

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

February 24, 2025

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

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

Staff present: City Manager Mike Bennett, City Attorney John Shaver, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou, Housing Manager Ashley Chambers, Utilities Director Randi Kim, Deputy City Clerk Krystle Koehler and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Matchett Park Affordable Housing Project

The council discussed a proposed affordable housing project at Matchett Park in collaboration with the Grand Junction Housing Authority.

- **Background & Need:**

- The project aligns with the City's 2023 housing strategy to increase affordable housing.
- The area, previously designated for school use, is now available for housing due to shifts in school district plans.
- Housing demand remains high, with a low vacancy rate and a significant waitlist for Grand Junction Housing Authority affordable units (2,600+ households).
- The city has committed to increasing affordable housing by 9% over three years under a state program.

- **Project Details:**

- The development could include 80–120 units of mixed-income housing.
- Key location includes health services, schools, churches, and a grocery store.
- The housing authority is still in the early design phase, considering a mix of two-story buildings.
- The project will integrate with the park's updated master plan, ensuring a balance between recreation and residential use.
- The plan includes maintaining park amenities like pickleball courts, sand volleyball, and softball fields.

- **Next Steps:**

- The council clarified that this is an exploratory phase; no final commitment has been made.
- A lease agreement is necessary for the Housing Authority to proceed with funding applications and environmental reviews.
- Further community engagement will be conducted before finalizing plans.

- b. **Funding Options for Private Lead & Galvanized Water Service Line Replacements**

The council discussed funding options for replacing private lead service lines in accordance with new EPA regulations.

- **Current Status:**

- The city completed a service line inventory, identifying 365 lines needing replacement, 219 of which are privately owned.
- The city has never exceeded EPA lead limits, but proactive replacement is encouraged to prevent future issues.
- Estimated replacement costs:
 - City-owned lines: \$92,000–\$185,000
 - Private lines: \$164,000–\$329,000 (city labor) or up to \$1.3 million (private contractor)
- The city's utility department owns specialized equipment to replace lines at a lower cost than private contractors.

- **Funding Options Considered:**

- Status Quo: Property owners continue to pay for their own replacements.
- Payback Plan: City replaces lines, and property owners repay over time via water bills.
- Grant Funding: Limited availability—only 39% of lines qualify for state assistance.
- City Water Enterprise Fund: City fully covers costs using existing water utility funds.

- **Next Steps:**

- There was direction from Council to use the water enterprise fund to cover both public and private line replacements.
- Ordinance revisions will be needed to allow city funds to be used on private property.

2. City Council Communications

Council discussed HomewardBound's relationship with and capacity for running the Resource Center in the future. There will be an Executive Session for staff to update Council on the due diligence findings for a future location for the Resource Center on March 5th. Council expressed interest in agendizing a discussion on the long-term city role in providing services to the unhoused and an RFP (Request for Proposal) for providers.

3. Next Workshop Topics

The Mayor Pro Tem urged Council to start thinking about dates for strategic planning after the election.

4. Other Business

There was none.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Workshop adjourned at 7:29 p.m.