

City Council Budget Workshop Minutes
April 2, 2025
8:00 a.m.
Council Chambers

1. Call to Order

The Budget Workshop of the Crestview City Council was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Mayor JB Whitten. Board members present: Mayor Pro-Tem Doug Capps. Council members: Ryan Bullard, Brandon Frost, Dusty Allison, and Shannon Hayes. Also present: City Manager Tim Bolduc, Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins, City Clerk Maryanne Girard, and various staff members. City Attorney Jonathan Holloway was excused.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Brandon Frost.

3. Open Workshop

Mayor JB Whitten declared a quorum was present. He explained the meeting will be less structured, as it is a workshop.

4. Approve Agenda

Mayor JB Whitten called for action.

Motion by Councilmember Brandon Frost and seconded by Councilmember Shannon Hayes to approve the agenda, as presented.

Roll Call: Ayes: Doug Capps, Ryan Bullard, Shannon Hayes, Brandon Frost, Dusty Allison. All ayes. Motion carried.

5. Action Items

5.1. Budget Policies and Priorities

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins went over how the workshop will progress and the timeline for the budget. She explained that the certified values are not received from the assessor until July 1st. She reviewed how strategic planning aligns to each budget area adding infrastructure, play and safety will be the key points. She stated the city is in good financial condition, as we have closed out FY24 in good standing. The capital projects such as the utilities for the Bypass, Foxwood Septic to Sewer, Main Street Revitalization, Golf Course improvements, Mirage traffic improvements, Redstone, Brookmeade Park, Fire Station 3, and Vineyard Village from the previous year are carried forward as the projects span multiple years.

Councilmember R. Bullard stated that Fire Station 3 should be top priority and asked about the current status of the station.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins replied that the firefighters have been temporarily located, and we are awaiting numbers before proceeding. She mentioned that Station 3 was set for remodeling, but we have had urgent issues recently adding we are looking into state assistance and insurance options. City Manager Tim

Bolduc added the remodel is a top priority and the funds will come from the general fund.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins mentioned Utility Project Fund projects and went over the completion dates. She also reviewed some of the accomplishments with the completion of the projects at Twin Hills Park and Rotary Park.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins went over the Total Project Management updates on the new facilities and the facility upgrades. She said Ajax will bring back the numbers from the survey that has been completed, and we will have firm numbers by the next budget meeting. We are also awaiting numbers for financing options. She mentioned that Ajax stated that there is no solid plan at the gym as there are moisture issues that cannot be resolved economically.

She went over the project summary for Capital Projects for FY26, such as cameras at the gym, shade sails at Durell Lee, floor replacement at the Community Center and street resurfacing. She added that Ajax will have firm numbers for our facility needs by our July meeting.

Mayor Whitten asked about the street relining and PS Director Carlos Jones replied that it can be included in the plan. He suggested that the Council inform him about streets that need resurfacing, stating they can be added to the list. Projects Director Wayne Steele added we are only allotted funding for five miles a year.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins displayed the city limits map along with where the projects are located throughout the city. The development plan will be aligned with the map of projects.

She also went over the Tourist Development Tax projects which included Blackwater Golf Course, the netting and parking lot, as well as the Brookmeade Park enhancements. She said we do not have an update on State Appropriations for the Animal Control Facility, Redstone sidewalks, Bypass reuse line, and the Garden Street and 85 Signal yet but we hope to know before the July meeting.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins mentioned that the personnel changes will be presented in July. We plan to add a 2% COLA and 4.5% merit increase. Florida Blue will go up 3.5%, however, we do not have the Proshare numbers yet. The Proshare is a portion of what we do not spend on health claims that comes back to us. She added it is possible the Florida Blue projection may go down dependent on our participation in wellness such as annual exams.

Discussion ensued on the health of the plan, rates, self-insurance options, staffing to manage the transition to self-insurance, actuaries on claims, the Proshare being returned to the employees, and how integral the benefit package is as part of retaining our employees.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins went over tuition assistance, the Employee Assistance and Wellness Reimbursement program. She went over the firefighters' exams stating we have great results.

Mayor JB Whitten excused himself at 8:50 a.m.

City Manager T. Bolduc emphasized from a global perspective; we are able to compete because we have quality staff. We have a good solid team that are well-trained. We are going to be technically sound and put people first. The benefits allow us to retain the good quality staff we have.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins went over the PS Impact Fees for FY26 stating the fees are directed at the developers. She mentioned we need a ladder truck, and it takes about three years to get one ordered, built, and delivered. Our consultant, Kimley-Horn, helps with the planning and forecasting for development.

She went over the Utility Fee Schedule projection stating we will need to raise the bills 11% to keep up with the improvements. She went over the numbers that we need to provide the services.

Discussion ensued on the balance from 2021 when the city tapped into the fees. We had to reset and added a rate increase in 2022 which was a 17% increase. We held off on capital projects to roll it back to make it easier. We were also subsidizing the stormwater fund from water and sewer utility. We corrected it by separating it so stormwater could be self sustainable. We have not made a transfer since 2022. At some point, the city has to balance it out. We cannot make a cost allocation until we receive the study results.

Discussion ensued on the water rate increase and the impact of the garbage rate increase.

Councilmember Dusty Allison added if we want to continue to be a city that is improving, we have to make the adjustments to maintain the integrity of our city so we are not in the red.

City Manager T. Bolduc said Jacobs will come back with a ten-year study with the full projection. Part of the development plan will be to keep the focus on the infrastructure with our growth.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins said Dusty Allison and Shannon Hayes attended the Legislative Action Days along with her.

City Manager T. Bolduc said when we don't transfer money, we will have to use ad valorem taxes.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins went over the options for the millage rate, which is estimated at 6.6466, which is lower than 1/10 of a percent. She said we do not have the estimated values yet.

She called for a five-minute recess at 9:16 a.m., and Mayor Pro-tem D. Capps resumed the meeting at 9:25 a.m.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins asked the Council for their priorities.

Councilmember S. Hayes requested the staff concentrate on the other Fire station, continue to improve our parks, go forward with the sports complex, and the cemetery.

Mayor Pro-Tem D. Capps said his priorities are the Science Center in Crestview, the Public Safety building, sports complex, Mirage, Brookmeade to Highway 85, and upgrades to the Skate Park at Brookmeade. He agreed to the barn cover-up to save money. He would like restrooms as soon as feasible, however. The north park is a priority, as well as the traffic circle at Mirage since the apartments are opening up and the connector road.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins said we are bringing the Science Center back and are looking for sponsors. It would be used for STEM and youth arts activities.

Councilmember B. Frost stated his priorities are the Fire Station, sports complex, gym, Science Center, and lighting at Twin Hills at the new playground.

Director of Operations W. Steele said that the lighting should be completed soon, and Deputy City Manager J. Leavins added that the cameras will be coming soon as we are waiting on the contractor to install them.

Councilmember R. Bullard stated his priorities are the fire station, getting ALS, reviewing the Mutual Aid Agreements because of the revenue loss, Special Event activities such as Food Truck Fridays, Mardi Gras parades, partnering our Parks and Recreation with the Little League Soccer Association and private company sponsorships.

Parks and Recreation Director Brady Peters said we are with the Babe Ruth League and Cal Ripken League because of our connection with Baker.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins said we are tracking a bill on ALS that would move fees to where we could tap into grants. She added ALS is in the fire department's strategic plan long-term goals.

Councilmember Dusty Allison thanked the Fire Department for managing the issue with Fire Station 3. Her priorities are the new Public Safety building, and the Sports Complex.

Mayor Pro-Tem D. Capps said ALS is important to him, as well.

Councilmember S. Hayes agreed that safety is his number one, but the Sports Complex has drawn our city together. We will need to borrow the money, but our grandkids will enjoy it.

Deputy City Manager Jessica Leavins said we are meeting with the bond company about financing of the Sports Complex and hope to partner with the county.

Discussion ensued on partnering options, naming rights, operational needs, cost of living impacting the numbers from commercial development, utility cost increases, effects of lowering the millage rate and being fiscally smart.

City Manager T. Bolduc added that the items on the priority list are generated by the millage rate. If we roll it back, that will take operational dollars from our priorities. He mentioned as long as the County keeps buying property, he hopes they will see the value in partnering. He also mentioned we have added services and have lowered the millage rate even with the inflation.

Mayor Pro-Tem D. Capps requested that staff provide comparisons based on the pros and cons of maintaining and lowering the millage rate.

6. Comments from the Audience

No one from the public was in attendance.

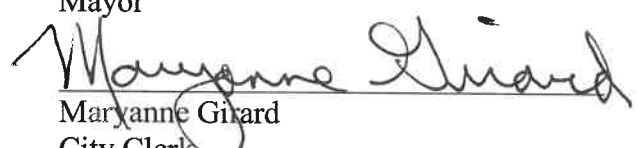
7. Comments from the Mayor and Council

8. Adjournment

Mayor Pro-Tem Capps adjourned the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

Minutes approved this 14th day of April 2025.


JB Whitten
Mayor


Maryanne Girard
City Clerk

Proper Notice having been duly given

