



# City of Brookland, Arkansas

## City Council Meeting Minutes

**Date of Meeting: March 12, 2024**

**Type of Meeting: Regular**

**Called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Kenneth Jones**

COUNCILMEMBER ATTENDANCE: (P = Present A = Absent)					
David Gambill	P	Jason Cooper	P	Mayor Kenneth Jones	P
Pamela McGee	P	David Loggins	P	Attorney Kevin Orr	P
Candice Bishop	P	Wilson Shipman	P	Clerk/Treas. Julie Thomas	P

**Previous meeting minutes:**

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

**To:** Approve the Brookland City Council meeting minutes dated February 11, 2024, as presented

**Discussion:** None

**For: 6            Against: 0            Motion: Passed 6-0**

**New Business:**

**1. Brookland School Superintendent Brett Bunch – discuss ideas for traffic:**

Brookland School Superintendent Brett Bunch came before the council to request the completion and extension of a dead-end street, through the neighborhood located directly behind The Southern Chef, on HWY 49B, and adjoining the school campus, for the purpose of opening an additional traffic route for morning and afternoon drop off/pickups, potentially alleviating some congestion from other areas of the city during heavy traffic times. Bunch explained how this street could be used to connect traffic from HWY 49B, through the neighborhood of Christy Drive and Margie Drive, to the school campus through the east side of the Primary Building. Bunch stated that the plan is for the parents of elementary students to utilize this route to drop off/pickup their students. He described how the school would install a gate to close off the neighborhood from the school campus during the day, in between morning and afternoon car line traffic, for safety concerns and to prevent the route from being used as a normal through-way for other traffic. Bunch also discussed the continued growth of the school district from school choice applications and the ongoing growth of the city of Brookland. He explained the efforts by himself and other school officials to find ways of alleviating heavy traffic around areas of the city during the peak points of the school day, however, there are limitations to what can be accomplished. Bunch provided the council with a map and detailed letter explaining the proposed route and daily traffic information to support their request.

Mayor Jones explained that the council would not be able to decide on this request at this meeting. Jones stated that the city would need to do a traffic study and/or traffic count of the streets in this area. Jones expressed that the city had considered this route for school traffic in the past. He continued by saying that the city has plans for overlaying several streets this year, one being Oak Street, and would consider looking at the possibility of creating 3 lanes there, if possible. Jones also

discussed some congested areas of the city that need upgrading/ improving, however, he explained that funding is always an issue.

Council member Wilson Shipman asked Superintendent Bunch about school growth resulting from school choice applications. Bunch explained that Arkansas law allows for school choice and that it comprises roughly 13.7% of Brookland’s enrollment. Mr. Bunch added that, among some of the other options considered recently, the school investigated the possibility of picking up students at Nettleton Baptist Church, to alleviate some of the heavy traffic into the city. However, Bunch explained that option would also require adding more drivers, which is also a challenge. Shipman asked Bunch about the proposed new school building and Bunch responded that it would be another 3 years before the new campus would be ready.

Mayor Jones wrapped up by stating that this item would be added to the agenda at next month’s regular meeting. Jones answered a question from the floor about the date and time of next month’s meeting.

**2. Add to the meeting agenda: Public feedback regarding Brookland School’s proposed traffic plan:**

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: David Gambill**

**To:** Approve allowing public feedback regarding the proposed traffic plan of Brookland School District

**Discussion:** None

**For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0**

**Public Feedback:**

1. Jason Arnold (113 Janis Drive) Arnold expressed his opposition to the school’s request. He discussed concern for the safety of children who walk through the neighborhood to school. Arnold also voiced concern over the proposed use of gates to close the through-way. He proposed a different route for traffic flow, winding through the bus lot, which would hold a high number of vehicles and alleviate congestion in other areas.
2. Allen Ross (107 Teresa Drive) Ross expressed opposition to the school’s request. Ross explained concern about safety in the neighborhood with the influx of traffic, including the 2 daycares, the hazard to youth drivers, there being no sidewalks, and to the children who walk through the neighborhood.
3. Brandy Hathcoat (113 Margie Drive) Hathcoat expressed opposition to the school’s request. Hathcoat stated her concern for increased theft, the route being used as a continuous bypass or through street, and the daycares that operate in the neighborhood. Hathcoat shared that she had a petition signed by many of the neighborhood’s residents who oppose the school’s proposed plan.
4. Karen Russell (Kidz R Us Daycare owner) Russell expressed opposition to the school’s proposed plan. She explained some of the safety concerns for the staff and families who use her daycare. Russell explained that the daycare’s outdoor play area is across the street, requiring staff and students to cross in order to have outdoor play time. Russell discussed her concerns for the safety of her staff, students, and parents with the increased traffic in this neighborhood.
5. Justin Turner (102 Janis Drive) Turner expressed opposition to the school’s proposed plan. His concerns included the safety of kids driving through the neighborhood.

6. Kyle Hathcoat (113 Margie Drive) Hathcoat suggested a different route- traffic would turn north off School Street (parallel to Hickory-behind the junior high building) with two lanes of traffic running through the back of the campus and through the bus lot, into the current traffic lanes.
7. Rob Ingram (106 Janis Drive) Ingram suggested the same route as Kyle Hathcoat, however, Ingram explained there could be only one line of traffic because the other is designated as a fire lane and cannot be blocked for that reason.
8. Lachelle Sipes (114 Christy Drive) Sipes expressed opposition to the school's plan and discussed her issues while backing out of the driveway of her own home. Sipes explained that her home is located on a corner lot, and she must be careful and yield to oncoming drivers despite the stop sign that is located on the corner, intended to slow traffic. Sipes expressed concern for an increase in traffic flow making this situation even worse. Sipes asked about the city widening the street and about the right-of-way. Mayor Jones responded that before the city considers this proposed plan for traffic, they would complete a traffic study as well as a survey to determine the right-of-way.
9. Colby Brooks (156 CR 753-Brookland School Board Member) Brooks attempted to clarify some of the concerns and questions from residents of the neighborhood. Brooks explained the proposed traffic flow, the possible benefits of easing traffic from the congested areas of the city, and the inclusion of a gate that would remain closed after drop off and pickup times in the mornings and afternoons.
10. Ricky Fielder (115 Margie Drive) expressed opposition to the school's proposed plan. Rickey asked about routing traffic through the property adjacent to Brookland Baptist Church if the gas line were moved. Mayor Jones explained that the city and school district could not decide on behalf of the church regarding their ability or desire to sell or donate land for use as a traffic route.
11. Connie Williams (101 Janis Drive) Williams expressed opposition to the school's proposed plan. Williams expressed concerns over the traffic blocking her driveway during heavy traffic times. She also expressed concern for the safety of the children she cares for in her home daycare.

Mayor Jones explained that the city would take the plan into consideration and would take the steps necessary to make a decision that is in the best interest of all those impacted. Another question was asked from the floor about the city's plans to repair roads that are in need in that neighborhood. Mayor Jones discussed plans that are already in place which will improve drainage along Margie and Christy Drives.

### **3. Parks Committee Update:**

David Loggins, Parks Committee Chairman, was present to give the council an update. Loggins stated that work on the two city parks will resume when the ground dries and weather permits. Loggins explained that playground equipment has been ordered and should be installed when groundwork is complete. Loggins also stated that the two city parks will hopefully be completed and opened by the end of summer or fall, 2024. Loggins explained that construction on the concession stand for the sports complex should begin soon, as well. Loggins added that once the two city parks are completed, more funding will be sought to finish the sports complex.

### **4. County Road 948 (formerly HWY 230 E) - Craighead County Judge has asked the City of Brookland to take over maintenance from UPRR to Holman (HWY 49B):**

Mayor Jones explained that HWY 230 is now County Road 948. Jones stated that the County recently took over HWY 230 from the AR Highway Department. Jones explained that the county (Craighead) has asked the city to take over maintenance of the road in the area not annexed by the City of

Brookland (from Union Pacific Railroad to Holman Street). Jones stated that he contacted the Arkansas Municipal League attorney for clarification and was advised to enter into an agreement with Craighead County. Jones added that this agreement will give the city the opportunity to help Brookland Public Schools as they expand and add another campus on the land they purchased there.

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

**To:** Approve making County Road 948 (formerly HWY 230 E) a city street from Union Pacific Railroad west to Holman Street (HWY 49B)

**Discussion:** None

**For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0**

**5. Ordinance 2024-05 – Amending Section 1 of Ordinance 2023-03:**

Mayor Jones asked the council to suspend the rules and read, by titles only, Section 1 of Ordinance 2023-03, amending the compensation of the mayor for attending city council meetings.

**\*1<sup>st</sup> reading by titles only of Section 1 of the amendment by Attorney Kevin Orr:**

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

**To:** Approve suspending the rules and reading Ordinance 2024-05 by titles only, amending Section 1 of Ordinance 2023-03

**Discussion:** None

**For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0**

**\*2<sup>nd</sup> reading by titles only of Section 1 of the amendment by Attorney Kevin Orr:**

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

**To:** Approve suspending the rules and doing the second reading of Ordinance 2024-05 by titles only, amending Section 1 of Ordinance 2023-03

**Discussion:** None

**For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0**

**\*3<sup>rd</sup> and final reading by titles only of Section 1 of the amendment by Attorney Kevin Orr:**

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Candice Bishop**

**To:** Approve suspending the rules and doing the third and final reading of Ordinance 2024-05 by titles only, amending Section 1 of Ordinance 2023-03

**Discussion:** None

**For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0**

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

**To:** Accept the third and final reading of Ordinance 2024-05 as read

**Discussion:** None

**For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0**

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

To: Adopt the Emergency Clause in Section 4 of Ordinance 2024-05 as read

Discussion: None

For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0

ROLL CALL VOTE:					
David Gambill	Yes	Candice Bishop	Yes	David Loggins	Yes
Pamela McGee	Yes	Jason Cooper	Yes	Wilson Shipman	Yes

**6. Resolution 2024-06 – Amending 2024 General Fund Budget:**

Attorney Kevin Orr read aloud Resolution 2024-06, amending the 2024 General Fund Budget.

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

To: Accept Resolution 2024-06 as read

Discussion: None

For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0

**7. Abernathy Motors – 8258 HWY 49N – Temporary Certificate of Occupancy request:**

Olivia Abernathy (representative for Abernathy Motors/Instant Autos) came before the council requesting a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy. The request is for a newly completed shop building. Abernathy explained that the parking lot and driveway have not yet been finished with asphalt overlay, however, the shop will not be open for public access, it will be used for repairs.

**Motion by: David Gambill**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

To: Grant a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy to Abernathy Motors for 60 days, contingent upon completion of the requirements for full occupancy.

Discussion: None

For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0

**8. Add 3 items to the agenda:**

Mayor Jones requested 3 items to be added to the meeting agenda: the Legislative Joint Audit for 2022 for General and Street Funds, the purchase of a Kubota skid steer, and the 2024 Arkansas Municipal League Conference, June 12-14, in Little Rock.

**Motion by: David Gambill**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

To: Add 3 items to the meeting agenda

Discussion: None

For: 6      Against: 0      Motion: Passed 6-0

**9. Legislative Joint Audit for 2022 General and Street Funds:**

Mayor Jones asked the council if they had received and reviewed the 2022 Legislative Joint Audit for General and Street Funds. Jones asked the council if they had any questions and he noted that there were no findings in the report.

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Wilson Shipman**

To: Accept the 2022 Financial and Compliance report for General and Street funds

Discussion: None

**For: 6     Against: 0     Motion: Passed 6-0**

**10. Kubota skid steer purchase:**

Mayor Jones informed the council that there is an issue with purchasing the budgeted 2024 Kubota skid steer. Jones stated that the selling company will not give the city a 3-year no interest purchase option, as a municipality. Jones explained that they could finance with First Community Bank at a 6% annual interest rate, saving around \$10,000 overall, on the purchase.

**Motion by: David Loggins**

**Second by: Jason Cooper**

**To: Purchase a 2024 Kubota skid steer through First Community Bank at 6% annual interest rate**

**Discussion: None**

**For: 6     Against: 0     Motion: Passed 6-0**

**11. Arkansas 2024 Municipal League Conference in Little Rock:**

Mayor Jones announced to the council that the 90<sup>th</sup> annual Arkansas Municipal League Conference will be held June 12-14 in Little Rock. Jones asked the council members to decide on whether they would attend.

**Old Business:**

**12. Monthly financials for General, Street, and Utility Funds:**

<b>February 2024</b>	<b>General Fund:</b>	<b>Street Fund:</b>	<b>Utility Fund:</b>
<b>Beginning Balance:</b>	\$1,121,586.08	\$418,362.04	\$516,520.09
<b>Ending Balance:</b>	\$1,146,011.29	\$435,750.80	\$518,660.81

**Mayor's Notes:**

✓ **Annual State of the City Report:**

Mayor Jones spoke to the council and others present about the status of the City of Brookland, Arkansas. Jones discussed the growth within the city and the challenges that accompany growth. Jones summarized the business additions to the city, the street and drainage repairs that have been completed, and the continued need for traffic improvements. Jones cited the accomplishments of several of the school's sports and activity groups and congratulated them for their achievements.

Mayor Jones asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion by: Wilson Shipman**

**Second by: David Loggins**

**To: Adjourn the meeting**

**For: 6     Against: 0     Motion: Passed 6-0**

**Meeting adjourned at: 8:18 PM**

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Kenneth Jones, Mayor

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Julie Thomas, City Clerk/Treasurer