

**GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING**

Fire Administration Training Room

October 28, 2024

Call to Order

Council President Herman called the Special Meeting of the Grand Junction City Council to order at 4:02 p.m. on the 28th day of October 2024.

Those present were Councilmembers Scott Beilfuss, Cody Kennedy, Jason Nguyen, Council President Pro Tem Randall Reitz, Dennis Simpson, Anna Stout and Council President Abram Herman.

Executive Session

Councilmember Stout moved and Councilmember Kennedy seconded to convene into ***EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS MATTERS THAT MAY BE SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATIONS, DEVELOPING STRATEGY FOR NEGOTIATIONS, AND/OR INSTRUCTING NEGOTIATORS PURSUANT TO C.R.S. SECTIONS 24-6-402(4)(e)(I) AND 24-6-402(4)(a) OF COLORADO'S OPEN MEETINGS LAW RELATIVE TO A POSSIBLE CONDEMNATION ACTION BY THE STATE OF COLORADO AND THE CITY AGAINST AMDM, LLC REGARDING THE PROPERTY LOCATED 123 UTE AVENUE, 317 SOUTH SECOND STREET, AND 319 SOUTH SECOND STREET, GRAND JUNCTION COLORADO WHICH PROPERTY HAS BEEN DETERMINED TO BE NECESSARY FOR THE MOBILITY HUB PROJECT.***

It was a unanimous vote to convene into Executive Session for the purpose stated.

Upon completion of the Executive Session, Councilmember Kennedy moved, and Councilmember Nguyen seconded to return to open session in the Fire Administration Training Room. The motion passed 7-0.

Council President Herman reconvened the Special Meeting at 4:14 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the special meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Budget Workshop #3

The budget workshop was called to order at 4:20 p.m.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Downtown Business Improvement District (DBID) Presentation and Discussion:

Executive Director for the Downtown Development Authority Brandon Stam gave an update on the DDA and DBID.

Key points included:

- Business Improvement District (BID) Updates:
 - Events: BID manages popular downtown events, including Spooktacular, Tree Lighting, and Parade of Lights, supported by sponsorships.
 - Visitor Data: Utilizing Placer AI, BID tracks visitor demographics and behaviors, noting peak hours and visitor profiles.
 - Programs: BID introduced a billboard program, community activation grants, and a workshop for business merchandising.
 - Gift Card Program: Highly popular, with sales spiking around the holidays.

- Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Projects:
 - Major Projects: Junction Apartments, Grand Avenue Lofts, and Terminal Project supported by \$4.5 million in grants.
 - Improvements: "Vibrant Main Street" initiative aims to improve downtown areas with better lighting and event management.
 - Grants: Offered facade and residential conversion grants to incentivize downtown investment and growth.
 - Maintenance: Efforts in pigeon control, sidewalk cleaning, and holiday decorations.

- GJ Creates:
 - Celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Art in the Corner program and installed 22 new sculptures, including international contributions.
 - Future goals include hosting the annual Colorado Creative Industries Annual summit and expanding First Friday Art Walks.

- Financials:
 - DDA's fund balance is projected to remain strong, enabling support for future projects.
 - BID and DDA budgets primarily come from special assessments, sponsorships, and grants.

- Future Parking Needs:
 - While the downtown parking study indicates capacity is sufficient for now, future growth may require a parking structure.
 - Collaboration with institutions to utilize existing lots for public parking outside business hours is being explored.

Horizon Drive Business Improvement District (HDBID) Presentation and Discussion

Executive Director of the Horizon Drive Business Improvement Sandra Zoldowski gave an update.

Key points included:

- **Projects in 2024:**
 - Phase II Ditch Cleanup: Completed from Enzo's to the Cor-Plex building, removing invasive plants and trash.
 - Business Directory: A map and business list for visitors along Horizon Drive. Ads are being sold to help with printing costs.
 - Roundabout Art Installation: Art selected for the GJ Horizon Drive and G Road roundabout, with a final selection pending.
- **Operations:**
 - Improved communication through a business database.
 - Addressing an issue from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs about exceeding the allowable tax revenue, resulting in a mill levy adjustment for 2025.
- **Plans for 2025:**
 - Phase III of Ditch Cleanup: Extending to Freddie's, aiming for an annual maintenance cycle.
 - Security Enhancements: Two cameras and two license plate readers will be added along Horizon Drive.
 - Community Engagement: Partnering with local businesses on events, adding bike racks, and supporting job placement for IntelliTec students.
- **Budget and Financials:**
 - Adjustments due to exceeding the 5.5% tax cap; approximately \$56,000 over.
 - The budget includes a \$65,000 expense for roundabout art carried into 2025.
 - An audit exemption is sought due to low revenue and expense figures, with Council action expected in December.

Visit Grand Junction Department Presentation

Visit Grand Junction Director Elizabeth Fogarty gave an update of Visit Grand Junction.

Key points included:

- **Tourism Metrics:**

- Grand Junction has outperformed both U.S. and Colorado (ski and non-ski areas) in hotel revenue metrics, with notable increases in average daily rates and revenue per available room.
- Lodging tax collections rose 2.8% from the previous year, signaling effective strategies in attracting tourism revenue.
- 2025 Focus and Global Partnerships:
 - VGJ will emphasize responsible tourism, workforce development, and collaboration with organizations like the Colorado Tourism Office.
 - This includes a workforce campaign highlighting hospitality careers and a “Grand Junction Expert” program to educate locals on tourism assets.
- Data-Driven Strategy:
 - VGJ uses over 254 data dashboards to inform real-time decisions, tailoring marketing strategies and campaigns for maximum engagement.
 - This approach has driven substantial website engagement, with significant increases in unique users, sessions, and page views.
- Community Engagement: VGJ fosters local pride by involving residents in branding efforts, distributing a special visitor guide edition to all households in Mesa County, encouraging locals to act as brand ambassadors, and updating content to include local feedback.
- Budget Changes:
 - VGJ’s 2025 operating budget is \$4.9 million, with a \$500,000 reduction from previous years due to the end of ARPA funds.
 - VGJ will focus on efficiency to maintain service levels while absorbing this budget adjustment.
- Brand Identity and Council Discussion:
 - VGJ’s branding efforts aim to create a unique identity for Grand Junction that balances tourism and community image.
 - Council discussed the potential of a city flag and complementary logo to further unify community identity and pride.

Nonprofit Funding Process Recommendations and Discussion

Council discussed a new process for nonprofit funding.

Key points included:

- **New Nonprofit Funding Process:** Traditional nonprofit funding was removed from the 2025 budget due to tighter financial constraints.
- **Selected Organizations Funded in Budget:** Essential nonprofits like HomewardBound and the Center for Children received funding for critical services related to City operations, including shelter support and child abuse services.

- **Council Focus on Specific Priorities:** For 2025, Council proposed directing funding specifically toward initiatives related to homelessness and housing. Nonprofits outside of this focus will not automatically advance for Council review.
- **Preference for Capital Projects:** Council recommended focusing on one-time capital funding rather than ongoing operational support to ensure sustainable, long-term impact. Operational funding may still be considered if it meets critical needs.
- **Flexible Application Timing:** Nonprofits aligned with the homelessness and housing focus can submit requests throughout the year, with these reviewed as supplemental budget items rather than within a fixed application period.
- **Oversight and Evaluation by Staff:** Staff will pre-screen applications to confirm alignment with criteria before forwarding qualified requests to the council. Each funding decision will factor in the City's overall financial health.

Dues and Subscriptions

The Grand Junction City Council reviewed its membership in several organizations to determine their value and alignment with city goals. After evaluating the benefits, Council decided on the following changes:

- **U.S. Conference of Mayors:** Discontinue membership due to limited benefits relevant to the city's needs and cost concerns.
- **National League of Cities (NLC):** Discontinue membership, noting that most of its resources and conferences cater to larger metropolitan areas, and Council and staff felt limited added value compared to Colorado-specific groups.
- **Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC):** Discontinue membership, as its focus on county-level issues and extractive industries was seen as less relevant to Grand Junction's municipal concerns. The City receives similar legislative advocacy from the Colorado Municipal League (CML), which aligns more closely with Grand Junction's needs.
- **Club 20:** Retain membership with a request for improved communication to ensure Councilmembers receive invitations to relevant meetings and opportunities to engage with the organization's committees.

This revised approach is expected to save the city approximately \$20,000 in membership costs for the year.

Follow Up from Previous Budget Workshops and Additional Council Discussion

City Council and Staff discussed final steps for approving the 2025 budget, covering insurance costs, the proposed self-insurance approach, and infrastructure projects.

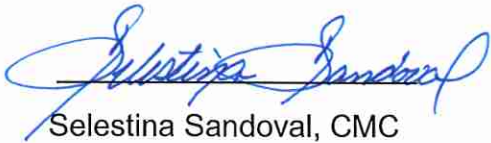
Key points included:

- Insurance: A 13.8% increase in premium for the City's self-insured health plan was discussed. The self-insurance model remains advantageous, saving potential costs versus a fully insured plan.
- Infrastructure Projects: Concerns were raised about the 4th and 5th Streets project, with Councilmembers split on the timing of the project's next steps. The possibility of pausing on the 7th Street project was also discussed.
- Supplemental Budget Considerations: Council discussed possibly using supplemental budget allocations for urgent or unforeseen needs, especially for projects with grant opportunities or critical needs that arise during the budget year.
- Future Meetings and Timelines: The next steps include a November public presentation and first reading of the 2025 budget ordinance, followed by a final adoption in December.

Council Communication and Next Workshop Topics

Council reviewed upcoming meeting topics.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Selestina Sandoval, CMC

City Clerk

