage, making sure that you have service goals for that new centralized permitting function in the city. And then again, that technology, that's going to be just an ongoing, honestly, recommendation moving forward is just making sure that you really ask that software representative to do what they're supposed to do and ensure that you have staff that can fully integrate their system as they promised you.*

*So budget impact, and I just really want to emphasize, of course, you all will have total control of the true budget impact. This is just what was assumed by Matrix, just with our work across the country. But we can see, actually, a lot of the high-priority recommendations could be implemented through process changes, policy updates, and reallocation of existing staff responsibilities with minimal or no budget required. But the ones that we see likely to carry budget implications that you should be aware of is the establishment of the permit center. So you do have the physical space, that's*

a good thing. Already exists in City Hall, but it just might be modest cost associated with kiosk equipment, signage, and any reconfiguration needed to formalize the customer service hub, basically. Enable paperless submittals and online inspection scheduling. Again, these are really software configuration realities, but it may require some additional vendor support, and that sometimes can trigger system modification fees per your contract with that software. Staff training program, you know, it can really be a high or low-budget implication, but just making sure that you develop a formal training curriculum, and having that as a part of the budget moving forward. There could be costs with associated training materials, or sometimes you have external facilitation support that comes in, and you are a university city, so there might be some opportunities there for you to partner. Hire one dedicated Commercial Plans Reviewer. This is a new full-time employee. Represents the most significant near-term budget impact, but it is a position that is expected to accelerate review timelines and improve cost recovery through fee collections, in theory, so that's partially offsetting the investment. And then the system integration, again going back to technology, but that would likely be a capital investment that you'd be thinking about tracking in the future, because if you do have, if you go the route of having a replacement program, that is a cost that is absolutely a reality.

Okay, I think I've made it to the questions and discussions slide, so I appreciate you hanging out with me for, you know, the past hour. But I'm here to answer any of your questions or concerns. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I have one question, the iWorQ system, is there a standard nationwide or across the board standard system for implementing documentation? Ms. Brekke asked, for the programming software, councilmember? There are many options out there right now, and I always tell staff when I start to interview them, unfortunately, none of them have easy buttons. There's certainly, and you're also seeing a lot of these larger companies buy smaller companies, which is kind of creating the problem, because you start with a customer service group that changes once they're bought. Am I misunderstanding your question? Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman replied, yeah, but can the city also, I guess, hire an analyst to make up their own software? Ms. Brekke said, oh, so we have seen that occur, but that typically is just not, it's not long-lasting. It's a huge cost for the city, and what we have seen happen is that the city is then spending so much money in trying just to keep updating it themselves. Also, you're, in a way, creating a very unique system that customers aren't interacting anywhere else, and that's not necessarily a good thing in the software world. So I would just recommend you look at the other software systems that your comparable jurisdictions are using. It is absolutely the first time we have seen ProjectDox and iWorQ used together. Now, I'm not saying that that means it's a bad option, but it was the first time we've seen it. Does that help? Okay. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, so I'd like to expand on that conversation because that was really one of my questions in that software system itself. Does that software, one of those softwares, can they be updated or handle the capacity that you're referring to, to streamline a lot of this process? Ms. Brekke replied, so I think, from what I know, you actually have most options purchased for iWorQ. So it's a matter of literally turning on the switch for some of the integration. ProjectDox is, could be a little bit tricky for becoming the intake for building permits, but you do see cities making it happen. So I think the answer I want to provide you is yes. I mean, we are absolutely recommending to start with what you have right now, because we recognize the monumental process it would take to start over with something else. I think it's just a matter of really getting the right people in the room. You have some highly qualified staff. It's not their full-time job to be doing this, but they are very much improving the workflow systems behind the scenes on the technology side. I think it's just a matter of seeing how you can get some assistance from customer support, having some vendor support, and maybe potentially paying a little bit more for that training aspect and having them actually come on site and see how you're utilizing it, too.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, sure, and one last question, I'm sorry Chairman. I saw on the first slide, it said 85% implementation. I'm assuming that's implementing what you all recommend. Ms. Brekke said, correct. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman continued, but I did not see any success rates, follow-ups, or anything like that regarding that 85% implementation. Ms. Brekke responded, yeah, fair, that's a great point. We have it, I just didn't put it on the slide, but we really actually celebrate being available to staff after we are done here tonight. It's very important for us to receive feedback on recommendations that didn't work out for you all, as well as the ones that are working out well for you. So we just actively want to make sure that we're communicating with staff forward and just having those questions come back to us as you're implementing it. We are available, I am certainly available. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, thank you. Ms. Brekke said, thank you. Councilmember L.J. Bryant said, Mr. Mayor, kind of a couple of related questions. As we think about a few different topics, we think about AI and fertility and population changing, and we've seen our growth slow down here. Conway's growing twice as fast as us. We're no longer in the top 10 fastest-growing cities. So as we consider some of those things, how do we, and even in the permit data, our permits, and granted, things have changed across the country, don't get me wrong. Our single-family permits are down. All of our permits are down. So how do we weigh those things against making these investments? Ms. Brekke replied, yeah, that's a great question. So tracking the growth is, of course, the first step. But we certainly were looking at current workload, and actually, it was the trends in the last three years. So even if you're seeing a decrease, we're still factoring in current workload. Our recommendations are really to improve the process. You are going to continue to grow. It might not be the fastest-growing area, but when you start to become the fastest-growing area again, you are going to have these tools and these systems in place to ensure that you can continue to address the interests that you might have from developers. The technology is a reality that you will need to be addressing no matter what. That is how applications and permits are submitted to cities and counties now. And so that investment is an ongoing reality, I would say. Of course, for additional staff, you know, that can be for a discussion just on, it's really that once a Commercial Plan's Reviewer, is that justified? You have a vacancy, I believe, right now, in Inspections right now. But our recommendations are really to address the current realities. Yes, Jonesboro might not be a high-growth area, but it would just, I'm trying to just quickly think of ways that you might, typically, when we have those types of communities, you are seeing a larger number of FTE's being recommended because you just don't have enough people and the hours available to do the actual review that's required. Mayor Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, thank you for your presentation. Ms. Brekke replied, thank you so much, I appreciate it.

**Read**

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilmember Chris Gibson motioned, seconded by Councilmember Brian Emison, to adopt the Consent Agenda unless changes are noted. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman asked to remove RES-26:043 from the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Chris Gibson amended his original motion to adopt the Consent Agenda to reflect removing RES-26:043. Councilmember Brian Emison amended his second. All voted aye.

*Approval of the Consent Agenda*

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

**Aye:** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent:** 1 - Ann Williams

[MIN-26:042](#) MINUTES FOR THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON MAY 5, 2026

**Attachments:** [CC Minutes 05052026.pdf](#)

**THIS ITEM WAS PASSED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

[RES-26:046](#) RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY ATTORNEY TO CERTIFY THE CITY OF JONESBORO 2026 ANNUAL FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES FOR THE CITY OF JONESBORO TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (GOJO)

**Attachments:** [FY26-certifications\\_0.pdf](#)

**THIS ITEM WAS PASSED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Enactment No: R-EN-066-2026

[RES-26:050](#) A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, TO APPROVE USE OF THE ARKANSAS WIRELESS INFORMATION NETWORK (AWIN) WITH NECESSARY EQUIPMENT PURCHASES FOR THE GOJO TRANSIT SYSTEM

**Attachments:** [Jonesboro JETS bus Quote for AWIN -3251790.pdf](#)  
[SOA OPTIONS LTR Jonesboro GOJO 20260306.pdf](#)

**THIS ITEM WAS PASSED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Enactment No: R-EN-067-2026

[RES-26:051](#) A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS, GRANTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR A BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE FY2025 EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG)

**THIS ITEM WAS PASSED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Enactment No: R-EN-068-2026

[RES-26:052](#) A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO GRANTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR THE FY2027 SELECTIVE TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM (STEP) FROM THE ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

**THIS ITEM WAS PASSED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Enactment No: R-EN-069-2026

[RES-26:053](#) A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF JONESBORO GRANTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO APPLY FOR THE FY2026 SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL GRANTS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**THIS ITEM WAS PASSED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Enactment No: R-EN-070-2026

[RES-26:054](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO EXECUTE A RELEASE AND WITHDRAWAL OF PETITION OF PROPERTY LOCATED ALONG STRAWFLOOR DRIVE

**Attachments:**     [Release and Withdrawal of Petition.pdf](#)

**THIS ITEM WAS PASSED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Enactment No: R-EN-071-2026

[RES-26:055](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS AS RECOMMENDED BY MAYOR HAROLD COPENHAVER

**THIS ITEM WAS PASSED ON THE CONSENT AGENDA.**

Enactment No: R-EN-072-2026

*RESOLUTIONS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA*[RES-26:043](#)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER JONESBORO TO LEASE SPACE AT 407 UNION AVENUE

**Attachments:**     [United Way Lease Agreement \(Revised 11.25\).docx](#)

*Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, yes, sir, thank you. I just had a question about the dates on that contract. That agreement, it's now 26 and it had December 1 of 25. Would that affect anything or? It's all right? City Attorney Carol Duncan said, it'll be okay. It's just that we have been going back and forth with it for a while. I mean, obviously, they're leasing the building currently as a holdover tenant from a previous lease, so I don't think it would make a difference. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I just noticed the dates and I didn't want it to hurt us. Councilmember L.J. Bryant said, Mr. Mayor, quick question for the City Attorney. I flipped through it and the answer may be obvious, but it wasn't obvious to me. Let's say we decided to demolish that building for some random reason in the next 10 years. Do we have the ability to? Ms. Duncan said, I believe there's an out clause in there that if there's something going on where the building is no longer usable, or I do think we have an out in the contract. I'd have to look to point you to the paragraph, but I do believe we have an out on that lease.*

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

**Aye:** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent:** 1 - Ann Williams

Enactment No: R-EN-073-2026

[RES-26:045](#)

RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO,

ARKANSAS TO CONDEMN PROPERTY LOCATED AT: 1205 N. Floyd St.  
Jonesboro, AR 72401

**Attachments:**    [1205 N Floyd Board and Secure Affidavit.pdf](#)  
[1205 N Floyd Condemnation Resolution.pdf](#)  
[1205 N Floyd Inspection Report.pdf](#)  
[1205 N Floyd Map.png](#)  
[1205 N Floyd Notice of Violation Affidavit.pdf](#)  
[1205 N Floyd Returned Board and Secure.pdf](#)  
[1205 N Floyd Returned Notice of Violation.pdf](#)  
[30842229-IMG\\_5171.jpeg](#)  
[30842230-IMG\\_5170.jpeg](#)  
[30842236-IMG\\_5164.jpeg](#)  
[30842238-IMG\\_5162.jpeg](#)  
[30842242-IMG\\_5158.jpeg](#)  
[30842243-IMG\\_5157.jpeg](#)  
[30842244-IMG\\_5156.jpeg](#)  
[30842245-IMG\\_5154.jpeg](#)

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

**Aye:** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent:** 1 - Ann Williams

Enactment No: R-EN-074-2026

## **6. NEW BUSINESS**

### *ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING*

#### [ORD-26:016](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT REVENUE BONDS UNDER THE MUNICIPALITIES AND COUNTIES INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT REVENUE BOND LAW FOR THE PURPOSE OF SECURING AND DEVELOPING INDUSTRY; TO AUTHORIZE THE SALE OF THE BONDS AND THE APPROVAL OF A BOND PURCHASE AGREEMENT AND A PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES AGREEMENT IN CONNECTION THEREWITH; TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A TRUST INDENTURE SECURING THE BONDS; TO AUTHORIZE AND PRESCRIBE CERTAIN MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE PROJECT, THE ACQUISITION, CONSTRUCTION, AND EQUIPPING THEREOF, AND THE FINANCING THEREOF; TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF A LEASE AGREEMENT RELATING TO THE PROJECT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

**Attachments:** [Trust Indenture - Jonesboro - InnovAsian \(2026\).pdf](#)  
[Lease Agreement - Jonesboro - InnovAsian \(2026\).pdf](#)  
[PILOT Agreement \(InnovAsian Jonesboro\)\(2026\).pdf](#)  
[Recognition of Prior Interests Nondisturbance and Attornment Agreement \(I](#)  
[Bond Purchase Agreement - Jonesboro - InnovAsian \(2026\).pdf](#)  
[Notification Letter to State Officials - InnovAsian PILOT Agreement.pdf](#)  
[Notification Letter to Local Officials - Jonesboro - InnovAsian PILOT.pdf](#)

*Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember L.J. Bryant, to suspend the rules and offer ORD-26:016 by title only. All voted aye. Councilmember Joe Hafner said, I do have a, I don't know if this is the right time, but I would like to make a motion to waive the second reading. Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, second. Mayor Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, okay, it is the right time if we're going to waive it, it's now instead of doing it on the next reading. (All voted aye.)*

**A motion was made by Councilperson Joe Hafner, seconded by Councilperson Charles Coleman, that this matter be Waived Second Reading. The motion PASSED with the following vote.**

**Aye:** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent:** 1 - Ann Williams

## **7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### *ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING*

#### [ORD-26:014](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM I-1 TO C-3, LUO FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5925 EAST JOHNSON AVENUE

**Attachments:** [H26-014 - Rezoning Plat-5925 E. Johnson.pdf](#)  
[Staff Report - 5925 E. Johnson.pdf](#)  
[horizon.pdf](#)  
[MAPC Minutes 03.24.26.docx](#)

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

**Aye:** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent:** 1 - Ann Williams

Enactment No: O-EN-020-2026

#### [ORD-26:015](#)

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 117, KNOWN AS THE ZONING ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR CHANGES IN ZONING BOUNDARIES FROM RM-8 TO RS-5 FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1601 GRANGER DRIVE AS REQUESTED BY CRAFTON TULL

**Attachments:**    [Application](#)  
                          [Plat](#)  
                          [Notification](#)  
                          [Staff Summary RZ\\_26-07](#)  
                          [MAPC Minutes 04.14.26](#)  
                          [Receipt](#)

*Councilmember Kevin Miller said, yes sir, Mr. Councilman, I've had a request if we could hold this until the next council meeting. I believe it has to be referred back to the zoning board for another approval, and they are requesting that it be held until the next meeting for two weeks. The motion is to postpone until the next City Council meeting. Councilmember Brian Emison seconded the motion. All voted aye.*

**A motion was made by Councilperson Kevin Miller, seconded by Councilperson Brian Emison, that this matter be Postponed Temporarily. The motion PASSED with the following vote.**

**Aye:** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent:** 1 - Ann Williams

## **8. MAYOR'S REPORTS**

*Mayor Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, I'll read the Mayor's Report as it was presented to me.*

*Good evening, everyone. Since our last city council meeting on May 5th, there has been a great deal of activity across the city, and I'd like to highlight a few important updates and community events.*

*First, I want to encourage everyone to participate in the Plan Jonesboro comprehensive planning process. The community survey remains open at [planjonesboro.com](http://planjonesboro.com). I encourage all residents to share their thoughts and ideas about the future of our city. Public engagement continues to be a major part of this effort. A public input meeting was hosted by the West End Neighborhood Association yesterday, May 18th, at the library, and additional meetings are scheduled for June 4th, June 25th, and July 16th. There will also be webinars and additional community engagement opportunities throughout the summer. Stay engaged and help shape the plans for the future of Jonesboro.*

*I also want to remind students and families that applications are now open for the Youth Advancement Council. Students in grades 9 through 12, including public, private, and homeschool students, are encouraged to apply. Applications are available on the city's website at [www.jonesboroar.gov](http://www.jonesboroar.gov) for both new and returning members and will be open through July 1st. We have some fresh ideas and are looking forward to working closely with the city leadership for the upcoming year.*

*On May 7th, we recognized May as Specialty Court Month and highlighted the important work treatment courts do in reducing crime by addressing substance use and mental health disorders. These programs continue to make a meaningful impact while also saving taxpayer money, approximately \$6,000 per individual served. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all who served to make this option possible, including our City Attorney.*

*On May 11th, we celebrated the 125th anniversary of the Salvation Army and*

*recognized their longstanding partnership in serving those in need throughout our community. We also want to thank Capt. Charles and Terry Smith for their service to Jonesboro as they prepare for reassignment to Louisiana. We wish them all the best in their next chapter.*

*I had the opportunity to welcome attendees to the Arkansas Community Action Agency Association Spring Conference on May 13th and the CRDC Prevention Conference on May 14th. Also on May 14th, a group of city employees attended the FOA LEAP Program event featuring an impressive showcase by clients from Abilities Unlimited. We are grateful for their investment in our community and our city employees support all our community partners.*

*Community events have continued throughout the month, including the Fisher Street Fish Fry hosted by Dr. Coleman on May 16th. I hope you were able to stop by and grab your fish plate before they were gone.*

*Today, city staff attended multiple events throughout the day. The 10th Annual Nonprofit Summit of the Northeast Arkansas hosted by Karis Consulting Group, the Law Enforcement Luncheon at Central Baptist, and the Arkansas Rural Development Commission Conference. I was pleased to share in a panel discussion alongside Andrea Allen and Judge Marvin Day to kick off the three-day conference.*

*Mayor and Chief Elliott are beginning discussions on the incentivization for recruitment to the Jonesboro Police Department. Public safety is a priority for our growing city and we must continue to work together to encourage officers to protect and serve in Jonesboro.*

*We've celebrated several ribbon-cuttings and business milestones with the Chamber of Commerce. These investments and expansions continue to reflect the momentum and growth happening across Jonesboro. I know many are pleased with the addition of Raising Canes. It was a whole celebration.*

*Looking ahead, we are excited to welcome visitors and cycling enthusiasts downtown for the Skirmish Delta Gravel Festival taking place May 28th through May 31st.*

*And on June 6th, the next neighborhood cleanup event will be hosted at Fisher Street United Methodist Church as part of continued efforts to support beautification and neighborhood engagement.*

*Please also note city offices and services including Sanitation and the Go-Jo Transit will be closed on Monday, May 25th in observance of Memorial Day. The adjusted sanitation schedule is available on the city's website and was posted to social media outlets as well. With that, take notice that the incinerator location will be closed on Saturday, May 23rd to allow sanitation employees a holiday weekend as well.*

*Back to business after Memorial Day holiday. We do want to pause and take a moment in honor of all who have served and sacrificed for our country. This Memorial Day, we remember and honor the brave men and women who gave their lives in service to our nation. And thank you to all our residents, community partners, volunteers, non-profits, businesses, and city staff who continue working every day to make Jonesboro a stronger community. God bless. Mayor Copenhagen.*

*It says your financial statements are available.*

[COM-26:031](#)

APRIL 2026 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**Attachments:** [April 2026 Financials.pdf](#)

Filed

## **9. CITY COUNCIL REPORTS**

*Councilmember L. J. Bryant said, just two quick things. I think Mr. Richardson and I've talked about this at one point. You know, if you Google the Park Ranger Program, to me, it's still not clear how to get a hold of folks and how that works. I think we need some public education around the Park Ranger Program. The Mayor just referenced it in his report. I know Chairman Emison's worked on it some. We've got the open positions in the PD, so we've got money out there, so we need to figure out how to reallocate the money to help the Chief. It's a national problem with the teen takeover movement that's happening around the country and what's happened at City Water and Light Park and what's happening all over America and it's only going to be worse in the summer all over America as kids are out of school and stuff, so we need to make sure the Chief has what he needs from us.*

*Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I just wanted to reiterate that while this is mental health awareness month to thank all of our health professionals that are out there. And, I do advocate seeing a therapist if you can and desire, but I just want to say thanks to all of those hard workers. Thank you.*

*Councilmember David McClain said, I have questions, I think, really for Jim. I know he presented at Finance last week and spoke a little bit about the gun range being something that is losing money, I think to the tune of over \$450,000, I believe is the number, a year. And, so, I had a few questions if he wouldn't mind coming up and just answering a couple of questions real quick. And I mean correct me if I'm wrong, Jim, on those numbers. Parks and Recreation Director Jim Stearns replied, no, sir, you're correct. Councilmember McClain said, okay, so it's \$450,000 a year. Mr. Stearns continued, 2025 loss was \$497,000, 2024 is \$506,000, and 2023 was \$412,000. Councilmember McClain asked, have we talked a little bit or have we discussed a plan going forward maybe to help stop that bleeding? And I'm not meaning to catch you off guard, but at the same time, just trying to brainstorm about what we can do to stop that, maybe stop the bleeding there. Mr. Stearns replied, that's the question of the day, yes, sir. We're looking at different ways to attract more tournaments to the facility. I can give you a report on how successful tournaments have been in the past year. We still lack a facility as far as a conference meeting room to really host larger tournaments. That's one potential way. We've already kind of slowed down our projects and renovations and landscaping projects. We're trying to cut those costs and limit that kind of stuff. We've got a lot of work on the range. We're challenged a lot with the EPA requirements of being a wetland, and so we're really trying to make sure that we're living up to that agreement as well. Councilmember McClain said, I know when I was on A&P, we talked a little bit about using some funds maybe for, you just talked about a facility, maybe for the clubhouse. Is that what you're referring to, maybe a clubhouse to finish out? To build one? Mr. Stearns replied, yes, sir. Councilmember McClain continued, have y'all had any discussions anymore about that? Mr. Stearns said, we've had very little discussion about that. We just started kind of approaching that now. As Mr. Morgan mentioned a couple months ago. We also look at hopefully adding a camera system to the pistol rifle side to maybe reduce the number of staff that we have out there until we improve our numbers. So we're looking at that option as well as one of the projects we're kind of looking at. Councilmember McClain replied, okay. Last thing, and I don't know if we can do this, but I hope we can. Have we looked at maybe outsourcing and having someone else run the facility? Maybe like we're going to have*

a company run our RAC. Have we looked at having someone else? Mr. Stearns replied, we have not to my knowledge, I mean, I've really been here five months. (Chief Operations Officer Tony Thomas said off camera/mic, yes, we have.) Councilmember McClain repeats, y es, y'all have? Okay, okay. It's doable. One, is it doable first? And then second, are we... Chief Administrative Officer Brian Richardson came to the podium and said, this is obviously a discussion that happened prior to Jim. We did have some discussions with the sports facilities group that is going to be running the Ridge Athletic Center, and they did some, kind of some, preliminary research. And, of course, a lot of their determinations are that in order to actually live up to what that facility was probably proposed to do back when it was originally funded, you do need some sort of centralized clubhouse to intake tournaments and to allow for registration and vendors and food service and all that kind of stuff. They had their doubts that it would be, on paper, you know, self-sufficient and profitable, along its own just based off of that one centralized building. It would give you the opportunity to reduce that loss each year. And, you know, you're kind of hamstrung with the shooting range because you can't de-staff it to the point where it's unsafe. It's a city property and the last thing we want to do as a city-owned property is be unsafe because of a lack of staff. So, you know, Jim's done an excellent job of kind of going through that. In fact, whenever he came on board as assistant parks director, that was kind of one of his first assignments, was to figure out where we can cut and where we can make it more efficient and help reduce the loss every year. Because I do think it is important, anytime we talk about parks, that, you know, I know that the shooting range is often viewed as kind of different because it is revenue-producing, but the ultimate goal of all parks is not necessarily to make money. It's to help with the overall economic development and get people into town where they are spending money in hotels and restaurants and everything that the Ridge is going to also do. So it's kind of finding that balance line of how much do we have to spend to be able for the facility to function as it was originally proposed? Is that possible? Where's the money going to come from? And at what point are we satisfied? Are we satisfied with losing \$200,000 a year if it's generating X amount of million dollars in economic impact? And, you know, some of these reformers obviously that were probably worked through 10 years ago. And, you know, some of that stuff has been kind of looked at by the sports facilities group. And so outsourcing is an option, but in order to outsource it, you're going to have to either complete it or work out some sort of funding agreement that allows funding to complete that. And, you know, that's a hard ask to come before City Council and make until you can show that you can cut as much as possible and still be a safe facility, an effective facility. And so that's what Jim's been working pretty hard on to try to make that a presentable opportunity. And we're also seeking some outside funding. I know there's been discussions with the Game and Fish on some possible supportive funding because, again, it's hard to ask for more public dollars to go in this without bringing some private investment or some third-party investment into this. So we're certainly well aware of the realities of where we are on this project. Councilmember McClain said, yeah, I don't think you can cut to half a million a year. I mean, honestly, I mean, you mentioned cutting some stuff, but I really don't think that's possible. I mean, you'd have to... I mean, in my thinking, you'd have to lay off staff and a few other things, and I don't... Like you said, we can't do that. So I would encourage, you know, discussion to happened with A&P, and then also if we can figure out a way to get with the sports facilities group, then I would encourage that as well. Mr. Richardson said, well, and ultimately what we want is a safe facility that produces the type of economic impact that was originally kind of proposed and envisioned with this project. And, you know, we've actually kind of redesigned the building to help reduce the cost. I think originally the proposal is a 6,500-square-foot or so main building, and it was, you know, even at that construction time, it was a \$6 or \$7 million building, if I remember right. And we kind of worked back through it and tried to engineer just the essentials in there, enough meeting space to make it a viable facility. And I think the last

estimate that we had on it was somewhere just a little north of \$3 million. You know, you start going below that, and, are you building what you actually need to make that facility successful? So it's, you know, it's definitely a complex problem that doesn't necessarily have an easy button answer to it. Because, again, this is a... Craighead Forest doesn't make money, but we know how important it is to the community. So where's that...trying to find that fine line is a constant challenge that's placed in Jim's hands. Councilmember McClain said, okay, thank you. Unless you had something else, Jim? Mr. Stearns replied, no sir. Councilmember McClain said, okay, thank you.

Councilmember Chris Gibson said, yes, just a couple of things. Advertising and Promotions met yesterday, and I would like to suspend the rules and walk on RES-26:057. Councilmember John Street said, second. Mayor Pro-Tempore Chris Moore asked, Carol, will you confirm there was a unanimous decision at A&P? Ms. Duncan said, yes. Mayor Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, okay, Carol confirmed there was a unanimous decision, which is the prerequisite. (All voted aye.) Councilmember John Street motioned, seconded by Councilmember David McClain. (All voted aye.) Councilmember Gibson said, the only other thing I had is we had a conversation a couple of weeks ago about the Parks Advisory Committee wanting to reconvene with the Public Services Committee and I think that I want to try to do that on our regularly scheduled meeting date on June the 16th, but I would like to move that up to 3:30 just to allow adequate time. Mayor Pro-Tempore Chris Moore asked, Carol, we won't need a motion on that to change the committee meeting will we? Ms. Duncan said, I don't think so. Mayor Pro-Tempore Chris Moore said, I wouldn't think so either. Alright, duly noted.

Councilmember Dr. Charles Coleman said, I only have two things. I spoke to Ronnie Shaver. He's at home. He's doing a lot better. The other thing is to thank the DARE program for helping the Fish Program that we had this weekend. We done real well. We gave out 365-375 fish plates and 300 hot dogs.

Councilmember Brian Emison said, the only thing I have is I want to reiterate on the Mayor's comments and also to L.J.'s point that, did have an opportunity to sit down and talk with the employee reps for the Jonesboro Police Department, and I think that we've got a lot of good options for us as we proceed forward as we look at what benefits that we're able to offer the Jonesboro police officers because Lord knows they make it where we can go to sleep and we can rest every night, so it's our opportunity to take care of those that take care of us on a daily basis. It was set up, and me and Chief were going to try to get together last week. However, there was a scheduling conflict, and I think this is a good opportunity to brag on Chief and brag on some good initiatives that we have going on in Jonesboro right now. Chief, I'm kind of putting you on the spot here, but would you like to come up and tell us about the Blue Envelope Program, please? Police Chief Rick Elliott said, this past week, we participated in mock traffic stop drills for people with autism. We're the first agency in the state to put on such a project like this. This is Autism Awareness Month, and I've been working with several people at the University and with the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, John Taylor, out of Little Rock. We started this project back in May. So, we did some scenarios, mock traffic stops this past Wednesday out at ASU with people with autism. And, so, the therapists and the counselors and everybody's involved in this can see how the individuals act due to the stress levels that a traffic stop causes. As we all know, traffic stops generate stress as it is, and then with people that have autism, that increases their stress levels even more. So we, as an agency, have to learn how to deal with individuals, but more important, the Blue Envelope Program and Green Envelope Program was something that's passed by legislation and went into effect the first of the year. And, essentially, when an officer makes a traffic stop and if a person has autism, they'll pass a blue envelope to the officer. We'll have directions that, hey, I have whatever. And inside the envelope

*will be their license, their registration, and proof of insurance. They may be stressed to the level that they can't communicate to the officer. And failure to communicate when an officer approaches can lead to unfortunate things for the driver. We may think they're impaired or a million other different reasons. So they just kind of cut down anything that would be unfortunate. So that works. So we had this demo, and, again, everything worked according to plan. There are some changes that we're looking to take back to our state legislators on this. We've learned a lot from that and we're looking to move forward with some more changes. But, again, I'm just proud of the department and being able to participate in this program along with the state police and the ASU police. Like I said, we're the first in the state to do it. And ironically, two days later, one of our traffic officers worked in an accident on a person with autism, and the first thing he did was presented the blue envelope. So he was stressed out because of the accident and just he knew to hand the officer when she approached the blue envelope. So the program across statewide, hopefully will grow. It's an educational piece right now because law enforcement is just learning about the program starting to learn how to implement it and how it works. Again, I'm just proud that we are the first in the state to kick this off and continue to work on the local and the state level to make this a go across the state of Arkansas. Thank you. Councilmember Emison said, thank you, Chief.*

[RES-26:057](#)

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JONESBORO, ARKANSAS TO MAKE A REAPPOINTMENT TO THE ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS COMMISSION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMISSION

*Councilmember Chris Gibson motioned, seconded by Councilmember John Street, to suspend the rules and walk on RES-26:057. All voted aye.*

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

**Aye:** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent:** 1 - Ann Williams

Enactment No: R-EN-075-2026

## **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

*Jonathan Carvell, 4474 Highway 163, said, good evening. Thank you for your time. I'm here as representing the SWAT swim club. Some of the parents asked me to come and speak about the situation that we have at the city pool. I don't know how familiar you are with the situation, but a few weeks ago we were told that rather than splitting the space at the pool with the other team in town, we would have to allocate more space to the other team because it wasn't going to be safe for them. They had so many swimmers. It wasn't going to be safe for them to swim with just five lanes. They were going to need more than that. And so I'd like to address that, specifically the safety aspect. First, as a parent, we all want our kids to be safe. That's our primary responsibility. It's a secondary responsibility for the swim clubs themselves. It's really when we give them over to them, it's their responsibility. I don't think the city has a safety issue. I think we have a space issue. And that's a good problem to have because it's exciting. It means that the new facility is going to be viable. As a safety professional, I had that role at A-State as a safety officer for nearly 10 years. I've solved a lot of safety issues that came to me collaboratively with some of the people in this room, and I prefer to do it that way, collaboratively as a community solution. We weren't given the opportunity to do that. So I'm here today to hopefully let you guys hear us out, and again, thank you. So a lot of times what we see when people*

*bring safety issues to us as professionals is that we can't eliminate the risk. The best thing we can do is we can shift it, transfer it to another entity. Risk transference usually involves insurance. In this case, I would submit that if five lanes is unsafe for one team, if six lanes is unsafe for that team, and we're now going to be squished down to three lanes for our team, that's going to create an unsafe situation for us. And again, we're going to address that. We're going to address that probably with some extraordinary things and some gymnastics that we're going to have to do in our schedule. The other team's not going to have to do that. But we will because we want our kids to be safe. The other thing that happens with safety issues often is someone will come to you with a solution that sounds viable. It sounds like it'll work. More kids, more swimmers, more lanes. That makes sense. But really what it does is it creates a perverse incentive for both teams to load up their rosters and justify their space in the pool. And that just means more and more kids in the pool, and it exacerbates the space challenges that we have. And that's probably why you don't see this type of arrangement very often. Usually the split is along time instead of space so that you don't have that perverse incentive. And so the other thing that can happen is that, again, we've transferred this risk to another group of kids. Really. But the other thing that can happen is people can cry safety. They can say, hey, this is going to be unsafe for us because they have a goal in mind. They want more space. And I'm afraid that's what's happened here. And I wouldn't say that if the other team hasn't already been given seven lanes. We were told we were going to get at least four. We had some details we wanted to work out, but apparently now they have seven lanes and we're going to be down to three. And it seems inherently unfair. And so just as a parent, as a safety professional, if you've got anything to say about this situation, if you've got anything that can make it so that we feel welcome at the pool, and that we can use that facility in that way, I'd really appreciate it. So I've lived here for my whole life, and I think we can work this out. I really do. So thank you again for your time. I appreciate it.*

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Aye:** 11 - Brian Emison;Chris Moore;Chris Gibson;David McClain;Joe Hafner;Kevin Miller;Anthony Coleman;Janice Porter;John Street;Charles Coleman and LJ Bryant

**Absent:** 1 - Ann Williams

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Harold Copenhaver, Mayor**

**Attest:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**April Leggett, City Clerk**