

## GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY MARCH 30, 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, Assistant to the City Manager Johnny McFarland, Parks and Recreation Director Ken Sherbenou, Community Development Director Tamra Allen, Deputy City Clerk Krystle Koehler, and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

### 1. Discussion Topics

#### a. Parks Impact Fee Update and Discussion

The Grand Junction Municipal Code ("Code" or "GJMC") required the City to update its impact fee study once every five years. The City's last fee study for transportation, police, fire, parks, and municipal facilities was completed in 2019 which necessitated the need for the city to update its fee study in 2024/2025. The city contracted with TischlerBise to update its fee study for which a new fee schedule was adopted on April 2, 2025. The process for updating included a city-appointed stakeholder group, numerous workshops with the City Council and Planning Commission, community meetings, as well as a joint workshop between the City Council and the appointed stakeholder group. Information about the fee study including all fees were made available throughout the process on <https://engagegj.org/impact-fees-study>.

Staff received from the Housing and Building Association of Western Colorado a request that the City reconsider the adopted parks fee, including the calculation, collection and tracking therein. The city has subsequently received a request from the HBA to not collect the increase to the adopted parks fees that, at the time, were scheduled to become effective on January 1, 2026 until a thorough review has been completed and Council has made a decision on whether the fees should be adjusted.

Staff presented at the December 15, 2025 City Council workshop different methods of sorting the dataset to determine the per acre cost for park and open space land acquisition. At that time, the Council directed staff to utilize "Option 3" that would produce a weighted average price per acre of \$108,008. Since that workshop, staff has met with HBA representative Kevin Bray to review the original dataset. Staff subsequently engaged an MAI Appraiser to review the dataset.

Overview:

- An MAI appraiser reviewed transactions, resulting in two new options:

- Option 3A: Refined sales data → ~\$113K/acre
- Option 3B: Appraised values → ~\$90K/acre

#### Key Points:

- Both methodologies are legally defensible.
- Option 3B uses a larger dataset and may better reflect market value.
- Lower fees = reduced cost burden on housing, but:
  - Tradeoff: less revenue for future park development.

#### Council Discussion Themes:

- Strong interest in housing affordability impacts.
- Recognition this is a policy trade-off (short-term affordability vs. long-term park funding).
- Some skepticism about how much fees truly affect affordability, but agreement that incremental reductions matter.

#### Direction:

- Consensus to move forward with Option 3B (~\$90K/acre).

### **b. Councilmember Ballard's Deployment**

#### Overview:

- Discussion of Councilmember Ballard's military deployment and ability to serve.

#### Key Topics:

- Legal clarity: Whether a resolution is needed to excuse absences.
- Access & representation: Communication with constituents while deployed.
- Technology: Confirmed ability to attend meetings remotely.
- Risk scenario: What happens if multiple meetings are missed.

#### Council Positions:

- Split views:
  - Some support a resolution now for legal certainty.
  - Others see it as unnecessary unless absences occur.

#### Key Themes:

- Strong support for Ballard's service.
- Emphasis on maintaining representation and flexibility.
- Recognition of legal ambiguity in charter vs. state law.

#### Direction:

- Informal direction to bring resolution forward for consideration at a regular meeting.

### **c. Councilmember Communication and Decorum**

#### Overview:

- Discussion initiated regarding tone, accuracy, and professionalism in council communications.

#### Key Concerns Raised:

- Misstatements of fact in public forums.
- Disparaging language toward:
  - Staff
  - Community partners
  - Other councilmembers
- Impact on public trust and relationships.

#### Themes:

- Distinction between:
  - Policy disagreement (acceptable)
  - vs. personal attacks / misinformation (problematic)
- Need for:
  - Respectful communication
  - Accurate public statements
  - Stronger working relationships

#### Councilmember Response:

- Acknowledgment of need to improve tone and effectiveness.
- Commitment to work on communication and collaboration.

#### Outcome:

- No immediate censure.
- Expectation of improved conduct moving forward.

## **2. Council Communication**

#### Items Discussed:

- Upcoming Mayor/Mayor Pro Tem rotation and board assignments.
- CML (Colorado Municipal League) conference registration.
- Advocacy updates deferred.

## **3. Next Workshop Topics**

#### Planned items include:

- 7th & 9th Street conceptual study (transportation/CMU connection)

- Public land use in development calculations
- Possible workshop on 29 Road item
- Discussion of mayoral rotation and board assignments
- Recreation center tour (upcoming)

#### **4. Other Business**

- **Urban Trails Committee**
  - Interview Committee updated Council on their selections for the vacancies.
- **Downtown Development Authority (DDA)**
  - Interview Committee updated Council on their selections for the vacancies.
- **Zoning Board of Appeals**
  - Proposed shift to role-based appointments (by Planning Commission position rather than individual).
  - Ensures continuity and efficiency.
- **Teacher Appreciation Week Proclamation**
  - General support to issue civic proclamation going forward.

#### **5. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.