

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY July 1, 2024

Meeting Convened: 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held in person at the Fire Department Training Room, 625 Ute Avenue, and live-streamed via GoTo Webinar.

City Councilmembers Present: Councilmembers Scott Beifuss, Cody Kennedy, Dennis Simpson, Anna Stout, Mayor Pro Tem Randall Reitz, and Mayor Abram Herman. Councilmember Jason Nguyen was absent.

Staff present: Interim City Manager Andrea Phillips, City Attorney John Shaver, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Fire Chief Ken Watkins, Finance Director Jennifer Tomaszewski, Police Chief Matt Smith, Marijuana Compliance Officer Travis Wright and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Fire Collective Bargaining Ordinance

Representatives of Local 2808 approached City Council with a request to consider an ordinance that would provide for a collective bargaining process between the City and Local 2808. Local 2808 was formed in 1980 and is affiliated with the International Association of Firefighters and the Colorado Professional Firefighters Association. In 2018, the GJFD and Local 2808 established a Memorandum of Understanding between the two entities and acknowledged communication parameters.

President of Local 2808 Bryson Rasmussen presented this item, and Grand Junction Fire Chief Ken Watkins was present and available to answer questions.

Mr. Rasmussen shared the intent of adopting a collective bargaining ordinance, including:

- Adding an employee-level perspective to discussions regarding pay, benefits, safety, etc.
- Help establish consistency through changes in leadership and organizational changes.
- Work with leadership to help deliver changes and direction.
- Organizing labor assistance in areas of gathering information or data to help make decisions and ease the burden on leadership.

He showed examples of other Colorado municipalities with Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and shared their pros and cons. Senate Bill 25, passed in February 2013, was discussed. It allows firefighters of two or more to organize, negotiate collectively, and engage in collective bargaining, noting that it is not necessarily applicable in cities under home rule.

b. 2025 Council Budget Priorities

At the June 3, 2024, Council Workshop, staff presented early consideration topics for the 2025 Budget. Staff also proposed preparing a future Council Budget Policy Document, which they are currently in the process of drafting, following the Governmental Finance Officer Association (GFOA)

guidelines. From the June 3 workshop, the Council directed staff to bring the 2025 considerations back for further discussion in another workshop.

Interim City Manager Andrea Phillips presented this item. Her presentation focused on:

- **Financial Status:** Details on general fund reserves, expected revenues, and savings within the labor budget.
- **Capital Projects:** Discussion on available funds for capital projects, prioritization efforts, and specific project examples like road improvements and housing developments.
- **Summarized Budget Update:** Current operating revenues match current operating costs and the City is in a good financial position, although costs are increasing at a higher rate than the current revenue growth.
- **Future Considerations:** Anticipation of future budgetary impacts, including new obligations and projects, and considerations for council decisions on various community needs.
- **Non-Profit Funding:** Seeking Council direction on possible changes to how this is approached, including caps, priorities in funding, or future allocations coordinated with United Way.

c. Cannabis Ordinance Modification(s)

On April 6, 2021, the voters approved referred measures 2A and 2B. The approval of those measures provided the City Council an opportunity to allow for and regulate and establish tax rates and regulations for the retail cannabis industry in Grand Junction. The regulations allowed for 10 cannabis licenses. Five businesses have been licensed and opened, and the other five are in various stages of opening. Because the status of five of the approved businesses is uncertain, and the unopened businesses are well into the 24-month extension period, the City staff is requesting that the City Council provide direction on possible amendment(s) to the Code in the event that the extension period expires before all 10 of the businesses are open and fully operational.

Conversation ensued about possible paths going forward that potentially included:

- Monitor the status of "openings" and report back to the Council at or near year's end;
- Develop an ordinance to amend the Code to provide additional time for extension(s). If this option is selected, the staff will recommend that the amendment(s) allowing for further extension(s) includes criteria;
- Develop an ordinance to amend the Code to reduce the cap to the number of businesses open when the latest of the current extended licenses expire;
- Develop an ordinance to amend the Code to retain the cap, but delay the opportunity to apply for "vacated" licenses until some future time;
- Commit to the cap and open an application period after each vacancy/extension expires.

After discussion, the direction from Council was to monitor the status of openings and report back once the extensions have expired.

d. Tax Exemption on Second-Hand Goods

Based on the request from Councilmember Kennedy for consideration of a sales tax exemption for secondhand stores, City staff brought forward information to assist Council with the discussion which was presented at the January 8, 2024, City Council Workshop. As an outcome of that meeting, a subsequent memo was submitted to Council on January 19, 2024, followed by an additional Council Workshop on March 18, 2024. Staff was directed to provide additional information as an outcome of the March 18 workshop.

The discussion centered on the proposed implementation of a tax exemption tailored specifically for 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations that sell second-hand goods. This targeted approach contrasts with a broader application to all used merchandise retailers, which may be deemed impractical due to its complexity and potential revenue implications.

Key considerations include whether this tax exemption should be established as a permanent policy or include a sunset provision to assess its effectiveness over time. Administrative challenges, such as the need to develop systems for tracking and reporting sales tax exemptions, were highlighted, along with the importance of effectively communicating these changes to the community.

Council agreed on a sunset provision and 2025 implementation.

2. Council Communication

Councilmember Reitz stated he would host an event at his home on August 6th for National Night Out with police.

Councilmember Kennedy expressed the need for a staff navigator to assist the public in the planning process for developments.

Councilmember Beilfuss expressed concern about safety at the Day Center.

Mayor Herman listed the future workshop topics.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 8:58 p.m.