

BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Discussion: The Final Review of the FY 2025 Proposed Budget.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:20 pm., held in Council Chambers and virtually via Zoom.

In attendance were: Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

City Staff: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Tim George, Assistant City Manager; Dawane Martinez, Director of Human Resources; Bertha Gaymon, City Treasurer; Brian Kim, Acting Director of Public Works; Dale Worley, Director of Information Technology; Chief Rick Bowers, Greenbelt Police Department; Terri Hruby, Director of Planning and Community Development; Greg Varda, Director of Recreations; Chondria Andres, Public Information and Communications Coordinator; Tyra Smith, Diversity Equity, and Inclusion Officer; Dr. Liz Park, Director of CARES and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.

Others present: Judith Davis, Michael Hartman and others

Council reviewed the proposed FY 2025 budget provided by City Manager Mr. Salmerón. FY 2025 Budget ensures alignment with the city's needs. The budget addressed financial constraints, funds specific positions, provides cost-of-living wage increases, and supports the Compensation Study. Council also discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on real estate revenues and need to adapt to reduced revenue projections. They emphasized the importance of exceptional service and plan to hold a work session to discuss their goals and objectives.

Council discussed proposed budget changes including Ms. Gaymon's suggestions to reduce abatements and reallocate funds from the Refugee Assistance Program. The focus on revenues, expenses, fund balance goal and reserve policy, highlighting key budget drivers. They also addressed microphone issues and upcoming Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) expected in 2026 noting further discussion opportunities would arise.

Council discussed streamlining Discretionary Grants, with Mayor Jordan proposing to consolidate them into a single line item for greater efficiency. They considered funding for Advisory Boards and Committees, but decided to be cautious with taxpayer money and revisit the matter in the next budget cycle. Council agreed on a process for advisory groups to apply for funds and highlighted the need for improved training for specific committees.

Austin Gibbs, founder of Greenbelt SITY Stars has requested \$34,900 grant from the Council for a trip to Japan for 12 children including training and equipment. Council noted that grant

requests are usually due in January or February so this will be considered in the following budget process. They agreed to review the application and share it with Mr. Varda for further evaluation.

Mayor Jordan has proposed consolidating funding for most boards into a single pool, with the exceptions of the Advisory Committee on Education (ACE) Grants and the Reparations Committee. There is also debate on whether to maintain the 2050 Carbon Neutrality goal recommended by the Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability or to aim for a more ambitious target of 2030. Council prefers to stick with the 2050 goal unless a comprehensive climate plan indicates that an earlier target is feasible.

Council is considering funding for a new trailer for CERT and raising the annual subsidy for the Greenbelt Cinema. They aim to replace CERT's old trailer with a versatile one. While acknowledging inflation's impact on the Cinema's costs Ms. Weaver proposed a one-time increase of \$25,000 pending a Comprehensive Plan from Dr. McGrath for long-term sustainability.

Michael Hartman suggested the City support the theater through In-Kind services and social media outreach instead of cash payments. Council's discussion also covered plans for bond funds to improve the theater facilities. Noting that care be taken to minimize disruption to ongoing operations.

Judith Davis, Greenbelt East inquired about the retiree prescription subsidy which Ms. Gaymon confirmed would remain at \$65,000 though the number of retirees using it is uncertain. Mr. Salmerón clarified that funding for Red Oak mitigation program previously thought to be unbudgeted is included in the Chesapeake Trust \$89,000.00 grant for this fiscal year.

Council commended the team's budget efforts and announced a public hearing for May 29, 2024. Mr. Gibbs invited all to the Greenbelt SITY Stars performance on May 18, 2024. They discussed data collection improvements, equity in transportation, and reviewed upcoming sessions, including the Reparations Commission. They also considered a funding request from CRAB and emphasized clear meeting agendas.

Informational Items

Chief Bowers updated Council on a May 14, 2024 incident near the Community Church. Ms. Weaver reported from the Transportation Planning Board meeting and Mayor Jordan announced a Historic Preservation meeting on May 21, 2024 about the Dora Kennedy French Immersion School formerly Greenbelt High School. Ms. Hruby also shared staff will attend the conference.

The meeting ended at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

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Deputy City Clerk