



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

At 11:34 AM the thirty-third meeting of the LR CENT Committee was called to order by Peter McKinney O'Connor, co-chair.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the August 2021 were approved.

General Financial Report

Sara Lenehan, the City's Chief Financial Officer, reviewed sales tax collection through July 2021 (based on the report to the City by the State of Arkansas through May 2021). Year to date, the City is \$3,208,475 or 15.01% 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 received \$279,990,066 in the 5/8 cent Operating Tax and \$168,140,694 in the 3/8 cent Capital Tax for a total of \$448,130,760 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.

Community Programs

Director Dana Dossett reviewed the Reentry opportunities from May to July of 2021. During that time period, they have served 33 residents. Due to COVID-19, City Hall has remained closed to the public, which has affected the intake numbers. It is hoped that the intake numbers will increase once City Hall has re-opened to the public. However even with City Hall closed, the Department has served 30 residents using virtual options.

The Department has started collecting more demographic data on the persons being served and breaking it out by months. This includes gender, ethnicity, marital status and ZIP codes. They hope to use this to study trends and to see if there are certain times in the year when numbers are higher or lower.

Beginning in August 2021 the Re-entry Program will be relocating to the Martin Luther King Legacy Center located at 3012 Martin Luther King Drive. Staff is looking forward to moving the program closer to the community.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 the 2021 Summer Youth Employment Opportunity (SYEO) was offered at a modified level. The opportunity was offered to students on a first-come-first serve basis. In an effort to control the supervision of interns, and to minimize the exposure to COVID-19, all students hired were only placed within City-funded departments, agencies, and programs.

There was approximately 55 worksites. With that strategy in place and adhering to the City of Little Rock and CDC COVID mandates/protocol staff was able to have minimal COVID exposure/incidents.

Parks and Recreation

John Eckart, Parks and Recreation Director, updated the Committee on departmental projects. In addition to \$50,000 from LR CENT, Parks received \$650,000 in funding of projects through grants from the Arkansas Parks and Recreation Foundation for the River Mountain and Two Rivers Mountain bike trails. This has created a new mountain bike trail system containing a total of 10 miles of trails with green, blue and black ratings at River Mountain Park. That park is also the location of Little Rock first professionally constructed mountain biking trail system in a city park.

Two Rivers Park Children's Mountain Bike Trails named Fox Tail Trail and Pup Track, were developed for new users and are ½ mile in length.

Police

Latreaa Mullins, Administrative Services Manager for the LRPD updated the committee on plans for the new Police headquarters building. Work that is in progress includes plumbing and the walls. It is hoped that it will be occupied by the first quarter of 2022.

Ms. Mullins noted that in July, two Lieutenants had been promoted to Major, two Sergeants had been promoted to Lieutenant, and two Officers had been promoted in Sergeant. There is more diversity in the officer ranks and in those being promoted.

Recruit Class #98 Started orientation on February 15, 2021, with eleven (11) participants; and they graduated on July 30, 2021. Recruiting and testing for Class 99 ended on April 17, 2021. Class is scheduled to start with 14 applicants on August 16.

Recruiting and testing for Class #100 began June 2021 and currently remains in progress.

911 Communications currently have 20 vacancies (18 of which are call-taker positions). On July 16, 8 trainees graduated from the academy and on July 17, began their on the job training at the call taker positions.

Public Works

Director Jon Honeywell presented the Public Works update. As of July 2021, the in-house Sidewalk Program crew has completed 254,595 square feet (approximately 50,919 linear feet) of new sidewalks since July 2012. Sidewalk constructed by the contractor with Sidewalk Program funds totals 227,629 square feet (45,525 linear feet) since September 2015. Together that is a total of 482,224 square feet (96,444 linear feet) of sidewalk reconstruction. That is approximately 18.2 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. \$56 million was allocated for Street, Drainage, and Resurfacing projects. All 74 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
- 7 Projects are in design.
- 9 Projects are in the Right-of-Way Phase.
- 3 Projects are in the Bidding and Award Phase.
- 25 Projects are under construction.
- 4 Projects are substantially complete.
- 26 Projects are complete.

The 2019 Street Resurfacing Program has completed asphalt resurfacing on 111,300 linear feet of City streets. The 2019 Street Resurfacing Program is 95% complete.

The 2020 Street Resurfacing Program has completed asphalt resurfacing on 79,275 linear feet of City streets. The 2020 Street Resurfacing Program is 98% complete.

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.

The Zoo has completed installation of the majority of the new public address system hardware, including speakers, power sources, and Ethernet connections. The final set of equipment needed to go live is in production with vendor.

The Zoo has engaged an engineering firm to conduct a topographical assessment and provide recommendations for a Wetland/Watershed Restoration Project.

The Zoo has completed engineering specifications and is finalizing a contract with the winning bidder to start work for a Veldt Drainage Improvements Project.

Upcoming projects include construction of a central hay barn, completing fencing and habitat expansions to the rhino yard in order to facilitate arrival of a new rhino calf, and bidding other AZA related facility upgrades.

General Comments/Questions

Co-Chair O'Connor noted that he and Dr. Hampton would be making the annual LR CENT report to the City Board at 4pm on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, at the Centre at University Park.

Mr. Carter noted that the next meeting would be on a Wednesday in November, 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 12:40 pm.