



Jonesboro Advertising and Promotion Commission
Minutes: February 28, 2022
City Council Chambers

Attending: Jerry Morgan, David McClain, Tom Fielder, Chris Gibson, and Tracy Owens.
Absent: Bill Hurt and Dan Das.

Chairman Jerry Morgan called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. announcing that an official quorum was present. Mr. Morgan reviewed the minutes of the meeting held December 14, 2021 which were included in the meeting materials. Mr. Gibson moved to approve the minutes and Mr. Fielder seconded. The minutes were approved as presented.

Financial Report:

Chairman Morgan presented a current overview of financial status of the Jonesboro A&P Commission.

Morgan presented A&P Revenue Trends for 2021. December ended the year with collections of \$71,703, giving a total for 2021 of \$797,952. This is a 41% increase from 2020 and a 15.4% increase from 2019. Upward trends are strong with significant increased hotel occupancy and revenue. The STR report showed occupancy rates in hotels was up 54%. It was noted that there is a significant increase of available hotel rooms which allows more visitors and guests to find hotel rooms. The Embassy Suites Hotel and Convention Center, sponsored by the Jonesboro A&P Commission, has concluded a "banner" year. Arkansas Business Magazine featured Embassy Suites with hotel general manager, Craig Pomrenke, on the cover of the March, 2022 issue.

The many projects funded and supported by the Jonesboro A&P Commission are creating opportunities for visitors and guests to visit Jonesboro and support our local businesses. In recapping the projects funded for 2022, they are on schedule with many requests for the awards already coming in. Morgan thanked everyone involved for the great work being done in the community to promote tourism.

Revenue numbers for January are in, with total revenue for the month of \$74,121. Morgan noted that this total does not include the increased 1% that has been added beginning in 2022.

Mr. Gibson moved to approve the financial report seconded by Mr. McClain. Financial report was approved.

New Business:

Chairman Morgan announced that the lease space for the A&P office that was approved in the December 14, 2021 meeting has been executed. This space is downtown and easily accessible. The cost of the space is \$3,900 for 6 months. This comes to \$650 a month which is below the projected cost previously approved.

Andrew Guiltner from the City of Jonesboro finance department gave an update on collections of the prepared food tax and hotel tax change that began January 1, 2022. Guiltner stated that collections are going well. All businesses that have been identified have received a notice and instructions to remit taxes collected to the City of Jonesboro. The data base was derived from businesses having a privilege license. To date, \$273,000 has been collected from the prepared food tax, slightly above the projections. 170 of the 360 businesses identified have actually remitted, and they are continuing to arrive in the mail. The additional 1% hotel tax that was added January 1 has brought in an additional \$12, 718. The established 3% tax brought in \$60,597 for a total of \$73,315.

Morgan emphasized that the A&P Commission is very fortunate to have the support of the City of Jonesboro Finance Department in collecting these taxes. Many A&P organizations employ staff for these purposes, and the city's support allows the money collected to be used for many needed projects. Morgan thanked Mr. Guiltner and the City for their help and support.

Kevin Hodges, Chair of the Sports Complex Steering Committee gave an update on the steering committee's progress. Hodges reported that the committee has been meeting regularly and working diligently to interview and recommend a company to provide a feasibility study for The Sports Complex initiative. They held the first meeting on January 5 at which Mayor Copenhagen and A&P Chair Morgan attended to provide direction for the committee. They emphasized transparency of all meetings, and encouraged the public to attend meetings. Four firms had sent in proposals to provide the feasibility study. The committee narrowed this to 2 firms. The two remaining firms were asked to schedule on-site reviews and present their proposals to the committee. By a closed ballot vote (9-10, Eastern Sports Management is their recommendation. Factors impacting this vote included:

- a. The CEO personally came to Jonesboro to see the site for himself and meet the committee members. This personal attention was greatly appreciated.
- b. The company emphasized the importance of the physical location of the Sports Complex.
- c. This study will include information pertaining to the operations of the facility.

They expect the study to take 12 – 14 weeks and will get started immediately upon receiving the contract. The cost will be **\$73,500 + fees** for travel, etc. Mr. Morgan asked Hodges to name other organizations in our area that have used this company. These include Memphis, TN – Mid-South Fairgrounds, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and Tulsa, OK. Morgan emphasized that we will be in competition with these other facilities for business in our region. McClain noted the

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Approved:

importance of the study including operations of the facility and how to plan a complex that will be budget neutral or indicate the need for added income. Hodges noted that the scope of work has been expanded to include the proximity to restaurants, hotels, etc. that will impact the operations side. The City would like an outstanding structure to provide the “Wow” factor for our City. This will include the need to bring in architects and civil engineers to determine what Jonesboro needs. Tracy Owens asked if there is a need to put a cap on the fees the company will be able to charge in excess of the stated fee. The Commission agreed this is needed.

Chris Gibson moved to approve the recommendation to hire Eastern Sports Management. Tom Fielder seconded. Motion carried and recommendation approved.

There was one request for funding. KLEK F.M. requested \$5,000 to be used for their Juneteenth 2022 Celebration. The funds would provide Fireworks for the event which would bring many people in for the celebration. Tom Fielder moved to award \$5,000 in seed money for this new event. Chris Gibson seconded. Motion was approved.

Chairman Morgan called for questions from the floor. There being none, Mr. Gibson moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. McClain. Motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Submitted by

Christy Appleton
Administrative Officer