

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, January 9, 2019, to discuss budget updates.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:33 p.m. The meeting was held in room 201 of the Greenbelt Community Center, 15 Crescent Road.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Colin A. Byrd, Judith F. Davis, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; David Moran, Assistant City Manager; Jeff Williams (8:40 p.m.), Treasurer; Molly Porter, Community Planner; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Administrative Assistant.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Diane Oberg, Greenbelt News Review; Bill Orleans and others.

Mayor Jordan explained this is a pre-budget work session to get updates on the current year's budget.

Mr. Moran stated that many of the buildings are aging. The newer buildings, the Police Department and the Aquatic and Fitness Center, are over 25 years old. This year's project includes the Dam, the HVAC at the Greenbelt Theater and CDBG projects on Breezewood Drive and Cherrywood Lane. The Cherrywood Lane design award will be up for first reading on Monday's meeting agenda.

There was brief discussion on whether the Buddy Attick Park parking lot project should be completed after or during the Dam Project. Ms. Pope stated she didn't want the parking lot to be ruined if it was completed before the Dam Project. Mr. Putens stated that when the Dam Project is underway, the trucks would travel near Public Works and the recycle center area. Mayor Jordan added Public Works would need to be able to get in and out of the parking lot too.

Mr. Moran answered Mr. Putens's question advising the completion of the Dam Project could be six months or longer. The goal is to start the project this spring or early summer.

Mr. Moran answered Mayor Jordan's question advising the project will be completed in one phase.

Mr. Moran answered Ms. Davis's question advising the lake level will be low, three quarters of the path will still be open for usage, the parking lot will not be completely closed and there will be construction noise.

Ms. Ard answered Ms. Pope's question advising Mr. Sterling is aware of the sinkholes at Buddy Attick Park near the Lakecrest entrance and she will follow up with him to see if he knows the cause.

Mr. Moran answered Mayor Jordan's question advising the white coat to the outdoor pool is a project that should be started this spring and should be completed before the pool opens this summer.

There was a brief discussion on improvements at the Youth Center. Mr. Moran stated that Public

Works evaluates the assessment needs of the building. The Youth Center will need a full scale renovation. It is heavily used. Ms. Ard added there was a discussion with staff which included things that needed to be added to the budget and a replacement schedule.

Ms. Porter answered Mayor Jordan's question advising the Hanover Parkway pedestrian/bike project is in the planning stages. Mayor Jordan stated that Hanover Parkway is the longest street in the city and it isn't pedestrian/bike friendly.

Mr. Williams advised, as of today, the City is \$313,000 short and will not reach the adopted budget this year. He stated that the net is less than \$93,000, but it can change in a month. The City will not run a deficit.

There was a brief discussion on how high the assessment percentage increase was. Mayor Jordan asked did the Homeowner Associations (HOAs) need to appeal. Mr. Williams advised the individual home owners need to appeal.

Mr. Williams answered Mayor Jordan's question stating the fourth quarter was a strong quarter in Hotel Motel Tax. Ms. Davis asked with the Federal Government shutdown, will that affect the Hotel Motel Tax. Mr. Williams stated he didn't know how much that would affect it.

Mr. Williams answered Mayor Jordan's question stating the Cable Franchise Fees are on a decline. It peaked two years ago but has been dropping ever since.

Mr. Williams advised the City received the first of five estimated income tax payments from the State and they are \$60,000 higher. The interest is going up because the Fed's raised the rates.

Mr. Williams explained the expenditures are \$400,000 lower than budget due to the vacancies on July 1st. The LGIT insurance is \$17,000 lower and the Worker Compensation Insurance is \$133,000 lower also.

Council went through the Revenues – FY 2019 vs Historical Report line by line.

Mayor Jordan stated that the Grants are down from 5-10 years ago. He asked was that due to retirements. Mr. Williams stated that staff does not affect these grants.

Ms. Davis stated that the reason the Rec Camp fees were down was due to Circus Camp. Mr. Williams stated that the revenue and expenditures both were down. Ms. Davis asked was the Recreation Department looking at different ideas for camp. Ms. Ard stated the Recreation Department looks at its different camps periodically.

There was a brief discussion on the revenue for Youth Services. Ms. Ard stated the County contract was signed.

Mr. Williams answered Mayor Jordan's question stating there are 8 vacancies at the Police Department. Ms. Ard noted that a new officer is in the process of being hired and that the new IT civilian position is about to be advertised.

Mr. Williams answered Mayor Jordan's question stating that Ms. Palau requested two part time employees instead of one full time employee.

Ms. Ard answered Mayor Jordan's question advising the Animal Control Supervisor is a civilian position and is currently being advertised.

Ms. Ard answered Mayor Jordan's question advising they are still going through the applications for the Recreation Director.

Mayor Jordan asked how were the operating expenditures. Mr. Williams stated it was as expected.

Mayor Jordan stated that health care was going up. Mr. Williams advised it increased; the City pays 20% and staff pays 80%. Mr. Williams also said that health care was part of the percentage of staff salary and benefits.

Mr. Williams answered Mayor Jordan's question stating that he suspects it's going to be another good year with a surplus.

Council identified and discussed their individual priorities for the FY2020 budget:

Mr. Putens identified and discussed the office issues in the City Manager Office, Planning and Code Enforcement and CARES; the vacant office space in the Community Center. Mayor Jordan stated that the office issues at the Municipal Building be addressed sooner than later.

Ms. Mach identified and discussed the Economic Development Marketing Signage. Mayor Jordan stated that there were not as many signs as were previously discussed. There was a brief discussion on the amount of signage that was on Crescent Road near Buddy Attick Park.

Ms. Mach also identified and discussed the parking on Lakecrest Circle at Lakecrest Drive. She asked was it a city street and, if so, why is it a private parking lot.

Ms. Pope identified and discussed the Lakecrest Drive intersection due to citizens at the traffic light blocking other drivers; a second dog park, the dog park rules and regulations and the current dog park needs improvement. Mr. Putens stated that the current dog park should be cleaned up and be the model before the second dog park is built.

Ms. Davis identified and discussed raises for Council, increase the tree inventory and replacement of trees, boundary for Greenbelt Home Inc. (GHI) and the forest preserve, security cameras for Greenbelt East, a bucket truck for Public Works, hire a part-time arborist, the bus shelter at Greenway Shopping Center needs repairs, Greenbelt Connection should have extended evening hours. Mayor Jordan advised improvements to the entry way to Baltimore Washington Parkway on Southway. The bus 15X is no longer stopping in Greenbelt.

Ms. Davis also identified and discussed a line item for the Arts Advisory Board (AAB) budget, monthly E-newsletters and twice a year mailers instead of quarterly mailers.

Mr. Byrd identified and discussed increasing the Advisory Committee on Education (ACE) grant budget; new computers for the Springhill Lake Rec., and recording all work sessions. Ms. Mach stated that ACE presents their budget and will ask if it needs an increase.

Mayor Jordan identified and discussed making improvements to the inside of Springhill Lake Recreation Center; County funding the sidewalk on Branchville Road; bike rest station on trail; full time volunteer/grant coordinator, Hanover Parkway pedestrian/bike timer for the traffic lights, and Economic Development enterprise fund used as incentives.

Mr. Putens also identified and discussed security cameras, the animal shelter is in need of repairs, Economic Development and a part time Code Enforcement employee to assist at Springhill Lake Apartments.

Ms. Pope also identified and discussed the playground near the Nursery School needs a canopy over the swings, French Immersion School plans for office space deleted, and cancel the University of Maryland Shuttle passes.

Ms. Davis additionally identified and discussed the AAB public arts underpass project, placing lights on the bridge over the Baltimore Washington Parkway and a statue at Central Park, Greenbelt Station. Mayor Jordan advised a plaque should have been placed at the fall dedication and also a plaque at the Greenbelt Middle School.

Mayor Jordan also identified and discussed that the tennis courts need resurfacing.

Mr. Byrd also identified and discussed staff reaching out to the chairs of the advisory boards to see what funding they need. There was a brief discussion among Council. Ms. Pope said if the boards needed something, they would ask. Ms. Davis advised it depends on the committee. If it relates to a course or seminar related to the board, funds will be allocated.

Mr. Orleans asked and was provided answers to questions regarding tonight's work session not being recorded.

Information Items –

Mr. Putens requested a letter be written to Washington Gas referencing a gas leak and the residents weren't informed until after it was repaired.

Ms. Davis requested the Small Cell Ordinance be sent to the Maryland Municipal League (MML).

Additional informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Administrative Assistant*