

REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held December 9, 2024.

Mayor Jordan called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Danielle P. McKinney, Jennifer A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Kristen L.K. Weaver, and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

ALSO PRESENT were Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Timothy George, Assistant City Manager; Brian Kim, Acting Public Works Director; Chondria Andrews, Public Information Officer; Jamarie Spencer, Production Assistant; and Bonita Anderson, City Clerk.

Mayor Jordan asked for a moment of silence in honor of those who recently passed, Regina K. Murphy, Dorothy “Dottie” Anne Spivacke, and Stephen E. Donn. Mayor Jordan then led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

PETITIONS AND REQUESTS:

Bob Rand, a resident, expressed his support for the JEDI Action Team memorandum but disagreed with the censure approach. He suggested that, moving forward, any such behavior should be addressed immediately in accordance with the Council Standing Rules.

Scott Legendre, a resident, in a letter read by Councilmember Pope, expressed that he is not in favor of the proposed process from the JEDI Action Team, further emphasizing the importance of adhering to the proper process in handling this matter.

Keith Jahoda, a resident, agreed with Mr. Legendre’s letter and emphasized that the matter should have been handled internally at the staff level.

Michael Hartman, a resident, expressed his appreciation to City staff for their dedication and efforts in the distribution and management of ARPA funds.

Clara Kuehn, a resident, expressed her support for Councilmember Roberts and voiced her dismay regarding the memorandum issued by the JEDI Action Team.

Mary Canter, a resident, noted that Councilmember Roberts behaved inappropriately but it was nothing egregious or that warranted censure.

Bill Orleans, a resident, requested the email from Mayor Pro Tem Weaver, which initiated the process of addressing Councilmember Roberts’s behavior and comments directed at a city employee during a public meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA: It was moved by Ms. Knesel to remove item #31, “The SPACE Workforce Development Grant,” seconded by Ms. Pompei, that the consent agenda be approved as amended. The motion passed 7-0.

Council thereby took the following actions:

COMMITTEE REPORTS

City Council Referral - Multilingual Welcome Sign at City: Council accepted the report.

Senior Citizens Advisory Committee - 2024 Annual Open Forum Report: Council accepted the report.

NEW RECOGNITION GROUP BASIC CERTIFICATION REQUEST- GREENBELT ULTIMATE FRISBEE: Council approved the application.

APPOINTMENT TO ADVISORY BOARD/COMMITTEE: Council appointed Michael Burchick to the Advisory Committee on Education.

REAPPOINTMENT TO ADVISORY BOARD/COMMITTEE: Council reappointed Jane Young to the Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Environmental Sustainability for a new term.

RESIGNATION FROM ADVISORY BOARD/COMMITTEE: Council accepted Michael Lee's resignation from the Park and Recreation Advisory Board.

MEETINGS: Council approved the meeting schedule.

STAKEHOLDER LIST: Council approved the stakeholder list.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBERS TO METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD AND POLICY COMMITTEES: Council approved the 2025 Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments appointments.

FOOD INSECURITY GRANTS (5): Council authorized the City Manager to enter into MOUs with Capital Area Food Bank (\$24,000); Meals on Wheels (\$72,000); Master Touch (\$12,000); St. Hugh's Food Pantry (\$76,000); and Holiday Boxes (\$20,000).

REPARATIONS RESEARCH/GENEALOGY CONTRACT: Council approved the funding for the research and genealogy work for \$75,000.

NON-PROFIT GRANT APPROVAL FOR FAVOR'S TABLE: Council approved the grant award for \$10,000 to the Favor's Table non-profit organization.

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT FOR A ONE YEAR EXTENSION TO 12/31/2025 TO VERRA MOBILITY RED LIGHT AGREEMENT: Council authorized the City Manager to execute a one-year contract extension amendment to the Verra Mobility Red Light Agreement effective 1/1/2025.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mr. Roberts moved to Special Order item #14, "Addressing Unbecoming Conduct of a Councilmember per Council Standing Rules," to be the next item for discussion. Ms. Pope seconded. Mayor Jordan moved to approve the agenda as amended, Ms. Pope seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

Addressing Unbecoming Conduct of a Councilmember per Council Standing Rules: The Council, along with the public, discussed the behavior of Mr. Roberts, who made critical comments about City employees during a public meeting. The debate centered on whether his actions violated Council rules and whether the matter should be addressed publicly. Some members, including Bob Rudd and Robert

Snyder, supported Mr. Roberts, emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives and arguing that Council should not overreact to his remarks. The conversation concluded with a discussion on the need to establish a formal process for addressing such issues going forward.

The Council discussed a personnel issue regarding Councilmember Roberts's behavior towards City staff. Mr. Roberts argued that his rights were violated and that the matter should have been handled through the City Manager and HR. He also criticized the JEDI team, claiming they tarnished his reputation in the Greenbelt News Review and exerted undue influence over Council. Mr. Roberts suggested dismantling the JEDI team altogether. Council also considered the need for a more formalized process to handle similar situations in the future.

Kathy Legendre expressed concerns about Councilmember Roberts's rude and insulting behavior towards staff in a public meeting, questioning their skills and capacity. She emphasized that such conduct is unbecoming of a councilmember and should be addressed by the presiding officer, with support from the rest of Council. If necessary, the offending member should be removed from the meeting. While Council's Standing Rules do not specify further consequences for violating these standards, she stressed that it is the responsibility of the City Council to address inappropriate behavior, at the very least through a public rebuke. The JEDI Action team highlighted that such behavior negatively affects employee morale, creativity, and participation. Ms. Legendre noted that, as emphasized in the JEDI audit process, the impact of actions matters more than intent. The behavior of elected officials sets the tone for a supportive and inclusive environment. She suggested that Council formalize expectations for member behavior and establish clear consequences for misconduct, either through the Standing Rules or in a separate code of conduct.

Ms. Weaver moved for a public rebuke of Mr. Rodney Roberts for conduct unbecoming a councilmember, including making disparaging and insulting comments about City staff in a public meeting and negatively impacting the morale and productivity of staff and the overall environment in which the City functions. Ms. Pompei seconded. The motion passed 5-2. (Ms. Pope and Mr. Roberts)

PRESENTATIONS:

Human Rights Day Proclamation: Mayor Jordan presented a proclamation declaring December 10th Human Rights Day.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS:

Statement for the Record – Closed Session of June 27, 2024: Ms. Weaver moved that in accordance with the General Provisions Article, Section 3-06(C)(2) of the *Annotated Code of Public General Laws of Maryland*, the minutes of tonight's Meeting reflect that Council met in closed session on Thursday, June 27, 2024, at 7:33 p.m., in the Municipal Building Library and virtually via Zoom. Council held this closed meeting in accordance with Section 3-305(1)(7)(8) and (10) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland: 1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals; 2) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter; 3) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation; and 4) to discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans.

The purpose of this meeting was to 1) to address personnel matters over which this body has jurisdiction; 2) to consult with counsel and staff about pending or potential litigation; and 3) to discuss the deployment of fire department staff.

Vote to close the session:

	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Knesel	X			
Ms. McKinney	X			
Ms. Pompei	X			
Ms. Pope				X
Mr. Roberts	X			
Ms. Weaver	X			
Mayor Jordan	X			

The following staff members was attendance: Josué Salmerón, City Manager, and Todd Pounds, Legal Counsel. Other individuals in attendance: Chief Tommy Ray, Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department.

Council took the following action: voted to authorize filing an injunction and temporary restraining order to prevent fire department staffing changes from going into effect (7-0).

Ms. Pompei seconded.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Knesel	- Yes
Ms. McKinney	- Yes
Ms. Pompei	- Yes
Ms. Pope	- Abstain
Mr. Roberts	- No
Ms. Weaver	- Yes
Mayor Jordan	- Yes

Statement for the Record – Closed Session of July 8, 2024: Ms. Weaver moved that in accordance with the General Provisions Article, Section 3-06(C)(2) of the *Annotated Code of Public General Laws of Maryland*, the minutes of tonight's Meeting reflect that Council met in closed session on Monday, July 08, 2024, at 7:02 p.m., in the Municipal Building Library. Council held this closed meeting accordance with Section 3-305(b)(1)(8) and (10) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland: 1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals; and 2) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation; and to discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including: (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and (ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss options for responding to staffing changes at Greenbelt and Berwyn Heights fire stations, including recruitment and retention options.

Vote to close the session:

	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Knesel				X
Ms. McKinney	X			
Ms. Pompei	X			
Ms. Pope	X			
Mr. Roberts	X			
Ms. Weaver	X			
Mayor Jordan	X			

The following staff member was in attendance: Josué Salmerón, City Manager.

Other individuals in attendance: None

Council took the following actions: None

Ms. McKinney seconded.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Knesel	- Yes
Ms. McKinney	- Yes
Ms. Pompei	- Yes
Ms. Pope	- Abstain
Mr. Roberts	- Yes
Ms. Weaver	- Yes
Mayor Jordan	- Yes

Statement for the Record – Closed Session of October 28, 2024: Ms. Weaver moved that in accordance with the General Provisions Article, Section 3-06(C)(2) of the *Annotated Code of Public General Laws of Maryland*, the minutes of tonight's Meeting reflect that Council met in closed session on Monday, October 28, 2024, at 10:28 p.m., in Council Chambers. Council held this closed meeting in accordance with Section 3-305-(b)(1)(8) and (10) of the General Provisions Article of the Annotated Code of the Public General Laws of Maryland: 1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals; 2) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation; and 3) to discuss public security, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to the public or to public security, including (i) the deployment of fire and police services and staff; and 9ii) the development and implementation of emergency plans.

Vote to close the session:

	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
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Ms. Knesel	X			
Ms. McKinney	X			
Ms. Pompei	X			
Ms. Pope	X			
Mr. Roberts		X		
Ms. Weaver	X			
Mayor Jordan	X			

Staff member in attendance: Josué Salmerón, City Manager

Other individuals in attendance: None

Council took the following actions during this session: authorized the City Manager to pursue an appeal of the lawsuit related to fire department staffing changes (6-1, Mr. Roberts).

Ms. McKinney seconded.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Knesel - Yes
Ms. McKinney - Yes
Ms. Pompei - Yes
Ms. Pope - Yes
Mr. Roberts - Yes
Ms. Weaver - Yes
Mayor Jordan - Yes

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS: Mr. Salmerón provided updates on several key topics, including the fire department's activities, the upcoming launch of a new CRM application utilizing Salesforce, and the finalization of the FY 2024 audit. He also addressed concerns regarding frequent pipe breaks in the City's water system and discussed the ongoing response from our partners at WSSC.

LEGISLATION:

Ordinance of the Council of the City of Greenbelt Amending Chapter 8 "Elections" of the City Code to Add § 8-14 "Vacancies on Council" To Implement Procedures for Filling Vacancies on the Council Relative to the Next Regular Election, And to Provide the Voters of the City to Participate in the Process: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments.

Ms. Weaver introduced the ordinance for first reading.

Charter Amendment Resolution of the Council of the City of Greenbelt to Amend §32 "Vacancies on Council" To Change the Procedure for Filling Vacancies on the Council by Following Procedures in Newly Enacted § 8-14 Of Chapter 8 of the City Code: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments.

Ms. Weaver introduced the charter amendment resolution for first reading.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Legislative Issue Tracking: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments. Ms. McKinney requested this item to be added to the agenda to discuss the need for a legislative issue tracking tool. The goal of this tool is to improve organization and enhance transparency for the community.

Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Contract for Website Redesign and Services: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments. Chondria Andrews, Public Information Officer, introduced CivicPlus representative Liz Vesta, who presented to Council the website redesign project, emphasizing accessibility and public engagement. The presentation included a discussion on the use of a content management system and the possibility of a beta launch.

Ms. Pompei moved that Council authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with CivicPlus for the website redesign and related services for \$44,878.99. Ms. Pope seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

Authorizing the City Manager to Approve Purchase of IRIS Mainline Camera from Insight Vision: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments. Brian Kim, Acting Public Works Director, provided a brief overview of the IRIS Mainline Camera, highlighting its advanced features that align with the City's operational goals and needs.

Ms. Knesel moved that Council authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with Insight Vision, Inc. for the purchase of the IRIS Mainline Camera for \$37,787.00. Ms. Pompei seconded. The motion passed 6-1. (Mr. Roberts)

Authorizing the City Manager to execute a contract for Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure at the Community Center Parking Lot: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments. Mayor Jordan moved that Council authorize the contract with Blue Whale EV, LLC for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations at the Community Center/Library parking lot for \$225,735.30, of which \$195,735.30 will be covered using ARPA funds, and \$30,000 will be funded through Bond Bill allocations. Ms. Weaver seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

Authorizing the City Manager to execute the purchase of Basketball Court Solar Lights: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments. Ms. Pope moved that Council authorize the City Manager to purchase solar lights for the new basketball courts at Springhill Lake Recreation Center for \$10,999. Ms. Weaver seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

ARPA Status Update: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments. Mr. George updated Council on the progress of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded initiatives, noting that 92% of the projects have either been completed or are under contract. Mr. Salmerón discussed challenges with the animal shelter project, which saw its costs double unexpectedly. The team is exploring alternative solutions, including improving the existing shelter or upgrading water fountains in City parks. He also mentioned a special meeting scheduled for December 18th to finalize contracts and address remaining unallocated funds.

Council Activities:

- 19 November: The SPACE Open House (Knesel, Pompei, Pope)
- 20 November: Parent support project meeting (Pope)
- 20 November: Transportation Planning Board meeting (Weaver)
- 20 November: Park and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting (Weaver)

- 21 November: Prince George's County Municipal Association Monthly meeting (In-person – Jordan, Pompei; virtual – Weaver)
- 22 November: PGCMA Legislative Consultant meeting (Pompi)
- 25 November: PGCMA Legislative Committee meeting (Jordan, Pompei)
- 25 November: New Deal Cafe Quarterly Membership meeting (Pompi, Weaver)
- 25 November: Maryland Black Mayors Association meeting (Jordan)
- 26 November: Councilmember Watson Community Turkey Giveaway (Jordan, Pompei)
- 26 November: Greenbelt Advisory Committee for Environmental Sustainability meeting (Weaver)
- 26 November: Senior Citizen Advisory Committee meeting (Pope)
- 28 November: Gobble Wobble (Jordan, Knesel, Pope, Weaver)
- 30 November: American Legion Craft Bazaar (Knesel, Pope, Weaver)
- 1 December: Art Reception at New Deal Cafe (Jordan, Weaver)
- 1 December: Greenbelt Concert Band Performance (Jordan, Weaver)
- 1 December: Greenbriar Tree Lighting (Jordan)
- 2 December: PGCMA Legislative Committee Meeting (Jordan, Pompei)
- 3 December: District 22 Legislative Dinner (Jordan, Knesel, McKinney, Pope, Pompei, Roberts, Weaver)
- 4 December: Metro Washington Air Quality Committee meeting (Weaver)
- 4 December: Greenbelt Library's Open House: Exploring the Tugwell Collection (Jordan)
- 4 December: CHEARS Great Food Transition Meal (Jordan)
- 4 December: Maryland Mayors Executive Committee meeting (Jordan)
- 5 December: Maryland Municipal League State of the Municipality event (Jordan, Pompei)
- 5 December: Elizabeth Seton Open House (Jordan)
- 5 December: Greenbelt Rotary Club meeting (Weaver)
- 6 December: DMV Mayor's Meeting with NOAA Secretary (Jordan)
- 6 December: Roosevelt Center Tree Lighting (Jordan, Knesel, McKinney, Pompei, Pope, Weaver)
- 6 December: Greenbelt Museum Deco the Halls (Jordan, Weaver)
- 7 December: Winter Wonderland (Knesel, McKinney, Pompei, Weaver)
- 7 December: Mission BBQ Holiday brunch (Jordan, Pope)
- 8 December: Greenbelt Station Pavilion Lighting (McKinney, Weaver)
- 8 December: Sparkle Mart (Jordan, Knesel, Pompei, Weaver, Pope)
- 9 December: City Staff Holiday Door Decorating Contest (Knesel, McKinney, Pope)
- 9 December: Metro Washington Council of Governments Audit Committee meeting (Jordan)
- 9 December: Meeting with Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Region (Jordan)
- 10 December: Employee Holiday Party (Jordan, Pope, Knesel, McKinney, Pompei)
- 12 December: COPS vs. KIDS basketball game (Pope, Knesel, Jordan, Weaver, Pompei, McKinney)
- 14 December: GIVES meeting and Holiday gathering (Pope)

THE SPACE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANT: Mayor Jordan read the agenda comments. Ms. Knesel explained that she removed the item from the consent agenda due to a conflict of interest, requiring her to abstain from voting. Ms. Weaver then moved for Council to approve \$50,000 in funding to support continued operations for the Workforce Development Center (WDC) and an Entrepreneur Incubator Lab (ELab) in Greenbelt West. The focus of the funding would be on employment, career development, and new small business formation, particularly for young adults. Ms. McKinney seconded.

The motion passed 6-0-1. (Ms. Knesel)

ADJOURNMENT: The Mayor adjourned the regular meeting of December 9, 2024, at 11:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonita Anderson
City Clerk

"I hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct report of the regular meeting of the City Council of Greenbelt, Maryland, held December 9, 2024.

Emmett V. Jordan
Mayor