

CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Pro Tempore Nikki Bufford called the special meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers David M. Viafore, Karen Mauer-Smith, Brett L. Wittner, Hunter T. George, and Jim Andrews, and Mayor Shannon Reynolds were present. Mayor Reynolds and Councilmember Wittner attended the meeting virtually.

PRELIMINARY 2026 BUDGET – 1st BUDGET WORK SESSION

Finance Director Deskins presented the Preliminary 2026 Budget General Fund overview and highlighted that the preliminary budget includes a 2.7 percent cost-of-living adjustment for all employees, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The 2026 personnel requests include reclassifying the Public Works Administrative Assistant to a Utility Billing Clerk, converting the part-time Community Events Specialist to a full-time position, and moving one seasonal/casual Recreation Leader to a permanent part-time position.

Finance Director Deskins presented two proposed budget requests that include a new pool cover and new office furniture for the Police Chief. She highlighted the General Fund revenue changes, stating that the property tax line, retail sales tax, and other tax revenues increased. Finance Director Deskins noted anticipated increases in retail sales tax, building, mechanical, and plumbing permits relating to the Whittier Elementary School Replacement Project.

Council discussions included the frequency and cost of the pool cover replacement, recreation programming and pool revenues, and wastewater treatment charges.

City Department Directors provided brief overviews of their 2025 accomplishments and 2026 budget requests.

- City Manager Masko reported on the Legislative budget and highlighted that there were no major changes.
- Court Administrator Olivarez reported on the finalization of the Enterprise Justice Implementation, as the Administrative Office of the Courts begins onboarding the remaining limited jurisdiction courts statewide, preparing for and onboarding a new Judge, monitoring for legislative updates, continuing staff training, and preparing for the Photo Enforcement Program.
- City Manager Masko stated that there are no major changes to the Administration budget, highlighting that staff efforts will focus on the Pedestrian Safety Plan, the Photo Enforcement Program, and overseeing the Whittier Elementary School Replacement Project construction.
- Finance Director Deskins reported that Finance will continue with a status quo budget and no new projects or staffing changes.
- City Manager Masko reported on the Legal Services budget and highlighted an increase for 2026 due to cost-of-living adjustments, a contract increase for the City Prosecutor, and ongoing costs for special legal counsel. There was a brief discussion on future impacts from legislative changes affecting Assigned Counsel and upcoming labor negotiations with the Police Guild.
- Public Works Director Bemis reported on the City Hall columns' restoration, upcoming facility painting needs, anti-graffiti options for the public restrooms, and the Time and Temperature sign.

- Police Chief Celis reported on current calls for service statistics, staffing levels, increasing community engagement and visibility, participation in local school programming, and the proposed in-car video lease. Council discussions included the Police Department's overtime costs, staffing levels requiring the overtime to cover patrol shifts, and funding for the emphasis patrol overtime.
- City Manager Masko reported that the City continues to work with two planning consultants, hiring an in-house planner in 2026, the interlocal agreement with University Place for on-call code enforcement services, and revisiting the building and planning fee schedule.
- Parks and Recreation Director Grover reported on the backstop project funding at Fircrest Park, summer and senior programming expansion, the proposed staffing requests, and the pool operations, to include lifeguard certification. There was a brief discussion on updating the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan.

Council discussions included using Westside Disposal mailers for City outreach, the upcoming EMS levy renewal, purchasing surplus generators, researching emergency management grants for generators, sending the Parks and Recreation Director to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Annual Conference, and the health condition of the Alice Peers Park tree.

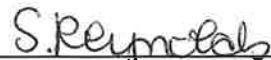
Finance Director Deskins discussed the Equipment Rental and Replacement (ERR) fund and highlighted allocations for two new police vehicles, a dump truck, a street sweeper, a crane truck, and a facilities maintenance truck. She also reported the budget requests for a new generator and new workstations. Council discussions included the street sweeper replacement, reinstating the equipment replacement-tracking form, and aligning ERR allocations with actual replacement costs.

Council discussions included unfunded staffing requests, 2026 legislative request, the Community Center and pool maintenance reserve, providing detailed equipment replacement forms, emphasis patrols, the photo enforcement program, and the Whittier Elementary School Replacement project revenues breakdown and one-time funding use.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Viafore MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 P.M., seconded by Councilmember Mauer-Smith.

The Motion Carried (7-0).



Shannon Reynolds, Mayor



Arlette Burkhart, City Clerk