

Upon notice duly given under Arizona Revised Statutes, Section 38-431, et seq., as amended, the City Council of the City of Bullhead City held a Special Meeting on Monday, April 20, 2026, in the City Council Chambers, 1255 Marina Boulevard, Bullhead City, Arizona.

CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Mayor Alfonzo called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Council Member O’Neill led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Council Present

Alfonzo, Dallman, Newlin, O’Neill, Ring, Smith

Council Absent

None

Staff Present:

CITY MANAGER: Toby Cotter

CITY ATTORNEY: Garnet Emery

CITY CLERK: Debie Ogden

CITY MAGISTRATE: Rod Gilleo

INTERIM POLICE CHIEF: Daniel Sharp

FINANCE DIRECTOR: Robert Drexler

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR: Angie Johnson

UTILITIES DIRECTOR: Mark R. Clark

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR: Saritti Chooniyom

HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTOR: Jeff Tipton

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR: Camden Stanley

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Discussion relating to the proposed City of Bullhead City Budget for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2026, including proposed revenues, expenditures, and programs for all governmental funds.

- Introduction – Budget Overview Presentation

City Manager Cotter said the annual budget review was an opportunity to review each department and division in detail, meet key directors and staff, and ask questions in an open forum. He said the budget continued the city’s long-standing commitment to strong programs and services, which had strengthened in recent years. He said a continued focus was on employees, including cost-of-living adjustments, step increases, competitive benefits, and safe working conditions. He said public safety was a primary focus with the largest police budget to date along with investments in risk management and human resources. He highlighted improvements to community amenities, including the new animal shelter, senior center, and community center, as well as expanded opportunities for residents. He said the budget also prioritized infrastructure including water, sewer, streets, and capital projects,

along with continued investments in parks, recreation, and ADA accessibility. He said the city maintained strong financial management practices, clean audits, and transparency.

City Manager Cotter gave a PowerPoint presentation and explained the general fund reserve had grown to approximately \$50 million, allowing the city to begin implementing key projects like the acquisition of Chaparral Golf Course, planned capital improvements, and significant investments in water and sewer infrastructure. He highlighted the \$8 million secured for the Highway 95 right-turn lanes, the new UTV/ATV Trailhead facilities, and the Bullhead Animal Resource Center (BARC). He summarized ongoing and completed projects, including Rotary Park improvements, the Optimum Community Center, new housing development, ADA river access, the Community Garden, Veterans' Park enhancements, traffic signal improvements, tourism initiatives, park security upgrades, and grant-funded equipment purchases. He said the proposed public safety budget exceeded \$23 million, including additional personnel and equipment. He said street and drainage projects were proposed at \$7.2 million and were supported in part by state and county funding. He said the capital improvement program included approximately \$6.8 million in projects including indoor pickleball courts, park restrooms, ADA river access, and golf course improvements, and said the budget reflected ongoing and multi-year projects.

Finance Director Drexler explained the state-imposed expenditure limit and said the passage of Proposition 416 increased the city's spending limit to approximately \$191 million. He said several projects were funded from fund balance reserves, including Hancock Road rehabilitation, Baseline Road improvements, traffic signal upgrades, an indoor pickleball court, park upgrades, police vehicles and equipment, department vehicles, and municipal facility and roadway improvements. He said the city adopted a balanced budget as required by state law, with sufficient revenues to support planned expenditures. He said Bullhead City continued using a zero-based, line-item budgeting approach for the 14th consecutive year, providing transparency for all expenditures. He said the budget included 36 funds, consisting of debt service funds, capital project funds, enterprise funds (including water and wastewater), and internal service funds and said the city included approximately \$15 million in grants, which would only be spent if awarded. He reviewed expenditure categories, including personnel, maintenance and operations, and debt service, and said the proposal included 12 new full-time positions across departments. He highlighted employee-related costs, including over \$5 million for health insurance and over \$5 million for public safety retirement, along with cost-of-living adjustments.

Finance Director Drexler reported the citywide fund balance was projected at approximately \$35 million. He said the general fund, as the primary operating fund, relied heavily on local sales tax (46 percent) and state-shared revenues (40 percent), with retail as the strongest contributor and said Bullhead City did not levy a property tax. He said a \$10 million loan to the water department would be recorded, increasing the general fund balance to approximately \$33.8 million. He said the city's reserve policy required a minimum of 30 percent of operating expenditures (approximately \$14 million), and the proposed budget exceeded that requirement.

Council Member Smith asked if the total included the \$10 million loan to the utilities fund and if the actual balance was approximately \$23 million. Finance Director Drexler answered affirmative. City Manager Cotter said the general fund balance has approximately \$23.7 million in cash on hand compared to the required \$14 million reserve. He explained the higher balance reflected the \$10 million loan to the water department, which was being repaid, bringing the effective total to nearly \$34 million. He said the city remained financially stable and advised maintaining a conservative

reserve and avoiding reductions near the minimum policy level due to economic uncertainty. He said auditors would account for the loan as a receivable to the general fund.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if repayment of the water and wastewater loans were incorporated into recent rate increases. City Manager Cotter confirmed the repayment was included in the new rate structure and financing plan.

Finance Director Drexler said the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report was included with the budget materials and said both PDF and digital versions of the budget were available for public access and review. He outlined the budget adoption timeline, including the workshop held on April 20th, tentative adoption scheduled for May 19th, publication dates of May 27th and June 3rd, and final adoption planned for June 16th.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked how much funding was anticipated from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the \$1.7 million Hancock Road rehabilitation project. Finance Director Drexler said the total project cost was \$2.7 million, with \$1 million in grant funding and \$1.7 million from the general fund. City Manager Cotter said the project was programmed and included \$1 million secured through the state budget, along with additional funding supporting ADA improvements, with the general fund covering the remaining costs. He confirmed the ADA improvements were currently underway.

Council Member Newlin asked about an increase in planned spending relative to anticipated revenue in the proprietary funds for fiscal year 2027. Finance Director Drexler explained the increase was primarily due to significant capital projects in the water and wastewater funds, totaling over \$20 million. Council Member Newlin said he noticed changes in the budget presentation format compared to the prior year. Finance Director Drexler said the changes were the result of updates to the city's budgeting software, which modified chart styles and terminology.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if the \$30,000 allocated for Veterans Memorial Park would be sufficient for future additions of military displays. City Manager Cotter said the amount was adequate for now, noting past projects required minimal city funding due to strong community support and donations. He said if additional funding became necessary, staff would return to Council to request contingency funds.

Council Member Smith asked for clarification on the miscellaneous and contributions categories listed in the budget. Finance Director Drexler explained the miscellaneous category included developer funding for the CityCentre Improvement District right-turn lane, while contributions reflected sponsorships and donations supporting various programs. City Manager Cotter said city revenues came from multiple sources, including sales tax, state-shared revenues, user fees, grants, and donations, emphasizing the budget was supported by diverse and substantial revenue streams.

Council Member O'Neill commented on the volume and detail of the budget document and said it was extensive and available to the public for review and emphasized that Council carefully reviewed the material rather than "rubber stamping" decisions. City Manager Cotter acknowledged the complexity of the document and said the city worked to make it as understandable as possible while complying with government accounting standards and audit requirements.

City Manager Cotter said this workshop provided an opportunity for Council and the public to ask questions and said the presentation would proceed to departmental budget discussions, beginning with the Municipal Court.

- Judicial Budget

City Manager Cotter introduced City Magistrate Rod Gilleo and Deputy Court Administrator Kirsten Merritt.

City Magistrate Gilleo said he reviewed prior presentations and emphasized continuing the court's philosophy of treating every taxpayer dollar with care and accountability with a focus on managing even small expenditures responsibly. He highlighted recent and ongoing accomplishments, including upgrades to courtroom technology and electrical improvements, such as adding power access at counsel tables and lecterns. He said there is a significant reduction in maintenance agreement costs, decreasing from approximately \$139,000 to \$50,000 following completion of prior approved upgrades. He discussed future objectives, including transitioning to digital evidence systems in line with statewide court initiatives. He said the court generated revenue through fines, with a portion allocated to the Court Enhancement Fund, which was being used to fund courtroom upgrades. He emphasized support for specialty courts, including the Quality of Life Court and Veterans Treatment Court. He said the use of Justice System Funds (JSF) would be used to cover training expenses for staff and participation in a national conference. He concluded the court's proposed budget of approximately \$1.7 million reflected a slight decrease from the prior year, demonstrating efforts to maintain fiscal responsibility while supporting court operations.

Council Member O'Neill expressed support for the Veterans Treatment Court, noting his involvement as a mentor and praising recent improvements, organization, and participant success. He highlighted the positive impact on participants and emphasized the importance of supporting veterans.

Council Member Newlin commended the court's progress and presentation and encouraged their continued efforts.

Council Member Smith asked about the adequacy of the jail budget. City Magistrate Gilleo explained the city contracts with Mohave County for jail services, with costs exceeding \$200 for the first day and \$114 for each additional day. He said the current budget was tracking slightly under projections, so no increase was requested at this time, though it may need to be addressed in the future.

Council Member O'Neill said specialty courts like the Veterans Treatment Court and Quality of Life Court help reduce jail costs by providing diversion and support services.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo thanked City Magistrate Gilleo for his conservative budgeting approach and asked about the absence of a courtroom bailiff. City Magistrate Gilleo explained security personnel were stationed immediately outside the courtroom, making a dedicated bailiff unnecessary at this time.

- Legal Budget

City Attorney Emery expressed appreciation for Council's support and recognized his staff in both the civil and criminal divisions, as well as the City Manager's executive team, for their

professionalism and collaboration. He said the office continued to manage priorities and adjust workloads as needed while seeking to improve operations. He said budget changes were primarily related to personnel and software, including deferred costs associated with a prior implementation of electronic filing systems in the prosecutor's office. He said the office planned to implement new software to improve efficiency in handling redactions of police reports, which require significant time due to public records requests. He explained the legal budget included contingency funds to address unforeseen matters, such as litigation or enforcement actions. He provided an example of a recent case involving a public nuisance property, where legal preparation was completed but demolition was expected to proceed without litigation. He said his office prioritized resolving legal matters efficiently across areas such as litigation, property acquisition, right-of-way issues, and human resources.

Council Member O'Neill commended the City Attorney's Office and said the prosecutor assigned to Veterans' Court was fair and easy to work with and expressed appreciation for his efforts.

Council Member Newlin expressed appreciation for the City Attorney's responsiveness and clarity and said he was always available to provide assistance and guidance.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo praised the City Attorney's Office and said it had a strong staff because of effective leadership and described the department as well-run and deserving of respect.

Council Member Dallman expressed appreciation for the City Attorney's efforts in facilitating the removal of the nuisance property without significant cost to the city. Council Member Smith concurred.

- Development Services

City Manager Cotter introduced the Development Services leadership team, including Development Services Director Saritti "Billy" Chooniyom, Planning Manager Johnny Loera, and Senior Plans Examiner Wendy Lewis. He addressed a recent negative comment and emphasized the team's strong performance amid significant development activity, including new housing and commercial projects. He said the department was among the busiest in the region and consistently received positive feedback from business owners and developers.

Development Services Director Chooniyom said the department had 19 employees and added one code enforcement inspector in the prior year to address issues with homeless encampments, shopping carts, and signage enforcement. He said the proposed fiscal year 2027 budget reflected a decrease of approximately 4.3 percent, primarily due to reduced travel and training costs as staff transitioned to online training. He said there were cost savings of approximately \$15,000 on the General Plan Update project by completing the work in-house rather than using outside consultants.

Council Member O'Neill praised the Development Services Department and said staff was helpful and responsive when assisting him with plan review questions. He said while some constituents had raised concerns about the permitting process, he believed delays were often due to incomplete or improperly prepared applications by contractors rather than city staff. He said based on his experience observing the process firsthand, staff responds quickly with corrections and guidance, and expressed appreciation for the department's overall service and professionalism.

City Manager Cotter thanked Council Member O'Neill for his comments and shared a similar recent experience in which a complaint was made regarding delayed plan approval. He said upon review, the plans had not actually been submitted by the contractor despite claims to the contrary. He said while the city is often blamed for delays, the process relies on complete and properly submitted applications. He said the department's standard turnaround time is 14 days or less for plan review and commended staff for consistently meeting that timeframe and performing effectively.

Council Member Newlin said based on his prior experience working with the Development Services Department before serving on Council, he had developed a strong impression of the department. He praised staff for their depth of knowledge and expertise and commended their work, encouraging them to continue their efforts.

Council Member Smith noted employee health care costs had increased significantly. City Manager Cotter said all agencies were experiencing rising health insurance costs, with the city seeing increases of approximately 9 to 10 percent, while some agencies were experiencing increases of 15 to 18 percent. He said the city had taken steps through its insurance trust to help control costs where possible and said broader market pressures were driving increases. He said the city hoped the increases were temporary and would moderate in future years, and referenced ongoing national efforts related to prescription drug pricing. He said health insurance costs can be significantly impacted by a small number of high-cost claims and noted the importance of maintaining coverage for the entire workforce. He said the city has wellness initiatives and preventive care programs and said unpredictable medical events can substantially affect costs. He said the increased health insurance costs were reflected across all departments in the budget.

Council Member Ring commended the Development Services staff for their work and expressed appreciation for their efforts.

City Manager Cotter said funding for nuisance abatement was reduced to \$50,000 and dangerous building abatement was reduced to \$150,000. He explained if the city had been required to fund a recent major motel demolition project, it could have exhausted the entire budget, but that was no longer necessary because the owners agreed to demolish the building. He said the nuisance abatement fund covered smaller issues like weeds and junk accumulation, while the dangerous building abatement fund addressed more significant cases, such as unsafe or abandoned structures. He said the city typically placed liens on properties to recover abatement costs over time and have been successful in recouping those funds, particularly upon sale of the property.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo commended the Development Services Department and said staff performed their duties effectively and complaints were often due to a lack of understanding of the processes involved.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo called for a short recess at 10:07 a.m. Vice Mayor Alfonzo reconvened the meeting at 10:19 p.m.

- Public Safety

City Manager Cotter introduced Interim Police Chief Daniel Sharp and Deputy Chief Jason Harms. He said the Police Department remained one of the city's top priorities and largest budget components. He said the level of funding reflected community demand and Council direction

prioritizing public safety. He said Council had consistently emphasized the importance of law enforcement, and said the city continued to support the department to ensure officers could effectively enforce laws and maintain public safety. He said adequate funding was necessary to provide personnel, equipment, vehicles, and other resources needed to safely serve the community.

Deputy Chief Harms thanked the Council for its continued support. He said the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget was developed as a balanced and responsible plan reflecting current needs and future growth. He said the proposal focused on staffing, equipment, and training to meet increasing service demands in a growing community. He highlighted the addition of four new police officer positions, bringing total sworn officers to 86, restoring levels last seen in the early 2000s despite significant population growth. He said the additional officers would support the traffic unit and community policing efforts, both critical to public safety and quality of life. He said the department's budget was \$25 million and emphasized a commitment to responsible stewardship of public funds. He said key investment areas included training and equipment, particularly due to many officers and supervisors being relatively new to their roles, requiring continued training and development. He addressed equipment needs, including replacement of aging patrol vehicles, noting high mileage and extended use due to idling. He said the budget included requests for seven patrol vehicles and three detective vehicles to maintain operational reliability. He outlined modernization efforts, including the acquisition of rifles and upgraded pistols with enhanced technology, replacement of outdated Taser devices, and a structured equipment replacement plan, including ballistic helmets. He said the budget emphasized sustainability, operational readiness, and long-term planning to support the department's mission and the community's public safety needs.

Council Member Smith asked if the \$2,000 budgeted for prison inmate costs was sufficient. City Manager Cotter explained the amount covered ancillary local holding costs, such as meals and supplies for detainees held temporarily in city holding cells, while the primary jail and transport costs were paid separately to Mohave County for housing inmates in Kingman.

Council Member O'Neill asked if the reported 40,276 calls for police service reflected the current fiscal year. Interim Chief Sharp answered affirmative. Council Member O'Neill said the total averaged approximately 110 calls per day and commented on the significant workload handled across multiple shifts and expressed appreciation for the department's efforts. Council Member O'Neill asked if more police calls originated west of Highway 95 near the river or east of the highway. Deputy Chief Harms said most calls occurred on the river side and said he could provide detailed statistics. Council Member O'Neill said there appeared to be fewer streetlights on the west side of town near the river and suggested additional lighting could improve traffic safety and visibility. He then shared a recent example in which officers responded to and assisted an individual experiencing a mental health crisis, noting their continued support and responsiveness. Deputy Chief Harms said the department was developing a strategic plan that included reviewing beat alignments as the community continues to grow. He said the department monitors call locations and response times to help guide staffing and deployment adjustments. Council Member O'Neill commented on the challenge of policing many streets with limited staffing and said the department could not place officers everywhere at once. He encouraged residents to report concerns to the city and said the police department responds where possible to address speeding and traffic issues. He also expressed appreciation for increased police presence along Highway 95.

Council Member Newlin thanked Interim Chief Sharp for serving Bullhead City and commended Deputy Chief Harms for his leadership. He expressed appreciation to all Bullhead City police officers for their service and praised the community as one of the best cities in the country.

Council Member Dallman asked about plans for upgrading radios and communications equipment. Deputy Chief Harms said a proposed \$12 million communications system was not included in the current budget due to cost constraints but remained a priority for the department. He said the city was seeking assistance from state funding sources to support the project. He said the budget included increased funding for vehicle radio upgrades as part of ongoing preparations for a future communications system. He said as patrol vehicles are replaced, older single-band radios are being upgraded to tri-band radios compatible with both current and future systems. Council Member Dallman expressed hope that the city would receive state funding assistance for the project.

Council Member Ring thanked the police department staff and officers for their work and commended the department for doing a great job.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if the department currently had officers attending the academy. Interim Chief Sharp said three recruits were currently in the academy and performing well, and that several potential lateral hires also appeared promising. He said the department hoped to send eight recruits to the next academy and noted recruitment efforts had been successful in recent months.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked who conducted pre-employment psychological evaluations for police applicants. Interim Chief Sharp said the evaluations were performed through an outside contract service rather than in-house.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked what happened to outdated weapons. Deputy Chief Harms explained the department worked with vendors to trade in older equipment for credit toward new equipment and other needed supplies.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked what type of Taser system was being considered for replacement. Deputy Chief Harms said the department was planning to transition to the Taser 7 and said it was one of the primary models in production and offered the capabilities the department needed. He said the department would continue working on a phased replacement of older devices.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo thanked the department for their service and commended staff and officers for their professionalism and performance.

City Manager Cotter explained the BACCUP program is funded through opioid settlement revenues received by the city. He said the program utilizes these funds to support outreach and assistance efforts for individuals in need, with staff actively engaged in providing services in the community. He referenced program accomplishments and personnel costs reflected in the budget documents and said the funding source and program operations had been discussed throughout the year. He said Deputy Chief Harms could provide additional details if needed.

Council Member Smith asked if only three participants had graduated from the Quality of Life Court and questioned if the level of output should be considered an accomplishment or if the program should be reconsidered. City Manager Cotter said the question regarding Quality of Life Court outcomes would be more appropriately directed to the magistrate and those overseeing participation in the

specialty court process. He said the BACCUP program is designed to provide community-based response and outreach following opioid-related crises, including post-overdose situations when immediate police response has already occurred. He said the program focuses on follow-up engagement and connecting individuals in need with services beyond the initial incident. He noted the importance of receiving timely referrals and information to effectively deploy resources and said leadership believed the program was functioning well and expected continued improvement over time.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if anyone from the public would like to speak on this item.

Annette Wegmann-Wood expressed strong support for public safety and raised concerns about mental health resources for first responders. She shared a personal experience related to her husband's career in law enforcement and emphasized the importance of professional counseling support, particularly through third-party mental health services outside of the workplace. She asked what resources the city provides to support officers experiencing stress, trauma, or PTSD and how the city ensures access to professional counseling and mental health care for public safety employees.

Interim Chief Sharp explained the police department provides access to professional counseling services for personnel and referenced protections under the Arizona TIGER Act which allows officers to seek mental health support, and said the department also maintains a peer support program within the Bullhead City Police Department. He said the department has partnered with Boulder Crest to bring the Struggle Well program locally in coordination with the Fire Department and other agencies and has provided access to Boulder Crest's Warrior Path program. He said the goal is to reduce barriers to care by bringing services locally and to expand participation with additional sessions being scheduled. Interim Chief Sharp said participation in these programs is encouraged and increasingly normalized within the department, and said officers are connected with resources when needed. Ms. Wegmann-Wood asked if officers take advantage of the services. Interim Chief Sharp answered affirmative. She asked about fitness-related support and said it was important for stress relief. Deputy Chief Harms said the department supports wellness efforts by allowing time during the work week for physical activity to help reduce stress and promote overall health.

Having no one else present wishing to speak, Vice mayor Alfonzo closed the public comment.

- Public Works

Public Works Director Angie Johnson introduced Public Works team members Assistant Public Works Director Alexander Cruz, Office Specialist Jesse Moreno, Roads Foreman Mitch Guthrie, Administrative Assistant Patti Byer, Facilities Foreman Christian Lavigne, Administrative Analyst Casey Lemmons, and Turf Specialist Victor Cervantes.

Public Works Director Johnson reported the increase in the Public Works Administration budget was due to the addition of a Stormwater Specialist position, which is required by the State of Arizona. She explained the position is responsible for stormwater system oversight, inspections, and related documentation and said the associated costs included required software, training, and equipment. City Manager Cotter said Assistant City Manager Pruitt had been coordinating with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and state agencies regarding stormwater requirements. He said the city had attempted to manage the responsibilities internally without adding a dedicated position, but the scope of work had grown beyond what could reasonably be handled

within the City Manager's Office. He said population growth had resulted in additional regulatory requirements, including the need for stormwater management staffing. He described the position as an unfunded mandate and acknowledged that while future grant opportunities may help offset costs, the city was primarily responsible for establishing and operating the program.

Council Member O'Neill asked if the Stormwater Specialist role was primarily for monitoring runoff during rain events. City Manager Cotter said the position would cover the full scope of stormwater management, including oversight of drainage, development impacts, construction site runoff, and regulatory enforcement to ensure compliance. He said once the program is fully implemented, staff would provide a more detailed presentation to Council outlining the stormwater management program and its operations.

Public Works Director Johnson said the Facilities Management Division's budget decreased by approximately 7.67 percent. She explained the reduction was due to a shift away from initiating new capital projects as the department focused on completing previously started work. She said the upcoming year's priorities would center on routine maintenance and repairs, including plumbing, painting, and general facility upkeep.

Public Works Director Johnson said the Park Maintenance Division added approximately 80 acres to the city's park system and said the increased funding is for equipment, software, and materials, including a turf machine and field-painting system. She said the department added an additional robotic field painter, which significantly improved efficiency, allowing soccer and ball fields to be painted in about one day instead of requiring up to a week and a half of staff time. City Manager Cotter said AI was being incorporated across all departments and said the robotic field painters are an example of technology improving efficiency by reducing labor demands and allowing staff to focus on other responsibilities.

Council Member Smith asked for clarification regarding additional mower leases and if a mower had recently been purchased. Public Works Director Johnson said additional leases were needed due to the recent expansion of park acreage and increased maintenance demands and said the city now maintains approximately 80 additional acres along with other sites such as the middle school. City Manager Cotter said the additional mower leases were also driven by the need for higher-quality equipment to maintain upgraded turf standards across city facilities, including parks and the Chaparral Golf Course. He said maintaining high-quality athletic fields and greens was important for hosting regional and national sporting events and supporting the city's reputation for well-maintained recreational facilities.

Council Member Smith asked about the significant increase in printing costs, questioning what types of items were being produced. Public Works Director Johnson said the increase was related to signage and custom printing, including business cards and various operational signs. She explained the Roads Division produces most of the city's signage in-house and the increased budget was intended to reimburse the Roads Maintenance Division for those materials and production costs.

Council Member O'Neill requested clarification regarding the Toro mower lease and associated personal property tax. He asked if the tax was revenue coming in to fund the lease or a cost applied to the city. Finance Director Drexler said it was a personal property tax assessed on the leased equipment and is a standard component of lease agreements. Council Member O'Neill asked if the equipment is returned and replaced at the end of the lease term. Finance Director Drexler answered affirmative.

Public Works Director Johnson said the mowers are under warranty and said the vendor typically provides prompt service when repairs are needed to keep the equipment operational.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo said a Turf Maintenance Specialist position had been listed in the prior year's budget but did not appear in the current year and asked if the position was still needed. City Manager Cotter clarified the individual referenced, Turf Specialist Cervantes, remained with the city and had been promoted. He said the employee is highly regarded for his work and plays a key role in maintaining the Chaparral Golf Course and other turf facilities.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked why the Fleet Services capital outlay budget was showing \$8,000 in 2025, no budgeted amount in 2026, and \$200,000 in 2027. Finance Director Drexler explained the \$200,000 in 2027 is planned for the purchase of a new fleet service truck and said the vehicle would be used by fleet maintenance mechanics to respond directly to field breakdowns and service city vehicles on-site.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked why fuel costs were projected to decrease in the budget despite current market conditions not indicating a decline. City Manager Cotter said fuel projections are based on market forecasts, federal economic indicators, and historical pricing trends, as well as the city's bulk fuel purchasing abilities. He said the city budgets used projected average prices of approximately \$2.95 per gallon for unleaded fuel and \$3.68 per gallon for diesel. He said fuel prices have fluctuated significantly in recent years and referenced prior pricing as low as \$2.03 per gallon, and said the city uses a conservative forecasting approach while acknowledging market volatility. He explained some departments may use more or less fuel than anticipated, and the city maintains contingency funding to address potential increases if fuel costs exceed projections. He said staff would monitor actual costs throughout the year and return to the Council if adjustments are necessary.

Council Member O'Neill asked if the city operates two street sweepers and referenced public concerns about street cleaning frequency and visibility. Public Works Director Johnson said the city operates three street sweepers total, with two assigned to the Roads Division and one associated with the Water Division. Council Member O'Neill noted concerns from residents about street sweeping coverage. He said street sweepers are typically deployed based on need, including response to utility breaks, high-traffic areas, and service requests, rather than running continuously on every street. Public Works Director Johnson confirmed the department prioritizes sweeping in subdivisions when needed, responds to resident requests, maintains Highway 95 regularly, and assigns one sweeper to support slurry seal operations during winter months. She said crews also respond to weather events as needed. Council Member O'Neill thanked staff for their work and commended crews for their professionalism in the field.

City Manager Cotter reminded residents about the GoGov Direct App, which can be downloaded from the App Store. He said residents can submit service requests, including street sweeping concerns, by uploading a photo through the app. He said the requests are received by staff and routed to the appropriate personnel for response as quickly as possible.

- Legislative

City Manager Cotter described the Legislative budget as a relatively small and stable portion of the city's overall budget, covering the Mayor, Council, and City Clerk's Offices. He said the Council budget remains generally consistent year to year, with only minor increases and said it includes

Council stipends, health insurance, and allowances for travel and training. He said funds are included for potential attendance at League of Arizona Cities and Towns training and occasional travel to Washington, D.C. He characterized the budget as conservative and comparable to those in other Arizona municipalities.

City Clerk Ogden said the primary change to the Clerk's budget was related to the upcoming election cycle, with costs still being refined pending final figures from the Mohave County Recorder's Office. She said \$6,500 is budgeted for election-related postage for mailed informational pamphlets and reported there were currently 24,817 registered voters, with registration continuing through June 22 for participation in the Primary Election. She highlighted staff development efforts, including support for Deputy City Clerk Susan Carroll in completing her Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) designation, Certified Election Official training, and progress toward a Certified Public Manager (CPM) credential through Arizona State University. She said the implementation of a new Otter AI transcription tool would improve efficiency and accuracy in meeting minute preparation and reduce turnaround time. She said \$2,500 was allocated for replacement of an aging laptop.

Council Member O'Neill asked how many voters were currently registered for the upcoming election. City Clerk Ogden said there were currently 24,817 registered voters. Council Member O'Neill noted the comparison between the number of registered voters and the city's overall population and encouraged residents to participate in the election process, emphasizing the importance of voter turnout.

Council Member Dallman commended the City Clerk's Office for its work and thanked staff for their continued hard work and service.

Council Member Smith asked if the increase in election contract costs was related to the upcoming general election and the General Plan Update. City Clerk Ogden said if all candidates were elected outright in the primary election, a general election would not be necessary, and said the General Plan Update must still be submitted to voters during the general election. She said election costs also include voter information pamphlets, which are produced and distributed through a contract with Runbeck and said the company handles printing, translation, and mailing services, which represents a significant portion of the election-related expense.

City Manager Cotter said Mohave County also charges the city for conducting primary elections. Council Member Smith asked what the normal election costs would be. City Manager Cotter said expenses are calculated on a per-registered-voter basis. He said Mohave County administers the election process, including staffing polling locations and mailing ballots, and said municipalities contract with Mohave County for those services and are billed accordingly.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked about the projected increase in public records requests and asked what criteria were used for those projections. Deputy City Clerk Carroll explained the estimates were based on a review of the previous five years of historical data. She said over the past two years the number of public records requests had increased significantly resulting in the higher projected totals.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo requested all election candidates receive updated information regarding sign placement regulations to help avoid campaign signs being placed in prohibited areas. City Clerk Ogden said staff would make the information readily available by posting maps and the applicable ordinance on the City Clerk's website, as well as providing printed copies at City Hall. She said staff

would also remain available to answer questions by phone. Council Member Smith noted it was on the website and she had shared the link.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo thanked the City Clerk's Office for their work and dedication saying the office remains consistently busy and expressing appreciation for the service they provide.

Council Member Smith asked if the nearly 40 percent increase reflected in the expenditure activity graphs was primarily related to elections. City Manager Cotter confirmed the increase was attributable to election-related expenses. He explained the election cycle was the primary factor driving the increase within the Mayor and Council and City Clerk budgets.

- Financial Services

Finance Director Drexler said the Finance Department operates through two primary divisions: the Accounting and Budget Division, and the Billing and Collections Division. He said the Accounting and Budget Division is responsible for preparing the city budget, monthly accounting functions, annual audits, and financial statements. He said the Billing and Collections Division primarily supports the Water and Wastewater Divisions by managing monthly billing and collections for more than 20,000 customer accounts. He said no staffing or software changes were proposed for the department and the 4 percent budget increase was primarily related to personnel costs.

City Manager Cotter praised Finance Director Drexler and the Finance Department Staff for their work behind the scenes managing the city's financial operations. He said while the department may not receive significant public attention, staff played a critical role in ensuring purchase orders are processed, bills are paid, vendors are supported, and the city's finances remain secure and well managed.

Council Member O'Neill asked if potential future activity related to the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport would require additional staffing by the Finance Department. City Manager Cotter said based on past experience with new city responsibilities like the Chaparral Golf Course, additional finance staff had not been requested. He said the Finance Department had successfully absorbed new operational responsibilities, including Marketplace and Chaparral Country Club and Restaurant without expanding staffing. He said staff capacity is monitored to ensure workloads remain manageable, and credited Finance Director Drexler and his team for effectively supporting these transitions.

- Technology Services

City Manager Cotter introduced Information Technology Manager Randy Scheffert and noted his long tenure with the city. He said while Information Technology (IT) functions could be structured under various departments, the city has found it effective to house IT within Finance for operational efficiency and coordination.

Information Technology Manager Scheffert said the department's budget did not include significant increases overall. He said the primary increase was in software and hardware agreements, driven largely by the addition of police body cameras and expanded cybersecurity tools. He said subscription-based software and hardware costs have continued to rise across the board, contributing to the increase in that category.

Council Member Smith said the budget reflected a new Network Engineer position and asked if the position was intended for future hiring. Finance Director Drexler said the position had been budgeted in the prior year but due to the specialized nature of the role and required certifications related to police department networks and systems, the hiring process has taken additional time. He said Information Technology Manager Scheffert had not yet filled the position and is actively working through the process to bring a network engineer on board.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked what a network engineer does. Information Technology Manager Scheffert explained the role can cover a broad range of responsibilities within the IT Department. He said IT departments often include many specialized functions, and a network engineer is typically expected to handle multiple areas. He described the position as someone who may assist with tasks ranging from installing computers to designing and maintaining network infrastructure, including assigning IP addresses, configuring switches and servers, managing connectivity, and supporting firewall systems.

City Manager Cotter emphasized the importance of the Information Technology function to city operations and said many services depend on functioning power and systems. He said when power outages occur, most departments are impacted because systems go down and must be restored by the IT team. He said the IT Department is responsible for keeping systems updated, maintaining cybersecurity protections, and ensuring backups are in place. He described cybersecurity as a constant, ongoing effort to defend against external threats targeting municipal systems. He compared the investment in cybersecurity to other public safety functions and said just as resources are dedicated to protecting physical assets like parks, similar investment is required to protect digital infrastructure. He said maintaining system uptime and security is a top priority for the IT Department and a significant portion of its budget.

- Executive

City Manager Cotter said the Executive budget includes multiple functions, including the City Manager's Office, Public Information, Marketplace, Economic Development, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization. He highlighted key staff in the City Manager's Office, including Assistant City Managers Pruitt and Kajirwa, noting Assistant City Manager Kajirwa's recent participation in a Washington, D.C. program for future city managers. He described Assistant City Manager Pruitt's responsibilities as primarily focused on legislative affairs, coordination in Phoenix, working with elected officials, and helping secure state funding. He said the City Manager's Office consists of six staff members including himself, Assistant City Managers Travis Pruitt and Edigar Kajirwa, Administrative Analyst Karen Spletzer, Administrative Assistant Jessica Nunnally, and Grant Specialist Teresa Bartholow. He said an approach the office has developed was to engage directly with residents who speak during public comment by following up with them immediately after meetings to help resolve questions or concerns on the spot when possible. He said the Executive budget is largely personnel-driven, with limited costs outside of staffing, travel, training, and conferences.

Council Member Smith asked if the increase in personnel costs was due to hiring additional staff. City Manager Cotter said the Recreation Division had been reclassified from the Public Works Department into the Executive Department. He said this change was made because Public Works is managing a significant volume of infrastructure projects, and it was determined that Recreation would

be better overseen under Assistant City Manager Kajirwa for improved organizational alignment and oversight.

Council Member Smith asked if the significant increase in utilities was related to the organizational changes. City Manager Cotter said the increase is largely due to the Recreation Division's budget being moved into the Executive Department, which brought its associated utility costs with it. He said utilities and related operating costs tied to Recreation now appear in that section as part of the reorganization. He said additional operational costs remain associated with Marketplace and Chaparral Golf Course and Restaurant, and said those expenses continue to be reflected within their respective budget areas along with corresponding revenues.

City Manager Cotter described the Public Information Office as a highly visible and active department led by Public Information Officer Mackenzie Covert. He said the office does extensive work producing video coverage of city meetings including City Council, Parks and Recreation Commission, and Planning and Zoning Commission. He said the team also manages the city's social media presence and website content and contributes a wide range of public-facing communications. He said while much of the work may not be immediately visible to the public, it plays a significant role in keeping residents informed and engaged in city operations.

Council Member Smith asked about GoGov notifications and noted a 619 percent increase in that line item. Public Information Officer Covert said the city recently activated the notifications feature within the Bullhead City Direct App. He said the app had always allowed residents to submit issues such as potholes or weeds directly to staff, and the newer update now allows the city to send push notifications about events, road closures, and emergencies. He said by adding the notifications feature an upfront implementation cost required and includes an annual maintenance cost. He clarified the significant percentage increase resulted from an initial budgeting estimate that was lower than the actual annual renewal cost. City Manager Cotter said the GoGov notifications system was added to improve how the city communicates with residents, particularly those who may not receive information through traditional sources such as newspapers or social media. He said residents have expressed difficulty staying informed about city events and services, and the app helps address that gap by providing direct notifications for events, emergencies, road closures, and other updates. He said staff plans to increase outreach efforts, including teaching residents how to download and use the app. He emphasized improving access to timely information is a priority given the challenges of reaching all segments of the community. He clarified "GoGov" is the name of the vendor providing the system, while the public-facing app is called "Bullhead City Direct", which is what residents are encouraged to download from mobile app stores.

Council Member O'Neill asked for the names of the Public Information Office staff so they could be recognized publicly for their work. Public Information Officer Covert said his staff included Christian Berger, who serves as his second-in-command; Christian Hutcherson, who frequently provides event coverage and photography; Kristie McNeil, who contributes writing, coverage, and documentary-style production work; and John Black, who recently joined the staff full-time after previously volunteering with the department and was operating the video switcher during the budget meeting.

Council Member Dallman praised the Public Information Office team and specifically highlighted Kristie McNeil's contributions. She said Kristie went beyond her normal duties at the White Night in the Park event by stepping in to help with setup during delays caused by wind conditions. She said Kristie later returned to the event to take photographs and support coverage efforts and described

Kristie as an outstanding and dedicated staff member.

Human Resources Manager Stanley said the Human Resources and Risk Management Department plays a key role in supporting the city's ability to deliver public services by maintaining a qualified workforce and managing organizational risk. She said although the team members are relatively new to their roles, they have made significant contributions and said they have successfully adapted to new technology systems and developed improved processes to better support city employees. She identified staff members including Payroll Specialist Lisa Enos, Recruitment Specialist Zarhia Walters, Benefits Specialist Sarah Camarena, and Risk Specialist Marisa Koster, and expressed appreciation for their work and contributions to the organization.

Human Resources Manager Stanley said the Human Resources and Risk Management Department's proposed budget for the year is \$9.23 million, representing a 14.86 percent increase over the prior year. She said the increase is primarily driven by rising insurance and risk-related costs, continued investment in technology systems such as NeoGov, and strategic efforts to recruit and retain a high-quality workforce. She outlined several accomplishments from the past year, including reduced recruitment timelines, improved ability to fill critical vacancies, implementation of digital processes that increased efficiency and turnaround times, and expanded leadership development and retention initiatives aimed at preserving institutional knowledge. She identified key departmental priorities as workforce stability to ensure adequate staffing across departments, retention and employee engagement to reduce turnover, succession planning to prepare internal talent for leadership roles, and risk mitigation to reduce claims and protect taxpayer resources. She said although costs are increasing, the budget reflects a proactive investment in personnel, systems, and safety intended to prevent higher long-term costs associated with turnover, liability, and service disruptions while maintaining effective city services.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo complimented Human Resources Manager Stanley on the progress under her leadership and said the difference has been "day and night." Council Member O'Neill agreed and expressed similar appreciation for the work being done.

Council Member Smith asked if the NeoGov expense reflected in the budget was the approximately \$193,000 annual cost discussed at the previous council meeting. Human Resources Manager Stanley said the current cost had been reduced to approximately \$182,000 after the city removed the single sign-on feature from the system, resulting in savings.

Council Member Smith asked why there was a significant increase in the 401A Retirement line item. Finance Director Drexler explained the change was related to allocation adjustments within the Wastewater Division and other cost centers. He said in coordination with the Human Resources Department, staff allocations were restructured so that human resources personnel costs would be distributed more consistently across departments and funds. He said because of those adjustments, some budget categories increased while others decreased, depending on how personnel costs were reassigned.

Council Member O'Neill asked if the business meals budget item was related to providing meals during the hiring process. Human Resources Manager Stanley said the expense is tied in part to the city's leadership academy and employee orientation efforts. She said the program emphasizes creating a positive first impression for new employees during onboarding and orientation activities, and those efforts are incorporated into that budget line item.

Council Member Smith asked if the underground fuel storage expense was related to the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport. Human Resources Manager Stanley said the expense pertains to the fuel tanks located at the City Annex Building. She said the Chaparral Golf Course facilities were also added to that category during the current year.

City Manager Cotter said the Executive Department's budget includes the city's economic development function, which is handled internally by his office with support from staff rather than a standalone economic development department. He said the city's economic development budget is relatively modest compared to other cities that invest significantly larger amounts in this area but said the Bullhead City's team approach has been effective. He pointed out a decrease in the economic development initiatives line item, explaining prior incentive commitments including those related to DOT Foods have already been implemented. He described DOT Foods as a strong employer in the community and credited the incentive program and prior council decisions for helping attract the company and supporting its expansion and workforce growth. He said DOT Foods continues to report performance metrics to the city and has exceeded its original projections. He said additional economic development incentives may be brought forward in the future for other prospective companies.

City Manager Cotter said Marketplace operates as a self-supporting enterprise fund that generates its own revenue to help subsidize amenities and reinvest in facilities such as parks and Chaparral Golf Course. He said Marketplace Manager Ann Roberts brings extensive hospitality experience in hotel and restaurant management and has successfully overseen a broad range of operations. City Manager Cotter said Marketplace includes the ramada rentals, the River Shop located in the Chamber of Commerce building, parking fee operations at Community and Rotary parks, the Bullhead Belle, the Optimum Community Center, the Senior Enrichment Center store, the new BARC store, and the recently added Chaparral Golf Course and Restaurant. He said while the primary purpose of these amenities is to provide recreational opportunities and community engagement for residents and visitors, generating revenue is also an important objective. He highlighted the department's role in workforce development and said that Marketplace employs young workers, some as young as 14 years old, giving local students early work experience and opportunities to develop skills that in some cases have led to full-time city employment.

Council Member Smith said her understanding was that Marketplace operates as an enterprise fund in which revenues generated by facilities such as Chaparral Golf Course and Restaurant and the Optimum Community Center remain within those respective operations. She questioned language indicating that all revenues and expenses were held for Community Park. Finance Director Drexler said that reference originated from the parking fee program associated with Community Park and clarified revenues generated by the various Marketplace operations are retained within their respective revenue centers. Council Member Smith asked if parking revenues collected at Rotary Park remain dedicated to Rotary Park operations. Finance Director Drexler answered affirmative.

City Manager Cotter said additional capital expenditures related to the Chaparral Golf Course and Restaurant appear later in the budget. He said when the city assumed operations of the facility, it was understood that investments would be needed not only for the golf course itself but also for the clubhouse and other long-term capital assets associated with maintaining the municipal nine-hole course. He said Marketplace Manager Roberts had made significant progress improving revenues at Chaparral and said recent months have performed well financially. He said the operation has been managed carefully, with close attention paid to controlling expenses and adjusting staffing levels based on operational needs and seasonal demand. He emphasized Marketplace operations involve

managing large-scale visitor activity, particularly during busy summer periods, and said the city is now positioned to provide services both throughout the parks system and at the Chaparral Golf Course effectively and efficiently.

Council Member Dallman asked how many employees work under the Marketplace Division. Marketplace Manager Roberts said staffing levels fluctuate seasonally, ranging from approximately 50 employees during slower periods to between 70 and 80 employees during the summer months. She said the department currently has 62 employees, including youth workers. Council Member Dallman asked if staffing levels are sufficient during major holiday weekends. Marketplace Manager Roberts replied the department is currently onboarding approximately 22 new employees at the end of April to help meet seasonal staffing demands.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked how many trained bartenders were currently employed within Marketplace operations. Marketplace Manager Roberts said the positions are classified as “food and beverage attendants” and said the department currently has five part-time attendants and was in the process of hiring two additional employees for those roles while continuing active recruitment efforts.

City Manager Cotter said Marketplace staffing relies heavily on part-time employees, which makes workforce management more complex for Marketplace Manager Roberts. He said Chaparral Golf Course is somewhat unique in that it has a small number of full-time staff, specifically one full-time employee working inside the facility, with additional staff working on the course. He said most other Marketplace roles are primarily part-time. He said although there are only a few full-time positions, the overall operation is large and depends significantly on seasonal and part-time workers. He said these part-time and seasonal employees are essential both for maintaining operations and as valuable entry-level job opportunities for young workers gaining their first work experience.

Council Member O’Neill asked if the five food and beverage attendants were assigned to fixed positions or if they rotate between duties. Marketplace Manager Roberts said initially those employees were assigned only to the Bullhead Belle operation. She said since the addition of Chaparral Golf Course, she had been cross-training staff so they can work across multiple food and beverage locations as needed, improving flexibility and coverage.

Council Member Smith said Marketplace Manager Roberts develops a daily lunch menu that is very affordable. She encouraged everyone to visit the restaurant and try their lunches.

City Manager Cotter said beginning with the previous year’s budget, the city separated Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues into a distinct budget due to their continued growth and expected future increases from new hotels and short-term rentals. He said these funds support the Marketing, Sponsorships, and Tourism division which focuses on tourism promotion, marketing strategies, and sponsorship coordination. He said when local businesses such as DOT Foods or Optimum sponsor city events, those agreements are coordinated through the Marketing, Sponsorship, and Tourism office and said over the past 12 months the department had generated approximately \$200,000 in sponsorship revenue in addition to tourism-related funding.

Marketing Director Jensen said the department’s budget remains essentially flat compared to the prior year. She said while there were some internal adjustments in how funds are allocated, there were no significant changes or major increases in overall funding for the department.

Recreation Superintendent Heath said the past year had been highly successful for the Recreation Division, with continued progress and accomplishments over the past several years. He said much of this success was attributed to City Council's support of quality-of-life initiatives within the Recreation Division. He expressed appreciation for the strong working relationship with Council. He said the Council's support through the budget process had been essential in delivering recreational programs and community events. He said the division frequently received positive feedback from residents regarding city events and activities. He identified the Recreation Division's core areas of responsibility, which included the Optimum Community Center, general recreation programs, aquatic activities at the community pool, special events, and park ranger services.

City Manager Cotter said discussion of the Optimum Community Center focused on operational costs, with capital improvements to be addressed separately in the budget. He said the current budget primarily covered routine operations, including custodial staffing and basic facility maintenance such as restroom upkeep.

Council Member Smith said during a recent meeting at the facility, new restroom fixtures were being installed. Recreation Superintendent Heath explained that older restroom fixtures designed for younger children were being replaced with standard adult fixtures. He said upgrades would expand the center's usability and allow for multiple concurrent activities including community plays, tax preparation services, and other events held in the multipurpose room.

City Manager Cotter said staff allocations were adjusted by reallocating part-time funding into a full-time coordinator position. He said the change was budget neutral overall, though it reduced part-time funding while creating this new full-time role.

Council Member O'Neill said when he first visited Bullhead City in 2018 while looking for a place to live in Arizona, he was impressed by the park system and recreational activity, including soccer and softball tournaments, skateboarding, and the dog park. He said those amenities influenced his decision to relocate to the community. He compared Bullhead City's parks favorably to other cities he had lived in and said local parks were a major asset and contributed to the city's identity as a recreation and tourism destination, particularly for youth sports and tournament activity. He also credited parks and recreation facilities with supporting increased tourism during the COVID-19 period. He said the parks system was a primary reason he chose to live and remain in Bullhead City.

Recreation Superintendent Heath said he could not deliver the Recreation Division's programs without the strong support of City Council and staff. He recognized his team's efforts in maintaining and improving parks and recreation services, noting their ongoing work in programs such as Fun Fridays, basketball leagues, pool operations, and senior activities including the Golden Games. He expressed appreciation for his staff's contributions and dedication.

Council Member O'Neill said while working in car sales, he would take customers on test drives through the city's park system. He said the park amenities often became the focus of the conversation rather than the vehicle itself, and said he believed this helped encourage interest in relocating to Bullhead City. He recalled specifically driving through Veterans Park with a veteran customer and said he viewed the city's parks as one of the strongest assets and an important factor in attracting residents to the community.

Recreation Superintendent Heath said the special events program continued to be a point of pride for the Recreation Division, with strong and growing community participation in events such as Winter Festival, Splash Bash, and other city-sponsored activities. He said the recent Golden Games was the largest to date, attracting participants from across the country who expressed positive feedback about the weather and city facilities. He said the event was highly successful and the department anticipated expanding similar programming in the future due to strong community interest. He said the farmers market budget had increased due to sustained and growing public demand and said attendance remains strong regardless of weather conditions. He said an additional farmers market is planned, with details on timing and location to be announced in the future.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo said he long admired the importance and the important mission of the Boys and Girls Club by providing a safe space and mentorship opportunities for the city's youth. He said after careful review of ongoing criticism and inept management spending, accountability, transparency and a lack of business principles and acumen, he would not entertain any funding going to the Boys and Girls Club. He said several months ago, he provided the guidelines for running small businesses, in this case a nonprofit, in hopes that someone would have taken his recommendations seriously. He said he found out it was a waste of his time. He said a lack of skilled management and oversight has led this fine organization to near bankruptcy. He said he strongly believes in supporting youth groups, but he wanted to ensure all contributions reach the kids directly with maximum impact and accountability. He said until there is clear evidence of improved oversight, transparency and responsibility, especially with financial practices across the organization, he in good conscience, cannot vote for this monetary support. He encouraged the club to address these issues head on so they can regain the confidence of the community. He said children count on a safe place to go after school, a place to grow and learn about socializing and having opportunities that they could not otherwise experience. He said based on that and what has transpired over probably the last year and most recently, he does not want to see that money go to that particular organization.

City Manager Cotter said the proposed budget reduced funding for the Boys and Girls Club from \$100,000 to \$50,000 and said the higher level had been included historically during his tenure to support after-school programs, summer programming, and supplemental services provided to the community. He said concerns had been raised regarding how prior funding was utilized and staff had previously requested a presentation from the organization to clarify expenditures and outcomes. He said there were indications of recent changes in management and that the Legacy Organization had become involved in stabilizing operations. He said the Boys and Girls Club operates on land leased by the city and if the organization were to cease operations, the city would assume responsibility for the facility and related assets. He said further discussion and clarification from the organization would be needed regarding financial performance, service levels, and use of prior funding. He said Council direction was needed on whether to retain the proposed \$50,000 allocation or remove it from the budget.

Council Member Smith asked if keeping the allocation at \$50,000 would require Council approval prior to any funds being issued to the Boys and Girls Club. City Manager Cotter confirmed expenditures at that level would require Council action. Council Member Smith said the funding should remain in the budget so the Boys and Girls Club could be given the opportunity to present and demonstrate proper operations before any funding decision is made. She said removing the line item could eliminate the city's ability to provide funding later without additional budget adjustments.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo suggested reducing the allocation to \$25,000 as a good-faith measure while allowing the organization time to address operational and oversight concerns. Council Member Smith said reducing the amount to \$25,000 would remove the requirement for future Council approval, whereas maintaining the \$50,000 level would require the organization to return to Council for review and authorization before receiving funds.

Council Member Dallman said she agreed to leave the \$50,000 in the budget so the Boys and Girls Club would have to come to Council for transparency's sake and explain where the money is going and if they had rectified the issues. She said she did not want to cut the Boys and Girls Club off at this point but to give them the opportunity to fix what is happening. Vice Mayor Alfonzo agreed with Council Member Dallman.

Council Member Newlin said he supported leaving the funding in the budget. He expressed a desire for the Boys and Girls Club to provide a presentation to the Council and said he had concerns regarding management performance over the past year.

Council Member O'Neill said he supported retaining the \$50,000 allocation in the budget. He said he believed the issues at the Boys and Girls Club were being addressed and expressed confidence that they would be resolved. He also requested that the organization return to Council to explain what occurred and the reasons for the reported problems.

City Manager Cotter said Council direction was clear and indicated consensus to retain the \$50,000 budget allocation for the Boys and Girls Club with the expectation of future reporting and review.

Council Member Smith asked why costs for bounce houses at the Splash Bash had increased significantly. Recreation Superintendent Heath said the increase was due to the city upgrading to larger and more enhanced bounce houses and slides to improve the quality and appeal of the event. City Manager Cotter said the enhanced event programming also places additional emphasis on securing sponsorship revenue to help offset costs. He said while the Special Events Fund included budgeted expenditures for expanded programming, staff also aimed to increase sponsorship contributions to balance those costs.

City Manager Cotter said there was an operational shift within parks management, including moving from primarily part-time staffing to more full-time positions. He said as the city's park system has grown, there is a greater need for full-time park rangers to actively monitor and protect park assets rather than relying primarily on part-time staff and surveillance cameras. He said full-time rangers provide more consistent oversight and accountability in maintaining park safety and addressing issues as they arise. He said the proposed budget included the return to three full-time park ranger positions supported by additional part-time staff, with cameras and police support continuing to supplement coverage.

Council Member O'Neill asked if the proposed full-time park ranger position would serve in a supervisory role. Recreation Superintendent Heath said the current senior park ranger prefers to remain in a part-time capacity and does not wish to transition to full-time employment. He said the senior ranger performs effectively in a part-time role and would continue to provide leadership and oversight. He said the department intended to train the three proposed full-time park rangers to a higher level of responsibility and capability with the expectation that one of them could potentially assume a lead role in the future.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo thanked Recreation Superintendent Heath and his staff for their hard work and dedication.

Council Member O'Neill said the park rangers were not limited to only the larger parks. He said they regularly patrol smaller neighborhood parks as well as areas near boat launches and throughout residential streets. He said he frequently observes park ranger presence in various parts of the community.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo called for a recess at 12:18 p.m. Vice Mayor Alfonzo reconvened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Finance Director Drexler said the budget included a \$15 million grant allocation, which had historically been budgeted within the Recreation Division for parks and recreation-related grants. He said the funding had been moved into General Services to provide broader flexibility for all potential grant opportunities across departments. He said these funds serve as placeholders for grant opportunities that may arise during the year, including items not yet identified in the proposed budget, allowing the city to respond quickly when funding opportunities become available. He reviewed several line-item changes, including increases in telephone expenses to \$147,444, office and equipment leases to \$85,080, office supplies to \$39,850, and postage to \$50,760. He reported contingency funds decreased from \$3.35 million in the prior year to \$2 million in the current proposal. He said there were changes in transfers, including a decrease in transfers out to special revenue funds from \$2.1 million to \$1.1 million, a minor increase of \$2,010 in debt service transfers, and an increase in transfers to capital projects from \$5.398 million to \$5.937 million. He explained some discrepancies were identified after the budget was posted and distributed, and said corrected figures would be included in the version presented to the Council. He said the General Services budget functioned as a catch-all for expenses that were utilized citywide and could not be assigned to a single department. He said there were increases in postage, public defender legal service costs, and changes within other professional services, including the removal of the land exchange consultant.

Council Member Smith asked what the budgeted amount was for telephones. Finance Director Drexler said the overall new budget was \$147,444.00.

Finance Director Drexler explained the increases in the office equipment lease category were related to copier lease contracts for City Hall and other city facilities. City Manager Cotter pointed out the Arizona State Firefighter Cancer premium expense of approximately \$112,000 and explained the payment was required under state law despite the city not operating its own fire department.

Finance Director Drexler said the tuition reimbursement budget for city employees decreased from \$25,000 to \$15,000 and said office supply costs increased by approximately \$3,500 while copier paper expenses decreased by about \$1,500.00. He said the primary increase was attributed to bottled water service for city facilities which rose by approximately \$5,400.00. He reported the significant increase within the budget was postage.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked what the total was for the increased postage amount. Finance Director Drexler said the budgeted postage total was \$50,760.00.

Council Member Smith expressed concern regarding the reduction in contingency funding across multiple areas of the budget. She said the reductions appeared to reflect the city's focus on

maintaining the approximate \$25 million reserve balance rather than continuing to increase reserve levels.

City Manager Cotter said the reduction in contingency funding reflected the city's belief that such large contingency amounts would not be necessary. He said staff aimed to present a budget that could operate without relying heavily on contingency funding. He said contingency funds remained available for unforeseen circumstances such as fuel price increases or unexpected operational needs. He said the city had used contingency funds infrequently and emphasized that any expenditure from contingency reserves would require Council approval.

Council Member Smith requested corrected budget pages be provided electronically once finalized. City Manager Cotter said revisions and corrections identified during the budget discussions would be incorporated into an updated version of the budget, which would be redistributed to Council. He said the corrected General Services pages would be provided in the interim.

- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)

Assistant City Manager Pruitt said he had been involved in the development and initial formation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and said an executive director had been hired who had assumed responsibility for MPO operations. He said MPO funding originates from the federal government, is distributed through the State of Arizona, and is initially funded by the city before reimbursement is received from the state.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Director Steve D'Amico introduced Grant Administrator Danielle Bruch as the MPO's only other staff member and commended her work in supporting the organization's operations. He said the MPO secured a \$1.76 million federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant, which was carried over into the fiscal year 2027 budget. He said approximately \$1 million of the funding would support a regional safety study covering Bullhead City, Fort Mohave, Mohave Valley, and the Fort Mojave Tribe, while approximately \$760,000 would fund demonstration safety projects. He said planned Bullhead City projects included smart traffic cameras along Highway 95 to improve signal coordination and collect traffic safety data, portable speed trailers for law enforcement use, and illuminated pedestrian crossing beacons near schools. He said Mohave County projects would include illuminated stop signs and additional speed trailers. He reported receiving approximately \$39,000 in funding for transit radio upgrades through a cost-sharing arrangement with the city and said the MPO was beginning development of a long-range transportation plan for the region with consultant proposals due later in the month. He said the MPO completed an interim Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which included funding for a new transit bus, radio upgrades for the Bullhead Area Transit System, transit operational costs, and a \$1 million Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) exchange contribution toward the rehabilitation of Baseline Road. He said the MPO had made significant progress in meeting numerous compliance deadlines despite staffing limitations and the absence of a director during prior years and said current reporting and submission requirements were now being completed ahead of schedule.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Director D'Amico presented the MPO budget and said overall operations remained relatively unchanged. He noted increases in health insurance costs of 43.69 percent and electricity costs of 21 percent, while cell phone service costs decreased by 28 percent. He explained the overall budget appeared significantly higher due to the inclusion of federal grant funding which is passed through the State of Arizona and temporarily budgeted at the local level for

project tracking and reimbursement purposes. He said the city fronts operational costs and submits reimbursements on a monthly or quarterly basis, with federal funds ultimately reimbursing the city for eligible expenditures. He said in-kind staff time is used to meet required local match obligations for grant-funded projects. He said the \$1.76 million SS4A grant included a 20 percent match requirement, and that the MPO was also pursuing a Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) grant through the state to offset local match costs for both the city and Mohave County. He said the MPO eliminated a previously budgeted \$40,000 vehicle purchase and instead utilizes a leased vehicle from the city and said this arrangement was significantly more cost-effective given the limited usage.

Council Member Dallman referenced ongoing transit-related studies and asked if efforts were underway to potentially reintroduce a bus route on McCormick Boulevard. Metropolitan Planning Organization Director D'Amico said a \$250,000 grant had been awarded for transit planning efforts, which would be led by Transit Manager Peluso. He said the grant-funded work would include evaluating and developing transit route options and said the process involves multiple stages of federal and state oversight, with planning and funding occurring in advance of implementation over several years.

Council Member Dallman asked if public information meetings would be held as part of the process. Metropolitan Planning Organization Director D'Amico said public participation is both a required and integral component of all MPO projects and grants. He said multiple public meetings would be conducted to gather input on proposed transit changes and related projects.

Council Member Dallman commended the MPO team for their work.

Metropolitan Planning Organization Director D'Amico said the Baseline Road project would utilize a HURF exchange, allowing funds to be transferred directly to the city instead of being processed through the standard MPO procurement process. He said the MPO would contribute \$1 million, which would be adjusted through the HURF exchange mechanism to \$900,000 with the city providing a matching contribution to complete the project funding.

Council Member O'Neill commented on the potential use of flashing stop signs and said they would be beneficial in areas with limited street lighting. He asked if the MPO would be the ones to contact with suggested locations for the flashing stop signs. Metropolitan Planning Organization Director D'Amico said a list of roadway locations had already been compiled and said there were currently no additional city-specific locations identified beyond the school-related project. He said coordination with city personnel was ongoing and there was still time to submit additional project requests within the current funding window.

Assistant City Manager Pruitt said the MPO had secured funding to develop a Comprehensive Regional Safety Plan. He said the process would include public outreach sessions with City Council involvement and would provide opportunities for Council and the public to provide input on safety needs and potential improvements as the plan moves forward. Metropolitan Planning Organization Director D'Amico said the regional safety plan would also include development of a new dam evacuation component. He explained the plan would expand on existing emergency guidance by incorporating more detailed evacuation information, including maps identifying the quickest routes to higher ground based on location to improve public awareness and response planning in the event of an emergency.

- Human Services

Human Services Director Tipton said the Human Services Department includes Transit Services led by Transit Manager Michael Peluso; Housing Rehabilitation overseen by consultant Denise Bishop; Senior Enrichment programs (including activities and nutrition) led by Senior Services Program Manager Kim Cool; Pest Abatement led by Dr. Michael Caballero; and the animal shelter, which would soon be renamed the Bullhead City Animal Resource Center (BARC) under Shelter Manager Alison Harms. He said staffing changes included the addition of one full-time animal shelter technician, a cremation manager, and a cremation operator, along with additional part-time support across all divisions. He reported total Human Services departmental expenses of \$5,300,230 compared to \$6,522,000 in the prior year, representing an 18 percent decrease, which he attributed primarily to changes in how costs were reported during construction of the animal shelter facility.

Human Services Director Tipton said Human Services Administration consisted of himself and his assistant and said the only increase in that budget area was due to cost-of-living adjustments (COLA).

Human Services Director Tipton said the Senior Enrichment Program includes activities and nutrition services, had a total budget of \$755,000.00, reflecting a 4 percent increase. He said the senior activities portion totaled \$158,000.00, a 16 percent decrease and said the \$50,000 in donation funding had been reallocated into direct line items. He said senior activities had grown to more than 230 offerings. He said the nutrition program budget totaled \$597,000.00, an 11 percent increase driven primarily by increased meal demand and adjustments to meal service costs. He said meals have increased by approximately 20,000 meals and said the city was in the final year of a five-year agreement with Western Arizona Regional Medical Center (WARMC) and said potential cost adjustments were currently under discussion. He reported growth in congregate meal participation, with nearly 40,000 meals served and said \$40,000 was included for the replacement of a vehicle.

Human Services Director Tipton said Pest Abatement experienced only a personnel-related increase due to cost-of-living adjustments (COLA). He said there were decreases in travel and property-related expenses with a slight increase in utilities attributed to the use of a laboratory at off-property. He said prior budgeting did not reflect a full year of utility usage history. He said the current budget now accounts for a complete year of operations. He said overall the program budget remained essentially flat.

Human Services Director Tipton said the budget included funding for a HOME grant and a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the emergency repair program. He said both grant items were anticipated to be brought before the Council for approval soon as well as an Emergency Repair grant.

Human Services Director Tipton said the Transit Division budget totaled approximately \$2.215 million, representing a 6 percent increase. He said part of the increase was attributable to a grant-funded radio system upgrade totaling \$39,500 that was not included in the previous year's budget. He said the Transit budget included \$225,000 for the purchase of a new transit bus.

Human Services Director Tipton said the Animal Shelter, now known as the Bullhead City Animal Resource Center (BARC), had a proposed budget of approximately \$922,000.00, representing a 41 percent increase. He explained the increase was associated with the new facility which provides approximately three times the animal housing space of the previous shelter. He said the budget

included approximately \$391,000 related to cremation services and associated capital items, including furniture and equipment. He said the city anticipates generating revenue from cremation services, which is expected to help offset operational costs.

Council Member Ring asked if the cremation technician position required specialized qualifications or training. Shelter Manager Harms said the cremation operator would be required to obtain Arizona certification to operate the equipment and said an existing staff member had already independently paid for the certification training to advance her career within the department.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if a veterinarian would be required to oversee the cremation technician position. Shelter Manager Harms said a veterinarian would not be required for the cremation process itself and said any future veterinary involvement would relate to services provided prior to afterlife care. Human Services Director Tipton clarified the cremation services are strictly afterlife services and therefore do not require veterinary oversight.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked how far over budget the BARC project was to date. Human Services Director Tipton said the project had remained within budget. He said the total project cost including the land, building, cremation equipment, kennels, cages, and related project components, was approximately \$6.8 million and had remained consistent with the amounts previously approved by the Council.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if operating costs would decrease once the new facility was fully operational due to the elimination of the previous shelter facility. Human Services Director Tipton responded that the former facility would no longer be used once operations transitioned to the new facility.

Council Member Smith said she had observed buses parked outside City Hall for extended periods of time and asked if additional stops could be added to the route during that downtime. Human Services Director Tipton explained the scheduled stop was an approximately eight-minute break built into the route to allow drivers time for rest breaks because many routes do not provide adequate opportunities for drivers to stop. Transit Manager Peluso said layover periods are intentionally incorporated into all fixed transit routes to allow drivers to use restroom facilities and briefly rest between route segments. He said the city was in the process of developing a comprehensive short-range transit plan and said the plan would evaluate the entire transit system, including potential route modifications, service expansions, and areas of unmet need. He said the McCormick Boulevard route stop had been removed in 2018 due to low ridership on the Green Line at that time. He said current and future transit needs including possible route expansions would be evaluated through the planning process. He said the transit study and planning effort would include multiple meetings with the MPO, City Council, the Bullhead Area Transit System Commission, and the public to gather input and review recommendations before any proposed service changes are finalized.

Council Member O'Neill expressed concern regarding the lack of convenient bus stops near certain locations, including the post office, senior center, and library, and suggested additional stops may be needed to better serve residents. He said the city's pest abatement efforts produced a significant reduction in caddisfly activity compared to previous years and thanked staff for their work and praised the Senior Center and its programs. Senior Services Program Manager Cool said a transit stop already exists near the Senior Center, although it is currently uncovered and may not be highly visible to the

public. Human Services Director Tipton said there was also a stop located near the entrance to Ken Fovargue Park and said staff would continue reviewing transit stop accessibility and related concerns.

Council Member Smith questioned why some bus stops remained uncovered despite extreme summer temperatures and asked if prefabricated covered shelters could be installed and relocated as needed. Transit Manager Peluso said because the transit system is federally funded, all shelter installations must comply with ADA accessibility requirements which significantly increases costs. He said installing even basic covered shelters typically costs between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per location. He estimated approximately one-third of the city's transit stops, or about 25 locations, currently do not have shelters and said the uncovered stops are generally lower-ridership locations, while existing shelters are prioritized for the most heavily used transit stops. He said expanding shelter coverage could be evaluated further if directed by the Council.

Council Member O'Neill expressed concern that transit schedule signs were mounted too high for many riders, particularly seniors, making them difficult to read. He suggested staff evaluate whether the signs could be lowered to improve accessibility and readability for transit users.

City Manager Cotter said departmental budgets include performance indicators that measure program outcomes, including volunteer participation and related value estimates. He said the Senior Center had experienced increased participation following expansion of its facility and credited staff and volunteers for the growth in programming. He said the value of volunteer hours represents a significant contribution to city services and emphasized the importance of volunteers in supporting both the Senior Center and the future animal shelter operations. He said the expanded animal shelter would also benefit from increased volunteer involvement. He said the Senior Center now offers more than 200 programs, made possible through staff coordination and extensive volunteer support, and said continued volunteer recruitment is necessary to sustain and expand these services. He encouraged the Council to review performance indicators in the budget, emphasizing their importance in demonstrating community engagement and service delivery outcomes.

- Utilities

City Manager Cotter said the Council addressed water and sewer matters monthly to keep the public informed. Utilities Director Clark thanked the Council for its assistance and support. He said significant progress had been made over the past five years, although additional work remained. He introduced Administrative Analyst Jackie Renfroe, Water Manager Timothy Dolan, Wastewater Manager Timothy Fontenot, and Interim Construction Manager Manuel Aldaz. He said the city operated 15 lift stations and two wastewater treatment plants, and construction at the Section 10 plant would expand capacity from 4 million gallons per day to 6 million gallons per day.

Utilities Director Clark said the Utilities Department staffing had remained relatively consistent and the department continued to operate leanly despite the complexity of Bullhead City's utility system. He said while comparable in size to Lake Havasu City, Bullhead City's system was more complex, operating 48 pressure zones compared to Lake Havasu City's three. He said the Utilities budget included water, wastewater, administration, water resources, and water impulse budgets.

Utilities Director Clark discussed efforts to protect the city's Colorado River water entitlements amid anticipated regional water shortages. He said Bullhead City held 29,149 acre-feet of water rights and used approximately 11,500 acre-feet during the previous year. He said potential future reductions

imposed by the Bureau of Reclamation would apply to the city's total entitlement and noted concerns regarding proposed reductions affecting the lower basin states. He said the draft environmental impact study regarding Colorado River allocations had been published and said he would be meeting with the Bureau of Reclamation regarding renegotiation of the city's Colorado River water contract.

Utilities Director Clark said the city completed its water and wastewater rate study during the previous year after maintaining unchanged rates for four years. He said a Utilities Safety Committee had been established to review accidents, issue safety directives, and improve workplace safety practices through regular meetings and employee training. He outlined departmental objectives for the coming year including continued development of standard operating procedures (SOPs), implementation of a GIS model update, and improvements to the city's computerized maintenance management system (CMMS). He said over 6,000 water system valves had been GPS-located to improve mapping accuracy and reduce water loss by enabling faster system shutdowns during repairs. He said the city was evaluating new CMMS software with predictive maintenance and future artificial intelligence capabilities to improve maintenance efficiency and reduce infrastructure failures. He said administration personnel salary reductions reflected one unfilled position and the reassignment of part of his salary to water resources activities.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked about Interim Construction Manager Aldaz's position and said the 2026 budget reflected the position while the 2027 budget showed no allocation. Utilities Director Clark said Interim Construction Manager Alvarez had previously served as a foreman in the Water Division and was currently serving as Interim Construction Manager on a one-year interim basis while the city delayed filling the position until the following year.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked for an estimated cost of the proposed new computer system. Utilities Director Clark said costs would vary depending on the system selected and the number of modules included and said some systems could be used by multiple departments. He said staff had narrowed the options to a system with an estimated annual cost of approximately \$65,000 plus implementation expenses.

Council Member O'Neill clarified for the public that Bullhead City was not currently experiencing a water shortage because the city's water entitlement exceeded current usage by approximately 17,000 acre-feet. He asked if future reductions would primarily affect that excess allocation and if the city would remain adequately supplied if growth remained stable. Utilities Director Clark responded that the city held 29,149 acre-feet of water entitlement and had secured sufficient allocations through long-term planning efforts beginning in the 1990's and early 2000's. He said the city's current water entitlement, combined with reclaimed effluent resources, could support a population of approximately 150,000 to 160,000 residents.

Council Member O'Neill asked if water used for golf courses was reclaimed water rather than potable water. Utilities Director Clark said Laughlin Ranch Golf Club currently used fresh water supplied through their private wells because sufficient entitlement remained available. He said if future reductions became severe such as the 75 percent cut in entitlement allocations, golf courses including Chaparral Golf Club would be converted to reclaimed reuse water.

Council Member O'Neill asked if future developments including the CityCentre and Emerald Bay projects had been considered in the city's long-term water planning and said there was public concern regarding whether ongoing construction could contribute to future water shortages. Utilities Director

Clark said the city's current water entitlement was sufficient to support future growth and reiterated that the city had enough water resources to support a population of approximately 150,000 to 160,000 residents. Council Member O'Neill said he wanted the public to understand that current and planned construction projects would not place the city into a water shortage situation.

Utilities Director Clark said significant investments have been made in the Wastewater Utility budget. He said the headworks project was substantially complete, with only minor housekeeping items remaining. He reported the construction of the aeration basin was progressing, with four of eight concrete pours completed, and said the project was expected to be completed during the next fiscal year with some carryover funding remaining in the budget. He said clarifier projects previously approved by the Council would proceed during the next fiscal year, and said additional capital improvement projects for the Section 10 Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Section 18 Wastewater Treatment Plant, and other smaller projects would also be presented to the Council. He said new odor control units had been ordered for the 18-1 lift station, replacing equipment that had failed. He said equipment delivery delays could result in a minor carryover into the next fiscal year and said additional equipment had also been ordered for the 18-1 lift station.

Council Member O'Neill said residents had frequently noticed the odor problem in the area and asked if the lift station near the post office on Lakeside Drive would be addressed. Utilities Director Clark clarified the location was not a lift station, but an odor control unit and he said corrective work was planned. Wastewater Manager Fontenot said the city was awaiting delivery of a manhole component and contractors would begin work once it arrived. He said the existing odor control system had mistakenly been connected to a smaller sewer line during prior construction and would be reconnected to the primary 21-inch sewer main along Lakeside Drive. He said the project would correct the connection and also include installation of sealed manholes and continued use of bioxide treatment to improve odor control until a full rehabilitation of the sewer line could be completed.

Council Member O'Neill asked if bioxide was the chemical used to address the organisms causing sewer odors. Wastewater Manager Fontenot said the bioxide treatment was primarily used to reduce hydrogen sulfide levels in the wastewater system. Utilities Director Clark said additional odor-causing compounds were also present and said the combination of bioxide treatment and installation of sealed manhole lids was expected to significantly improve odor control. He said a full rehabilitation of the laboratory at the Section 10 Wastewater Plant had been completed in December 2025.

Utilities Director Clark reported the Utilities department maintained approximately 1,300 sewer connections per employee, compared to the 75th percentile industry benchmark of 608 connections per employee established by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and said the wastewater operation served more than double the typical number of customers per employee. He said the wastewater budget reflected a projected decrease of just under \$900,000 for the next fiscal year and said excluding a \$400,000 increase in depreciation, expenditures were reduced by approximately \$1.3 million primarily due to decreasing debt service obligations. He said the wastewater utility remained in strong financial condition with very little outstanding debt remaining. He discussed implementation of the new computerized maintenance management system (CMMS), which would be introduced in phases and include maintenance tracking, water reporting, and operational data management. He said digitizing operational records and equipment run-time data would improve predictive maintenance capabilities by allowing staff to analyze trends and identify maintenance needs before failures occurred, replacing the current paper-based recordkeeping system.

Utilities Director Clark said significant activity had occurred within the Water Utility over the past year. He said the new Well 20-1 had been drilled and was producing approximately 5,000 gallons per minute, which would supply a new storage tank planned for construction the following year. He said this addition would strengthen water system reliability on the south side of the city, though it did not directly benefit the north side due to lack of interconnection. He said multiple wells had been replaced during the year, including Well 3, Well 10, Well 16-1, and the Lake Mohave Highlands well system. He said several of these facilities were aging infrastructure, with Well 16-1 originally constructed in 1974. He reported staff completed 265 mainline water repairs and 308 service line repairs during the year and said the city experienced an estimated loss of approximately 35 million gallons of water annually due to line breaks.

Council Member Smith said she noticed a water issue on McCormick Boulevard over the weekend and indicated it appeared to have been marked for repair. Utilities Director Clark said depending on severity, some water main breaks were temporarily capped or allowed to leak minimally before crews returned to complete repairs. He explained the Council had previously approved a valve and hydrant technician position to improve system maintenance and responsiveness, but staff was still working through a large backlog of valve maintenance. He said ongoing system improvements would reduce the number of valves needed for future shutdowns and improve repair efficiency. He said the Water Distribution team completed approximately 16,500 service orders, with individual staff members sometimes handling 90 to 100 service orders per day and said these workloads were managed by a four-person field team. He explained that certain capital improvement program (CIP) construction categories were excluded from operational totals, resulting in adjusted budget figures of approximately \$13.24 million for 2026 and \$13.81 million for 2027, and reflected a year-over-year increase of just under \$600,000. He said this increase was offset by a corresponding rise in depreciation, resulting in a relatively flat overall budget position for the water system. He reported a 233 percent increase in backflow service activity and described backflow prevention as a growing regulatory priority, referencing increased focus from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. He said the Council had previously approved an additional Water Quality Specialist position, which had been filled and assigned to manage backflow and fat, oil, and grease (FOG) programs under Wastewater Manager Fontenot and said the city would increase efforts to ensure annual testing and compliance of customer backflow prevention devices. He said funding for the new computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) had been included in both water and wastewater budgets, with costs allocated between the two utilities.

Utilities Director Clark reviewed the Water Resources Fund and said it included approximately \$55,000 in annual dues paid to the Mohave County Water Authority, along with debt service expenses associated with financing water entitlement purchases. He said the significant decrease in the Water Resources Fund was primarily due to expiration of a \$3 million grant used for water conservation and turf removal projects throughout the city. He said the city partnered with areas including Palo Verde Meadows and Arroyo Vista, as well as various city parks to complete turf removal and water conservation improvements. He said the grant funding would expire on June 30, 2026 and would not continue into the next fiscal year, accounting for the substantial reduction in the fund balance.

Council Member O'Neill asked about the city's water pressure zones and said some residents in newer homes had expressed concerns regarding low water pressure. He asked if improvements were planned to address pressure issues. Utilities Director Clark said the city had completed a Water Master Plan in 2022 shortly after assuming control of the utility system from EPCOR. He said the study provided a roadmap identifying infrastructure deficiencies and needed improvements throughout the

system. He said the inherited water system consisted of multiple non-interconnected systems with undersized water lines and insufficient interconnections, which contributed to inconsistent water pressure in some areas. He said the city understood the necessary corrective measures, but implementation would require significant funding and time.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo called for a short recess at 2:20 p.m. Vice Mayor Alfonzo reconvened the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

- Capital Improvement Plan

City Manager Cotter reviewed several Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, including conversion of the old animal shelter building for future use as part of the Public Works yard, the DataWorks criminal justice mobile live-scan project, and lighting replacement improvements at Rotary Park.

Council Member Dallman asked if the park lighting replacements were part of a rotating replacement schedule throughout city parks or if the fixtures had simply reached the end of their service life. Public Works Director Johnson said the project focused primarily on lights along walking paths that were beginning to rust and deteriorate. She said \$50,000 had been budgeted for the current year and that replacements would likely continue over several years due to the age and condition of the infrastructure.

City Manager Cotter said the Council would receive additional information during an upcoming workshop regarding an energy efficiency audit and substantial lighting replacement recommendations from a consultant. Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if the replacement fixtures would utilize LED technology. City Manager Cotter answered affirmative and said LED lighting was significantly more efficient and cost-effective than older systems.

City Manager Cotter discussed the proposed transit facility project, explaining that the amounts shown in the CIP were placeholder planning figures only and did not represent the final project cost. He said the completed facility could ultimately cost between \$6 million and \$10 million once fully designed and constructed, and said the project was anticipated to be grant funded.

Council Member Smith said she believed additional roadway improvements should be considered in the city's general planning efforts. She said she was concerned there was not a right-turn lane onto Arroyo Vista from Bullhead Parkway and said residents had expressed safety concerns due to vehicles slowing from higher traffic speeds to make turns. She said she was concerned about the short and narrow right-turn lane from Bullhead Parkway onto North Oatman Road and suggested widening or extending the lane. City Manager Cotter said the city would consider those improvements both as part of the General Plan process and future roadway planning discussions. He said although the projects were not currently included in the budget, staff could begin evaluating them for future inclusion.

City Manager Cotter continued the Capital Improvement Program discussion with the Bullhead Parkway HSIP project extending from Silver Creek Road to Desert Foothills Boulevard. Council Member Smith commented on the use of raised medians, referencing previous median removals along Highway 95. Public Works Director Johnson said the project represented a portion removed from the original Bullhead Parkway project. She said the existing section from Bullhead Parkway to North Oatman Road included a center median with lighting, while the section from Silver Creek Road north

to Desert Foothills Boulevard currently only had a median without lighting improvements. She said adding lighting to the corridor would likely cost an additional \$10 million to \$12 million and explained the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funding was for project design only, with design costs estimated under \$450,000 and total construction costs projected at approximately \$6 million. She said matching funds for the project would be included in the following year's budget and said the improvements were intended to address roadway safety concerns.

Council Member Smith suggested evaluating if the existing dirt median area near Locust Boulevard could potentially be converted into a merging lane for southbound traffic entering Bullhead Parkway.

City Manager Cotter continued reviewing Capital Improvement Program projects, including the Buena Vista Drainage Improvements, Chaparral Golf Club Phase One improvements, and the CityCentre Improvement District right-turn lane project on Highway 95. Council Member Smith asked for confirmation that expenditures associated with the CityCentre projects would ultimately be assessed to the benefiting properties. City Manager Cotter confirmed that the costs would be assessed and said the city would be reimbursed for all project expenditures, including grant-funded portions.

City Manager Cotter reviewed Citywide Drainage projects, Community Park improvements, and the Community Park restroom project. Public Works Director Johnson said the Council had recently awarded the restroom construction project and said a second related project would later return to the Council for approval. She said the additional project would include lift station upgrades, water and sewer improvements, paving, and ADA accessibility improvements associated with the restroom facilities. She said the restroom construction had been separated into its own project, while the lift station improvements would proceed separately.

Council Member Smith asked if additional restroom facilities planned farther south within Rotary Park remained contingent upon grant funding efforts. Public Works Director Johnson said the city was actively pursuing grants and said funding for design and engineering of a second restroom facility in Community Park near Laughlin Ranch Boulevard had already been included in the budget. She said preparing engineered plans in advance would allow the city to proceed directly into construction once grant funding became available. Assistant City Manager Kajirwa added the current restroom project was funded through the State Lake Improvement Fund (SLIF) and said the city intended to pursue additional SLIF funding opportunities for future restroom projects.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if the Community Park projects would be required to go out for bid. Public Works Director Johnson confirmed the projects would be competitively bid and explained that current cost figures were preliminary because final pricing would depend on bid results from contractors. She said the approximately \$855,000 currently identified for the project was fully grant funded, while the city's required matching contribution was approximately \$200,000.00. She said the Community Park restroom design work would be funded through grants. City Manager Cotter said based on the recently approved bid for the current restroom project, staff anticipated future restroom construction costs would remain relatively similar if grant funding was secured during the following fiscal year.

Council Member Newlin asked for clarification regarding the CityCentre Improvement District budget figures and said the project reflected approximately \$16.1 million while the Capital Projects Fund summary showed approximately \$12 million in FY 2026 and \$16.8 million in FY 2027. Public Works Director Johnson explained construction costs had increased significantly due to rising prices for fuel, asphalt, concrete, and other materials. She said earlier figures had been preliminary estimates and that more refined engineer's estimates had become available as the project advanced into final

design. City Manager Cotter said some of the project figures remained estimates because the final design and bid process had not yet been completed. He explained the city still needed to complete the formal improvement district formation process, establish final district costs, and receive construction bids before exact project amounts could be determined. He said the current figures served as budget placeholders while negotiations and final cost determinations continued with the developer.

City Manager Cotter reviewed planned capital improvements for the new clubhouse restaurant at Chaparral Golf Club and Restaurant and said the project would address deferred maintenance items including flooring, ceilings, roofing, doors, and windows. He said some improvements were required for ADA compliance while others were necessary building upgrades intended to preserve the long-term value of the property.

Council Member Smith asked if the project included remodeling of the restaurant's restroom facilities and said some restrooms were not ADA compliant. Public Works Director Johnson said the restrooms near the bar area met ADA requirements, but the restrooms located within the restaurant area did not. Council Member Smith said the current project amount was not enough to address the restroom renovations. City Manager Cotter said additional ADA restroom improvements would likely be addressed in future years and said current financial limitations require the city to phase improvements over time.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo raised concerns regarding the entrance ramp leading to the front door and said the area lacked proper railings and presented a fall risk. City Manager Cotter said improvements to the entrance access and doorway area, including ADA-related upgrades, were included as part of the current project scope.

City Manager Cotter asked if the Council had questions regarding the Lake Mohave Highlands drainage project. Council Member Smith said although curved curb installations had recently been completed in some areas, subsequent rain events still resulted in damage to adjacent private yards. She asked if more vertical curb installations would be considered going forward. Public Works Director Johnson said she would address areas where roadway edges dropped off significantly, resulting in erosion and damage during storm events. She said the primary objective was to protect city asphalt infrastructure and manage drainage in areas where water flow created recurring issues and said some affected areas involved a mix of city and private property. Council Member Smith asked if the city would continue installing rolled curb sections. Public Works Director Johnson said rolled curb would continue to be used where appropriate, particularly in areas with uncertain driveway locations or vacant parcels, as it allows flexibility for property owners to establish driveway access. She said vertical curb would be used where drainage conditions and engineering requirements warranted a more restrictive barrier approach.

City Manager Cotter reviewed the Landon Road Connection project, which would extend Landon Drive to Highway 68 and reconnect near the Laughlin/Bullhead International Airport. He said the project had experienced repeated delays due to findings in required environmental and cultural resource studies. He said a new consultant had been retained to reassess prior findings and determine whether previously identified items were correctly classified as cultural or archaeological resources. He said coordination with tribal representatives would be necessary to ensure compliance with applicable requirements and said the city's goal was to advance the project to state land auction within the coming year. He said the project area was environmentally and culturally sensitive and emphasized that all regulatory requirements must be met before proceeding.

Council Member Smith asked if the budget allocation was intended for land acquisition at auction or for continued consulting work. City Manager Cotter said consulting costs were minimal at this stage and the necessary studies needed to be completed to enable the project to proceed to auction. He said if clearance could not be obtained, staff would return to the Council with further updates regarding potential obstacles. He said prior consultants had identified potentially sensitive environmental and cultural features in the project area, requiring further evaluation and possible avoidance or clearance.

City Manager Cotter reviewed proposed Capital Improvement Program items, including carryover funding for the middle school fields and the Optimum Community Center project, identified as an indoor pickleball and multipurpose facility. He said the indoor pickleball facility estimate of approximately \$1.5 million represented a preliminary planning figure based on current assumptions and said the project had not yet been fully designed or bid. He said the proposed facility would primarily serve as an indoor pickleball venue and would also function as a multipurpose space capable of hosting other recreational or community uses. He said the space could accommodate multiple configurations depending on need.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo recalled prior discussions indicating that outdoor pickleball courts were originally considered due to structural limitations of existing buildings. He asked if the plan now involved removing the existing structure and constructing a new facility. City Manager Cotter said the current concept would involve constructing a new metal building designed primarily for pickleball, while repurposing the existing classroom building for potential future uses.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if placement of the new building would eliminate previously discussed family park space within the site. City Manager Cotter said staff believed the full site plan could accommodate the facility, a future pool, and the planned family park area while still maintaining adequate parking and river-facing recreational space. He said while the project remained costly, staff believed the location was suitable and that community demand supported the investment.

Council Member Smith asked if there was any opportunity for grant funding to support the indoor pickleball facility. City Manager Cotter said the project would likely need to be funded through the General Fund and said existing commitments with the Legacy Foundation for other major recreational projects including the pool, limited the availability of additional foundation funding. He said while some grant opportunities could be pursued, the project timeline suggested that reliance on grant funding would likely delay implementation, and a general fund approach would be more realistic if the city intended to proceed.

Council Member Smith expressed concern about advancing the project without grant support and said multiple existing pickleball facilities in the community seem to not warrant the estimated \$1.5 million cost. Assistant City Manager Kajirwa explained funding competition and timing constraints limited available external funding sources. He said local philanthropic support, including from the Legacy Foundation, was limited across the tri-state region, and that state-level grant opportunities were also uncertain. He said relevant funding programs were currently overcommitted and would not accommodate the project within the current fiscal cycle as a grant-funded initiative. City Manager Cotter said demand for pickleball facilities in the community was strong and growing across age groups, including families and younger residents. He said the proposed facility would be designed as a flexible structure capable of supporting multiple recreational or community uses over time, allowing for future adaptation if demand shifted or if private-sector investment emerged later.

City Manager Cotter provided an overview of multiple Capital Improvement Program items, including the Rotary Park ADA River Access project and said similar improvements had previously been implemented at Community Park and were now being considered for expansion at Rotary Park in response to Council requests. Council Member O'Neill expressed appreciation for the project and stated it addressed needs identified by residents in the lower river area.

City Manager Cotter described the General Rotary Park Improvements project as a placeholder for smaller-scale park upgrades. He reviewed IT and computer-related expenditures, including storage systems, backup and recovery infrastructure, desktop replacements, server and network upgrades, fiber optic backbone improvements, and related data system components supporting city operations. He further outlined various equipment purchases, including an additional mower lease, an advanced collision investigation scanner, park aerator, security cameras, flatbed and maintenance trailers, infield maintenance equipment, portable generator, and other operational tools used across parks, streets, and utility divisions. He said the proposed \$25,000 allocation for park camera systems was intentionally reduced to pause further expansion until a comprehensive security and monitoring strategy could be developed for coordination between park ranger operations and law enforcement needs. He said additional items included a vibration roller for street maintenance, vacuum excavator equipment, transit radio system upgrades, water meters, a water truck tank replacement, golf course maintenance equipment, and related infrastructure tools.

Council Member Smith requested clarification regarding funding for the Hancock Road rehabilitation project, noting prior grant participation. Public Works Director Johnson confirmed that the project included approximately \$1.5 million in grant funding, along with approximately \$1.2 million in General Fund contributions, for a total project cost of approximately \$2.7 million.

City Manager Cotter reviewed the Highway 95 Right Turn Lanes construction project and explained the completed projects, planned improvements, and remaining funding allocations. He discussed the Montana Ridge Lighting Project on Bullhead Parkway, explaining that lights originally installed at that intersection had previously been relocated to North Oatman Road due to development timing. He said with residential development now occurring in the Montana Ridge area, the city was obligated to reinstall lighting improvements as originally intended when the area was undeveloped.

Public Works Director Johnson reviewed traffic signal and beautification efforts along city rights-of-way and medians, as well as traffic management initiatives related to Highway 95. She described the proposed implementation of a traffic monitoring and signal optimization system known as Mile Vision, which uses high-accuracy camera technology to analyze traffic flow and support signal timing adjustments. She said a pilot installation at the Mohave Crossroads Shopping Center intersection had performed well. She said the system would be deployed incrementally at an estimated cost of \$4,500 per intersection module, with approximately \$150,000 budgeted for phased implementation. She said individual intersections would be upgraded over multiple years and said the system would support traffic flow improvements by reducing unnecessary signal delays and improving response to real-time traffic conditions. She said traffic counts at Meadows Drive ranged between approximately 32,000 and 42,000 vehicles per day. City Manager Cotter said the system was not intended for enforcement purposes, such as red-light cameras or license plate readers, but rather for operational traffic management and situational awareness at intersections. He explained the technology would allow the city to better manage congestion, particularly along Highway 95, and improve signal timing based on actual traffic conditions. Assistant City Manager Kajirwa added the Metropolitan Planning Organization had secured a \$1.76 million Safe Streets for All grant for a demonstration phase of the

project. He said results from the pilot could support future applications for larger-scale funding to implement long-term traffic improvements.

Council Member Smith asked about long-term software costs associated with the system. Public Works Director Johnson said the system was structured as a one-time module-based purchase rather than an ongoing subscription, with expected equipment lifespans of 10 to 15 years and potential camera life spans of up to 20 years depending on conditions. She said the vendor would provide ongoing software updates without additional subscription fees.

Council Member O'Neill asked if the equipment would withstand local environmental conditions, particularly heat and sun exposure. Public Works Director Johnson said the system was currently being tested in multiple Arizona jurisdictions, including City of Peoria and City of Surprise, as well as other regional municipalities, and said feedback from those deployments had been positive.

City Manager Cotter reviewed requested capital equipment purchases, including one utility van for the Utilities Department at \$76,000.00, seven new police vehicles, potable water trucks, a replacement fleet service truck, a replacement vehicle for Meals on Wheels, a straddle stacker for BARC operations, a trailer-mounted trash pump for the Water Division, a new transit bus approximately \$225,000 in total cost (including approximately \$180,000 in grant funding), a Parks Department truck purchase, a pre-owned truck acquisition at approximately \$50,000, upfitting for police vehicles, and three vehicles for the narcotics unit.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo said all capital equipment purchases would follow the city's procurement policies, including use of state contract purchasing options or cooperative purchasing agreements where applicable, and said warranties and extended warranty options would be evaluated for cost-effectiveness. City Manager Cotter said most items would return to the Council for approval throughout the year, except for smaller purchases under established administrative thresholds.

Council Member O'Neill asked if a listed 2023 Chevrolet Silverado 4-wheel-drive vehicle was already part of an existing procurement arrangement. Public Works Director Johnson said staff was actively identifying available units and had issued bid solicitations. She said the vehicle may be a 2024 model depending on availability. Council Member O'Neill asked if procurement efforts included engagement with local dealerships. Public Works Director Johnson confirmed bids had been sent to area vendors. City Manager Cotter said the city prioritized local purchasing when feasible and said local dealerships had previously provided competitive pricing and useful equipment options for city needs.

City Manager Cotter reviewed the Water and Wastewater Capital Improvement Program and said there were approximately \$26 million in planned projects. He said staff had developed a comprehensive but constrained program balancing system needs with available revenues. He explained while additional investments could further improve system reliability, the current proposal reflected a phased approach aligned with affordability and operational priorities.

Council Member Smith asked which projects were required versus discretionary. City Manager Cotter said most items were necessary or needed to maintain system reliability and compliance, though a limited number of projects could potentially be deferred by one to two years. He cautioned deferrals could result in future emergency repairs if system components fail before replacement. He said staff had worked extensively to prioritize projects over a multi-year horizon and said the program

represented a balanced and reasonable level of investment. He said both water and wastewater systems required continued modernization due to historical underinvestment by prior operators.

Council Member Smith asked if all funding for these projects came from utility revenues. City Manager Cotter confirmed all water and wastewater projects were funded through the enterprise funds and stated that the Utilities Department was now operating independently of the general fund, including repayment of prior internal borrowing.

Council Member Dallman asked if the Water and Wastewater enterprise funds might eventually be combined to reduce debt exposure. Finance Director Drexler explained the funds could remain separate or be combined, but for upcoming bond issuances the city planned to pledge combined water and wastewater revenues. He said this approach is common practice and improves borrowing capacity and interest rates while still allowing the city to track each utility's financial performance separately.

Council Member Newlin asked about the increase in capital leases shown in the proposed budget. Finance Director Drexler said the line item reflected proposed utility bond financing totaling approximately \$21 million. He said the final budget documents would be corrected to properly reflect bond financing rather than capital lease terminology.

2. Public Comment Period – Comments from the public will be heard at the end of the budget presentations.

Vice Mayor Alfonzo asked if anyone from the public would like to speak on the proposed budget. No one spoke.

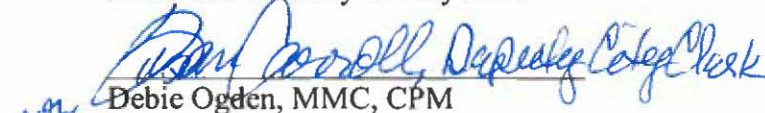
ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, Vice Mayor Alfonzo declared the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct record of the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Bullhead City held on the 20th day of April 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 11th day of May 2026


Debie Ogden, MMC, CPM
City Clerk