



Wednesday, November 10, 2021, Minutes
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
VIRTUAL

At 11:32 AM the thirty-fourth meeting of the LR CENT Committee was called to order by Peter McKinney O'Connor, co-chair. Members present were Erma Peterson, Steve Strickland, Ken Gill, Musheerah Tharpe, Don Shellabarger, and Troy Laha.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the November 2021 were approved upon a motion by Steve Strickland, seconded by Don Shellabarger.

General Financial Report

Sara Lenehan, the City's Chief Financial Officer, reviewed sales tax collection through October 2021 (based on the report to the City by the State of Arkansas through August 2021). Year to date, the City is \$5,091,606 or 14.611% over the same period in 2020. However, these numbers include the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic so there was expected to be an increase from 2021 compared to 2020.

In the first nine years of the tax, the City has received \$304,948,516 in the 5/8 cent Operating Tax and \$183,115,764 in the 3/8 cent Capital Tax for a total of \$488,064,280 in new tax proceeds.

Finance continues to look at the conclusion of the original 10 years of projects, all projects will be completed. Those unfinished projects will receive between 95 to 96 percent of their original allocation. But due to budget estimates and other cost savings, the projects will still be finished.

Zoo

Director Susan Altrui provided updates. Three modular education buildings to serve the rapidly growing camp programs, afterschool programs, birthday parties, and other zoo rentals. Cost includes buildings, infrastructure, and interior buildout. Two classrooms are fully complete. Vendors are connecting the third to broadband internet to facilitate interactive and virtual programming. This will allow the Zoo to offer its popular Zoofari youth education program for a special session in December during school break.

The Zoo has completed installation of the majority of the new public address system hardware, including speakers, power sources, and Ethernet connections. It should be completed by the end of November. The pathway lighting and electrical upgrades is underway. This has aided with the installation of the GloWILD! special event at the Zoo which runs through January 15, 2022.

The Collared Lizard Conservation project was finished as of November 8. The funds built a specialized facility for breeding of these endangered species which are indigenous to Arkansas.

Due to supply chain issues, the camera system for the birth of the new rhino baby (subsequently named Kevin) was delayed. The Zoo was, however, to use other technology to document the birth and keep the public apprised.

Public Works

Director Jon Honeywell presented the Public Works update. As of October 2021, the in-house Sidewalk Program crew has completed 257,905 square feet (approximately 51,581 linear feet) of new sidewalks since July 2012. Sidewalk constructed by the contractor with Sidewalk Program funds totals 253,404 square feet (50,680 linear feet) since September 2015. Together that is a total of 511,309 square feet (102,261 linear feet) of sidewalk reconstruction. That is approximately 19.3 miles of sidewalks

A total of \$ 70,925,000.00 was allocated for the 2013-2015 Street, Drainage and Resurfacing projects in all Wards. Individual amounts per Ward varied, however future allocations were determined to equalize program spending per Ward for the entire program. 104 projects are complete and the one remaining project is substantially complete.

Regarding the 2016 to 2018 Street and Drainage Improvement Program, there were 43 street/drainage projects: all design work is completed, one project is under construction and 42 are complete.

The 2019 to 2021 Street and Drainage Improvement Program is underway. \$55.7 million was allocated for Street, Drainage, and Resurfacing projects. All 76 Street & Drainage projects for the 2019 – 2021 program have been funded. Public Meetings to receive input from neighborhoods are complete and resurfacing work is under way in all Wards.

- Resurfacing work is under construction in all Wards
- 6 Projects are in design.
- 7 Projects are in the Right-of-Way Phase.
- 2 Projects are in the Bidding and Award Phase.
- 18 Projects are under construction.
- 11 Projects are substantially complete.
- 32 Projects are complete.

The 2019 Street Resurfacing Program has completed asphalt resurfacing on 119,300 linear feet of City streets. The 2019 Street Resurfacing Program is 100% complete.

The 2020 Street Resurfacing Program has completed asphalt resurfacing on 79,275 linear feet of City streets. The 2020 Street Resurfacing Program is 100% complete.

The 2021 Street Resurfacing Program has completed asphalt resurfacing on 6,700 linear feet of City streets. The 2021 Street Resurfacing Program is 10% complete.

Police

Chief Keith Humphrey updated the committee on plans for the new Police headquarters building. Much interior and exterior work is underway. It is hoped that it will be occupied by the first quarter of 2022.

Recruit Class #99 started orientation on August 16, 2021, with eleven (11) participants; ten (10) remain in the class are expected to graduate on January 28, 2022. Recruiting and testing for Class #100 began June 2021 and currently remains in progress. Seventy-four (74) applicants successfully completed the test phase and have been moved to the background check phase. Class 100 should start on February 14, 2022. It is anticipated there will be 15 members of the class.

Parks and Recreation

John Eckart, Parks and Recreation Director, updated the Committee on departmental projects. The Crump Park Splash Pad was dedicated on August 28, 2021. It was a \$400,000 project to construct a Vortex Splash Pad in Crump Park. The project was designed and installed by Parks employees and has been well-received by the Community.

Housing and Neighborhood Programs

Kevin Howard, Housing and Neighborhood Programs Director and Tracy Roark, Animal Services Manager, updated the Committee on the improvements to the Animal Village. The new space added to the existing shelter will include an intake area along with work stations for staff to check in new incoming animals. A dog wash area will be added and moving the existing laundry and food prep area into the space. It will also include a re-working the existing cat stray, cat intake and feral cat area into one area to house all cats together. This \$400,000 project will allow staff more room for animal intake, improvement of laundry facility and will also allow access by ramp into the rear of the facility. Cats have already benefitted by having a quiet place for them to socialize.

Community Programs

Director Dana Dossett announced that the ReEntry services have moved out of City Hall and are now located at 312 MLK Drive. This allows for easier client access. She also announced that ReEntry Services has a new Administrative Assistant, Shaneka Fisher-Jones, and is increasing its social media presence.

Director Dossett reviewed the Reentry opportunities from August to October of 2021. During that time period, they have served 55 residents.

The ReEntry Program is on standby to participate in 2 separate ReEntry Training Opportunities to potentially be funded by grants: 1) Partnership with Restore Hope for CDL Training; and 2) Partnership with EPA & Pulaski County Brownfields Office for GIS Mapping Training for Brownfields.

General Comments/Questions

The 9-1-1 Communications has been created as a new department. It will start making updates to the LR CENT Committee in February.

Mr. Carter noted that the next meeting would be on a Wednesday in February, at 11:30 a.m. As it gets closer to the meeting, the exact date and the format of the meeting will be determined.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:29 pm.