

**BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL** held on Wednesday, May 18, 2026, for the final budget review.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:07 p.m. The meeting was held at the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 25 Crescent Road, and 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; Tim George, Assistant City Manager; Dr. Dawane Martinez, Director of Human Resources; Dr. Liz Park, Director of CARES; Brian Kim, Director of Public Works; Greg Varda, Director of Recreation; and Shaniya Lashley-Mullen, Deputy City Clerk.

**OTHERS PRESENT WERE:** Bertha Gaymon, Consultant; Judith Davis; Bill Orleans; Michael Hartman; and others.

### **Final Budget Review**

The Greenbelt City Council held a work session to review the final proposed modifications to the FY2027 budget and operational plan. Mr. Salmerón reported that, despite initial uncertainties, the budget remained balanced, with projected revenues of \$41,748,149 and expenditures of \$41,741,246. He discussed several budget adjustments, including employee health costs, Board of Elections changes, and potential grant modifications. One key decision was to delay the use of an \$87,000 PEPCO credit until next year's budget. Mr. Salmerón noted that, while abatement allowances were increased to \$580,000 in the budget, this figure was based on current patterns rather than the higher amounts seen in previous years.

The Council discussed budget requests totaling \$199,746 to be funded from Unassigned Cash Reserves, with no proposed tax rate increase. The requests included \$92,000 for health and prescription increases, \$7,500 for Board of Elections educational campaigns on ranked-choice voting, and \$15,632 for increased utility and operating costs for the Cinema facility. The Council also considered additional contributions of \$60,000 for business stabilization and development and an increase in the Cinema subsidy to \$100,000, although these amounts were not yet included in the current budget presentation.

While several Councilmembers expressed support for the Cinema, concerns were raised about the financial impact given the tight budget and the need to avoid using reserves for operating costs. Dr. McGrath explained the Cinema's efforts to secure over \$500,000 in grants and donations for infrastructure improvements. The Council agreed to support both the subsidy increase and the one-time infusion, with plans to monitor the Cinema's performance and potentially have a Councilmember join the Cinema's Board as a non-voting member. Michael Hartman, a Greenbelt resident, spoke in support of funding for the Greenbelt Cinema, explaining that the investment would benefit multiple businesses in

Roosevelt Center, including restaurants and shops. Bill Orleans, a Greenbelt resident, echoed Mr. Hartman's comments and suggested that the City should buy Roosevelt Center.

The Council and Mr. Salmerón discussed several budget reclassification proposals, including creating a new Operations Manager position, restructuring the Human Resources position into two part-time roles, and reclassifying various staff positions to reflect increased responsibilities and complexity. The discussion included debate about the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer role, with Councilmember McKinney expressing concerns about the specific grading and questioning the rationale for the proposed Grade 11 classification. Mr. George discussed reclassifying the Grants Coordinator position from Grade 10 to Grade 11, with the change taking effect July 1.

Members of the public, including Mr. Hartman, Mr. Orleans, Mr. Rand, and Dr. Rosado, criticized the proposal to move the DEI position from Grade 15 to Grade 11, arguing that it represented a retreat from progressive DEI initiatives and failed to adequately address accessibility for people with disabilities. They called on the Council to reconsider the proposal and preserve the independent DEI office at its current staffing level. The Council discussed the future of the DEI position after Mr. Salmerón recommended reclassifying it, with funding remaining available for either personnel or professional services. Councilmember McKinney presented five alternatives for consideration, while Councilmember Pompei expressed disappointment with the process but supported reshaping the role. The Council agreed to continue the discussion at upcoming work sessions on June 1 or July 1.

Councilmember Pompei submitted a proposed \$130,000 funding solution to maintain critical health programs after American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding ends, suggesting cuts to the Greenbelt East Recycling Center and administrative budgets to cover the gap, including reductions to Legislative Services funding and the DEI position. The discussion revealed confusion about which positions would be funded, with clarification needed on whether all three positions, the Nurse Coordinator, Community Health Coordinator, and Community Case Manager, would be maintained and how funding would be allocated between CARES and the Police Department. Judith Davis, a Greenbelt resident, expressed support for eliminating the Greenbelt East Recycling Center and questioned the value of the current legislative consulting services. The Council debated using reserves for this one-time expense, with concerns raised about sustainable fiscal practices and the use of reserves. The discussion also included utility cost savings from the Solar Farm Project, potential fuel cost increases, theater subsidy payments, and collective bargaining legal expenses.

The Council discussed budget allocations for various community organizations, focusing on adjustments to the proposed funding amounts. The Council agreed to eliminate funding for Greenbelt Refugee Aid (GRACE), provide \$12,000 to Greenbelt Access Television (GATe), and reduce funding for the Greenbelt Business Alliance (GBA) to \$2,000, with the expectation that it would raise additional funds independently.

## **Review of Meeting Schedule and May 26<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Agenda**

The Council reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule, and Mayor Jordan requested that a Special Meeting/Closed Session be scheduled after the June 29<sup>th</sup> work session with County Councilmember Adams to discuss personnel matters. Councilmember McKinney requested that a work session be scheduled for June 1 to discuss the DEI Office restructuring. The Council also reviewed the upcoming May 26 regular meeting agenda.

The meeting ended at 10:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shaniya Lashley-Mullen  
Deputy City Clerk