

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 5, 2021
6:00 P.M. - 7:54 P.M.

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING - CITY HALL - #1 MUNICIPAL DRIVE

The City Council of the City of Jacksonville, Arkansas met in a regular session on August 5, 2021 at the regular meeting place of the City Council. Council Member Bolden delivered the invocation and Mayor Johnson led a standing audience in the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag.

ROLL CALL: City Council Members: Dietz, Bolden, Blevins, Sansing, Ray, Mashburn, Traylor, Twitty, Smith, and Rains answered ROLL CALL. Mayor Johnson also answered ROLL CALL declaring a quorum. PRESENT TEN (10) ABSENT (0).

Others present for the meeting and by Zoom were: City Attorney Stephanie Friedman, Finance Director Cheryl Erkel, Public Works Director Jimmy Oakley, CDBG Director Theresa Watson, IT Director Emily Osment, Jim Moore, and Leader Newspaper Reporter Rick Kron.

PRESENTATION OF MINUTES: Mayor Johnson presented the minutes of the regular City Council meeting of May 6, 2021 for approval and/or correction.

APPROVAL AND/OR CORRECTION OF MINUTES:

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Council Member Rains that the minutes of the regularly scheduled City Council meeting of 6 May 2021 be APPROVED. MOTION CARRIED.

CONSENT AGENDA:

WATER DEPARTMENT:

WASTEWATER DEPARTMENTS:

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

POLICE DEPARTMENT: ORDINANCE 1665 (#15-2021)

AN ORDINANCE WAIVING COMPETITIVE BIDDING FOR THE JACKSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT FIREARMS RANGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT; FOR APPROPRIATE IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCESS FOR DEPARTMENT AND CITY OF JACKSONVILLE REPRESENTATIVES; DECLARING AN EMERGENCY; AND, FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Council Member Mashburn to place Ordinance 1665 on **FIRST READING**. **ROLL CALL:** Council Member Dietz, Bolden, Blevins, Sansing, Ray, Mashburn, Traylor, Twitty, Smith, and Rains voted AYE. (0) voted NAY. **MOTION CARRIED. Whereupon City Attorney Friedman read the heading of Ordinance 1665.**

Mayor Johnson explained that the Police Department is doing improvements to the shooting range and they will be done to FBI specifications, which is the reason they are asking to waive competitive bidding. He then pointed out that the FBI will reimburse the City of Jacksonville.

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Council Member Bolden to **APPROVE** Ordinance 1665 on **FIRST READING** and **SUSPEND THE RULES** and place Ordinance 1665 on **SECOND READING**. **ROLL CALL:** Council Member Dietz, Bolden, Blevins, Sansing, Ray, Mashburn, Traylor, Twitty, Smith, and Rains voted AYE. **MOTION CARRIED.**

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Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Council Member Mashburn to **APPROVE** Ordinance 1665 on **SECOND READING** and **SUSPEND THE RULES** and place Ordinance 1665 on **THIRD AND FINAL READING**. **ROLL CALL:** Council Member Dietz, Bolden, Blevins, Sansing, Ray, Mashburn, Traylor, Twitty, Smith, and Rains voted AYE. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Council Member Sansing to **APPROVE AND ADOPT** Ordinance 1665 in its entirety. **ROLL CALL:** Council Member Dietz, Bolden, Blevins, Sansing, Ray, Mashburn, Traylor, Twitty, Smith, and Rains voted AYE. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Council Member Rains that the **EMERGENCY CLAUSE** be approved and adopted. **ROLL CALL:** Council Member Dietz, Bolden, Blevins, Sansing, Ray, Mashburn, Traylor, Twitty, Smith, and Rains voted AYE. **MOTION CARRIED.**

ORDINANCE 1665 (#15-2021) APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 5th DAY OF AUGUST, 2021.

STREET DEPARTMENT:

SANITATION DEPARTMENT:

PARKS & RECREATION:

PLANNING COMMISSION:

COMMITTEE(S):

GENERAL: a. **PUBLIC HEARING:** Approval of CDBG 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan & 2021 Annual Action Plan

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing at approximately 6:06 p.m.

With no public comment, Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing at approximately 6:07 p.m.

Council Member Blevins commented that the report had items dealing with economic development, questioning if Ms. Watson had spoken with Economic Developer Courtney Dunn from the Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Watson stated that most of the data figures came from the HUD database, explaining that they fill in this information for you. He then answered that she did not consult with Ms. Dunn.

Council Member Rains complimented the plan, adding that it was alarming to find out that roughly half of our citizens are at risk as far as housing costs.

Ms. Watson concurred saying that it is because of the lack of affordable housing; citing that half of our citizens are paying more than 30% of their income for housing.

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Council Member Rains stated that this is concerning and will be meeting with Ms. Watson concerning this issue. She asked and volunteered that she could be considered part of the at-risk group.

Council Member Blevins answered that he represents Ward 2, which includes Sunnyside Addition, the main at-risk group. He agreed that there are a lot of issue with only a limited amount of funds with such stringent guidelines, not everyone can be helped. He added that we do need to work a little harder to make sure the people who need the help get that help.

Council Member Rains stated that there needs to be a more direct representation on this Council. She clarified that she feels these people need to sign up and run for City Council. She stated that some people do not understand what it feels like to be literally a paycheck away from a family disaster. She offered her help.

Council Members Ray and Bolden both offered that the City Council has always been diligent in helping at risk groups within the City.

Council Member Bolden stated that all the City Council members represent their Wards and do what it takes to help. He stated that it takes more than being able to check a box to have the dedication to serve the citizens.

Council Member Rains stated that she has been awake since 3:00 a.m. because she makes sacrifices for her community because that is what it takes. It takes people like me, who are at that at-risk population standing up and directly representing.

Council Member Bolden moved, seconded by Council Member Ray to approve the CDBG 2021-2025 Consolidated Plan & the 2021 Annual Action Plan as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

b. PRESENTATION: Rock Region Metro On-Demand Micro-transit Service Proposal

Mr. Charles Frazier, CEO of Rock Region Metro, which is the largest provided of public transit in the State. He stated that he is here to talk about a proposal that could bring public transit services to Jacksonville. He stated that he has worked with Mayor Johnson for the last couple of years. He then offered a brief bio and professional background. He then offered a brief history of Rock Region Metro, which was established in 1986. He stated that the core services they offer are fixed route, bus service, paratransit services (door to door service), and a rail system. He stated that they have been doing a pilot program for the last 2.5 years that is micro-transit. He said you can consider this to be something like a shared ride service, very much like Uber. You hail the vehicle from your smart phone or you can call our dispatch center, it is using a small vehicle and we create zones and we pick people up at their door within the zone and transfer them to another location within the zone.

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He stated that the second type of innovative service that they provide is a van-pull service. He stated that with this service we do not provide the driver but we do provide the vehicle and then subsidize the costs of that vehicle to help lower the costs of insurance and fuel. He stated that looking forward they are doing a pilot program offering a service called "Rides to Wellness", this is a service that is just starting and it is same-day on-demand non-emergency medical transportation that they have been running with UAMS. He stated that this program is about to be formalized and used in Central Arkansas.

He related that they have 200 employees, 150 of those are unionized and represented. He stated that labor and fuel are their largest expenses and their annual budget is \$20,000,000.00.

He offered a brief overview of the service that was running in Jacksonville for the last 20 years. He explained that Jacksonville was part of the original interlocal agreement that was established in 1986 but they were only part of it for one year before the City backed out and did not want to be part of the interlocal agreement any longer, however, there was a subsequent handshake agreement with the Mayor at the time and his predecessor to participate in the service. So, there was a service that ran from Little Rock to Jacksonville and then through Sherwood and back to Jacksonville that was the shared express route; Route 36 Jacksonville & Sherwood express. He explained that this service ran three trips in the morning, four trips in the afternoon; weekdays only, Monday through Friday. He added that because it was an express route service there was no requirement or funding for the paratransit service. So, even though the vehicles were ADA compatible, the service was only seven trips a day. He noted that ridership was very poor, being only 30 to 40 trips per day, it worked out to be 15 to 20 people a day taking the service. Not a very effective use of taxpayer dollars or their resources. He stated that the costs to provide this service for Rock Region Metro was approximately \$300,000.00 annually; the City's contribution was around \$84,000.00 and Sherwood also had a contribution of \$84,000.00 so it was subsidized by Rock Region Metro. He stated that the service was paused at the beginning of March 2020 and then formally retired by Rock Region Metro in August 2020.

On Demand Micro-transit

He stated that he has been working with the Mayor who is passionate about wanting to understand what opportunities might be available here for the City. He stated that he has a proposal tonight, where Rock Region Metro would invest almost \$500,000.00 over the next five years of CARES funding to help get a Micro-transit service started in Jacksonville. He stated that the proposal is for an on-demand shared ride public transit service, there would be one full-time vehicle running 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. He stated that the vehicle would be a 12-passenger van with defined zones within the City limits and then a point of interest at the McCain Mall. He explained the proposal would be to have a free service for riders for the first six to eight months to help build ridership and it would be funded by City

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contributions and Rock Region Metro's CARES' funding grant for the first five years. He stated that the service would pick them up within the zone and take them anywhere within the zone. He then stated that the other service would pick up people at a fixed location within the zone and then take them, at defined times, down to the McCain Mall. He explained that McCain Mall is an access point for our fixed route bus system, though being that they could get to McCain Mall and then have a ride home later or if they needed to get into Little Rock they could transfer onto the big buses and then ride the rest of the network. He stated that his Board has already approved earlier this year and would require a 3-year minimum agreement between City of Jacksonville and Rock Region Metro; adding that they could start up as early as six months after the City approves the contract. He offered a snapshot of the estimated costs, saying if we were to do this for a full annualized year, the costs in total would be \$228,000.00; Rock Region Metro would use their CARES funding the first year to cover \$141,000.00 of that costs and the City would contribute \$87,000.00. He then pointed out they would pare down the CARES funding and boost up the City contribution over the subsequent years while building ridership. He stated that his goal is to make sure the City Council knows he is available now and in the future for questions as the City considers this service.

Mayor Johnson stated that early in 2019 he originally brought this up at a townhall meeting, and he then met with Mr. Frazier going all over Jacksonville looking at various locations, after which we did surveys. He stated that this service was started at two areas in Little Rock and now they are about to start it in Conway. He added that he feels it would be a good fit for Jacksonville; to get someone from the Towers to the grocery store and their pharmacy and then back to the Towers. He stated that Jacksonville can use its APR money to help fund this, adding that when it comes time to vote on this we will discuss how we are going to fund this at least for the first three years.

Council Member Blevins asked if after the first six months free to the passengers, does the City get the money for fares.

Mr. Frazier concurred, saying that any type of fare revenue that comes in, recovery costs, it is not a matter of getting the money because it is not a profit, it would just subsidize the service, or reduce the expense associated with it. He then concurred with Council Member Blevins that it would reduce the City's expense. He then stated that usually fare box recovery is going to be about 20%, maybe lower if we have a discounted rate for seniors.

Mr. Gregory Williams questioned if they could transit people on Air Base.

Mr. Frazier stated that there is a security access concern, and if they get hung up at the gate, then they would not be able to be reliably on time. He stated that he is not opposed to that but it is not a part of the specific proposal they are offering now. He stated that he would not be opposed to researching if that could be possible.

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In response to a question from Council Member Bolden, Mr. Frazier answered that the City would create a zone, which has not been defined yet, adding that for the purpose of the presentation he has quoted that as being the City limits. He stated that we would need to put a little more effort into it and determine exactly where that should be.

Council Member Bolden addressed the earlier question about pickup on the Air Base, citing that the only way that could be handled would be to establish a pickup area outside the gate. He explained that there would be no way to get inside the gate given the heightened sense of security. He stated that he does like the idea of the City being able to pick the zones and the locations for stops.

Mr. Frazier stated that it is very flexible transportation and points of interest outside the zone could be incorporated into the defined zone. He then added that the longer-range plan for Central Arkansas is to have zone to zone travel. He stated that right now service within the zone is going to be \$1.35 to \$2.00 for a fare. He related that currently they are working through the costs of zone to zone travel but we are not there yet.

Mayor Johnson asked about being able to purchase a monthly pass, citing that he could go to McCain Mall and then get on a regular bus, asking if the pass is transferable.

Mr. Frazier answered yes, saying that they have a monthly bus pass that is \$36.00 that is unlimited trips, and right now for this service it would include that, so, people could use it unlimited amounts of times and transfer to fixed route bus system and ride that as much as they would like to.

Council Member Rains asked for clarification regarding the point of interest at McCain Mall being defined times.

Mr. Frazier answered that the defined times are that they do not want to take any one to the Mall too late in the day and then have them stranded there so the defined time is that we are not going to take you to the Mall any later than 4:30 p.m. if it is running to 6:00 p.m. because we need to make sure that you get back. He then answered that it could be like shuttle times, saying that they have a lot of flexibility with the technology. He explained that they do not really understand the travel patterns for this community yet, but maybe there are defined times that we are shuttling down to the McCain Mall. He stated that there are lots of ways to cater the service.

Mr. Frazier then answered Mayor Johnson that they would track the service in order to get a better understanding of how they can serve the public best.

Mr. Gregory Williams asked why the whole City of Jacksonville could not be designated as a zone.

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Mr. Frazier clarified that the zone will be the entire City of Jacksonville, he went on to say that these are smaller vehicles, and inside the vehicles there is an iPad so they are getting into the neighborhoods. He stated that this would be door to door service. He stated that passengers would be calling into dispatch or using their iPhone to hail the service. He clarified that this is not a fixed route, but requested service. He additionally clarified that this is a shared ride system.

Mayor Johnson expressed his appreciation to Mr. Frazier for his presentation, he then questioned if the service could take kids to school and home.

Mr. Frazier answering yes, he explained that they have fare agreements with, for example, eStem and it is grade school to high school and those kids are riding the bus. He added that if a student is under 11 years of age, you need to have a chaperon, which is reasonable for public transportation. He then acknowledged that the chaperon could be a teacher, parent, older sibling, etc.

Council Member Blevins concurred with Mr. Frazier that the costs are based on having only one vehicle. He then questioned that if we ever got to where we needed a second vehicle, would it double the City's contribution but not double the CARES contribution?

Mr. Frazier stated that the costs would actually go down a little bit in terms of an hourly rate because they could get better efficiency from their resources. He stated that the CARES funding is currently what they have approval for, but really the direction that all transit agencies is to do what we can to support communities. He stated that this is not off the table but the current proposal is a pilot program to do the discovery of what are the real needs, what are the travel patterns. He stated that his role is to be nimble enough to be responsive to the community's needs and that is what the technology allows us to do.

Council Member Bolden cautioned that we want to make sure the citizens are going to use this service. He mentioned that the City has nothing to do with the Charter School and the City is not trying to pick up schools.

Mayor Johnson confirmed that the City is not going to provide public transportation for the schools, adding that it was more of a question as to what is available.

Mr. Frazier noted that he would not want to miss the opportunity for the City to partner with lots of different organizations to combine funding to leverage the services.

Mayor Johnson again thanked Mr. Frazier for coming and answering questions.

Ms. Laura Wardlow addressed the City Council citing that she saw a woman walking on a busy road with a Wal-Mart jacket. She cited another instance of

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a woman of low income having to walk to work. She stated that there is a very vulnerable part of the community and the City needs to respond to this safety issue. She said this would be a really good thing that the community could use.

In response to a question from Mayor Johnson, Mr. Frazier explained the Transportation Advantaged Program which offers free rides to where persons who are experiencing homelessness would go to one of the providers and enroll in services. He stated that those services are either life skills training or job training and in doing so they can apply for and receive an unlimited use bus pass. He stated that the goal is to get them to a job, training or wherever they need to go. He cited that they have been able to help transition more than 500 people out of homelessness into stable housing situations. He stated that it is not just homeless people there are a lot of unmet transportation needs in Central Arkansas. He stated that the old service did not serve the Community very well but this will be a lot more flexible and offers the opportunity to learn what people really need.

City Council thanked Mr. Frazier for his presentation.

c. RESOLUTION 809 (#8-2021)

A RESOLUTION CONGRATULATING AND SUPPORTING COACH LARRY BURROWS AND THE 2021 JACKSONVILLE CHEVY BOYS BASEBALL TEAM OF THE GWATNEY CHEVROLET AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL PROGRAM; AND, FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Council Member Sansing moved, seconded by Council Member Rains to place Resolution 809 on **FIRST READING. MOTION CARRIED. Whereupon City Attorney Friedman read the heading of Resolution 809.**

Council Member Sansing stated that the Gwatney Chevy Boys repeated as State Champ, double AA American Legion, adding that it is very important to recognize them and the coaches.

Council Member Ray moved, seconded by Council Member Blevins to **APPROVE AND ADOPT** Resolution 809 in its entirety. **MOTION CARRIED.**

RESOLUTION 809 (#8-2021) APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 5th DAY OF AUGUST, 2021.

d. Request to set Public Hearing: Raising recycling fees

Council Member Blevins explained that Public Works Director Jim Oakley was coming to the City Council before COVID to request more funds for the recycling program because the landfill fees were going up and the bailer was on its last leg and the truck had broken down. He then added that due to COVID coming into play, the City ended up discontinuing their curbside pickup, which offset costs. He stated that he has since been contacted by multiple people about what happened to the curbside recycling. He stated that because of funding it has not come back since the easing of COVID. He stated that the issues before COVID was never dealt with, we still need to fix the

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bailer, we still need to fix the truck and the landfill fees are still raised. He stated that he would like to host a public hearing to ask the public if they still want the service of curbside pickup enough to allow the raising of fees to an additional \$5.00 or some other amount to bring back the service by a third party.

Mayor Johnson related that he serves on the Pulaski County Solid Waste District, noting that they entered into a contract with Waste Management for \$5.71 that they pay for streamline recycling. He stated that they have agreed to take our plastic and plastic was the hardest material on the bailer. He stated that we have been able to keep our same bailer and use it for cardboard and paper. He concurred with Public Works Director Jim Oakley that he feels we can go another year before we have to raise rates unless we go back to curbside recycling.

Council Member Blevins reiterated that the purpose of the public hearing would be to find out if the public is really wanting to bring back curbside service that has been taken away at the expense of adding additional fees.

Council Member Bolden clarified that two Council Members can call a townhall meeting.

Council Member Rains stated that she would be interest in setting the public hearing. She explained that the Environmental Committee is working to determine what a good solution is as far as following through long-term restoring curbside pickup while not increasing the fees to the citizens. He stated that in a situation where at least 50% of our citizens are at-risk; we do not need to be increasing fees. She explained that Environmental Committee is looking at potentially adding an Anerobic Digester, which the EPA funds. She stated that the EPA has been supplying grant funds since 2018 to reduce the solid biological waste; to divert that from the landfills and from incineration projects. She explained that an Anerobic Digester takes all of our solid waste from our wastewater program, it takes food scraps from restaurants or citizens; noting that a micro-brewery just opened and they would definitely be really interested in this, while reducing our tipping fees as a city and also potentially providing collaboration with our businesses. She related that from this Anerobic Digestion, you get biological gas or methane gas which can then be used to generate electricity. She stated that with the amount generated by the City, we would be able to substantially compensate our electric bill with the biogas that is generated. She added that we would have organic fertilizer that we could use for our beautification projects. She stated that we can talk about this and we can talk about raising fees.

Mayor Johnson offered that a townhall meeting would be the best avenue to have these discussions.

Council Member Blevins stated that the reason that he wanted a public hearing is because he wanted the other City Council members to be present for their

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input. He explained that at a townhall meeting the City Council members do not have to be present.

Mayor Johnson offered that a special City Council meeting could be called by two City Council members.

Council Member Blevins asked if there is a problem hosting the public hearing during a regular City Council meeting.

Mayor Johnson explained that we are here to do the public business, pass ordinances and resolutions.

Council Member Blevins interjected, so this is not for the public?

Mayor Johnson pointed out that this would be gathering information.

Council Member Traylor stated that if there is an interest in recycling, he would hope that this room would not hold all the people that would want to come to a townhall meeting. He stated that he would be for it either way, if you want to have a public hearing that is what we are hear to listen for and if you want to have a townhall meeting, I will be there. I would hope that if we are going to raise everyone's fees, that we would have more people than this room would hold.

Council Member Blevins agreed, saying that with the attention of last week's agenda and the amount of people that called, that there would be enough people.

Council Member Traylor stated that there is nothing that says you can't have a public hearing after you have a townhall meeting. He stated that if the response at the townhall meeting is good then you could bring it into a public hearing.

Council Member Blevins agreed and thanked Council Member Traylor for his input.

Council Member Traylor addressed Council Member Rains asking for clarification regarding the Anerobic Digester and how it ties into the recycling service that Council Member Blevins is suggesting.

Council Member Rains stated that this is what compensates that bill, we would still be continuing with the waste management. She concurred with Council Member Traylor that this is what is going to pay for recycling.

In response to a question from Mayor Johnson, Council Member Blevins stated that he would proceed with a townhall meeting and he would set that up.

Council Member Rose offered to be the second adjoining Council Member.

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Council Member Bolden concurred with Council Member Traylor.

e. Request to set Public Hearing: Amending JMC § 6.08.030 et seq.

Council Member Blevins stated that he had already set up an ordinance at one time to amend the fowl ordinance and was told that he needed to have a public hearing to see if anyone had any issues. He stated that currently the City has an ordinance that allows a chicken coup as long as it is not within 100' of another residence, including their own residence. He stated that this requirement makes it unable to happen, essentially, within the City limits. He stated that other cities have amended that distance down to around the 15' to 25' distance and have limited the number of chickens to six, also eliminating the ability to have roosters. He stated that when he got voted into office, he was contacted many times regarding the requirements to have chickens. He added that he is ready to have a public hearing to see if people would like to amend the ordinance requirements.

Council Member Bolden noted that it could be included with the other proposed townhall meeting. He added that he does have an individual that lives in his Ward that has chickens, but that is against their POA. He clarified that whatever the City may vote, the POA will take precedence.

Council Member Traylor clarified with Council Member Blevins that he would have to have a public hearing before amending an ordinance.

Council Member Blevins concurred, answering the reason is because it affects the whole population of Jacksonville.

Council Member Traylor stated that there have been all kinds of ordinances that come to us that are not conducted as public hearings. He stated that if there is an ordinance he wants to bring to City Council then bring it.

Council Member Dietz stated that he had a lot of people contact him regarding the recycling and they were 100% for it; but they were not for raising the fees. He stated that they related that they are willing to do the drop off. He issued concerns for raising the fees. He stated that the rental rates in January are going to go up because the insurance and real estate taxes have gone up. He then stated that he would be 100% against having any type of chicken or such animal around him; explaining that he sells properties and they are messy and there are people that will not clean up as well as being noisy. He suggested moving outside the City limits to keep farm animals.

Council Member Ray stated that he feels the current laws regarding this matter are still relevant.

Council Member Twitty stated that while we have those laws on the books, as times change, sometimes we have to change those laws. She stated that she would like to know more about what Cabot and Sherwood allow, adding that she would like to see Jacksonville compatible.

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Council Member Traylor confirmed that currently the law allows for citizens to have roosters.

Council Member Blevins stated that the ordinances he submitted for pit bulls as well as chickens, were almost identical to the ones approved by Sherwood and Cabot and can be considered compatible.

Council Member Twitty noted that there are several residents that have chickens and there have not been any complaints.

Council Member Bolden acknowledged that there are people who are not obeying the ordinances of the City.

Ms. Britney Carter pointed out in regard to chickens being messy; they only poop 1.5 ounces a day whereas dogs poop a lot more and you have to clean up the dog poop just as you would the chicken poop. She stated that other cities require an annual fee to make sure that animal control has the manpower to take of issues where people are not cleaning up. She stated that she would not mind paying a fee to the City. She then noted that there are a lot of benefits to having chickens, citing fresh eggs during COVID; not knowing when the stores may run out of eggs. She then noted that they help with pest control, such as mosquitos, and they are very good companions. She related that her 10-year-old son does not come out of the house except to take care of his chickens.

Mr. Jim Moore stated that he is president of the HOA where Ms. Carter lives; saying that chickens poop and when it dries, it gets carried by the wind and, with the closeness of the houses, it is a problem. He stated that Ms. Carter failed to tell you that she is selling eggs on Facebook from her house.

Council Member Twitty asked if he had proof that Ms. Carter is selling eggs because Ms. Carter is disputing that claim.

Council Member Rains stated can we make a note that Ms. Carter did not say anything about Mr. Moore and you are directly talking about Ms. Carter.

Mr. Moore concurred, reminding Council Member Rains that it is because he is president of the Association.

Mayor Johnson directed the meeting to move onto the next item.

f. DISCUSSION: City Council Meeting attendance for City Directors

Mayor Johnson stated that it is already a rule even though it may not be a written rule, explaining that if a Director is not going to attend they let him know before the meeting.

Council Member Blevins stated that he would defer this item until we quit doing Zoom.

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g. Request to have A & P and Planning Commission meetings livestreamed

Council Member Sansing stated that Commissions are set up to be non-political and make their own rules, the Commissions decide what they are going to do, adding that it is not for the City Council to tell any independent Commission how they are going to conduct their business. He stated that they are setup as a Commission to try to remove any political influence. He stated that you can request that a Commission do something, but you cannot mandate how a Commission conducts its business.

Council Member Blevins stated that it is just a request, reminding the City Council that they were mandated when Zoom started.

h. Improvements to Boys & Girls Club building

Council Member Blevins stated that he spoke with Parks and Recreation Director Kevin House and apparently there is a contract that needs to be signed to allow the City to help fix the building regarding certain issues. He related that there are a lot of issues that probably amount to more than the \$10,000.00 that the City has set aside in the budget for repairs. He stated that he just wanted to make those issue known for when the contract is signed.

i. DISCUSSION: Raising the City's minimum wage/creating a living wage

Council Member Blevins noted that there are a lot of empty positions in the City, citing that there are a lot of incentives being offered by private industry to fill jobs, and the City should be no different. He stated that currently the City only has a minimum pay of \$11.00 to \$13.58 hourly, adding that he believes that with the City being understaffed and employees having to work overtime and getting burned out, maybe the City needs to raise the City's minimum wage to \$15.00 hourly.

Mayor Johnson stated that they are working on an ordinance that is going to raise the minimum pay, it will not be an hour but an annual salary that will be equivalent to approximately \$15.00 an hour. He offered that would be at the next City Council meeting.

Council Member Bolden stated that this is something that he has been working on for quite a while; noting he made a statement at the last meeting where he said we want to give everyone a raise and have employees taken care of.

Council Member Blevins stated that he had submitted this one time before and was asked to pull this off the agenda. He added that since we were not using the money on where they were going to pull it off from, I decided to bring it back up for discussion.

Mayor Johnson noted that it is something Parks and Recreation Director Kevin House has been requesting for almost 2 years.

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Council Member Bolden stated that ever since the last administration, this is something we have been trying to get done.

j. Historical District status

Council Member Blevins recalled that during the last City Council there was discussion that the Historical District is under the City umbrella, he had questions, such as does the money collected by the Historical District go into the City or do they have their own fund and are there any City Council members on the Historical Commission? He stated that he believes he heard talks about the City tearing down Jim's Pawn Shop. He stated that his question is how can we tear that down if it is an historical building.

Mayor Johnson clarified that the City is not tearing down the building.

Historical District CEO Barbara Mashburn stated that they answer to the Parks and Recreation Department and are under that Department. She stated that they answer to Parks and Recreation Director Kevin House and he is also a member of the Historical District. She stated that they have a Commission of five members who are appointed by the Mayor. She stated that they originally began with five members but some have moved out so we are starting back over at zero; trying to get our Commission back. She then answered Council Member Blevins that she cannot be on the Commission because she is a City Council Member. She then stated that they have a Board of Directors that have six people and that Board of Directors oversees everything in the Historical District. She then answered that the money collected at the Museum goes back into the fund for the Historical District, agreeing that they have their own fund and checking account. She noted that they are a non-profit 501(C)(3).

Council Member Blevins questioned it is a 501(C)(3) that is under the City's umbrella?

Council Member Mashburn concurred, saying yes, they answer to Parks and Recreation Director Kevin House. She then answered that the person who mans the Museum is not a City employee but are volunteers and 99% of the time it is her. She then stated that they are not in the process of tearing down Jim's Pawn Shop but are trying to get grants to fix it, when we did not know that the pillars in the middle are rotted; so, we have to fix those and the walls before we even try to fix the ceiling and roof.

Council Member Blevins stated that since Jim's Pawn Shop is a City building, the City is the one with the grants to fix that.

Council Member Mashburn answered no, saying they are trying to get it underneath the Historical District.

Mayor Johnson added, and provide that to the City.

Council Member Mashburn stated we provide this to the City.

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Council Member Blevins noted that the Historical District signed that building over to the City. So, it belongs to the City.

Council Member Mashburn concurred, yes, it belongs to the City. She stated that they are still trying to get the grants under the Historical District, the Museum part.

Mayor Johnson clarified just like the Senior Center can get grants to improve their building, it is City owned, but they operate independently in it.

Council Member Mashburn added, because we are a 501(C)(3) and the City is not.

Mayor Johnson stated that the Boys and Girls Club is the same way, they are independent, adding the Chamber of Commerce is in a City building and they are all... we have written agreements with the Chamber and Senior Center. He related that they worked on the Boys and Girls Club but their Board has not been as easy to work with as we would like.

Council Member Dietz asked Council Member Mashburn if she has an idea of what it will take to do repairs to the pillars and walls so that we can get a roof on the building?

Council Member Mashburn stated that she was told that they would be better off to just tear it down and build a replica because it is in bad shape. She added that if they can get the grants then they will refurbish the building.

Council Member Dietz again asked if she has an idea regarding the costs?

Council Member Mashburn offered that she could bring the contractor back in.

Council Member Dietz offered that he knows trades people who do amazing work and less expensive.

k. Animal Control/full capacity, inaction of Pulaski County

Council Member Blevins stated that he spoke with Animal Control Manager Hedy Cass, who wanted to be here tonight, but she had a previous engagement. He added that he wanted to talk to Council Member Smith about this, saying that there was a post made online that the City Animal Shelter was at maximum capacity. He pointed out that they are a No Kill shelter, so they are getting close because they keep getting more and more animals brought in. He explained that he found out from Hedy that the County is not picking up strays, basically they are finding dogs and bringing them to city shelters. He questioned if there is something the City Council can do to talk to Pulaski County about resuming picking up strays.

Mayor Johnson noted that the County has never had their shelter, and they had room at NLR but believes that was done away with.

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Ms. Laura Wardlow stated that she wants to offer compliments to the City shelter, saying that she is connected to a lot of animal rescue groups, and the community involvement in Jacksonville with the Shelter is phenomenal. She acknowledged the full capacity situation at the Shelter and briefly touched on the societal situations that contribute to the growing problem. She stated that she would continue to support the Shelter in hopes that they remain a No Kill shelter.

ADDITION TO AGENDA TO LIMIT AGENDA ITEMS:

Council Member Sansing stated that he would like to make a motion that going forward that we limit City Council members to three items on the agenda per meeting. He stated that many of the issues could be handled by making a phone call.

Council Member Sansing moved to limit agenda items to three per City Council Member per agenda.

Council Member Rains noted that it would be proper to have a motion to suspend the rules and place the action on the agenda before formal action can be taken.

Council Member Sansing moved, seconded by Council Member Ray to **SUSPEND THE RULES** to add an item of discussion on the agenda. **ROLL CALL:** Council Member Dietz, Bolden, Blevins, Sansing, Ray, Mashburn, Traylor, Twitty, Smith, and Rains voted AYE. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Council Member Sansing moved, seconded by Council Member Ray to limit the City Council members to three items of business per each City Council meeting.

Council Member Twitty stated that limiting the number of items a City Council Member can place on an agenda is the same as limiting the citizens as to what they can bring forward. She stated that if she brings an item to the City Council, be it one or six, it will be because a citizen has called her with concerns. She pointed out that City Council members are not able to discuss these things with another Member because that would be an illegal meeting. She continued saying, so, I don't understand when you say these things can be discussed and not brought forward. She stated that she does not agree with you saying that we should limit what we bring to the City Council, adding "we are here to do a job, whether that job takes us 30 minutes or 3 hours". She then noted that sometimes the School Board is here until 2:00 in the morning. She emphatically stated "I do not think we are doing justice to the citizens to limit things on the agenda".

Council Member Sansing clarified that he was talking about a phone call to Department Heads not between City Council Members.

Council Member Traylor stated that if a Council Member calls a Department head and gets their answer then the other Council Members are unaware of the

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answer. He continued saying that he does not make calls to Department heads, so the only way he is going to find out the answers are at the City Council meetings. He stated that he does not have a problem with questions being raised in the City Council meetings, even if he may not agree with 90%, he stated that he is willing to listen. He related that this why he does not believe there should be limited items.

Council Member Twitty stated that it is our job to listen and not to limit.

Council Member Blevins stated that he has said when he got voted in and was contacted by citizens, he would bring up their concerns. He stated that he would be fine limiting it to 3 items per Council Member per meeting with a maximum of 30 and if another Council Member does not use theirs then they are free to offer them to me. He continued saying that he has things that he does want to talk about, saying he should not be punished if another Council Member does not have anything to talk about. He stated that these are discussion items, and he is not asking for a vote.

Council Member Bolden stated that he believes in thorough research before bringing anything to Council. He stated that in regards to what Council Member Traylor said about talking with a Director and not knowing what was talked about; it could be you may not need to know what I am talking about, because it might not need to be public. It might be something that is already worked out. He related that is not a hit, it is leadership. Leadership is to go to your leaders and find out what is needed and if we do not need to hear it then it is going to be taken care of. He stated that he does not see a problem with the three items suggestion, adding that on Council Member Blevins part, if the other Council Members do not use theirs, that he could use them, I believe it is called management, you manage your time over the course of meetings. He clarified that there is always an opportunity to bring items to the next meeting. He stated that he does not see a problem with three, adding that he believes three is better, saying that he would agree with that.

Council Member Blevins stated that he gets a phone call from a citizen after having three items already scheduled for the agenda, he would not feel comfortable telling the fourth person that calls and has a problem, "sorry, I can't help you this week because my time is limited". He stated that he believes limiting it would be a disservice to the citizens.

Council Member Bolden stated that as a leader, he is not going to tell anybody that he doesn't have time; he would say "I will get to you, I'm going to get it taken care of".

Council Member Dietz stated that he can refer to him and he would bring the item up for Council Member Blevins if he runs out of items.

Council Member Twitty stated that Council Members Bolden and Sansing have been on the City Council for a long time, Council Member Blevins is new, again limiting, you have made it known that you do not want these many items

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on the agenda. He stated that she is not sure it would take a vote to limit what we do or what service we give to the citizens. She pointed out that while Council Member Sansing and Bolden know how to navigate through the waters, a new Council Member does not know.

Council Member Bolden stated that for clarity, he is not talking about Council Member Blevins, he is talking about the number of discussion items, saying the bottom line is time, and management.

Council Member Rains stated that any question is a good question, adding that while she gets frustrated repeating herself sometimes, she feels that it is necessary and does not believe we should be limiting what we discuss here.

Council Member Sansing stated that it is clear to him that the City Council is fine with status quo and enjoy the marathon meetings; he withdrew his previous motion. He then stated that he does agree with Council Member Bolden that we do have time management issues. He stated that when people ask him questions, he does know who to go to and how to get it solved; I call the person back and tell them it is done. It may not come to the rest of this town but the people that contacted me are satisfied with what I got done. He stated that he has always had an aversion personally to what he considers grand standing or soap boxing, which is what I see.

Council Member Sansing withdrew his motion to limit discussion items to three per Council Member per Council meeting.

Council Member Ray withdrew his second to the previous motion.

APPOINTMENTS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Council Member Blevins announced that tomorrow night is the Chamber of Commerce's Casino night and the tickets are \$50.00.

Council Member Dietz stated for the record, he is always open to hear everyone's suggestion and he appreciates Council Member Blevins' suggestion, adding that the explanations helped him to understand better. He stated that as Council Member Rains said, every question is a good question and we need to get answers to them for our citizens.

He then pointed out that the City did not spend the money for the City Council Chamber equipment upgrades; we spent the money that we had to, but it was not out of our budget, it was given to us because of the Government and COVID. He stated that the City Council and the Mayor used the money very wisely for the improvements that we needed.

Council Member Rains stated that she has been doing a new active program for the past month called Shape up Jacksonville; adding that she is encouraging community members to walk with her on Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 6:30 and on Saturday at 7:00.

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ADJOURNMENT: Without objection, Mayor Johnson adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:54 p.m. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully,

Susan L. Davitt
City Clerk-Treasurer

MAYOR BOB JOHNSON