



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, March 30, 2009, for the purpose of reviewing the Overview, Revenues and General Government sections of the Proposed FY 2010 Budget.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; and David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager.

Mayor Davis began by offering Council members a chance to give an opening statement. Ms. Mach was glad the City had gone through a visioning process and hoped the City could use it as a guide in making budget decisions. Mr. Herling stated that the City needed to raise revenues without tax rate increases and suggested a grants coordinator or economic development position. Mr. Putens was glad that the City had gone through the exercise of identifying 1, 3 and 5% reductions. Mayor Davis was pleased that there was no tax rate increase and stressed that she wanted to avoid layoffs. She also wanted to preserve the contract post office and expressed concern about the disparity between police pay increases and other city workers.

Mr. Putens asked for further information about the pay difference between sworn officers and other City employees. Mr. McLaughlin explained that during the collective bargaining process, police salaries were determined to be behind comparable jurisdictions. He stated that the recent salary study determined other City employees' salaries were competitive with comparable jurisdictions.

Mayor Davis expressed concern about a lack of participation in Earth Hour by the City. Mr. Roberts noted that Public Works employees often leave their engines running while they work and believed this practice had negative environmental impacts. Ms. Mach asked if City employees were encouraged to turn off their computers at the end of the day. Mr. McLaughlin responded this was a recent change, but required a culture change based on earlier advice which had been to leave personal computers turned on.

Mr. McLaughlin reviewed the General Fund Summary page. He noted the City's efforts to rebuild and maintain a 10% General Fund balance. He indicated that tax revenue was down due to a decline in corporate personal property tax, income tax and highway user revenues.

Mr. Williams reviewed Revenues with Council. He indicated an increase in abatements was expected. There was discussion about a vacant building in Capital Office Park. Mr. Williams reported a decline in income tax revenue and a decline in highway user revenue.

Next, Council reviewed each budget in General Government in detail. There was discussion about the City's waste collection service and the costs for it in comparison to private contractors. Under Finance, Council asked staff to evaluate requiring employees to participate in direct deposit of paychecks.

Under Public Information, Mr. McLaughlin noted a management objective to expand the overhead banner program to Greenbelt East and West. He indicated the staff recommendation was to require groups to provide 3-4 banners so that all parts of the City could be covered. There was discussion about where the banners would be located in Greenbelt East and West.

Council reviewed the March 27 memo from the City Manager. Council discussed the proposal from Greenbelt In Focus (GIF). Council discussed the list of programs that GIF had produced. There was some concern that these programs did not necessarily market Greenbelt.

Next, Council reviewed the Line Item Summary. Mayor Davis asked about the high overtime costs. Mr. McLaughlin responded that this was predominately Police overtime and largely due to the need to cover dispatch or patrol vacancies. He also indicated that some of the overtime cost was for special initiatives.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager*