

## **GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

### **February 2, 2026**

**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 Robert Ballard, Scott Beilfuss, Laurel Lutz, Jason Nguyen, Anna Stout, Ben Van Dyke, and Mayor Cody Kennedy.

**Staff present:** City Manager Mike Bennett, Interim City Attorney Jeremiah Boies, Deputy City Manager Kimberly Bullen, Chief Financial Officer Jay Valentine, Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou, Communications Manager Kelsey Coleman, Recreation Superintendent Emily Krause, Deputy City Clerk Krystle Koehler, and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

### **1. Discussion Topics**

#### **a. Colorado Mesa University and Stadium Update**

Since the last update to City Council, city staff and Colorado Mesa University (CMU) representatives have continued with discussions regarding potential enhancements to amenities at the Lincoln Park Sports Complex to support collegiate football while preserving other partner uses at the stadium and public use of the track. CMU views this project as an opportunity to expand its athletic offerings while strengthening community ties and contributing to local economic vitality. At the December 15, 2025, City Council workshop, City Council directed staff to continue discussions with a proposal that included a potential lease of Lincoln Park Barn and land in between Lincoln Park Barn and the stadium for CMU to build a Football Facility. This is to provide an update for discussion and possible direction.

City Manager Bennett and CMU President Marshall provided an update on the proposed partnership restructuring for Lincoln Park Stadium.

#### **Key Points:**

- CMU would lease the football stadium and the Lincoln Park Barn.
- CMU would construct a new football facility between the barn and the stadium.
- CMU would contribute:
  - Continued annual user fee (\$36,705/yr)
  - Continued participation in PIAB funding (\$14,000)
  - \$300,000 annually in new lease revenue to the City
  - 50% of field replacement costs
  - 80% of field maintenance
- CMU would receive operational control, sponsorship rights, concessions revenue, and naming rights opportunities.

- The City would eliminate its approximately \$300,000 annual operational subsidy for the football stadium.

### **Usage Clarifications:**

- District 51 games and activities would continue.
- Public track access would remain available outside scheduled events.
- Community use of the barn would shift to the new Community Recreation Center (scheduled to open later in 2026).
- CMU practice use would expand but not displace existing high school usage.

### **Direction Given:**

General Council support to proceed with drafting a formal agreement for future public consideration.

### **b. Water Enterprise Loan to Fund Waterline Replacement and Tank Lining Projects**

The Utilities Department is planning on completing waterline replacement projects and a tank lining project in 2026. The total estimated cost for these projects is \$5 million. The Water Fund does not have sufficient reserves to cash-finance the project and will require debt issuance to fund the improvements. Two potential debt funding sources were identified through the State Revolving Loan Fund or through a private loan.

Utilities Director Randi Kim presented this item and was available for questions.

### **Key points:**

- Financing options for approximately \$4.6 million in capital water projects:
  - Multiple waterline replacements
  - CDOT-related infrastructure coordination
  - Water tank recoating
- Loan Options:
  - State Revolving Fund (lower interest, more federal compliance requirements, one project ineligible).
  - Private financing (Flagstar recommended), 10-year term, streamlined administration.
- Insufficient reserves were anticipated in long-range planning.
- The private loan avoids dual financing and federal compliance complications.
- Debt coverage ratios are within acceptable limits.

### **Direction Given:**

General consensus supporting the private loan recommendation.

### **c. Process for Hiring City Attorney**

This item was to facilitate City Council discussion on options for a hiring process to permanently fill the City Attorney position.

#### **Key Points:**

#### **Consensus Points:**

- Conduct a national external search.
- Use a professional recruitment firm.
- Maintain transparency in the process.
- Expressed appreciation for the Interim City Attorney's performance.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Schedule executive session to define:
  - Recruitment criteria
  - Compensation parameters
  - RFP scope for search firm
- HR and Procurement to assist.
- Anticipated timeline: 3–6 months once initiated.

### **d. Orchard Mesa Pool – Next Steps**

City Council requested the Orchard Mesa Pool item come back to City Council in early 2026 for further discussion.

In 2024, Mesa County issued a \$800,000 check to the owner of the Orchard Mesa Pool, School District #51, with a statement that Mesa County would no longer be a partner in providing the Orchard Mesa Pool. Following this, the remaining pool partners fleshed out an agreement to keep the pool open until the new Community Recreation Center (CRC) was online. This was signed on September 25, 2025. This ensured there would be no gap in service, and that a public pool would be available in Grand Junction. It stipulated that the gym, band, and locker room areas be demolished, which has occurred. The agreement also provided that the City would be solely financially responsible for all operational costs, including utilities previously paid by School District #51, and for capital costs, such as the new boiler installed in June 2025. Per that agreement, School District #51 remains the owner of the building.

Further back, in 2023, the City commissioned and paid for a study to understand options for the long-term future of the Orchard Mesa Pool. On January 22, 2024, the consultants, Ohlson Lavoie Corporation (OLC) and PROS Consulting, presented the results of the 2023 Orchard Mesa Recreation Facility (OMRF) Plan to the pool partners. This planning process was driven by an in-depth community engagement effort that spanned much of 2023. It aimed to objectively evaluate possible paths forward for the Orchard Mesa Pool. This facility was built in

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

1983 as a partnership between the Mesa County School District 51, Mesa County, and the City. Despite significant service to the larger Grand Junction community over the past 40 years, the team of architects and engineers facilitating the study concluded that the facility is at the end of its useful life. It needs a complete renovation if it is to continue operating in the long term.

With the Community Recreation Center expected to be completed later this year (2026), staff is seeking direction from City Council regarding Orchard Mesa Pool and four possible options for next steps to initiate discussion and possible policy direction. These four options provide a starting place for this discussion and while no decision will be made during the workshop, the goal is for direction on next steps staff can begin evaluating.

Option A: Continue to operate the Orchard Mesa Pool, even after the CRC opens. This would require an extension of the current agreement with School District #51. The agreement is set to expire on December 31, 2026.

Option B: Close the Orchard Mesa Pool when the CRC opens.

Option C: Release a Request for Proposals (RFP) to find a partner to take over ownership and operation of the pool and potentially add in new assets to the site.

Option D: Ask voters if they approve or disapprove of the formation of a Title 32 special district in the Orchard Mesa portion of the City to take over ownership, operations, and maintenance of the Orchard Mesa Pool.

### **Key Points:**

- School District owns the facility and has escrowed demolition funds.
- City currently carries full operational subsidy.
- 2026 projected subsidy: ~\$441,000.
- Attendance has trended downward.
- Engineering study determined major systems are at end of useful life.
- Estimated renovation (system replacement only): ~\$5.7–\$6.2 million (2023 dollars).
- Demolition estimate: ~\$905,000.

### **Council Discussion Themes:**

- Concern about loss of neighborhood amenity in Orchard Mesa.
- Equity considerations and access compared to the new Community Recreation Center.
- Long-term operational sustainability concerns.
- High subsidy per visit relative to other City facilities.
- Interest in exploring:
  - Public-private partnership (RFP process)
  - Recreation or special tax district formation
  - Hybrid funding models (grants, philanthropy, TIF, redevelopment concepts)
  - Potential voter input on future taxpayer support

### **Emerging Direction:**

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- Support for issuing an RFP to explore partnership interest.
- Interest in evaluating the feasibility of a special district.
- Recognition that additional financial and legal analysis will be required before final decisions.
- Schedule for 1<sup>st</sup> workshop in March for an update.

## **2. Council Communication**

Open discussion by councilmembers included:

- Commission on Arts & Culture bylaws and funding for a potential future workshop.
- Volunteer appointment process for a future workshop focusing on the decision-making process and communication.
- Future workshop on the timing of transition for Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem given the change in election time.

## **3. Next Workshop Topics**

City Manager Bennett updated the Council on future workshops, including the joint workshop with Mesa County.

## **4. Other Business**

- Interview teams were assigned for the Downtown Development Authority and Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.
- The Geothermal Event Conference was discussed.
- Request for a letter of support for FEMA Funding from Representative Rick Taggart.
- Request for a letter of support for keeping the Grand Junction Uranium Disposal Site open beyond 2031 from Senator Hickenlooper (this will be added to the February 4, 2026, City Council Regular Meeting).
- There was discussion on the HOME Act.

## **5. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.