BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL
Held Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Discussion: **Overview, Revenues & General Government, Other Funds Non-Departmental & Fund Transfers, Economic Development, FY 2026 Proposed Budget**.

Mayor Jordan started meeting at 7:30 p.m., held in Council Chambers and virtually via Zoom.

In attendance: Councilmembers Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompi, 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, Human Resource Director; Bertha Gaymon, Treasurer; Chondria Andrews, Public Information and Communication Coordinator; Tyra Smith, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer (DEI); John Mason, Economic Development Manager; Brian Kennell, Acting Information Technology Director; Cary Eure, Grants Coordinator; Gizelle Alvarez, Constituent Services Coordinator; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.

Others present: Judith Davis, Michael Hartman, Bill Orleans and others.

Mayor Jordan explained the proposed FY2026 budget was presented to Council on Monday and provided an overview of budget process including nine (9) budget work sessions and two (2) public hearings before the budget is adopted and passed on June 2. The proposed FY2026 budget is on the City's website.
Mayor Jordan pointed out that the proposed FY2026 overall budget is $52.53 million, which includes $40,215,900 in the General Fund, $7,412,260 in the Capital Project Fund, and $4,905,800 in Other Funds. He thanked Mr. Salmerón for presenting the Council with a balanced budget with merits and cost of living included.

General Government

Mr. Salmerón provided an overview of the FY2026 proposed budget overview, which includes growth in revenue in property taxes; however, it hasn't been consistent in previous years. In a time of uncertainty, this means more property taxes for the residents. Mayor Jordan stated that the City's proposed tax rate remains stable at .8275%, and Mr. Salmerón noted that the tax rate has remained the same for the last seven years, and there were no proposed changes.

Council

Mr. Salmerón stated no noticeable changes in Council's proposed FY2026 budget. He noted that under professional services line 30, on page 101, the cost reduction was placed back in the budget, and the budget comments will be updated to reflect that change.

City Manager's Office

Mr. Salmerón stated no noticeable changes in City Clerk, DEI and Grants' proposed FY2026 budget. He noted increases in personnel wages increase. Mr. Salmerón explained that there was an increase in Elections Fund's proposed FY 2026 budget to include Temporary Services and Notices to support Voter Engagement initiatives. There was a reduction to Legal Services due to completion of Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), Municipal Building based on maintenance of building, structure and Greenbelt Armory Funds due to maintenance and upkeep.

- On page 130, Ms. Weaver inquired about the increase from $4,770 to $8,000 in line item 37 regarding Notices and Publications. Mr. Salmerón answered that the rise in mailings and outreach is expensive for the upcoming November 4, 2025, election.

Mayor Jordan and Mr. Salmerón discussed:

- On page 131 the expenses of legal services, recodification, charter review and legislation review. Ms. Pompi added the item of City's lawsuit against Prince George's County regarding the Fire Department.

- Brief discussion regarding the Greenbelt Armory. Mr. Salmerón explained that city was being billed for water services and had that shut off. Staff would install a tarp on the roof as a preventative measure.

Ms. McKinney and Mr. Salmerón offered having activities at Greenbelt Armory may be best way to deter vandalism. Mr. Roberts stated that funds should have been used to fix roof and water damage instead of purchasing cameras.

Mr. Salmerón noted that remediation of Greenbelt Armory is $13 million. Mr. George added that the cost of demolishing the building is $1 million. Staff will provide Council with report.

Operational and Support Services

Ms. Gaymon provided an update on the Finance Department budget increase of $600 in salary costs. She shared that Finance Department was reduced by $30,800 because of elimination of the old accounting system.

Ms. Gaymon provided an update on Human Resources Department budget for an increase of $89,000 and implementation of new Human Resources Information System, Paycor.

Ms. Gaymon presented updates on Information Technology budget, an increase of $17,600 in personnel salaries. Information Technology (IT) budget was reduced last fiscal year due to $104,700 computer expenses being decreased by $21,500, which will be absorbed by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund.

Mayor Jordan recommended quantifying management objectives more making them timebound. Mr. Salmerón agreed and requested that a meeting be scheduled with the Council to revisit the Council's framework and goals.

Public Information and Community Promotion

Ms. Andrews provided updates on the Public Information Department increase of $36,200,00:

- line 34, an increase of $10,000 covers the interpreting services, studio equipment maintenance and website and studio maintenance.
- line 37 increase of $2,000 for Greenbelt News Review weekly full-page ads, City Connecter production and postage
- line 45 increases $7,650, covers memberships and subscriptions
- and line 58 increases $11,000 to support City events.

Ms. McKinney and Ms. Andrews discussed follow up with Council to see whether the public can elect to have a hard copy of the City Connector or a digital copy and if the cost would be cheaper.

Mayor Jordan suggested including completion date of website in the management objectives and city's rebranding style guide. Ms. Andrews explained the website migration process. She offered that it should be completed by June 30, 2025. Mr. Salmerón shared that Ms. Andrews has conducted "Lunch and Learns" across various departments for rebranding style guide to have a uniform look for our city.

Bill Orleans, a Greenbelt resident and Mr. Salmerón agreed that significant cuts to FY2026 proposed budget were across organization. Concerning the funds when available to notifications, publications and positions in the Recreation Department.

Judith Davis, Greenbelt East and Mr. Salmerón discussed all updated documentation would be uploaded to the city's website under Finance Department section.

He added that there was a reduction in the Recreation Department training section; however, there was an increase in training for the Administration and Public Information.

- On page 105, Ms. Davis suggested including petitions received and resolved as a performance measure. On page 113, Ms. Davis inquired about funds regarding Program Open Space. Ms. Salmerón stated that the City had received funds from Program Open Space, and the funds were represented in 2024. The city is anticipating applying for the FY2026 funding. The State of Maryland is proposing to make changes to that program.

- On page 105, Mayor Jordan and Ms. Weaver suggested including percentage or closure goals for the Council's referrals.

Michael Hartman, 2 Gardenway Ms. Andrews reported that City Connector is currently issued in English only at $5,000 per issue and including a Spanish version of the Connector is one of her goals. Mr. Salmerón added that translating Connector into Spanish would double the cost. He also explained challenges of Spanish media outreach.

A discussion regarding AI translations. Mr. Kennell explained that the IT Department is researching licensing and the cost of translation and interpretation services.

Economic Development

Mr. Mason stated that the Economic Development Department's proposed FY2026 budget increased by $12,900, and he provided the Council an update on the department, which included the following initiatives: Economic Development Strategic Plan, the CRM – Salesforce, and the Business Engagement Programming.

Mayor Jordan recommended quantifying the following management objectives: implement comprehensive business retention and expansion strategies to cultivate, grow, and support local business and development with a complete marketing campaign strategy that focuses on the attraction of new business investment (attraction), the growth and resiliency of existing Greenbelt businesses (retention and expansion), and then provide data new increase that highlights the impact ED successes has had on the economic health of the community.

Non-Departmental Fund

Ms. Gaymon provided an update on the Non-Department Fund, which is supported by the General Fund and is currently budgeted at $1,897,000, mostly Worker's Compensation.

She explained that workers' compensation is budgeted in three departments:

- Public safety
- Public work
- and Recreation

Ms. Gaymon added that other special programs are funding in this account also:

- Friends of Greenbelt Theatre Subsidy at $7,5000.
- The Homeowner Investment Program at $10,000
- Renter's Credit at $5,000,
- Unallocated Appropriation Fund at $30,000 and will be reduced to $12,000.

Ms. Weaver and Mr. Salmerón discussions regarding subsidies, medical and prescription insurance will be revisited during open enrollment and renewal process.

Mayor Jordan and Ms. Gaymon shared that CARES department manages the Homeowners Investment program.

Fund Transfers

Ms. Gaymon provided an update on Fund Transfers, which is $3,038,100, that was transferred from the General Fund Balance to cover the cost. Mr. Salmerón and Ms. Gaymon discussed how to present the Fund Transfers for the next budget cycle.

Ms. Davis and Ms. Gaymon discussed currently there are 44 retirees that receive subsidies. Ms. Gaymon promised to rely on how many renters receive piggyback credit and whether home buys credit buyback for employees is not budgeted.

There was a discussion regarding the Revolving Loan Fund.

Other Funds

Ms. Gaymon provided an update on the Other Funds, which includes the Cemetery Fund, Debt Services, and Special Projects.

Replacement Fund

Mr. George provided an update on the proposed $1,231,500 Replacement Fund, which included a new EV Packer trash truck that is proposed to cost $685,000.

Ms. Knesel and Mr. George said the Mowers purchased with ARPA funds were for the ballfields and listing Replacement Fund are more extensive and designed for larger fields.

Ms. Davis noted:

- no page numbers in the proposed FY2026 Replacement Fund section.
- budget comments needed to be corrected because the line items are listed with zeros, and comments state amounts.

Council thanked the staff for all their hard work.

Informational Items

Mr. Salmerón informed the Council that he met with the AMR team and the Town of Berwyn Heights staff to discuss the ambulance and medical services. He stated that staff are ready to schedule a meeting for AMR team to make a presentation. Mayor Jordan suggested having a joint meeting with Town of Berwyn Heights. Ms. Pompi suggested having presentation at a Four Cities meeting.

A discussion on rescheduling the Four Cities Meeting. Mr. Salmerón indicated that he would attending a city manager's conference and unable to attend on April 24, 2025. Both Mayor Jordan and Ms. Pope would be out of town and unable to participate.

A suggested town hall on proposed FY2026 Budget. Mayor Jordan stated he was open to having the town hall on Saturday or Sunday. Ms. Knesel requested to explore having the town hall at a different location. Ms. Weaver suggested having the town hall on Saturday, May 3, 2025. The meeting ended at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen

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Deputy City Clerk