

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

October 6, 2025

Meeting Convened: 4:00 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 Robert Ballard, Scott Beilfuss, Laurel Lutz (formerly Cole), Jason Nguyen, Anna Stout, Ben Van Dyke, and Mayor Cody Kennedy.

Staff present: City Manager Mike Bennett, City Attorney John Shaver, Deputy City Manager Kimberly Bullen, Chief Financial Officer Jay Valentine, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou, Utilities Director Randi Kim, Police Chief Matt Smith, Engineering and Transportation Director Trent Prall, Human Resources Director Shelley Caskey, General Services Director Jerod Timothy, Visit Grand Junction Director Elizabeth Fogarty, Deputy City Clerk Misty Williams, City Clerk Selestina Sandoval and other supporting staff.

1. Discussion Topics

a. 2026 City Manager's Recommended Budget

The City Manager presented the City of Grand Junction 2026 Recommended Budget (the Budget). The Budget reflects the City of Grand Junction's continued commitment to aligning financial resources with the strategic vision established by the City Council. Guided by the five pillars of the Strategic Plan, the Budget emphasizes both operational and capital investments that allow the City to maintain and strengthen its core service infrastructure following several years of significant growth and expansion. It also provides for ongoing investment in public safety personnel and equipment, ensuring the protection of our community remains a top priority. Additionally, the Budget advances the City's efforts to enhance transparency and improve service delivery efficiencies. The five pillars of the Strategic Plan include (1) Core Services, (2) Housing, (3) Fiscal Policy & Position, (4) Government Transparency & Accountability, and (5) Government Efficiency.

The Budget totals \$314.8 million. This is a \$44.3 million or 12.3 percent decrease from the 2025 Adopted Budget. This decrease is primarily due to the completion of Phase 1 of the Persigo Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion and rehabilitation, as well as the major phase of the Community Recreation Center in 2025.

Through staff's dedicated and collaborative efforts, the 2026 Budget is balanced, with a modest General Fund surplus of \$163,642. The projected ending General Fund balance for 2026 is \$47.5 million, including a minimum reserve of \$28.8 million, internal loans totaling just under \$1 million, and \$17.7 million remaining for future needs and one-time funding.

The Budget documents for this workshop are available online and include the following:

OpenAI. (2025). *ChatGPT* [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

- 2026 Recommended Budget Transmittal Letter, which provides a detailed discussion of the components of the Budget as it aligns with the City Council's strategic pillars as well as a financial overview.
- 2026 Recommended Budget Fund Balance Worksheet, which is a high-level summary of the recommended budget by fund and by expense classification and includes projected fund balances
- 2026 Recommended Budget Line Item Budget by Department, Fund, and Account Classification
- 2026 Recommended Budget Line Item Budget by Fund and Account Classification
- 2026 Recommended Capital Plan List
- 2026 Recommended Capital Descriptions
- 2026 Recommended 10 Year Capital Plan

Key points:

Police Department:

- 5 new officers added in 2026.
- \$3.1 million for radio replacements and tower upgrades.
- Police Annex Feasibility Study funded.
- Funding for continued expansion of Advanced Real-Time Information Center (ARTIC).
- Tactical vehicle (BearCat) replacement funded via impact fees.

Fire Department:

- 8 new FTEs: 3 community paramedics, 3 firefighter EMTs, 1 fire inspector, 1 battalion chief.
- Launching Community Paramedic Program at Station 7 to handle low-acuity calls and reduce ER burden.
- Fire Academy funding for 9 new recruits.
- Feasibility Study for Station 2 expansion as a dual company station.
- Wildfire response and prevention efforts to be strengthened.

Building Maintenance & Infrastructure

- \$8.5 million for pavement, sidewalk, and safety improvements.
- \$4.1 million for park repairs, trails, irrigation, and Canyon View enhancements.
- \$12.2 million for utility infrastructure upgrades (tanks, lines, drainage).
- \$7.3 million for facilities and fleet lifecycle replacements.

Major Projects

- Community Recreation Center: Final construction year; indoor and outdoor features, turf field.
- Sewer Plant Phase 2 Expansion and new administration building.
- Transportation Projects: 29 Road, D½ Road, Canyon Parkway.

b. Strategic Plan Draft Overview

In early 2025, City staff solicited qualified consultants to assist in the facilitation and development of the 2025-2027 City Council Strategic Plan. Everstrive Solutions LLC. was selected after review and interview with staff and designated City Council liaisons. On July 10 and 11, 2025, Everstrive hosted a City Council Strategic Planning Retreat, which resulted in the development of five key pillars that will guide the City's priorities over the next two years. On July 29, 2025, the consultants held an Executive Strategic Planning Retreat to present the City Council's pillars to executive leadership, allowing staff to begin developing goals and action items that would achieve the City Council's strategic vision. Everstrive and City staff jointly developed an initial draft of the Strategic Plan, which was presented to City Council at a Special Meeting on August 12, 2025.

Staff has since developed a second draft to incorporate the City Council's thoughts and feedback on the goals and action items after the August 12 meeting, and included recommended metrics to demonstrate achievement of the Plan's goals and pillars. The latest draft is included with this staff report for Council review. The attached draft is intended to encapsulate the written narrative; final design and formatting will be completed by the consultant prior to adoption. The goal of this discussion is for staff to present the latest draft to the Council and request direction for agendizing the plan for adoption. If the Council provides direction to schedule this item for consideration at a Regular Meeting for adoption, it can be added to the October 15, 2025, meeting.

Key points included:

- Budget priorities directly align with the five strategic pillars:
 1. Core Services
 2. Housing
 3. Fiscal Responsibility
 4. Government Transparency
 5. Government Efficiency
- Metrics and action items are in development to support implementation and should accurately reflect the goals of each pillar.

2. Council Communication

- Councilmembers discussed playground ADA accessibility concerns. \$75,000 allocated for equipment repairs, with partnership opportunities (ARC Mesa County) to fund additional ADA-compliant features.
- Council showed interest in further review of:
 - Pavement condition standards
 - Recycling improvements
 - Funding support for nonprofits and affordable housing incentives

3. Next Workshop Topics

- Capital project details
- Unfunded one-time requests and nonprofit grants:
 - Commission on Arts and Culture
 - Avalon Foundation
 - Homeward Bound, Catholic Outreach, Hilltop, Joseph Center – RFP-based requests
- Affordable housing fee waivers and incentives (water/sewer connection fees)

4. Other Business

- White Cane Awareness Day Proclamation - Council approved the issuance of a social proclamation recognizing White Cane Awareness Day.
- City Manager and Mayor thanked staff, departments, and the budget team for extensive work, highlighting transparency and alignment with strategic goals.
 - 2026 Budget Adoption Calendar:
 - Nov 5 – Budget presentation & public hearing
 - Nov 19 / Dec 3 – Final adoption and rate resolutions

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the workshop adjourned at 8:40 p.m.