

GRAND JUNCTION CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SUMMARY

JUNE 29, 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 (virtual), Scott Beilfuss, Cody Kennedy, Jason Nguyen, Anna Stout, Ben Van Dyke, and Mayor Laurel Lutz.

Staff present: City Manager Mike Bennett, Interim City Attorney Jeremiah Boies, Deputy City Manager Kimberly Bullen, Chief Financial Officer Jay Valentine, Police Chief Matt Smith, Fire Chief Peter Skeris, Deputy City Clerk Krystle Koehler, and City Clerk Selestina Sandoval.

1. Discussion Topics

a. Title 6, Animal Code

Police Chief Matt Smith presented an update to the City's Animal Code following the City's assumption of animal control responsibilities from Mesa County. The rewrite consolidates multiple code sections, modernizes outdated language, and aligns regulations with current operational practices. The primary purpose of the ordinance remains the restructuring of animal licensing and enforcement procedures.

- Council discussion focused primarily on proposed regulations for reptiles and other exotic animals.
- Staff explained that the proposed regulations are driven primarily by the City's limited capacity to safely house, transport, and care for large reptiles if animals become abandoned, neglected, or escape.

Council generally supported:

- Converting species restrictions to size-based regulations.
- Creating a permitting process for larger reptiles.
- Refining code language prior to first reading.

Staff will revise the ordinance accordingly before returning it for formal consideration.

b. Overview of Grand Junction Rural Fire Protection District Funding

Fire Chief Pete Skeris presented an overview of the City's long-standing agreement to provide fire services within the Grand Junction Rural Fire Protection District and the current financial impact.

Highlights included:

- The Fire Department responds throughout both the City and Rural Fire Protection District under a long-standing intergovernmental agreement.
- Approximately 13.5% of department call volume occurs within the Rural District.
- The annual subsidy from City resources is approximately \$2.1 million.
- Most parcels subject to the State's Wildland Urban Interface requirements are located within the Rural District (71.17%).
- Fire service demands continue to increase with population growth.
- Staffing, apparatus availability, and operational readiness are affected because City stations jointly serve both City and Rural District areas.

Council discussed:

- The fairness of City taxpayers subsidizing services outside city limits.
- The need to engage the Rural Fire Protection District Board regarding options to reduce or eliminate the funding gap.
- The possibility of the Rural District pursuing a future mill levy increase, recognizing that any tax question would be decided by Rural District voters.
- The importance of beginning those discussions well in advance of future contract negotiations.

No policy direction was requested. Staff indicated the presentation was intended to provide background information ahead of the 2027 budget process.

2. Council Communication

Councilmembers discussed:

- Demolition beginning on the airport terminal project.
- A future workshop discussion regarding Whitman Park, public restroom closures, and related public safety and maintenance issues.
- Communication strategies explaining restroom closures to the public.
- Emergency shelter coordination during wildfire smoke or extended power outages, with staff noting these functions are coordinated through Mesa County Emergency Management.
- A letter of support for Clifton Water District's grant application to modernize its Colorado River diversion structure.

3. Next Workshop Topics

City Manager Bennett summarized list of next workshop topics.

- July 13: Housing Action Plan draft, Housing Needs Assessment, and project updates.
- August 17: Council norms of conduct workshop with CIRSA and the City Attorney.
- Future discussion regarding the City's unhoused strategy and reports from organizations receiving City funding.

4. Other Business

a. One Riverfront Commission Appointments

Council reviewed recommendations from the interview committee for appointments to the One Riverfront Commission.

Discussion included:

- The exceptionally strong applicant pool.
- Recommended full-term and partial-term appointments.
- A question regarding service on multiple City boards and commissions, particularly involving Planning Commission members – the City Clerk will research and provide information before the appointments at the regular meeting.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business, the workshop was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.