

BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, to meet with the Recognition Groups to discuss the FY 2026 Proposed Budget.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:32 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 25 Crescent Road, and virtually via Zoom.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Danielle P. McKinney, Silke I. Pope, Rodney M. Roberts, Amy E. Knesel, Jenni A. Pompei (joined the meeting at 7:39 p.m.), Kristen L. K. Weaver, and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Josue Salmeron, City Manager; Bertha Gaymon, City Treasurer; Greg Varda, Director of Recreation; and Tyra Smith, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer.

ALSO, PRESENT WERE: Representatives of each Recognition Group; and others.

In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Mr. Varda explained that the Grant Review Panel is composed of five Advisory Board or Committee members who evaluate applications and submit funding recommendations to Council. He explained there are three different levels of Recognition Group status - Basic Certification (in-kind services), Project Grants, and Operational Grants. This year's panel found all applications worthy of support. Recognition Group funding requests totaled \$153,375, while the available FY26 budget is \$120,400. To balance the budget, staff applied a scaled funding model based on application scores.

Mr. Salmerón noted the value that Recognition Groups bring to the City, estimating their work saves the City hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Council met with the following groups and people to discuss funding requests:

GRACE: Frank Gervasi and Joyce Campbell represented GRACE in person. Mr. Gervasi shared that the group currently maintains two furnished apartments to support refugee families, though recent departures and current immigration challenges have made new placements difficult. GRACE continues to assist families locally and abroad, including in Lebanon and Afghanistan. Mr. Varda provided an overview of the group's grant score and funding eligibility.

In response to Council questions, Mr. Gervasi confirmed GRACE's ongoing relationship with GHI for apartment leases and noted the organization has maintained a fundraising surplus to support future arrivals. Councilmembers discussed the current number of Greenbelt residents served and whether funding levels should shift in light of reduced local placements. Mr. Gervasi emphasized that funds are reimbursable and the group remains prepared to welcome additional families. Ms. Pope thanked GRACE for their continued efforts.

Greenbelt Babe Ruth: Ian Gleason represented the group virtually through Zoom. He provided an overview of Greenbelt Babe Ruth noting the group's primary request this year is for updated equipment and uniforms. In past years, much of the funding was used for field upkeep, but with anticipated renovations to Braden Field, they hope to shift focus to league and umpire fees, which have increased post-pandemic.

Mr. Varda shared the group's grant score and corresponding funding eligibility. In response to Council questions, Mr. Gleason confirmed they are fully equipped for uniforms this season. Mayor Jordan thanked the group and asked to be kept informed of upcoming home games.

Greenbelt Business Alliance: Mona Reza represented the group virtually via Zoom. She shared plans to expand community engagement by reviving last year's outreach efforts and building excitement around the business directory and local voting campaign.

Mr. Varda reviewed the group's grant score. Ms. Reza noted that while they would prefer full funding, they managed last year with supplemental personal contributions and may look to raising gala ticket prices or exploring other venues to offset any shortfalls. They continue to meet monthly, are hoping to grow memberships, and planning to launch a new coffee connections program. Mayor Jordan thanked them for their work.

CHEARS: Carolyn Lambright Davis and members of the board presented on behalf of CHEARS in person. Mr. Varda clarified that CHEARS is a Basic Certification group receiving in-kind services rather than grant funding. The group shared a presentation on their recent projects, including the Three Sisters Garden and work with students at Springhill Lake Elementary.

Ms. Davis requested a reduction in the commercial kitchen rental rate from \$50 to \$25 per hour. Mayor Jordan suggested exploring options to address the request. Council expressed appreciation for CHEARS' contributions to the community.

Greenbelt Soccer Alliance: Jonas Cadwallader and Scott Borg represented the Greenbelt Soccer Alliance in person. They shared that GSA serves youth from kindergarten to age 15, with players running 1.5 to 3 miles per practice. The organization is fully volunteer-run and provides basic medical training for coaches. Most funding supports insurance, taxes, and equipment. After experiencing theft from their storage shed last season, the community helped replenish supplies. Mr. Varda reviewed the group's grant score and eligibility.

Mr. Cadwallader noted a decline in participation from 160 to 120 players and challenges in securing indoor space for winter activities. Despite this, all players get game time, and interest continues to grow in neighboring areas.

Greenbelt Concert Band: Danielle Celdran represented the Greenbelt Concert Band. She shared updates on their rebranding efforts, including a new logo and tagline, and noted the group's continued engagement in local events. While they will not perform at the City's Fourth of July event this year, three other concerts are planned.

The group currently uses funding to support their music director and may require additional storage as they expand. Mr. Varda explained they are not part of the standard grant process and instead submit a separate request. Council recommended reintegrating them into the regular grant cycle moving forward.

Greenbelt Boys & Girls Club: Dr. Orin Howard represented the group virtually. He outlined

their sports offerings and highlighted that Greenbelt's funding allows them to provide the lowest program costs in Prince George's County. Each sport includes seven scholarships supported by City funds. Mr. Varda shared the grant score and funding eligibility.

Dr. Howard noted increased equipment and uniform costs, which they now manage through international purchasing. He also mentioned the Club is seeking additional grants and manages costs related to administration and awards.

Greenbelt Youth Baseball Little League: Patrick Keaton represented the Youth Baseball Little League in person. He reported 214 players registered for the spring season. The league uses various fields in the City and County, and now requires each family to volunteer 15 hours. Mr. Varda shared the group's grant score and funding amount.

He noted umpire costs are rising and encouraged parent volunteers to help offset expenses. Uniforms remain one of their largest costs. The league is preparing for future concession opportunities once Braden Field renovations are complete.

Information Items

Council briefly discussed upcoming meetings with additional Recognition Groups. Mayor Jordan shared an update from the Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department regarding a pilot response program using bicycles and noted an upcoming announcement from the County about modifying firefighter staffing protocols.

Councilmember Pompi informed Council that Prince George's County rescinded approximately \$2 million in nonprofit grant funding and requested that staff monitor any potential impacts to Greenbelt-based organizations. The City Manager stated he would look into the list of affected nonprofits.

Mayor Jordan also reminded attendees that tomorrow is Bike to Work Day.

The meeting ended at 9:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyra Smith,
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Officer