

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, March 31, 2025, to discuss Miscellaneous – Grants & Contributions / CARES / Greenbelt Cinema

PRESENT 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.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Liz Park, CARES Director; Christal Batey, CARES Assistant Director; Caitlin McGrath, Greenbelt Cinema Executive Director; Chondria Andrews, Public Information Officer; Jamarie Spencer, Production Assistant; Bonita Anderson, City Clerk.

OTHERS PRESENT WERE: Bill Orleans, Judith Davis, Lois Rosado, Michael Hartman, and Robert Goldberg-Strassler.

Grants and Contributions Budget

The City Manager presented the proposed FY budget of \$271,800 for grants and contributions, reflecting an increase from the prior year. The budget is organized into four categories: organizational leaders, recognition groups, grants, and advisory boards and committees. Council discussed flexibility in reallocating funds during the fiscal year and the potential to restore reductions in other departmental budgets.

Mayor Jordan noted that two public hearings and a possible town hall meeting will be held as part of the budget review process.

Advisory Boards and Community Organizations

Council discussed budget requests and reporting expectations for advisory boards and funded organizations. Members emphasized the importance of receiving annual reports detailing prior use of funds and justification for new requests. Council reiterated that all advisory boards may submit funding requests and expressed openness to supporting strong proposals, including mid-year requests, as resources allow.

Meals on Wheels provided an update on services, noting 48 residents currently served and ongoing funding challenges. Council discussed the need to maximize limited resources in response to federal funding uncertainties and agreed to request updates from contribution recipients.

CARES, Clawback Concerns, and Green Team

Council discussed the potential clawback of Department of Education funds, emphasizing the need for executed contracts and purchase orders. Council clarified that allocated funds must be used for their designated purpose. The Green Team's funding and membership diversity were also discussed.

Council reviewed the allocation of \$72,000 for Meals on Wheels, including the option to front-load expenses.

Reparations Commission

Council reviewed the Reparations Commission budget, including outreach, reporting, and publication costs. Additional funding for transcription services was discussed, including questions regarding AI transcription tools. The Commission's budget was approved; however, funding for Tribesie Group Phase 3 was not included due to budget limitations.

Greenbelt Cinema Update

Dr. Caitlin McGrath provided an update on Greenbelt Cinema operations. While 2023 was challenging, financial performance has improved in 2024. The Cinema raised over \$80,000 in its end-of-year campaign and continues to expand programming, including a youth film initiative. Council noted the upcoming 10th Anniversary celebration on May 3, 2025, and ongoing plans to renovate office space pending approvals.

CARES Budget Adjustments

Council discussed significant budget shifts for CARES, including moving several positions back to ARPA funding to reduce General Fund impact while maintaining services. The emergency case manager position was eliminated following the conclusion of related programs. Council acknowledged anticipated increases in service demand and uncertainty related to pending federal grant approval.

Food Assistance, Outreach, and Community Support

Council discussed limited food assistance resources and explored partnerships with local organizations, including Trinity Church and the Capital Area Food Bank. Outreach strategies for seniors and immigrant communities were reviewed, including multilingual communication, school partnerships, and digital and print resources.

Council discussed disparities in food distribution experiences between Center City and Springhill Lake and agreed to further review the issue. Environmental considerations related to food distribution packaging were also discussed.

Informational items were discussed.

The meeting ended at 9:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Bonita Anderson
City Clerk