

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL was held on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, to discuss Public Safety and the FY2027 Proposed Budget.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Springhill Lake Recreation Center, 6101 Cherrywood Lane, and virtually via Zoom.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Frankie S. Fritz, Amy E. Knesel, Danielle P. McKinney, Jenni A. Pompei, Silke I. Pope, Mayor Pro Tem Kristen L.K. Weaver, and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Josué Salmerón, City Manager; Chief Richard Bowers, Deputy Chief Timothy White, Captain Jermain Gullege, Lieutenant Michael Apgar, and Lieutenant Michael Parsley, Police Department; Chief Thomas Ray, Company 35; Patricia Fillman, Animal Services Supervisor; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.

OTHERS PRESENT WERE: Bill Orleans, Judith Davis, Michael Hartman, and others.

Volunteer Fire Station Budget Updates

The Council held a work session focused on Public Safety and the FY2027 budget. Chief Ray reported that the Fire Station had 20 operational members and provided updates on equipment status, including the decommissioning of the 2008 chief's buggy due to high maintenance costs and the decision to postpone replacing one of the engines, which would cost more than one million dollars. The Fire Station's funding from the County was reduced from \$22,000 to \$15,000 annually, and the station was seeking additional support for both operational needs and potential HVAC system repairs.

Mr. Salmerón discussed budget allocations and financial planning over a five-year horizon, with current cash reserves at a little over \$700,000 and projections showing gradual increases to \$1.2 million. The Council and Mr. Salmerón explored potential funding sources, including unassigned cash balances. Judith Davis, Greenbelt East, inquired about the Ambulance Fee Fund, to which Chief Ray replied that the County had \$240,000 in an account. The discussion also touched on volunteer staffing and a Volunteer Staffing Utilization Incentive Program, though specific details about participation and funding were limited.

Public Safety Budget Discussion

Chief Bowers discussed Public Safety budget matters, including staffing levels and key changes from the previous year. He noted that the budget maintained consistency with the previous year, with notable increases in salary costs due to the collective bargaining agreement and a significant \$282,000 expense for stop sign cameras. The department was fully staffed with 72 people; however, as of that morning, the Accreditation Manager, Jim Parker, had retired, and the department was seeking to refill that position. Chief Bowers highlighted challenges with the records staff, particularly regarding mandatory

expungements, which had increased from an average of 50 per year to more than 200, and the need for additional funding for the Crisis Intervention Team, which was currently partially funded by ARPA.

Chief Bowers discussed the citation process and time-sensitive requirements, noting that stop sign violations included court representation, while other programs required an officer to provide testimony. He reviewed various grant applications, including State Highway grants handled by the Traffic Team and the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCAP) grants managed by the Administrative Services Lieutenant with assistance from Ms. Cary Eure, Grants Coordinator. Mr. Salmerón discussed liability concerns and risk factors related to law enforcement lawsuits through the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT). Mayor Pro Tem Weaver inquired whether there was potential interest from other municipalities in the Crisis Intervention Team training program, and Chief Bowers answered that the City of Hyattsville had started its own program.

Chief Bowers discussed the new electric vehicle cruiser, noting that it had only been in use for a week and still required IT installation and additional upfit items. The main challenge identified was the slow charging time using the current Level 1 charger, which would take about nine hours to charge 30 percent and would limit its widespread organizational use, though he acknowledged the need for continued monitoring of the electric vehicle's viability over the coming months. He also reported success with social media outreach efforts, which helped increase police officer applications from four or five to more than 20 candidates and successfully recruited eight communications staff members.

Chief Bowers reviewed the current accreditation status, noting that the Police Department maintained the "gold tier" standard with 486 standards, which is less common among peer agencies, which typically use the "LE1" tier with 180 standards. He addressed concerns about retirement eligibility, noting that only a small number of employees were currently eligible to retire over the next three years. There was also discussion regarding data privacy policies and technology usage, with a single point of contact identified for such inquiries.

Mayor Jordan suggested that a 5 percent salary increase from the Franklin Park at Greenbelt Station contribution be incorporated for the Franklin Park at Greenbelt Station officer and inquired whether there had been any negotiations with the Prince George's County School Board regarding the SRO. Mr. Salmerón and Chief Bowers noted that the City was currently in discussions with the Prince George's County School Board, and Mayor Pro Tem Weaver suggested starting negotiations with Franklin Park at Greenbelt Station during the next budget cycle.

Animal Shelter Budget

Chief Bowers and Ms. Fillman discussed the Animal Shelter budget, which showed a 2.5 percent increase in staffing costs and maintained full staffing for the first time in many years. The Shelter operates as a full-service facility from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., by appointment only, with recent improvements made using ARPA dollars, including new flooring and HVAC systems. A Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) grant that started on January 1st covers spay and neuter costs through a voucher program managed by an outside entity, while the Shelter itself remains in

temporary trailers, with ongoing concerns about spiraling construction costs for a new facility. Judith Davis, Greenbelt East, inquired about overtime costs for staff and insurance decreases, and Michael Hartman, 2 Court Gardenway, thanked the Police Department for implementing a Guardian Program for individuals with dementia. Chief Bowers discussed the budget request from the Greenbelt Community Emergency Response Team (GCERT) for \$1,500 to replace reusable inventory and outfit a trailer with equipment, including pop-up canopies, and from the Community Animal Response Team (CART) for \$1,500 for storage containers, additional pop-up canopies, and first aid materials.

Charter Amendment Discussion

Councilmember Pompei addressed concerns regarding the revised Charter Amendment Resolution that was presented to the Council two hours before the Monday, April 27th Regular Meeting. Mr. Salmerón explained that labor legal counsel had provided justifications for the modifications to the resolution and encouraged the Council to schedule a meeting with labor legal counsel to discuss those modifications.

The Council discussed the Charter amendment regarding collective bargaining, focusing on the definition of confidential employees. The discussion centered on whether certain positions in the City Manager's and City Treasurer's offices should be considered confidential employees for the purposes of union bargaining, with concerns raised about the potential impact of narrowly defining these roles. The Council debated using the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) definition versus developing a more tailored approach, ultimately agreeing that the City could determine bargaining unit composition since Maryland lacks a universal public employee relations policy. Mr. Salmerón noted that the Charter Amendment Resolution would be added to the Monday, May 11th Regular Meeting agenda for first reading.

Information Items:

Councilmember McKinney informed the Council that she would be submitting a DEI recommendation as a discussion item on the upcoming May 11th Regular Meeting agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Weaver gave a reminder that the upcoming May 4th Budget Work Session would be held at Green Ridge House starting at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting ended at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen
Deputy City Clerk