

CITIZEN BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 22nd, 2026 - 5:00 p.m.

<i>Committee Members</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
<i>Barry Eastman</i>	X	
<i>Tyler Mowery</i>	X	
<i>Anthony McCune</i>	X	
<i>John Shull</i>	X	
<i>Merrie Foreman</i>		X
<i>Lori Williams</i>	X	
<i>Khalil N Bhanji</i>		X
<i>Laura Gurney</i>	X	
<i>Nicole Riner</i>	X	

ATTENDING GUESTS & CITY PERSONNEL:

Stacey Aurzada, City Attorney
Mark Gonzales, Presiding Judge City of Greeley Municipal Court
Nathan Mosley: Budget & Policy Director
Kalen Myers, Budget & Policy Deputy Director
Ryan Eddings, City Budget Analyst I
Laura Delp: CBAC Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Barry Eastman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Eastman will be out of town at the May 27, 2026 meeting, so Vice Chair McCune will lead the meeting.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM MARCH 25TH, 2026

The minutes from March 25th, 2026 were unanimously approved with a motion by John Shull that was seconded by Tony McCune after a correction to indicate that Laura Gurney was not present at the meeting.

BALLOT INITIATIVE – KALEN MYERS

The discussion focused on the early exploration of a potential 2026 ballot measure that could ask voters to approve a tax increase. The process would follow the City’s usual approach, with Council first signaling whether it wants staff to prepare a possible measure for the November ballot. Some dedicated taxes have historically come up for renewal on a regular cycle, but the food tax was permanently renewed in 2024, so it is no longer part of that recurring schedule. The next typical renewal on the horizon is the Keep Greeley Moving sales tax, expected later in the decade. As a result, the current conversation is not about renewing an existing tax, but about whether to pursue a new tax increase. This topic is being revisited because Council considered several options in the previous cycle, including public safety, homelessness and housing, and economic development, but ultimately chose not to move forward at that time. The issue returned during the February strategic retreat because, if Council wants to pursue a ballot measure, the timeline for polling, outreach, and ballot preparation is important.

The main reason for considering a tax increase is the City’s broader budget outlook. The City is currently facing a significant general fund deficit and is trying to reduce spending by approximately \$20 million while also addressing cost pressures in core service areas. Public safety was identified as a key example, particularly in fire services, where staffing remains below desired levels. Hiring additional firefighters would require new funding that is not currently available on top of the existing deficit. Homelessness was also highlighted as an area of continuing community need. A homelessness response structure had previously been established largely with grant funding, but those grants have

expired, creating pressure to identify an ongoing revenue source if those services are to continue. The overall concern is how to maintain or expand service levels without relying on one-time funding solutions, which is why a possible tax increase is being discussed as a source of ongoing revenue. Kalen emphasized that no decisions have been made yet and that the conversation remains in an exploratory phase until later in the summer, when Council would need to decide whether to place anything on the ballot.

Feedback gathered from Council during the February retreat indicated general interest in a combined ballot measure focused on public safety and homeless solutions. The connection between those two issues was described as practical as well as policy-based, with the idea that better homelessness mitigation could reduce calls for service and relieve pressure on public safety systems. Council discussion suggested support for a sales tax increase of up to one-half percent, with interest in giving at least the homeless solutions portion some kind of sunset period, possibly in the range of five to ten years. An important theme from Council was that any new tax revenue should not simply replace or backfill existing funding shortfalls. Instead, if voters were asked to approve a tax increase, the funds should be tied clearly to enhanced or expanded services. Transparency, specificity, and a clear explanation of how funds would be used were identified as essential.

At the same time, the path forward is narrow and includes unresolved policy questions. Some Council members may oppose any tax increase regardless of structure, while others may only support one under strict limits. Major open questions include what exactly would count as “homeless solutions,” whether that would mean only sheltering or also include outreach, case management, and related services. There are also questions about how funding would be split between public safety and homelessness, whether the proportions would remain fixed or shift over time, and how any new measure would interact with the City’s existing public safety tax that remains in place for many more years. Another unresolved issue is voter appetite for a tax increase at all, which is where polling would play a major role. The next key step is a Council work session in May to determine whether Council still wants to pursue the concept. Since the February retreat, circumstances have changed, including the loss of a council member who had been a strong supporter of a sales tax increase and other changes in the broader civic landscape. That makes the upcoming Council conversation especially important before staff invest significant time in legal drafting, polling, and public engagement.

The committee was asked to provide feedback because its perspective could help identify community priorities, surface concerns early, test assumptions, and inform how a measure might be structured and presented. Members were encouraged to comment on whether the proposed priority areas resonated, what concerns they had, how they believed the community might respond, and what would increase or diminish trust in the proposal. It was explained that committee input could help shape the Council discussion, inform the design of polling questions, and guide messaging and community engagement if the proposal advances.

Additional background was provided on Greeley’s current sales and use tax structure and how it compares with nearby communities. The City’s sales and use tax totals 4.11 percent, and when combined with the state rate, the overall sales tax rate is 7.01 percent. Greeley was described as sitting in the middle of its nearest neighbors regionally. Because Weld County does not impose a county sales tax, the City has somewhat more room than some neighboring communities, many of which are also beginning to add fire district taxes. It was noted that comparisons are imperfect because each community has different circumstances, but Council routinely asks how Greeley’s tax rate compares to others when considering whether to propose an increase.

Survey results from Council and committee members were also discussed. Among Council members, responses showed divided views, with some not supporting any tax increase, some supporting up to one-half percent, and some supporting as much as one percent. When the discussion was held in person, one-half percent emerged as the practical level of interest. The strongest policy support appeared to be for public safety and homelessness. Committee responses were somewhat similar on the overall amount, with some members opposing a measure and others willing to consider up to one-half percent, but the priority areas differed more. Public safety received more moderate support, while homelessness and housing drew more skepticism, though at least one respondent identified it as a high priority.

A significant portion of the discussion centered on public trust and the community’s confidence in the City. Concern was raised that recent controversy and dissatisfaction around other City matters could negatively affect voter willingness to support any new tax measure, even if the tax were clearly designated for specific purposes. There was skepticism about how many residents fully understand the separation of different funding streams and whether they would distinguish

between unrelated City projects and a targeted ballot measure. In response, it was said this issue would likely be tested through polling, including questions aimed at whether sentiment about other City projects is influencing confidence in the City's financial management. It was acknowledged that the City could face an uphill battle and that strong public education would be necessary if the measure moved forward.

Committee members also expressed concern about combining public safety and homelessness into a single ballot issue. Some felt that packaging the two together could make the measure harder to pass because voters who support one priority but oppose the other may reject the entire proposal. The view was expressed that separate ballot questions would be cleaner and more likely to succeed. Others reiterated a broader philosophical concern that public safety should be funded within the existing general fund rather than through a separate tax increase, and that homelessness spending should be reduced rather than expanded. These concerns were acknowledged and it was noted that this perspective is consistent with prior committee guidance. At the same time, there are competing strategic considerations: separate ballot measures may be clearer, but multiple measures can also compete against each other and create the impression that the City is asking for too much at once. Polling was identified as a key tool to determine which structure, if any, might be viable.

Further discussion emphasized the need to define the homelessness component with greater precision. It was noted that homelessness-related funding currently includes both shelter support and homeless solutions such as outreach and case management, and those functions may soon face further transition because United Way is stepping away from direct service provision. That creates uncertainty about who will manage shelter services going forward. Committee members stressed that if a tax measure includes homelessness, the City must be explicit from the outset about whether it would fund shelter, outreach, case management, or some combination of those elements. It was pointed out that the timing within the budget cycle is helpful because the affected departments already have a clear sense of their operational and funding needs, making it possible to assemble specific service packages and present Council with concrete options for what a ballot measure could fund.

Overall, the conversation confirmed that a potential 2026 ballot measure remains highly tentative and politically sensitive. There is some interest in pursuing a sales tax increase focused on public safety and homeless solutions, but significant uncertainty remains about Council support, voter sentiment, public trust, the structure of the measure, and the exact uses of the funding. Committee feedback suggested that combining the two issues may weaken support, that public safety may be seen by some as a general fund responsibility rather than a ballot item, and that any homelessness proposal will need much clearer definition. The next major decision point will be the upcoming Council work session, after which the City will either move into an intensive period of ballot development, polling, and outreach, or decide not to proceed.

CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE (CAO) – STACEY AURZADA

The City Attorney, Stacey Aurzada, explained that the core mission of the City Attorney's Office is to provide legal services across all areas of city government, including City Council, Boards and Commissions, and City staff. Maintaining in-house legal counsel was described as a more cost-effective option for taxpayers than relying primarily on outside counsel, particularly for a city of Greeley's size. CAO handles a broad range of legal matters, including employment law, water court cases, tort and personal injury litigation, and legal support for daily municipal operations. It was noted that Greeley handles tort litigation internally because doing so has proven less expensive over time than outsourcing through shared risk arrangements commonly used by other municipalities. Stacey also emphasized CAO's role in advising Boards and Commissions and expressed willingness to provide future training or presentations on open meetings, open records, and similar governance topics. Internally, the department has been working to strengthen service delivery, improve responsiveness to clients, and formally integrate shared organizational values into its daily work.

The committee reviewed CAO's current organizational structure and budget, noting that most of its funding comes from the General Fund, while legal support tied to environmental and water resources is generally funded by the water, sewer, and stormwater Enterprises. Stacey reported that supervisor positions added in recent years have improved turnaround times and reduced the likelihood of work being missed. Stacey highlighted the value of dedicating more legal support to stormwater-related work as that area has become more significant for the city. Like many smaller non-capital departments, the City Attorney's Office is heavily personnel-driven, with staffing representing the majority of its costs. At the same time, CAO continues to support a growing number of complex initiatives and legal demands, including major city projects and specialized Enterprise-related legal work.

A major focus of the presentation was the department's required budget reduction. CAO was assigned a 17 percent reduction target and stated that it could meet that target, although doing so would be difficult. To achieve the reduction, CAO plans not to fill a currently vacant administrative assistant position and also not to replace an attorney who chose to retire during the budget process. The legal duties previously performed by that attorney will need to be absorbed primarily by the remaining attorneys in the municipal operations section. Additional reductions will come from significantly decreasing the budget set aside for outside counsel while still preserving a limited reserve for urgent or specialized legal needs, such as matters involving Council or unusual organizational situations. CAO also plans to reduce a funding pool that had been created over time to support internal attorney promotions and career progression. Although that approach had value in theory, it was described as not functioning well within the city's broader budgeting framework, and leadership suggested that promotion planning would be better handled more holistically at the citywide level rather than through a department-specific reserve.

Other proposed reductions include cuts to training, leadership coaching, and out-of-state travel. One of the most significant concerns raised during the discussion involved the possible elimination of a specialized legal AI research tool integrated into the office's legal research platform. Although this subscription represents a substantial annual cost, staff described it as highly useful because it provides safer, more reliable, and more efficient legal research within a closed legal environment. CAO acknowledged that the work can still be done without the tool by using more traditional research methods and general AI tools available through the city or public platforms, but doing so will slow down legal analysis and increase the amount of manual work required. It was explained that this effect compounds across the office: when administrative support is reduced, paralegals absorb more clerical work, which limits the legal support they can provide, and attorneys then must take on more of that work themselves. The cumulative result is a slower and less proactive office.

Questions from the group focused heavily on whether eliminating staff positions while also cutting a time-saving research tool would create operational risk and hidden costs. In response, CAO acknowledged that these cuts will reduce efficiency and capacity. The greatest likely loss will be in proactive legal work, such as presentations, early issue spotting, and outreach to departments intended to prevent problems before they become larger legal matters. Stacey said CAO is still in a better structural position than it was several years ago because of recent supervisory improvements, but the reductions will clearly affect service levels. A comparison was also shared showing that under a smaller 10 percent reduction scenario, CAO could downgrade rather than eliminate the two positions, retain the AI legal research service, and preserve somewhat more training funding while still making many of the same non-personnel cuts.

Stacey also discussed the challenge of balancing daily legal operations with support for large city initiatives such as West Greeley, Civic Campus, and MERGE. These major projects require extensive legal support, often involving specialized outside counsel, development agreements, financing structures, land use matters, and litigation. Some legal costs associated with these projects have been or will be paid through project-related financing mechanisms such as certificates of participation or other dedicated project funds rather than the General Fund. However, Stacey emphasized that even when some costs are externally funded, the staff time required to support these projects remains significant. Legal workload may eventually decrease as projects move past major milestones, but for now these initiatives require substantial attention in addition to the office's ongoing responsibilities such as municipal prosecution, licensing enforcement, and assistance with revenue-related compliance issues.

Another major workload pressure discussed was the increased legal and records burden associated with police accountability requirements, including drone footage, body camera records, and related public records demands. CAO noted that these responsibilities have expanded significantly in recent years, particularly after state legislative changes increased police-related litigation and accountability expectations. A previously requested records technician position intended to help police, the court, and the City Attorney's Office manage some of this records volume was not funded, so this remains an unresolved strain on operations. Legislative changes without corresponding funding, together with continued city growth, were identified as some of the most significant long-term risks facing the office.

To control costs and improve efficiency, the department said it continues to prioritize handling litigation internally whenever feasible, using outside counsel mainly for conflicts, highly specialized matters, or especially large and complex cases. It is also trying to build and retain internal expertise so the city can become less dependent on external legal services over time. Another efficiency strategy has been the development of stronger standardized contracts in coordination with purchasing, water and sewer, and public works. Better front-end contract drafting reduces the need

for repeated legal review after contractors propose changes. CAO has also been standardizing recurring workflows in areas such as liquor licensing, prosecution, and water court matters, and using internal systems to streamline processes where possible. These steps have helped CAO absorb more work and manage rising caseloads more effectively.

The discussion concluded with recognition that CAO can technically meet its savings target, but not without consequences. Reduced staffing, less training, and loss of specialized tools would all have real impacts on service quality, timeliness, and the department's ability to work proactively. There was notable concern from participants that cutting an efficiency-enhancing legal AI tool may create larger downstream personnel and risk costs, particularly in a high-stakes department where legal mistakes can be expensive. There was also interest in evaluating whether such tools should be supported with one-time funding or reviewed more strategically across departments to avoid duplication while preserving high-value use cases. Overall, the message was that the reduction target is achievable, but the tradeoffs are meaningful, and the city will likely need to weigh short-term savings against longer-term operational and legal risk.

MUNICIPAL COURT – JUDGE MARK GONZALES

Judge Gonzales explained that his central responsibility is to administer the court efficiently while protecting due process and treating people respectfully. The court aims to move individuals through the system quickly without sacrificing fairness, recognizing that some people want matters resolved as fast as possible while others need more time to understand and complete the process. The Greeley Municipal Court is one of the fastest-operating municipal courts in Colorado and noted that, although Greeley is around the tenth-largest city in the state, its court is likely among the five busiest by volume. This is due in part to Greeley handling a higher share of municipal cases internally, while some other jurisdictions shift more cases to county court. Judge Gonzales emphasized that this operational model allows the city to process a substantial number of cases efficiently, but it also means the court is highly sensitive to outside legal and legislative changes that affect workload and sentencing authority.

The court reviewed its organizational structure and noted that the court administrator plays a central role in coordinating operations and helping manage both performance and budget planning. Judge Gonzales highlighted the importance of administrative support in pulling together budget data and helping the court better understand its actual expenditures and revenues. A key theme throughout the presentation was the difference between budgeted figures and actual financial performance. The court explained that historical budget numbers do not always reflect what the court truly costs or earns in practice, and that recent efforts were made to examine actual revenues and actual expenditures more closely. Based on that review, the court reported that in the prior year it generated nearly \$1.6 million in revenue while actual expenditures were about \$1.4 million, meaning it brought in more money than it cost within the General Fund context. Judge Gonzales acknowledged that this does not capture the broader city services that support court operations, such as police enforcement, but maintained that the court is an overall revenue-positive function when viewed through its own operating figures.

The presentation focused heavily on the challenge of meeting the city's required budget reduction target. The court was asked to identify a 17 percent reduction, and leadership said this is particularly difficult because most of the court's budget is tied to personnel and the operation is already running at a high level of efficiency. The court developed scenarios for 17 percent, 10 percent, and 5 percent reductions and reviewed them carefully. Rather than cutting deeply into staffing and services, the judge indicated a preference for meeting the target based on the difference between budgeted amounts and actual spending, instead of reducing operational capacity in a way that would directly affect public service. The court suggested that some reductions may be possible by adjusting funding assumptions in areas such as costs associated with individuals in custody and other expenditure lines, allowing the court to reach the required savings target without eliminating key services. The overall message was that the court is willing to participate in citywide reductions, but believes those reductions should be structured in a way that reflects actual financial performance and preserves the court's ability to function effectively.

Judge Gonzales expressed strong concern that if the court were required to absorb full reductions through staffing cuts, core functions and public-facing services would be harmed. The judge explained that reducing personnel could force the court to eliminate or scale back marshal positions, which provide courtroom security, requiring police officers to fill those roles instead. Similarly, probation services could be reduced, but that would remove an important support system that helps people avoid reoffending and successfully comply with court requirements. The court emphasized that City Council has consistently expressed a desire for the court system to help people resolve issues and avoid future violations, and those goals become harder to achieve if staffing is reduced too far. The court also noted that it

performs services that support other departments, including handling payments associated with parking and radar van tickets, and warned that if personnel were cut, some of those supplemental services might have to be discontinued as well.

The court described several strategies it uses to keep costs down and improve efficiency. These include continually reviewing and refining internal processes, visiting other courts to observe best practices, talking regularly with staff about bottlenecks and workflow improvements, and cross-training employees so work can continue smoothly when someone is absent. One of the biggest operational improvements over time has been the move away from paper-heavy processes toward more electronic workflows. Judge Gonzales explained that when the judge first arrived, much of the work involved physically moving paper between departments, which caused delays. Since then, the court has implemented a queuing-based electronic process that allows information to move faster between court staff and prosecutors while still retaining paper files in the courtroom where needed. These changes have reduced delays and contributed to the court's reputation for fast service. Visitors from other courts reportedly comment on how quickly Greeley's municipal court operates.

The court also discussed ongoing innovation efforts, particularly through the use of CourtQ, the electronic check-in and case flow system that allows people to check in, review advisements, and move through the process more efficiently. CourtQ was described as an early and important innovation in the area, helping speed up operations and improve case handling. At the same time, the court acknowledged that the system still has workflow gaps that create unnecessary delays, such as when prosecutors enter information but fail to send it forward in the system. Court staff then have to stop other work to manually follow up, which slows operations. The judge described a desire to continue piloting improvements and automation that reduce these friction points and help staff work faster without sacrificing accuracy or accountability.

Another innovation discussed was the development of language-access tools, including a Haitian Creole informational video. The court explained that language needs shift over time depending on workforce and community demographics, and that multilingual communication tools can significantly improve efficiency. Rather than relying solely on a lengthy interpreter-mediated process in which legal information must be relayed back and forth line by line, prerecorded videos and other translated resources can streamline communication while still ensuring understanding. The court noted that it has seen changing language needs over the years, including populations speaking Haitian Creole and other languages from Africa and Asia, and expects to continue developing language resources as qualified speakers become available. Although the possibility of AI for language support was briefly raised, the judge expressed caution about relying on AI in this context, given the legal importance of precision and the need to trust that translations are fully accurate.

The court identified several current and future risks. One is rising caseload volume. The court reported that it handled more than 17,000 tickets in the last year, an increase of roughly 4,000 from prior years and the highest level seen since before the pandemic. This increase was attributed less to automated enforcement cameras and more to shifts in policing practices following COVID and legislative changes, which initially reduced routine traffic enforcement and are now gradually returning toward prior levels. The court expects traffic and other municipal cases to continue affecting workload as patrol activity normalizes. Another major risk is changes in law or Supreme Court rulings that alter sentencing authority, process requirements, or case handling obligations. The judge discussed a recent Colorado Supreme Court development that limits municipal courts from imposing higher penalties on certain misdemeanor offenses than would be available in state court. As a result, penalties for some municipal offenses must now align more closely with lower state-level limits. The court indicated this change reduces local flexibility and may also reduce revenue potential, while creating a more uniform sentencing structure across jurisdictions. There was also concern that similar reasoning could eventually affect traffic penalties and other municipal fines.

The court emphasized that legal and technology-related changes are increasing the amount of staff time required per case, even where the number of cases remains manageable. In particular, body-worn camera footage, drone footage, and related evidence create significant review, disclosure, and trial preparation demands for both prosecutors and court staff. These materials must be reviewed for discovery, suppression issues, hearings, and jury presentations, making each case more time-intensive. This mirrors concerns raised by other departments about growing public records and accountability obligations. The court stressed that these pressures are not always visible in simple case-count metrics, but they materially affect staffing needs and efficiency.

The discussion also highlighted the court's role in supporting city revenue collection and other departmental operations. In addition to processing court-related fines and fees, court staff accept cash payments for radar van and parking tickets because other departments do not have front-counter staff to do so. The court estimated that these payments total around \$40,000 annually. While that money is not necessarily counted as court revenue, the court sees this as another example of how its staff provide operational support beyond traditional courtroom functions. Judge Gonzales cautioned that if staffing reductions are imposed, these auxiliary services may no longer be sustainable.

The presentation concluded with appreciation for the opportunity to explain the court's work and budget realities. Judge Gonzales underscored that the court has worked hard to become a highly efficient, service-oriented operation and believes it is already generating strong value for the city. The court's position is that it can contribute to the city's savings goals, but reductions should be based on realistic actual spending patterns rather than service cuts that undermine court security, probation support, language access, revenue collection, or timely case processing. The broader discussion afterward reflected concern that some budget constraints, including limitations on fines and fees and restrictions embedded in the city charter, may need to be revisited if the city wants the court to remain financially balanced while preserving services. Overall, the court presented itself as a high-performing department that is trying to absorb budget pressure responsibly without weakening due process, operational efficiency, or public service outcomes.

NATHAN'S UPDATES – NATHAN MOSLEY

Nathan provided an update on several ongoing city topics, with the intention that these updates become a recurring part of future meetings, particularly for large-scale projects and major budget developments. The purpose is to keep the group informed about current information, upcoming work sessions, and study sessions that may be worth following, while also making efficient use of everyone's time by relying on existing council discussions for more in-depth project review. As part of that effort, the update began with the 2027 budget development process and included context for why certain departments had recently presented directly. It was explained that some departments report directly to City Council and therefore operate somewhat differently in the budget process, but that the broader challenge remains the same across the organization: every department is trying to identify meaningful reductions under difficult circumstances.

A key point in the budget discussion was that although some departments generate revenue, the city has generally not given departments direct budget credit for the revenue they contribute to the General Fund. The reasoning is that if all revenue-generating departments were allowed to offset their reductions based on those collections, departments that do not produce revenue directly, such as human resources, finance, and similar internal service functions, would end up carrying a disproportionate share of the cuts. It was also noted that some departments benefit from citywide support services without being directly charged for those overhead costs, further complicating any attempt to treat revenue generation as a simple budget offset. In retrospect, it was acknowledged that City Council might have been asked more directly during strategic planning whether certain reporting departments should be treated differently, but the current process has applied a common framework across departments, even though individual departments may argue that their specific circumstances justify another approach.

The update emphasized that the reduction targets now being applied are the result of earlier feedback from both the advisory group and City Council regarding departmental priorities. Based on that scoring process, departments were grouped into tiers. Police and Fire were placed in the highest-priority tier and assigned a 3 percent reduction target. A middle tier, which included departments such as Budget, Municipal Court, and the City Attorney's Office, received a 17 percent reduction target. A lower-priority tier of roughly eight departments was assigned a 25 percent reduction target. It was stressed that these are extremely difficult choices and that every department is facing significant impacts. In some cases, reductions cannot be achieved through operating efficiencies alone and will require workforce reductions. Within the Budget team, for example, the 17 percent reduction translates into approximately a 22 percent reduction in staffing, requiring the loss of two positions. The overall message was that all departments are under serious pressure and working hard to identify cuts, and that these tradeoffs are not limited to any one office.

Because workforce reductions were expected to be a major part of the budget strategy, the city implemented a voluntary separation process to give employees an opportunity to leave under an incentive structure before involuntary layoffs would be considered. That application process had recently concluded, with 77 employees across

the organization applying, which was close to the original estimate of around 80 participants. The update explained that the fiscal impact of voluntary separations depends heavily on which employees participate, since the effect is very different if most applicants are entry-level employees versus more senior or higher-paid staff. The program was opened to both Enterprise-funded and non-Enterprise-funded positions in part because it could create internal movement opportunities, allowing one vacancy to create flexibility elsewhere in the organization. This was described as only one piece of the larger workforce planning puzzle, but an important one. Within the Budget department itself, two employees applied for the voluntary separation program, which means that if the proposed reductions are ultimately adopted, those staffing losses may occur through attrition rather than layoffs. That outcome was described as beneficial in those specific cases and illustrative of how the process can ease some of the disruption caused by budget reductions.

The update then reviewed the current budget development timeline. Department budget submissions were due that Friday, following several weeks of training to help departments use the city's software and prepare their proposals. Once submitted, the budget team would review those drafts for completeness, underlying assumptions, and overall realism. It was stressed that the budget process involves not only reductions, but also revenue opportunities. While departments were not given retroactive credit for the revenue they have historically generated, they are being allowed to receive credit if they can identify realistic pathways for generating additional future revenue. The budget team's role is to scrutinize those assumptions carefully to ensure they are mathematically and operationally sound, rather than speculative or overstated. Budget analysts, managers, and leadership would all be involved in reviewing department submissions to identify any concerns before the proposals move forward.

A major next step in the process is a peer review meeting scheduled for May 6, where each deputy city manager group will review the proposals within its portfolio of departments. These discussions are intended to examine both the department-level impacts and the broader implications across each group of city functions. The update emphasized that although departments are currently focused on their own internal reductions, leadership will need to take a wider view to ensure that one area is not overwhelmed while another escapes with relatively little burden. The concept was framed as a shared citywide problem rather than a collection of isolated department decisions. If City Council later indicates that some cuts are too severe in certain areas, leadership may need to either identify deeper reductions elsewhere or find alternative funding sources. One example offered was the possibility of using one-time dollars to support a software tool for another year, while clearly flagging it for reevaluation in the next cycle. The peer review process is intended to surface those kinds of tradeoffs before final recommendations are made.

Final budget submissions are due on May 15, after which a series of City Council work sessions will begin. Starting May 12, the city will begin providing regular budget updates to Council every two weeks. The first session will offer a general budget overview, followed by a department-focused session on May 26 that will include finance, procurement, budget, the city manager's office, and public safety. Additional work sessions will continue every two weeks through July 14. Departments will also prepare videos to share with Council and others ahead of time so that work sessions can focus more on discussion and decision-making rather than presentation. This approach is intended to better prepare Council for the public reaction that may come as service reductions become more visible, and to give them an earlier opportunity to shape priorities. The goal is to keep a clear running total of council feedback, especially where Council may want to preserve specific items that would otherwise be cut, so the city can understand the cumulative financial impact of those choices. This schedule was described as an intentional response to prior feedback from City Council, which had requested earlier and more robust involvement in the budget process.

Looking ahead, the city expects to spend late July and August building the proposed budget internally, with the City Manager's proposed budget delivered to Council around late August or early September. Traditional fall work sessions would then occur in September, with formal budget adoption in October. The hope expressed during the update was that by the time the process reaches September, the difficult policy conversations will already have occurred, allowing the fall review to be more of a final alignment rather than a re-litigation of major issues. Communications staff are also working to increase public awareness of the work sessions so residents can better understand the choices being made and the tradeoffs required to balance the budget.

The update also included several capital improvement and major project items. A quarterly capital improvement program update is scheduled for May 12, in response to City Council's request for more consistent reporting on project status. This is intended to become a regular process for providing project-level information and receiving

Council feedback. On West Greeley, a financial update was scheduled for Council the following week, focused on the status of the certificates of participation, expenditures to date, expected outstanding invoices, and options for servicing that debt. It was explained that payments on those certificates are not expected until 2027, and that refinancing is likely no matter what path is chosen, meaning that meaningful payment obligations may not arise until 2028 or 2029. Much of the project's future depends on the recommendations of the oversight board and on what a revised "West Greeley 2.0" might look like. The first oversight board meeting was scheduled for April 30, with weekly Thursday meetings expected for at least six weeks. There was also a question about a Colorado Supreme Court case related to the matter, but no new update was available at that time, and it was noted that if a decision had been issued, it likely would have already received significant public attention.

For Civic Campus, the update explained that work is continuing despite broader questions raised by West Greeley. Staff are evaluating how the funding structures for the two projects interact, but clarified that the financing approach for Civic Campus is different. The certificates of participation intended for the new civic building are structured so that the newly constructed building itself serves as the collateral, rather than existing city buildings being leveraged across the system. Funding for that debt has been planned through quality-of-life capital improvement funds and food tax revenues, with a transition to General Fund support in later years. However, the timing of that transition may need to be reevaluated depending on what happens with West Greeley. Other work on Civic Campus includes land exchange coordination with Weld County and the school district, as well as efforts to align downtown pedestrian, transit, safety, and utility improvements with other planned construction so upgrades can be completed more cost-effectively while streets are already being opened. Abatement work at City Hall is ongoing, and demolition was described as approaching, although no specific date was provided. No separate Civic Campus update was currently scheduled with Council at that time.

An update was also provided on MERGE. A Council update was planned for May 26, and the project was described as still moving forward. Recent work has included updating the design services contract and bringing on an independent cost engineer to review project costs. This review is intended to ensure that the project remains within the voter-approved aggregate debt payment limit of \$120 million. One challenge noted is that the project may not receive as favorable a federal TIFIA loan rate as originally hoped, depending on the timing and category under which the city enters the federal loan cycle. Even so, it was stated that the rate would still be reduced, just not as advantageous as it might have been under a rural classification. Staff are therefore refining engineering and project cost assumptions to confirm that the project can still proceed within the limits approved by voters, and no immediate concern was expressed that those limits would be exceeded.

The update concluded with a plan to continue providing this kind of summary at future meetings and an invitation for the group to identify any additional projects they would like tracked in this way. There was also a request from the group to circulate project dates and work session schedules by email, or potentially provide a packet in advance, so members could review items beforehand and decide which meetings to attend. That request was received positively, and it was agreed that future communications would include the budget work session schedule as well as major project updates such as MERGE and West Greeley, along with follow-up summaries where helpful. Overall, the update reflected an effort to create a more structured and transparent flow of information on both the budget process and major capital initiatives so that advisory members, City Council, and the public can better understand what is happening and when key decisions will be made.

FUTURE MEETINGS AGENDA REVIEW – GROUP

The group discussed the agenda for the May meeting, which is expected to include an update on the first two City Council work sessions as well as information from the High-Performing Government initiative related to the Smarter City Spending effort. It was noted that the organization received more than 200 budget proposals, and the intent is to provide a high-level overview by department once all proposals are submitted by May 15. The update planned for May 27 is expected to focus on broad departmental themes rather than the same level of detail presented elsewhere. The discussion highlighted the scale of the challenge facing some departments, including Culture, Parks, and Recreation, which has a target of cutting \$4 million from a \$20 million budget. While departments may be able to make substantial progress toward reduction targets, the final portion of the cuts is proving much more difficult, and feedback from the group and from Council will be important in determining how to minimize the impact.

The conversation also emphasized that the budget-cutting process has prompted staff to examine operations and practices more critically than they otherwise might have. One example involved a review of purchasing card policies,

where a change in approach could increase rebate revenue enough to cover the cost of the purchasing card administrator. This was described as the kind of practical improvement that likely would not have been identified without the pressure of the current financial situation. The broader goal expressed was to preserve that mindset of scrutiny and innovation even outside of budget constraints so staff continue looking for more efficient ways to operate. It was also observed that while it is generally possible to find modest reductions, much larger cuts become far more disruptive.

PUBLIC INPUT

There were no members of the public present online or in attendance.

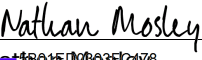
ADJOURNMENT

Chair Eastman adjourned the meeting at 6:48pm.

Next Regular Meeting:
May 27th, 2026
5:00-6:30 p.m.

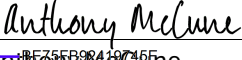
City Center South - 1001 11th Ave, Greeley, CO 80631
2nd Floor Colorado Conference Room 227
Zoom(<https://greeleygov.zoom.us/j/82522074466>)

Signed by:



Nathan Mosley
Budget & Policy Director

Signed by:



Anthony McCune
Vice Chairperson