

BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held on Monday, May 19, 2025, to meet with the Recognition Groups (Group 2) to discuss the FY 2026 Proposed Budget.

Mayor Jordan called the meeting to order at 7:30 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, 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; Nicole DeWald, Arts Supervisor; and Tyra Smith, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer.

ALSO, PRESENT WERE: Representatives of each Recognition Group; and members of the public.

In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Ms. DeWald outlined the grant review process and reiterated that all applications received were deemed worthy of support.

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

Black History and Culture Committee: Dr. Rosado and Joe Parks (virtual) shared highlights from Emancipation Day and Black History Month programs. The group collaborates with the Recreation Department and Prince George's Memorial Project, aiming to uplift African American history and culture through high-attendance events. Mr. Parks noted increased youth leadership within the committee. They are a Basic Certification group and did not request funding.

Greenbelt Community Orchestra: Anne Gardner (in person) and Sara Wissel (virtual) spoke on their seasonal performances and focus on living composers, including women and minority artists. The group collaborates with local school bands and has begun paying conductors to enhance quality. They have added membership dues and are pursuing sponsorships to sustain programming. Ms. DeWald shared their grant score. Councilmembers praised their strong attendance and community impact.

Labor Day Festival Committee: Karen Yoho and John Gardner reported successful 2024 programming, strong attendance, and increased community donations. This year's focus includes accessibility improvements, more inclusive performances, and a continuation of Rising Stars with cash incentives. The committee continues to rely on in-kind support from the City's Recreation, Public Works, and Police Departments and will not request funding. Council commended the group's extensive planning and community engagement.

Greenbelt Farmers Market: Scott Myfield, Brian Gorman, and Susan Harris (SNAP Coordinator) discussed vendor growth with 53 applicants of which 34 were accepted, space constraints, and outreach challenges in Greenbelt West. Council discussed options for expanded

scheduling like offering the Farmer's Market year-round or rotating vendors. There was also discussion about starting the Farmer's Market earlier than Mother's Day Weekend. The group emphasized diversity in offerings and ongoing SNAP match support through Co-op partnership. Ms. DeWald shared their grant panel score.

Greenbelt Access Television (GAT-e): The GAT-e team shared updates on digital education initiatives, including animation programming at Springhill Lake Elementary and a proposed Creative Energy Week in August. GATE is facing funding reductions due to decreased cable subscriptions. They requested support for equipment and potential scholarships for upcoming programming. Council discussed advocacy for PEG funding and the potential for expanded partnerships.

The SPACE: Shaymar Higgs and Bob Rand highlighted entrepreneurial training, youth digital arts programming, and Pride Month event coordination. They noted increased rent at their third location and ongoing efforts to secure additional grants. Council commended their growth, innovation, and citywide engagement. Ms. DeWald shared the group's review score.

FONDCA: Julie Winters (virtual) spoke about music and arts programming at the New Deal Café, including the Jazz and Blues Festivals. Rising costs for performers and logistics prompted this year's funding request. She noted their vendor and sponsorship model helps offset costs. Council asked about outreach to underserved parts of the city. Ms. DeWald shared the review panel's feedback.

MakerSpace: Representatives described the organization's role as a community tool-lending library and workshop space. Recent activities include a Repair Café and proposed safety training classes. They requested funds to support expanded programming and a new room added to their lease. Councilmembers praised their evolution and emphasized the need for increased marketing and outreach. Ms. DeWald shared their score and comments.

Greenbelt Arts Center: Carol Shaw, Wes Dennis, Truc Le, and Swithin David (in person) shared updates on productions, leadership development, and community engagement. The group has added flexible performance opportunities and implemented a new project management system. Council discussed outreach, audience tracking, and financial accessibility. Members highlighted plans for a talent showcase and expanded use of their space. Ms. DeWald presented the review panel's score and feedback.

Information Items

City Manager Salmeron noted that due to a \$4 million budget deficit, grant allocations were scaled according to panel scores. Approximately \$200,000 in Line 99 and an additional \$100,000 remain available for Council to consider for allocations.

Council discussed improving the grant application timeline and communication with advisory boards. Suggestions included creating a funding pool for advisory boards and encouraging pre-budget planning discussions in December.

Councilmembers raised concerns about the Refugee Aid Committee's funding in light of the small number of Greenbelt residents served with a recommendation to cap their funding at \$5,000.

Mayor Jordan, Council, and staff thanked all the Recognition Groups for their presentations and ongoing work in the community. Special thanks were given to Nicole DeWald, Cathy Pratt, and the Grant Review Panel for their coordination and leadership.

The meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tyra Smith,
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Officer