



***BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held
Wednesday, April 25, 2007, for the purpose of reviewing the Public Safety sections of the
proposed FY 2008 budget.***

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:02 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

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 McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; Chief Jim Craze, Capts. Dan O'Neil and Tom Kemp, Cpl. Dave Buerger, and Sgts. Carl Schinner and Jim Parker, Police Department; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Chief Brian Rudy, Chris Fleshman, president, Jay Remenick, vice president, and George Moore and Randall Magnum, trustees, Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department & Rescue Squad (GVFD); Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board; Silke Pope, Public Safety Advisory Committee; and Diane Oberg, Greenbelt News Review.

Greenbelt Volunteer Fire Department & Rescue Squad

Chief Rudy passed out to Council a copy of their replacement list. He said they anticipate buying a 2009 pumper to replace their 1999 pumper. The estimated cost is \$450,000, with sale of the old truck at about \$90,000.

There was discussion of the City contribution to the equipment fund, and it was agreed that although the amount had been increased in the FY 2007 budget, that was not a permanent change, and the figure for this year is \$57,000. Chief Rudy said they removed the ambulance discussed last year from the list because they realized that was not feasible at this time.

In response to a question, Mr. Remenick confirmed that bingo revenues are down, possibly due to increased competition. The Mayor asked what other departments do for revenue. The Chief replied that many departments bill for ambulance services. Mr. Remenick added that GVFD has not billed for these services in part because of the contribution they receive from the City. Chief Rudy added that some departments bill the insurance company but do not bill the patient if the insurance company does not provide reimbursement.

Mr. McLaughlin asked about grants he has seen reported from Congressman Hoyer. Chief Rudy said they apply for these grants every year; sometimes they are selected, other times not.

Police Department

A slide presentation was presented reviewing events of the year.

Mr. McLaughlin announced that the General Assembly had increased the municipal portion of the public safety surcharge from 12% to 25%. He also said staff would be talking with Hyattsville about preparing grant proposals to the state along the guidelines previously suggested by Delegate Gaines.

Sgt. Buerger said there had been a great deal of improvement in the department in its use of technology, specifically the mobile data computers (MDCs) being used in squad cars. He said they have 36 in the field and usage is up. He thanked Mr. Williams for the help the IT staff had been providing. The bad news is that the laptops are in very bad shape and need to be replaced by Panasonic Toughbooks. In response to questions from Council, Mr. Williams said the City has about \$40,000 available toward the replacements but that this amount will purchase only six or seven. He added that the model the City wants has not been available to date, however, with the result that no time has been lost.

The cadet program was discussed as a recruiting tool. Ms. Mach also asked if the criminal justice course taught by the SRO at the high school creates any interest. Mr. McLaughlin clarified that he had not included the cadet program in the budget for a number of years because of financial restrictions, but he thought it was timely to bring it back this year, given the upcoming retirements in the department and the recruiting needs that would follow.

The Mayor asked if Council had any problems with the four new positions proposed. Everyone agreed they were acceptable.

Sgt. Jim Parker made a presentation on the City's participation in planning for a countywide compatible radio system. He said the approximate cost to the City will be \$653,400, which will impact the FY 2009 budget. Mr. McLaughlin said it may be necessary to finance this project packaged with other large projects.

Council then reviewed the Public Safety budget page by page.

There was discussion of rehiring retired officers and the impediments created by the state retirement system if an officer is rehired by his or her previous department. The situation should be comparable to the program for rehiring retired county teachers, given the recruitment needs. It was suggested that this be considered for inclusion as part of the legislative agenda next year..

The Mayor asked about the video cameras Council had wanted for the squad cars. Mr. McLaughlin said he agreed with the Chief that it would be advisable to purchase the Toughbooks first and maximize the competence and use of the MDCs before moving on to another technology.

Mayor Davis asked to have fleet information on the nine vehicles to be replaced. Mr. McLaughlin noted that these were the usual eight for replacement plus one for the new officers.

Mr. Putens asked to track fuel costs, given the major increases. Mr. McLaughlin responded that this cost exists as a sub-account, but a budget note will be provided in the future.

The Mayor commented on the quantity of bicycles and skateboards in the area of the Center. Capt. Kemp said this in part reflects the reduced bike patrols resulting from vacancies. He said they are nearing the point of restaffing those patrols. He said he thought the combination of restored staffing and the replacement of the surveillance cameras in the Center should help a great deal. Regarding skateboarding in the parking lot, he said it may be time to begin issuing infractions and seizing boards again.

Mr. Roberts asked what would motivate the police to keep patrol levels up if the cameras are replaced. Chief Craze said they are pledged to doing that and do not view cameras as replacing officers.

Mayor Davis asked about quarterly reports. The Chief said he was aware that reports were lacking from last year and that they would be provided. The Mayor also asked to get information on the frequency of responses from officers who were off-duty or working off-duty jobs.

Referring to a memo from Sgt. Parker, Mr. McLaughlin said it had been decided it would be preferable to replace all the handguns at once but that a decision had to be made regarding destroying the old weapons or selling them back to the officers who wanted them. Council agreed to replace them all at once but put off the decision on the disposition of the old guns. Mayor Davis said she was concerned about having a Greenbelt weapon later be implicated in a crime.

Other Business

Ms. Gallagher announced that financial interest forms were due by April 30 and that she did not yet have all of Council's forms.

Mr. McLaughlin announced that several reports Council had requested were being sent out. He confirmed that it was Council's wish for Arts Supervisor Nicole DeWald to represent the City to receive the MML Award of Excellence for the Artful Afternoon program. He also asked for direction on articles for the MML magazine from the City regarding the fall conference to be held in Greenbelt. Ms. Mach suggested one focusing on cooperatives. Other suggestions were the history of the City, the SRO program, and environmental/green programs. Having a "top 10 things to do in Greenbelt" list was also suggested.

Ms. Mach announced that Neal Ewen's family was holding a memorial service in the Community Center on Friday from 3-5 to which everyone was invited.

Mayor Davis said nominations were being solicited for the PGCMA board and that it was her intention not to run again this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk*