



Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, August 27, 2025 | 9:00 AM
Metroplan | Pulaski Co. Regional Building
501 W. Markham St. | Little Rock

1. Call to Order

2. Introductions & Announcements

3. Summary of Previous Meeting

4. Council Discussion

- Fire District Funding Outside City Limits
- Regulating Subdivisions in Former Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) Areas
- First Amendment Auditors

5. Upcoming Grants & Capital Improvement Opportunities

6. Member Q&A

7. Preview of Upcoming Meetings

- TBA

8. Adjourn



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Meet Quarterly

Know more about the alliance: <https://tinyurl.com/ACEDAInfo>

American Assn. Of Retired Persons (AARP) | Capacity Building Microgrants

Community Wide Walk and Bike Audits for safety enhancement for people over 50.

Learn More: <https://tinyurl.com/AARPGGrant>



Small Cities Council

Meeting Summary

Wednesday, July 23, 2025, | 9:00 AM
Pulaski County Regional Center | Little Rock
Draft

Meeting PowerPoint slides available at www.metroplan.org

SCC Members Attending

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|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Mayor Mike Kemp, Chair | City of Shannon Hills |
| 2. Mayor Charles Gastineau, Vice Chair | City of Ward |
| 3. Mr. Keith Keck | Hot Spring Village |
| 4. Mr. Jeff Arey | City of Haskell |
| 5. Mayor Crystal Herrmann | City of Alexander |

Additional Attendees

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Mayor Tom Farmer | City of Benton |
| 2. Ms. Alicia Payseno | City of Cabot |
| 3. Mr. Mike Watson | Half |
| 4. Mr. Ben Reynolds | UES |
| 5. Mayor Mark Stodola | Arkansas Municipal League |
| 6. Mr. Jamie Collins | Neel-Schaffer |
| 7. Mr. James Green | GE Consultants |

Metroplan Staff

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Casey Covington | Executive Director |
| 2. Ms. Bernadette Rhodes | Deputy Director |
| 3. Ms. Sydney Dozier | Public Engagement Planner |
| 4. Mr. Paritosh Jambhale | Community Planner |

1. Call to Order

Mayor Kemp called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He welcomed participants and asked participants to introduce themselves.

2. Introductions & Announcements

Mr. Keck started the announcements on the table and mentioned that the Hot Springs Village Board is going to conduct a recapitalization of their 9 golf courses. Two golf courses are up for renovation and their board is trying to bring up the quality of the courses to charge the users of these courses an adequate fee to support their renovation costs. Mr. Arey mentioned Haskell's current priority of completing a new comprehensive plan. Haskell is working with Metroplan for the same. He also mentioned a new subdivision being implemented in Haskell. Mayor Herrmann added that the City of Alexander is focusing on completing its trail grants applications. The newly developed splash pad is a hit. They are also working on taking down/repairing the Old Hospital. CAPDD helped with the testing process through an EPA Brownfields grant. By the end of November, the city will have worked on remediation and evaluation processes to check whether the structure is safe to use. The result will dictate the next steps.

Mayor Gastineau mentioned that Ward will begin hearings on adopting the UDO starting in August 2025. The timeframe of adoption is in October-November of this year. It was put on hold due to the legislative updates. The city is also gearing up for new Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The city is also working on remediating some sidewalk issues that they have faced in the recent past. Mayor Kemp informed the council that the City of Shannon Hills is currently constructing a new bridge. It is an important project for the city and have about 108 days to complete the process. ARDOT will be helping Shannon Hills with their other active transportation friendly bridge once the current project ends. Saline County and Shannon Hills is working on improving their connections with the Southwest Trail and are looking forward to adding an Electric Vehicle (EV) Charger at their trailhead.

3. Summary of Previous Meeting

Mayor Gastineau made a motion to approve the summary of the June 25, 2025, meeting. Mr. Arey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. The Small Cities Spark: Presentation by Ms. Alicia Payseno, City of Cabot Economic Development

Ms. Rhodes reminded the council about the new agenda item that was introduced to the council in June. She conveyed that the Small Cities Spark is a section which intends to act as a medium to help start a dialogue of ideas and practices being currently performed and experimented that could inspire the council to try these ideas in their own backyard. Metroplan invited Ms. Alicia Payseno, PCED who is the Director of Economic Development for the City of Cabot. Ms. Payseno led this section.

Ms. Payseno discussed with the council how the City of Cabot's population changed from 9,000 in 1990 to about 28,000 in the most recent Census. She mentioned her belief in acting as a region and not just as individual cities. Her focus on regionalism also makes her think how the City of Cabot can help some of the fastest growing cities of Central Arkansas in Austin and Ward who are close neighbors of Cabot. She informed that Cabot has come a long way from working on its roads and water system expansion. The city

had a recurring problem of ditches. Mayor Kincade worked hard with the city departments to address all of these problems since his term began in 2019. After this introduction, Ms. Payseno discussed her main topic of how the City of Cabot used its Sales Tax to help develop its infrastructure.

She mentioned the importance of having a sales tax, no matter how small it may be, as a good source of income for cities. She then informed the council that the City of Cabot developed a new Comprehensive Plan and conducted many town hall meetings to understand what residents of Cabot wanted in their city. She mentioned the importance of balancing the needs and wants of the residents and gave an example of a splash pad. Even though a city might not need a splash pad, it is an important part of the community in Central Arkansas. The city then listed and consolidated the needs and wants of the city and started a proactive sales tax campaign to help raise funds for all the development that was needed for the city. The management knew that the process of increasing the taxes would be difficult to resonate with the citizens but with the city was able to make the case for the tax to residents and raised about \$100 Million through the increased sales taxes. The process used to launch the sales tax campaign was then explained by Ms. Payseno.

She mentioned that Cabot placed 10 different initiatives on the ballot, which were focused on what the city needed the most. And that was going to be the caveat that helps the city use the funds adequately, ensuring optimum usage of the funds. She also mentioned that saving some money in the longer run by not hiring an external campaign consultant and instead working as a cohesive group could help in saving some money for the city. Coming back to the ballot initiatives, she mentioned that the City of Cabot built a website to inform residents about the ballot initiatives and invested time in making the citizens understand what they are voting for instead of telling them how to vote. They showed renderings of exactly what they will get and repeated the message through all the forms available. They broadcasted the initiatives through schools, church groups, any place that would let them inform the population of Cabot and were completely transparent about the end results of what they will be getting. They paid attention to any voices that had any problems or doubts about the new infrastructure that the city was going to build and invest in. And made sure that they understood what the idea behind the end product was. After this process, all 10 ballot initiatives passed!

Ms. Payseno shared with the council that even after the ballot initiatives results, the city kept in touch with its citizens and developed a webpage that showed the current progress of those projects. She also mentioned that the process usually takes a long time and the costs of the materials needed to produce the same output as in the renderings increases due to changes in the present economy. This makes it difficult to replicate all of the details with the same amount of money that they initially started with and thus the city might have to look for a trade-off for either changing some features of the new infrastructure or increasing the amount of money dedicated to the project to accommodate cost increases. Most of the projects are now almost complete. Ms. Payseno also gave a snapshot of how Cabot has helped not just its own citizens but also the region in attracting new people as its neighbors. Ward has added 1,750 new lots and 61 units, and Austin has added 1,320 new lots and 31 units. Cabot itself has added 450 new lots and over 700 units. She defined a unit as anything that is either a multifamily, a condo, duplex, etc. The region as a total has added about 4,000 lots.

She also mentioned Cabot's Gametime at the Grounds which is the only covered sports facility in the state of Arkansas. It has 9 basketball courts that convert into 18 volleyball courts that convert to 27 pickleball courts. There is also a soccer court which also can convert to softball and baseball batting cages. That is an important part of tourism. The city also invested \$20 Million in broadband and owns all the fiber that helps with the internet connection. They partnered with a third party to help with billing and payment facilities. And due to this infrastructure, Cabot will be the first city in Central Arkansas to have a 1 gig border-to-border broadband connection which is owned by the city and acts as a revenue source for the city.

Mayor Herrmann asked a question regarding a situation which Alexander faces like Cabot. Neither of the cities own their water or wastewater utility. Mayor Herrmann asked how Cabot handled the problems it faced due to the open ditches and the collection of stormwater. Ms. Payseno replied that they partnered with a third party and worked on the partnership agreement which cost the city a lot of money that they had set aside for the water infrastructure. Mr. Stodola asked Ms. Payseno about how did Cabot work around the additional costs that have been added to the projects due to changes in the economy and if there were any set timelines that they had given to the public about the completion of these projects. Ms. Payseno replied that the costs were factored in during the initial pitch but even those costs have been met and exceeded. The sales tax is still on and has not closed yet. But to collect the necessary funds for the same, from an economic development standpoint, the city pursued taxes on retail products and services like restaurants and hospitality industry. She added that there were no set timelines for the projects themselves. There were timelines for the bonds, as to when the money should be used completely, but no set timelines were set for the construction. Mr. Stodola also asked what the total city sales tax was to which Ms. Payseno replied that it was 2% of the total price of the taxable goods or services. The city's millage rate was around 9 mills.

She also mentioned that it was important to keep a positive outlook and be receptive to learn what new things have been put to practice in our community and how they can be implemented in our cities. In her closing statements she reinforced the need to work as a region and help each other out.

Given the detailed nature of the presentation and the time required for discussion, it was decided to adjourn the meeting as the remaining items on the agenda were also covered in the Board Meeting.

5. Preview of Upcoming Meetings

- Wed, August 27th, 2025
 - 9:00 am: Small Cities Council Meeting
 - 10:00 am: Board of Directors Meeting

6. Adjourn

Mr. Arey made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Keck seconded it; the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 AM.