



City of Jonesboro

Municipal Center
300 S. Church Street
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Meeting Minutes Public Services Council Committee

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

4:30 PM

Municipal Center, 300 S. Church

1. Call To Order

2. Roll Call by City Clerk April Leggett

Present 6 - Chris Gibson; Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

Absent 1 - Joe Hafner

3. Approval of minutes

[MIN-23:021](#)

Minutes for the Public Services Committee Meeting on February 21, 2023

Attachments: [Minutes](#)

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

Aye: 5 - Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

Absent: 1 - Joe Hafner

4. New Business

5. Pending Items

6. Other Business

[COM-23:008](#)

SHOOTING SPORTS COMPLEX UPDATE FROM PARKS & RECREATION

Parks and Recreation Director Danny Kapales approached the podium and said, so what I've got, I've got a PowerPoint that actually falls into both presentations; and then I've got numbers to present. So, first off, thank you all for having me here. We'll just start in with going over the membership that we currently have. So far, at this point, we have sold 456 family memberships to the shooting sports complex. We've sold 323 individual memberships. Chairman Chris Gibson asked, what is the cost breakout of each of those? Director Danny Kapales said, \$150 per family, \$100 per single. Then visitor wise, to the pistol/rifle side, we've had 5,351 visitors so far; and on the trap side, we have thrown 378,893 clays. So quite a few clays have been tossed in the air so far. We do have all nine fields up and operational at this point for trap. We are still working on getting the skeet side. There were some electrical issues getting the correct wiring

there from the group that's helping us get that going. They are supposed to be shipping the wiring. They have got our guys trained on how to set that stuff up, so as soon as we get the correct wires, we will have the skeet side open.

So far, with the teams that come out, we've got the Jonesboro, Brookland, Walnut Ridge, and Christian Home Educators that actually call the complex their home field. They come out and practice pretty well routinely for trap. We have 13 trap tournaments to date that we've had so far that's raised about \$24,000. We have nine ATA events scheduled for 2023. We have four youth events scheduled for 2023. We've already had one, and that was on 3/4/23. That brought in about \$3500 for that one day event. We have a charity event scheduled for 4/15, and then we started a new event on the rifle side, which is the Know Your Limits. It's a rimfire activity. They do that once a month. It helps folks instead of spending a lot of money on the higher cost shells, they can actually bring the rimfire shells out and they are trained with basically .22 caliber; and they are reaching out 200 yards with the rimfire and showing how far they can actually shoot with those types of shots. We're doing that basically, like I said, once a month. Currently that's going to be the second Saturday of each month. We've had 20 competitors so far; and each time we have it, you see more come out. Also, those competitors are signing up for memberships, so that does help there.

We also have started a league for our trap side. With that league, Trumann Animal Clinic is our sponsor for the league. We've got 12 five-person teams that come out and participate in that league. Then the 3D archery trail, that's still in process of being complete. We are fighting weather with that. Unfortunately, that 3D archery does fall within our wet zone, so during this time of the year, it does get under water and we can't get heavy equipment out there. Once we get it complete, that's going to be a walking area, so you will be able to walk out there and utilize it; but trying to drive a skid steer or tractor or things of that sort to build the trail, it's just impossible. So we're going to have to wait until we get to the dryer summer months to complete that. Basically it's about a half-mile walking trail for 3D archery.

Our other is we've got the women's pistol class. We've had that with Arkansas Game and Fish. The last time we had the class, it filled up really quick, and so they scheduled another date on 3/24. It was basically filled up the next day because there were a lot of ladies that did not get into that other class so they filled it up right afterward. Then Glock Days is planned to schedule multiple events in 2023. That's actually sponsored by United Pawn and United Police Supplies. We have got the nine fields and the classroom sponsorships. To date, we have raised over \$600,000 in sponsorships for that park. Then Project Appleseed, I wish I could explain what that is. Some of you may know more on that, and if we need to get more details, I will. It has scheduled rifle marksmanship classes for the park. We've got four dates scheduled for that out there currently. If you listen to the radio much, you do hear them nationally get talked about. I just don't have all the details on that group.

So go on to some pictures. I know a lot of times just seeing things help out a lot. As you can see some of the activity and events going on. This is a pretty good picture of the range building on the pistol/rifle end. If you go on the inside right there, you'll see it's actually a beautiful building inside with the classroom, the hallways, the office space. It's just really a good representation of what that park needs to look like. This is the pistol/rifle end and showing folks out there lining up. Then this is the maintenance building. It's under construction. Currently, hopefully here within the next couple of months, we will be complete and be in that building. We are working out of basically a square post building right now on the backside of the firms. It's working fine. I've got a gravel floor that doesn't stay dry all the time, so this is going to be a dry

facility for the guys to be in, keep our clays dry and all of our equipment, and a warm space to work in. So that's another big piece for our guys, but this is a really nice structure. It's going to have office space, storage space, also the breakroom is a safe room. If you'll notice in all of our shop buildings, maintenance buildings, we're putting a safe room in just because my guys are in a spot where if we do have a storm, they need to have a place to go and at least feel comfortable while that storm is going through.

This is on the trap end. If you notice there, these are some folks just lined up while it was pouring down rain to be able to shoot trap. So it doesn't mean sunny days that they are out there. They are out there on inclement weather days also wanting to shoot. And that is just a look on the inside of a trap machine. I know some of you may have never seen what that looks like, but that is what a trap machine looks like with all the clays and all the activity inside it. These are our current six sponsors of the nine fields. It's nice to have a photographer working for you out there also. He caught a pretty picture over the archery course. Those two covers there are what we put in with A&P. They helped us do that this past year. That gives a little bit of cover for anybody that is out there shooting archery. That was one of the pieces we just didn't do when it was first designed. So now we will have some shade or if it's raining a little bit, they will have some cover to be under. Then this shows you the 3D archery and how that trail is going. We are basically doing a chat trail. That will be the half mile trail around, and then there will be shoot-offs from that half mile trail that will be mulched to walk into. That way, we don't have rocks for the arrows to hit and break up. It will be just a soft surface to walk in and shoot the targets. Basically, would be next is the Parks update. Are there any questions on the shooting range? So, I know one piece to add, if you have any questions is, there's a lot of things that we still would like to do and add on out there. I know the mayor currently is doing a lot of research and conversations with folks to figure out how we can continue to finish that project. I know he is currently talking with Game and Fish on how they can help, how they can come in and look at what we're doing there. Obviously, the city has made a great investment in that facility. They have helped us on the front end, and now it's looking back to them to see what they can do to help us basically complete what this project has started.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, I have a question if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman. Do we have any requests for more days available for it to be open? Have we had any requests? Director Kapales said, not really. The deal is that we really can't open more than those five days because you're going to have maintenance that has to be done downrange; and to provide any less than two days to be able to mow, weed eat, and clean up, it would be detrimental to keeping that place a first class facility. Councilmember Dr. Coleman said, it's good. I enjoyed it. I have been out there a couple of times; and I only ask that because my brother and I were trying to go there on one Monday. We didn't realize it was closed. Mr. Kapales said, yes, I think that maybe to add to that. One of the things I think would be a future look-at for that facility would be how we could potentially light the facility, but that is future. I think we get what we have done currently, and then look at lighting it up so that when we get to that five o'clock mark and it starts getting dark, we can flip lights on, and folks getting off work will have a place to go and be able to shoot during that time period.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman, a few kind of random questions. Danny, you might know some these off the top of your head. I just randomly thought of a few things. The first one you'll know. When did we open and start taking memberships? Mr. Kapales said, September '21. Councilmember Bryant said, do you know how our memberships compare year over year from that date? Mr. Kapales said, you know, I don't have the actual breakdown. Obviously, there are still folks that don't realize we

are open, so it's still continuing to grow; and every time we do something, it brings more people in. We had a decent rush right at the beginning of memberships; and I know the memberships now, we have a program called ACTIVEnet. That is an online registration. It's a way for folks to pay with credit card, whereas before we didn't quite have that system throughout the park system. That is helping us quite a bit. It also is, where our old system was, we entered into an Excel file and that's how we kept up with it. We actually have a true system that gives you a membership card, just the professionalism. It really brought us up to where we are caught up with everybody or surpassing a lot of folks. Councilmember Bryant asked, do we have non-resident members too? Is that allowed? Mr. Kapales said, yes, actually right now our membership is open to everybody and we do have quite a few non-resident members. Councilmember Bryant said, that's it. Thank you.

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[COM-23:012](#)

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM PARKS & RECREATION

Sponsors: Parks & Recreation

Director of Parks and Recreation Danny Kapales said, so next one would be a play tour. Chris, I'm sorry, but we're going to have fun with this first one. Chairman Chris Gibson said, oh boy. I'm lucky I didn't break a hip. Mr. Kapales said, as we all went on a play tour, we enjoyed what they had to offer; and that was a concrete slide that Chris went down. He went fast, as you can tell. Fortunately, it didn't video me going down a slide. You ought to have seen that. I landed on my back when I came down a slide. I'll show you that one a little bit later, not the video of it, but at least the slide itself. So, you've heard me talk when we talked about parks. We talked about adventure parks or using the topography of the landscape to build the park, building it up, not always just putting a play structure in place, but actually using those ups and downs of the playground. If you notice here, these little hills and these little mounds are built out there, so now the kids can use their imagination when they are playing, not just climbing on a structure. The kids can bring little trucks out there, and they can run up and down the mounds, they can jump back and forth across it. And those are turf surfaces. So now if they fall on it, it's not like they are falling on concrete. They are falling on a surface that is soft. It makes it much more enjoyable for them to play on. The swing set, if you notice the circular swing set and some zip lines; and if anyone here likes pickleball, this was a six-court pickleball course. One of the things I really liked about the pavilion area over here, if you'll notice, it was a circle pavilion area, and one of the things we talked about, this may be worth looking at some of our sports facilities. Because what it has provided is, I believe there were five or six locations within this where it had picnic tables, grills and a table with a sink to be able to sit down and cook. If we had this maybe like at Joe Mack or Southside, now teams could actually pick those locations, come in, cook for their teams, have a place to get away from for the games, and they get right back out there to the games at that point. I thought it was a neat little idea. Just some more playgrounds, BAGGO courts. If you notice the concrete BAGGO there, that is a piece that we'll be adding to the Union Park over here downtown. We'll add a couple of those, which I think will be fun for a lot of the adults downtown when they are utilizing what downtown has to offer.

This is another, I thought, was a really nice playground. If you notice, it's multi-tiered. If you look, everything on it is a play surface. I think there were about four or five tiers that you can climb on. Like I said, everybody played, so you see Brian came down the slide and enjoyed that from up top. To me, that's what a playground should look like utilized. You don't go in and flatten out a surface, you utilize what is there and you build on it. Chairman Chris Gibson said, that particular park that he is showing, you

really can't tell from this photo, but it was made to emulate the mountains in the background. There was a nice scenic backdrop that it actually took on the same skyline as those mountains. It was pretty incredible to see. Mr. Kapales said, then obviously we see this is one of the ones that is on a flatter playground; but one of the things I liked was the restroom. It just kind of shows that you can simplify some of your restroom facilities. If you notice how that has a roof and side walls, but it's open. It is very ventilated; and I can see that in some of our locations having it a little bit more open where you don't have to worry about the enclosed air. It just makes it a little bit better for folks being able to utilize it.

This one here was probably one of my favorite playgrounds. We were standing at the very top when I took these photos of this playground. If you'll look, the picture there up to the top left is me looking off of that playground down. So now we're looking down upon another playground. You see a bridge that takes you across to another playground; so they really had utilized what was there to build upon, and it really just made a fun environment for kids to play on.

This was the playground that I slid down, if you notice that slide. I had to climb through all of those tubes, and for me it was a challenge to get through all of it and I did land on my back pretty hard. Pavilion wise, I know it looks rustic, but this is probably one of my favorite pavilions. I would love to see this in some other locations, even maybe another location downtown. If we need to build a pavilion or space downtown somewhere, I think this would be really nice in that spot. And this playground, this is where we did get approached by a few parents. When we showed up, there were about twenty kids out playing; and so parents were wondering why eight guys got out of a dark van and walked up onto the playground all in dark sweatshirts. We were in Phoenix, but it was 56 degrees, so it was not like it was warm for us at that moment. But that was a really neat playground, if you notice, fully shaded and just a full climbing structure. The kids were all over it. They were having fun. We talked to the parents, and some of them were there that lived over by another playground but liked this one much better, so they were traveling over to enjoy that playground. This one here, I thought was a really neat climber. If you notice, the slide goes all the way down, spirals down, and this one was covered up too with children. It had a lot of activity.

So what I am going to do is, I am going to dig into some numbers we have in Parks unless you have some questions on the playgrounds. Chairman Chris Gibson said, I just want to make one statement. We kind of discussed when we were on this trip, and I do want to say that this trip was at no cost to the city of Jonesboro. They flew us out and gave us accommodations and took very good care of us. But one thing that we did discuss as a group when we were having dinner one night is them identifying a couple of closer facilities such as St. Louis or Fayetteville to where this group, if you're interested, could possibly jump on a local plane and go spend an afternoon and look at some of their facilities. I would love to see us do that at some point if anyone is interested. Mr. Kapales said, yes, absolutely. The group that took us down there would be happy to help us with any other trip or whatever. We are trying to grow parks. We are trying to make sure there is plenty of really neat and fun play spaces and as I said adventure playgrounds. Let's get away from the flat surface playgrounds and go to some playgrounds that are going to be creative for children.

So dealing in numbers, obviously we do a lot with programs. I'm really proud of what our kids do. So I will start with softball. We've got 24 junior high teams currently. Thirty-three youth teams have registered. We haven't quite started, but we are getting close to starting. This past Saturday, if anybody had a chance to go by Southside, you would have seen that there was a parking lot full of buses. We had 49 high school

teams at Southside playing all day Saturday. We were supposed to start on Friday, but obviously the rain came in on Thursday and we had to work really hard. I shouldn't say we. I didn't drag a rake one, but my guys did a great job getting that complex ready along with Brookland, which is the school that hosted this tournament. Their team was out there dragging rakes and making sure the fields got ready to go. But that was 49 teams from all over Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi. They were here in town playing high school, and that is strictly high school teams. That was not multiple age groups. They were all strictly high school teams here in town for that event. So it's pretty good to see. We've had three adult tournaments so far; and we're just in March so we've already had three adult tournaments out there at the park through the cold weather, through the wet weather. So activity has really cranked up. Miracle League, we've got 65 players signed up so far. I think it might not be a bad idea to get some of you signed up to be buddies at some point. That would be great to see you out there working with those children during their Saturday games. If you want to, just contact me and I will make sure we get you on a schedule. City Stars Basketball, we are currently in the middle of City Stars Basketball. We have 942 players playing in that right now. We play every Saturday. This is the one Saturday we are off right now because of spring break. We will be back at it next Saturday.

City Stars Soccer, so this is probably going to be our largest year ever for City Stars Soccer. Obviously, our numbers were really rising. Covid took us down a little bit, and now our numbers are going way back up. This fall, we had 1,211 participants. We open registration back up. Those participants, we usually lose a couple of hundred of those that transfer to baseball. We have registration reopened up and we get new participants. We've had 950 new participants sign up. So we are going to be somewhere around 1800 to 2000 kids playing recreational soccer this season. So it's going to be huge. On top of that, revolution soccer is continuing to grow, and that is our travel program. Spring is usually smaller than what our fall is. That is just because our high school kids and our junior high kids are removed from that. But this past year, we were over 300 kids, so that has been the biggest we have ever been in our travel program. Then we've got a new program that we have started up this year called junior high tennis. That is something that is not happening anywhere around here. It hasn't happened in the state anywhere. What we're doing is we are trying to give our local high schools kind of a kick start; because some of them unfortunately do not have kids that participate at the country clubs or any other locations and get those tennis lessons. But they come out for their first time to play tennis, it might be their ninth grade year, might be their tenth grade year. So now what we have done with the help from NEA Tennis, they are going to help run this program. We're starting at sixth grade, and we're doing a sixth, seventh and eighth grade junior high program; and you get to play for your school. You're going to get those lessons from tennis pros, and we will get three years of those kids learning how to play tennis before they get to that high school rank. So that registration is currently going on, so if anybody want to sign up, just go to the Jonesboro Parks and Rec page, which is the Jonesboro page, Jonesboro.org, and you can register for that activity. So that is currently where we are. Union Park, if you go by there now, you will see a lot of construction. There's been sod laid. There's quite a bit of activity. I do have a playground ordered for that, which is supposed to be in in August. So hopefully we will be complete by the end of August with that playground at that point.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, that is great man. I want to say thank you. I want to make a comment then a question, but thank you, because my grandson is part of those 942 City Star basketballs, so it's fun to see that. But you mentioned the increase in the soccer. So facilities, scheduling wise, I mean, do you think we will be pretty good with that much of an increase, because that is quite a bit. Director Kapales

said, yes, with soccer I think we will be alright. Fortunately, soccer being an outdoor, open space, we will have a little bit of room for growth there. Basketball is the hard part. Until we get a facility build and complete, we are kind of limited. That is why that 942 probably could have been 1200 if we didn't have to cut it off. Councilmember Dr. Anthony Coleman said, that is what I call a good problem. Mr. Kapales said, it is. It absolutely is.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman, any update on the Craighead Forest soft surface stuff? Director Kapales said, absolutely. Good question. I wish I had put some pictures on the PowerPoint. Rock Solid is out there currently. If you get a chance to go out, they are going to be out there for the next five months working on trails out at Craighead Forest, rebuilding trails. This company is a company that does trails all over the country, actually some outside of the country. Probably one of the best trail building groups in the world, and we have them right here in Jonesboro building trails out at Craighead Forest right now. So I am really proud of what you have provided for us as Parks Department to be able to do. So if you get a chance, please swing out there. They are working basically every day that they can. They have equipment on site. They are camping out there on site, so that they can get up straight in the morning and go right back to work. It's going to be really neat for the city of Jonesboro when they get this trail system done. Thank you.

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[COM-23:013](#)

MONTHLY UPDATE FROM JET TRANSIT SYSTEM

Sponsors: JETS

JETS Director Michael Black approached the podium and said, good afternoon and thanks for having me as well. Our numbers so far year-to-date, we have provided 18,353 trips. That is about 7% above where we were as same period last year at 17,261, and we are 78% above what we did in '21, which was 10,292. Of course, that was primarily the height of Covid. We are still in a struggle with vehicles. I've got three different dealers, manufacturers scouring and trying to find. We are now down to one paratransit vehicle due to an accident Monday morning. A private company sanitation truck backed into our new Ford Transit. We are still waiting on an adjuster to try to determine how long that is actually going to be down. But our Low-No Emissions grant, hopefully with FTA's cooperation, we will have that finalized within about a month and can put that out for bid. We are still struggling with employees, finding employees, that is. We had five interviews scheduled for today, one showed up. We've got three scheduled for tomorrow. We will just have to see how that goes. We are working diligently to rebuild our crew and keep our maintenance program proactive instead of reactive to keep what we do have rolling, and it's a challenge. I learned today that vehicle manufacturers are still going to be about two and a half million short on production this year, which is about the same as what it was last year. Ford is not giving up nearly as many chassis, plus they are not given the subsidy for the public transit side of it as they did pre-Covid. So it is still a bit of a struggle.

Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman? So, Michael, how many positions do you have, and how many positions are open? Mr. Black said, we have, including part time, 24 positions. Full-time is 16. Right now, we have three full-time positions open and need licensed drivers. Of course, fortunately the one out of five who showed up today, they are fully rated. They have all their licenses, DOT physical. Three weeks to a month of training, and they could hit the road on their own, which unfortunately it doesn't work out that way with all of them. We do train to obtain the CDL, but it has gotten quite a bit more complicated than it used to be as well.

Chairman Chris Gibson said, what is the pay scale on those new hires? Mr. Black said, entry level, full-time is \$15.61 an hour, where part-time CDL drivers are \$14 an hour, and admin is \$13 an hour. Councilmember LJ Bryant said, Mr. Chairman, I just say maybe Finance or somebody could do some research and share how that compares to what the school districts and such pay. Chairman Gibson said, absolutely. Mr. Black said, I learned today through an employee that is considering leaving, sadly enough, that a local hospital is paying \$17 an hour for a driver. I put some feelers out to try to make sure of that; but this employee I would very much like to retain if at all possible. Chairman Gibson said, just from my experience, I run a couple of buses here in town as well with my clinics; and you are falling pretty close to what we pay our drivers as well, so I'll be happy to run some traps for you if you need me to. Mr. Black said, okay, that would be great.

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7. Public Comments

8. Adjournment

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

Aye: 5 - Ann Williams; Brian Emison; LJ Bryant; Anthony Coleman and Janice Porter

Absent: 1 - Joe Hafner