

From the Mayor's Desk:

2023 is off to a bitter sweet start. I really don't know where to begin. So, I will try not to ramble. Let's, start with developments. The old Kum N Go location is being remodeled and will house Southern Chef. Harp's Grocery has purchased their permits with dirt work expected to start soon as weather permits and McDonald's Restaurant is on the April 4th Planning Commission meeting agenda.

Two new subdivisions are scheduled be built on the west side of HWY 49. Both are on Whitten Creek Road (CR 741). One is south of School Street and the second is north of School Street. These developments have brought concern regarding an already serious situation of traffic congestion at the HWY 49 and School Street intersection that are now a couple of peak times a day, and will make potentially the intersection an all-day concern. So, we have moved forward trying to find revenue sources to help upgrade the intersection. ARDOT, has a intersection upgrade program that will contribute funds for a project up to one million dollars. We have reached out to East Arkansas Planning and Development District and they have a grant totaling five hundred thousand we can apply for. Arkansas Economic Development is also looking into any funding source they may have to help with project. We have talked to Arkansas Water Association, and First Community Bank about possibly obtaining a loan. We have spoken with Michael MacBryde with Stevens Inc. about a franchise bond. This would not be a new tax on anyone or business. We already collect a franchise tax. If we decide this is the route to take, it will be a percentage of the franchise money the city already collects that will be used to pay the bond payment.

However, we are not just looking at the HWY 49 and School Street intersection. We also are looking at adding a signal light at the

intersection of HWY 49 and Pine Log. ARDOT has completed its traffic study to see if HWY 49 and Pine Log Road meets the warrants of a signal light. Judge Marvin Day and I were notified that it did meet the warrants for a signal light, but did not meet the warrants to get the 80% Federal/10% State/10% Municipality matching money. It only met warrants to receive a 50% Federal/50% Municipal matching money. City of Brookland and Craighead County would split the Municipal match for the signal light. After lengthy discussions on why this intersection did not meet the warrants for the 80/10/10 match, the City of Brookland decided to write a letter to ARDOT explaining why City of Brookland and Brookland School did not divert traffic from Brookland Elementary School and Brookland Middle School to Pine Log Road and eventually HWY 49 intersection. We did not do this because this is a very dangerous intersection for traffic. Additional traffic being sent this way would only up the percentage of wrecks at the HWY 49 and Pine Log Road intersection. Knowing this we have asked ARDOT to look at their traffic study of this intersection using the new information to see if it would be enough to change warrants for improvements to meet the 80/10/10/ match.

Additional employees have been hired and all departments have finally got their staff back to pre-COVID-19 numbers.

The sidewalk project along Holman, from School Street north to Jessica Lane-Phase One has been approved. Plans are to try and complete the Holman sidewalk, from Smith Street south to W. Matthews St. Our 2023 goal is to start replacing older sidewalks in the city in phases.

Several street projects including widening and overlays are scheduled for 2023.

Something none of us like to hear is that our sanitation rate is being increased by \$2.00 per month. Mr. Dedman came to my office to discuss this rate increase and said

this is due to Legacy Landfill increasing tipping fees (cost to dump garbage per ton) by \$1.50. Mr. Dedman said Legacy had a tipping fee increase in 2020 and 2021 also. With the economy the way it was, that he held back on an increase. However, with the increase in tipping fees this year, he needed to raise the fee due to increased operating costs. Our Sports-plex dirt work should have been started by the time this letter goes out. However, that will be up to the weather. The two inner city parks were bid out and came in over the projected cost, so these bids were rejected and we will do the two inner city parks in bid packages. Hopefully, we will get the savings we have seen on the sports-plex bids by doing this.

As you can see, there is a lot going on this year. More updates to come! As the weather gets better, there will be more activity throughout our city, so please obey the speed limit signs! Drive cautiously and watch for children and citizens walking and riding bikes, especially in places where there are NO sidewalks. I Pray you have a good spring and early summer.

Mayor Jones



**Brookland Utilities
Online Bill Pay**

This is just a reminder that Brookland Utilities (BU) has partnered with Nexbillpay to give residents the option to pay their bill by phone or online. There is a \$2 or 2.75% fee associated with online pay.

However, due to problems with receiving utility bills from post office in a timely manner, BU is encouraging residents to set up their accounts with Nexbillpay, so they can receive notification of the amount of the new bill each month by free text and/or

email(standard message and data rates may apply). To sign up, each resident must have their account number. The online pay can be access through our website cityofbrookland.com. **Hopefully this will eliminate the water bill delivery issue.**

Customers do not have to actually pay their bills online, but having an account established allows them to receive electronic notification of the amount they owe. The phone number to call in your payment is 1-844-293-9814.

DOXO Bill Payment Warning:

Several customers have used a search engine, such as google to pay their bills online and often end up on the DOXO online payment website. **DO NOT USE DOXO TO PAY YOUR BU BILL!** The website appears to be affiliated with the water system or municipality, but it is not. "doxo.com" may charge extra or higher fees, and BU cannot control when our utility will receive payments from doxo.com, because they come in the form of a check. This could result in late payment fees or disconnection due to non payment. Therefore, **BU advises customers to ONLY utilize the ONLINE PAYMENT link on our website for online bill pay.**



SWIMMING POOL REGULATIONS

The weather is getting warmer and everyone is starting to think about filling their pools for the summer. This is a reminder that Ordinance 2008-17 requires that

all swimming pools, 15" or more in depth, have a fence of not less than four feet in height. Said enclosure shall be a minimum of four feet from any edge of the pool. A copy of this ordinance can be obtained at City Hall. If there are questions concerning the installation of a pool, please contact our inspection department.



Brookland Storm Shelter is located at 407 Holman, beside Brookland Police Department

Mowing around your Water Meter Reminder:

Brookland Utilities wants to remind everyone to pay attention to your water meters as you start mowing your yards this spring, and if you utilize a lawn service, make sure that they are also aware of the location of your water meter.

The radio read meters that were installed in the summer of 2016, sit up higher than the older style, and running a lawn mower over the top of them with the deck too low can damage the radio, cord, meter box and/or other meter components.

The City Council enacted ordinance 2016-02, which states that repairs to damaged water meters is the responsibility of the owner/occupant, and lists the fees that will be invoiced to repair the damaged

components. Remember to check your yard after it is mowed, and immediately report any meter damage to the lawn care provider. (A copy of this ordinance can be viewed on the city website cityofbrookland.com.) The office will receive an alarm notification when the meter is not communicating with the billing software, and city workers will notify residents of any damage that is found. Please be proactive and inform your mowing service of the location of your meter box, when you hire them; so they won't damage the meter while mowing your yard.



Fireworks Ordinance Reminder

Fireworks may be discharged between the hours of 10am & 10pm on June 29, June 30, July 1, July 2, July 3, and July 5. Fireworks may be discharged between the hours of 10am and will be extended until 12:30am (of the following day) on July 4.



INFORMATION REGARDING DISPOSAL OF YARD WASTE AND LARGE ITEMS:

Residents may haul large items, such as tires, mattresses, electronic waste, furniture or appliances to Legacy Landfill which is located at 238 County Road 476, Jonesboro, AR. Their phone number is (870)972-6353 to obtain more information on dumping fees. Another location is the Lake City Transfer Station, which is

located at 12662 Highway 18 E., Lake City, AR. Their phone number is (870)237-8194

Residents may also contact Dedman's Sanitation to schedule a special trash pickup and find out the cost to have items picked up at (870)781-3754. This fee will be added to the monthly utility bill.

Shrub clippings, leaves and other yard waste may be hauled to the Jonesboro Yard Waste Incinerator located at 2650 Lacy Drive, Jonesboro. Contact their office at (870)932-7520 for hours and fees.



RECYCLE & WIN!

The following residents' names were drawn and they won \$25 in the Bluebag Recycle Program sponsored by the City of Brookland. The following items can be recycled: all metal cans, all colors of glass and all grades of plastics. Everything goes in the same bag together. Bluebags are available at City Hall. Just fill out the attached tag and your name will be entered in the weekly drawing.

Citizens who live in the county and bring their blue bags to put them in the recycle trailer need to remove the name tags and bring them into City Hall or leave them in the drop box. Please remember to tie your bluebags before you place them in the trailer.

Newspapers, junk mail, old magazines and other paper

products are to be placed in a separate bag and placed on the curb with your bluebag.

Corrugated cardboard boxes are to be flattened out and put in the green dumpster behind City Hall.

Bluebag Winners:

- 1/6/23 - Patsy Forehand
- 1/13/23 - Era J. Jackson
- 1/20/23 - Patricia Kimble
- 1/27/23 - Ann McGee
- 2/3/23 - Chester Dearing
- 2/10/23 - Barbara Wortham
- 2/17/23 - Rachael Ferraro
- 2/24/23 - Andrew Pate
- 3/3/23 - Dalton Taylor
- 3/10/23 - Kim Polsgrove
- 3/17/23 - Nelda Milburn
- 3/24/23 - Shelia Evans
- 3/31/23- Kathy Ferguson

Thanks for making Brookland a "GREENER" place to live.



FROM THE STREET DEPARTMENT:

As Springtime is arriving, we are about to begin our mowing season. We are implementing a new method in our department regarding spraying weed control in the ditches and city parks. We will be utilizing one of the tractors with an AG sprayer attached for higher efficiency and speed of application. We have decided to make this change due to taking on some of the mowing duties that have been contracted out in the past and thus reducing some spending within our department.

To further reduce spending, we will be using a larger Kubota tractor with a bat wing mower. We are asking citizens to be a little more vigilant in watching for this equipment especially on the narrower streets. Please be patient and cautious when passing this equipment as it is sometimes necessary for the City Employee to be outside the machine to make adjustments, pick up litter,

or spray around signs with handheld equipment.

We are also in the process of upgrading our street signs, since many were hard to read. The street name signs are also being changed to the larger reflective ones for 911 purposes and for better visibility at night or during inclement weather. The busy main roads are being completed first and the secondary roads will follow. This process is costly not only in parts and materials but with the several hours of man power. We ask that when you see our employees completing these tasks you slow down until you completely clear the work area. We have completed few streets at this point and were beginning to start other sections when we ran into some issues with theft and vandalism. Several signs were stolen shortly after they were put in place. These signs cost the taxpaying citizens of Brookland a lot of money. We are asking anyone that sees an individual who is not wearing a city uniform during working hours removing a sign to please contact the police department or report it to city hall. Any help in the area will be greatly appreciated.

The street department would like to take this opportunity to welcome our newest employee, Mr. Harry Darby, who began his employment with the city earlier this month.

Jeff Vernon,
Street Supervisor

Community Calendar:



04/04 – Planning Commission Meeting at 7pm

04/05 - Noon deadline for City Council Agenda

04/07 - City offices closed for Good Friday Holiday; utilize drop box, online and phone options to pay utility bills

04/09 - Easter Sunday

04/10 – City Council Meeting at 7pm

04/26 - Noon deadline for Planning Commission agenda



05/02 – Planning Commission meeting at 7pm

05/03 - Noon deadline for City Council agenda

05/08 – City Council meeting at 7pm

05/14 – Happy Mother’s Day!

05/29 – City offices will be closed for Memorial Day holiday

05/30 - Noon deadline for Planning Commission agenda



06/06 – Planning Commission meeting at 7pm

06/07 - Noon deadline for City Council agenda

06/12 – City Council meeting at 7pm

06/18 – Happy Father’s Day!

06/28 - Noon deadline for Planning Commission Agenda

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT STORMWATER RUNOFF POLLUTION



Stormwater is rain that falls on roofs or paved areas like driveways and roads. This water is carried away by pipes that is separate from the sewage system. Stormwater runoff poses a high risk to water bodies because it can be easily polluted and it is not cleaned. These pollutants harm aquatic life, native vegetation and endanger local drinking water.

1. Never dump anything down storm drains or in ditches.

Many people wrongly think that storm drains are part of a sanitary sewer system that flow into a wastewater treatment plant. Actually, they are a direct link to local streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands.

2. Pick up after your pet.

Pet waste that is left on streets, sidewalks, yards or trails near streams can easily wash into area creeks and streams, which can add harmful bacteria that makes it unsafe to swim or play in.

3. Check your car for leaking fluids and recycle your motor oil.

Improper disposal of used oil, which includes oil leaking from cars, contributes significantly to stormwater pollution. An easy way to clean up an accidental spill is to pour sand or kitty litter over the spill, wait a few minutes and then sweep up the solid materials.

4. Don't litter! Pick up trash you see on the ground(even if it is not yours.)

No one likes to see trash floating in the water and that is where it will end up if litter is left on the ground. It can be dangerous to wildlife that might mistake it for food or get tangled in the trash.

5. Use fertilizers sparingly and sweep driveways and sidewalks after application.

Use fertilizers according to your lawn and plant needs and the labeled instructions. Fertilizers that are applied in excess or scattered onto driveways or sidewalks have the potential to be carried by rain runoff into creeks and streams causing high levels of nutrients in our waters, which can lead to unnatural algae growth creating green "slimy" water that depletes oxygen for aquatic ecosystems.

6. Compost yard waste and sweep grass clippings out of streets after mowing.

Most people don't think of grass clippings and leaves as possible pollutants but they can be when they end up in waterways through our storm drain system. These materials can contribute nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous, which cause unwanted and uncontrolled growth of algae and aquatic weeds, blocking sunlight. Mulch leaves and grass leaving them on the lawn to add needed nutrients back into the lawn, minimizing the need to add fertilizers.

7. Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces and slow water down.

When rain falls on a roof, its momentum increases and gives it more power to wash pollutants into storm drains. By diverting your gutter downspouts to grassy areas, runoff can be slowed and allowed to be absorbed into the soil.

8. Wash your car at a commercial car wash that is plumbed to a treatment plant, instead of washing your car on a driveway or street.

When you wash your car on the driveway or street the dirt, grease, and soap can wash into the storm drains going directly to creeks and streams. If you wash your car at home, wash it on a grassy or gravel area that can absorb the water.

9. Use integrated pest management practices for controlling pests around your home.

Use pesticides cautiously. Excess pesticides applied to lawns and around surfaces like driveways and sidewalks wash off and pollute streams. These include bug killers, weed killers and fungus treatments.

10. Vegetate bare spots in your yard to minimize erosion.

Cover bare spots in your yard with mulch or vegetation. Leaving bare soil can cause exposed soil to wash away during a rain. On slopes, rain water will move quickly taking with it any soil that it can along the way, making water murky in water channels and making it difficult for aquatic life to find food or breathe.