

**MINUTES OF MEETING
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
9:00 AM Friday, September 6, 2019
Ouachita Room, Ponce de Leon Center**

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present

Pamela Avila
Greg Jones
David Childs
Cheri Nelson
Bob Pettey
David Whitlow
Jerry Yeric
Jim Zahnd

Committee Members Absent

Mike Hood
Curt Malone

Ex-Officio Members Present

Ex-Officio Board Members Absent

Paul Day
Bob Shoemaker

POA Liaisons

Mike Medica, Board Liaison
Leslie Nalley, POA CEO (absent)

Other Board Members

None

Justices of the Peace

Keith Keck, Saline County
Larry Raney, Garland County (absent)

School District Liaisons

Melissa Speers, Jessieville SD
Dr. Michael Murphy, FLSD (absent)

HSV Area Chamber of Commerce Liaison

Nathan Hunnicutt, Executive Director (absent)

Press

Nicki Sherman, Village Voice

Others Present

Maxine Klein, HSV Resident
Hon. Tom Farmer, Benton Mayor, Speaker
Josh Farmer

OPENING OF MEETING

Call to Order: Chair Pam Avila called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Notified Absences: Mike Hood and Curt Malone

Agenda: The Agenda was approved as submitted.

Minutes: The minutes of the August 2, 2019 meeting were approved.

Introductions: Maxine Klein, Guest – HSV Resident
New Member – Cheri Nelson
Speaker – Hon. Tom Farmer, Benton Mayor, Speaker

HON. TOM FARMER, BENTON MAYOR, GUEST SPEAKER

- David Childs introduced Mayor Farmer noting his long career as a coach and athletic Director before becoming Benton’s Mayor on January 1, 2019.

- Mayor Farmer discussed initiatives that have been undertaken in Benton since his last meeting with the GAC shortly after he became Mayor. Focusing on the theme that “together we can do more,” the Mayor discussed the following:
 - Benton has held a series of Town Hall Meetings to get input from and encourage participation by, the citizens.
 - In an effort to improve the appearance of the City, Code Enforcement officers have become more active. Those officers, working with over 500 volunteers from the group “Benton Matters,” did a survey to identify of code enforcement issues and clean up the City.
 - Plans are underway to improve signage along Interstate 30 so as to delineate Benton from the surrounding communities.
 - Several groups in the City, including groups from the Benton School District, are working to paint buildings and clean up the City.
 - The City is working with various community groups to promote entertainment events, such as a Fourth of July Celebration, Movies on Main Street and Third Thursday festivals during which the street from the Court House to the Farmers Market is blocked off for food trucks, music, games for children, etc. Over 5,000 people attended the August Third Thursday event. Plans are being made for other events including an Old-Fashioned Day on October 12 and a Hallmark Christmas celebration.
 - Mayor Farmer emphasized that these events are not just for the citizens of Benton and he wants Villagers to participate in Benton’s many activities just as many in Benton visit the Village to play golf and fish. He wants Villagers “to feel at home when you come to Benton.”

- During the question and answer period, the following items were discussed:
 - the new construction on Interstate 30 has caused congestion and a there have been a number of accidents in the construction zone. This project will take three and one-half years to complete.
 - Mr. Medica noted that the discussions were ongoing with some of the bigger businesses in Benton to put together a deal where they can come to the Village to play golf, etc., but he didn’t know when that will be finalized.
 - Mayor Farmer suggested that the Village participate in Benton’s Third Thursday festivals by getting a booth to advert

REPORTS

POA Board Liaison - Mike Medica

- Mr. Medica said he appreciated the presentation GAC Chair Pam Avila made to the POA Board.
- An information session regarding the Balboa Golf Course and Clubhouse will be held on September 12 at the Coronado Center.
- Sixteen to seventeen new homes have been approved for construction in the Village. In contrast to the sale of existing homes, new home construction adds to the Village's revenue base.

Chair – Pam Avila (Announcements/Other)

- Welcomed Cheri Nelson as a new GAC member. Ms. Nelson's training and experience as a nurse will be a benefit to the committee in the area of health care.

Broadband – Greg Jones

- The POA has sent out Requests for Quotes for high speed Wi-Fi in the Coronado Center, Grove Park and Coronado Center. While responses were received, they were not complete. Therefore, the RFQs had to be resent.

Garland County/Hot Springs – Jerry Yerick

- No written report submitted.

Highways (Tri-Lakes MPO) – David Whitlow

- Submitted in writing, attached to Minutes.
- While there was some debate as to whether the detour signs had been removed, the Danville Gate is now open.

Legislative Affairs – Jerry Yerick

- No written report submitted.

Saline County – Curt Malone

- No written report submitted.

Website – Pam Avila

- Photos of new Committee members are needed for posting on the Website.

Census Subcommittee – Jim Zahnd

- Submitted in writing, attached to Minutes.
- Nancy Hendrix, a former history professor at Arkansas State university, has been added to the Committee.
- The Village Complete Count Committee is connected with both the Saline County and State committees.

HSV CHAMBER UPDATES

Nathan Hunnicutt – Executive Director

- No written report submitted.

J.P. COMMENTS

J.P. Report Garland County – Larry Raney

- No written report submitted.

J.P. Report Saline County – Keith Keck

- Both Saline County and Garland County are working on revisions to the Hot Springs Village Property Code relating to the definition of “Compliance Officer.” Under the existing Code, Compliance Officers were designated under the Planning and Inspections Department. Under the revision, they will be under the Police Department.
- Both Counties have three ordinances that apply specifically to the Village: the Property Code, the Animal Control Ordinance and the Noise Control Ordinance.
- The State of Arkansas has opted out of a contract to provide funding for three Sheriff’s Deputies to patrol the Arkansas Department of Health facility in Haskell. The County has made adjustments to keep those Deputies on the payroll.
- The Metroplan has broadened its focus beyond roads and highways to consider additional infrastructure items such as bike paths and trails.

SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORTS

Jessieville School District– Melissa Speers

- Jessieville School District started the 2019-2020 school year with an enrollment up 6 students from last year’s average. This compares to the 50-student drop year over year that was reported at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year.
- At 37 students, Jessieville’s kindergarten class is the smallest the District has had in a number of years. This is a trend across the nation.
- The District has completed renovation projects on a parking lot and the District’s ag building.
- The football and volleyball teams have started their seasons and some of the cross-country runners train on Village trails.
- The October GAC meeting will be at Jessieville High School.

OLD BUSINESS

- Mike Hood reported that he has been working on an organization chart showing county and state offices. Different formats were discussed ranging from a contact list, to a chart that details what various offices and agencies do, to a “cheat sheet” for new residents that

provides information about where to go and how to get governmental and utility services. Work on this project will continue.

- The prospect of preparing an outline of the differences between various kinds of corporations, (*i.e.*, for profit, not for profit, municipal, etc.) was discussed and it was noted that work on a similar project was done several years ago, but the task was never finalized.

NEW BUSINESS

- Report to POA Board of Directors in August. The GAC Committee Chair presented a report to the POA Board at its August meeting to describe the Committee's work and its accomplishments.
- Quorum Court Dates and Locations. In connection with the Village's 50th Anniversary Celebration in April 2020, plans are being made to have the Saline County Quorum Court meet in the Village on the third Monday in March 2020 and for the Garland County Quorum Court to meet in the Village on the third Monday in May 2020.
- Health Services Directory. Efforts to generate a health services directory were discussed and will be assessed with the help of Ms. Nelson.
- Health Fair. Health fairs in the past have been well received and preliminary inquiries about a future health fair were enthusiastically received. Note was made that the health fair should focus on all age groups and it was suggested that the health fair might be coordinated with back to school and school immunization clinics.

Meeting Adjourned

REMINDERS & CALENDAR

Next POA Board Meeting: 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, September 18, at the Ouachita Building.

Next GAC Meeting: 9:00 a.m., Friday, October 4, at Jessieville High School.

Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Planning Organization Report – David Whitlow

The Tri-Lakes MPO did not meet in September. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 17 at 10:00 am. The venue for this meeting has been changed to the Hot Springs Transportation Center on 100 Broadway Terrace. This will be a joint meeting of both the Policy Board and the Technical Committee. The public is also invited.

The primary focus of this meeting will be a presentation and update of the #061555 project study (Martin Luther King interchanges). This update will be presented by ARDOT staff. Other information will be presented as appropriate.

The following information should be of interest to residents of Hot Springs Village.

- New fuel taxes went into effect in Arkansas on Tuesday, October 1st. The gas tax rose by 3 cents to 24.5 cents per gallon. Tax on diesel fuel went up 6 cents to 29.5 cents per gallon. There will also be a \$200 tax imposed on registration of new electric or hybrid vehicles. This is to offset the taxes lost because these vehicles do not pay as much in fuel taxes, yet they still use the highways. The increases will raise an estimated 95 million dollars for highway construction and maintenance. Part of the new funds to be expended will also come from taxes on casino gambling in Arkansas.
- ARDOT has released a statement that eight parcels of property have been acquired for the extension of the MLK to the junction of Highways 5 and 7. There will be at least 62 parcels required. Acquisitions are continuing.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- Nancy Hendricks and Lu Otto have accepted appointments to the Committee as representatives of the HSV community at-large. A complete roster of the Committee is attached.
- The initial meeting of the Committee is currently being scheduled for later this month.
- “Complete Count” training sessions are planned for later this month in both Little Rock and Benton (in conjunction with Saline County) and will be attended by representatives of Committee.
- Preliminary plans include coordinating “Complete Count” activities with some events of the HSV 50th Anniversary celebration.

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

Census Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee

Governmental Affairs Committee

MEMBER ROSTER

Jim Zahnd, *Chair*

501-701-3738

Jameszahnd1941@gmail.com

Curt Malone, *Vice Chair*

501-804-3620

mmtsinc@earthlink.net

Jerry Yeric

501-915-2438

pjyeric@suddenlink.net

Nancy Hendricks

501-226-5614

Nhendricks123@hotmail.com

Keith Keck

501-463-3239

keithkeck@aol.com

Lu Otto

501-922-9395

LuOttohsv@att.net

Renee Haugen (HSVPOA Staff)

501-922-5556, ext2154

RHaugen@hsvpoa.org

10.4.19 GAC REPORT

Hot Springs—Jerry Yeric

Garland County Habitat for Humanity will dedicate its 141st home.

The city has agreed to purchase the former Entergy Arkansas Inc. business office at 324 Malvern Ave. The 18,000 square feet of vacant office space will house the city finance department, utility billing services and city attorney's office.

Finance Director, Dorethea Yates, told the board a \$750,000 purchase price has been negotiated. Closing costs and commissions are likely to raise the final price to about \$800,000, a cost the city will amortize over five years using short-term financing available to local governments.

The purchase would also contribute to the city's revitalization plan for upper Malvern Avenue. Pedestrian plazas, bike lanes, sculpture gardens and green infrastructure are envisioned for the eight blocks from East Grand Avenue to Spring Street, making the approach into downtown more inviting to pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

City voters overwhelmingly endorsed a bond measure financing the construction of a five-field baseball complex at the former Boys & Girls Club of Hot Springs. The ballot authorizing the Hot Springs Board of Directors to issue up to \$8.5 million in bonds on behalf of the Hot Springs Advertising and Promotion Commission passed by a vote of 1,126-712, or by more than 22 percentage points.

A congressional delegation (Rep. Westerman, Sens. Cotton and Boozman) and state officials Sen. Sample, Clark and Rep. Warren toured the old Army and Navy hospital. There are several issues concerning this facility: (1) environmental. There are visible and non-visible environmental hazards. In addition, the location is close to the national parks thermo waters. The cite may be eligible for EPAs Brownlist of contaminated properties. If so, money from the EPA can be used to clear it up. (2) It is almost certain that the 31 outside facilities will need to be removed. The boilers for the Arkansas Career Training Institute complex will not be shut off Tuesday and will remain functional until at least Dec. 31.

For the fiscal year ending in July, Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort wagered a total of \$2 billion and won \$1.89 billion in prizes according to the records of the state Department of Finance and Administration. Beyond the state receiving \$26.3 million out of Oaklawn's betting machine net revenue, Hot Springs received \$2.1 million in fiscal 2019, while Garland County received \$732,110. Under Amendment 100, (passed in November) a casino's net gambling receipts will be taxed at 13% on the first \$150 million and 20% on receipts above. Net casino gambling receipts are defined as "casino gaming receipts less amounts paid out or reserved as winnings to casino patrons.

Of that tax revenue, 55% will go to state general revenue and 17.5% to the state Racing Commission for purses for horse and greyhound racing. Eight percent of the receipts will go to the county and 19.5% will go to the city.

The city will pay Scenic Hill Solar of North Little Rock 5.90 cents per kilowatt-hour generated by solar arrays the company will install, own, operate and maintain on city property. That power will go onto the grid, giving the city a kwh credit for every kwh added to Entergy Arkansas Inc.'s distribution system. The city pays Entergy 8.88 cents per kwh on average. Paying Scenic Hill two-thirds of that cost to generate power that offsets the city's electrical costs will save \$200,000 next year and more than \$30 million over the 28-year term of the agreement, the city and company said.

The Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration's Alcoholic Beverage Control Division cited Green Springs Medical LLC, 309 Seneca St., and Doctor's Orders RX Inc., 4897 Malvern Ave., for violating rules promulgated by the state Medical Marijuana Commission. The commission approved Doctor's Orders change of ownership Wednesday, allowing Donald Sears to sell the dispensary to Mark Drennan. The contract for sale signed Tuesday conditioned the transfer on the commission approving the ownership change.

Oaklawn Racing Casino Resort announced Monday that it will increase its hourly minimum wage for employees who don't receive tips from \$9.25 an hour to \$13 an hour as of Monday, Sept. 30.

The hourly minimum wage for employees who receive tips will increase from \$2.76 an hour to \$6 an hour, Oaklawn said in a news release. The increase will benefit about 970 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees.

City and county household waste will be disposed of at the Saline County Regional Solid Waste Facility in Bauxite starting October 1st, a move expected to lower transportation costs and save time.