

**FRUITA CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 22, 2024
6:30 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The workshop of the Fruita City Council was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Mayor Matthew Breman. City Council members present were Aaron Hancey, Jeannine Purser, James Williams, Rich Parrish, Amy Miller and Andrea Downs.

City Staff present were City Manager Mike Bennett, Assistant City Manager Shannon Vassen, Communications & Engagement Specialist Ciara Amann, City Clerk Deb Woods and Finance Director Joe Zaher.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT 2024 – 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN (6:30 - 7:00 PM)

City Manager Mike Bennett noted that he and Assistant City Manager Shannon Vassen added more information to the Strategic Plan after the conclusion of the August 28, 2024 Strategic Planning Retreat and requested that the Fruita City Council provide any wanted changes or additions they may have.

The three Strategic Priorities in the Plan include:

- Connecting Communities
- Opportunities to Live and Work in Fruita
- Core Service Delivery

For the Connecting Communities Strategic Priority, staff will be organizing more public outreach and engagement. As part of that, the City will be conducting its next anonymous Community Survey at the end of January 2025. The survey is typically done every four years and is one of the guiding documents that assists the City Council with developing the City's Annual Budget and making other decisions.

Another aspect of Connecting Communities includes Police outreach. Officer Ed Pacheco has been selected to focus heavily on engagement with the public to provide education and increase neighborhood and traffic safety. Other communication objectives include continuing to grow the Fruita Academy program by increasing the number of participants and partnering with outside agencies such as Lower Valley Fire to expand learning options. Revamping and redesigning the City's website at fruita.org is also included in the Strategic Plan as another communication tool.

Mayor Breman suggested that Fruita Academy students be recruited to potentially fill vacant seats on the City's volunteer boards and commissions.

Another Connecting Communities objective is to improve and develop a robust City Board and Commission program by coordinating quarterly meetings between all boards to provide updates, get to know one another and help create ways boards can help each other with projects. The City Council has also had discussions about the need to establish a focus of the Livability Commission and a desire to incorporate a "localism" element in all City boards.

Councilor Miller requested that staff find a better graphic than the trash truck Under “Live and Work in Fruita.”

Mayor Breman recalled a discussion at a Workshop Session about whether the City should decide to identify or hire a dedicated point person for Economic Development. City Manager Mike Bennett responded that staff is talking to the Business Incubator Center (BIC) about that but first, Fruita would need to figure out what the scope of work would be in order to create a description of duties and then the City could recruit someone for the position.

Mr. Bennett added that he would include it in the Strategic Plan so that the idea isn’t forgotten. He cautioned everyone that the work could literally be full-time and pointed out that it could also be done by firms, but that staff and the Council still need to look at the scope of work, so it could be listed in the Strategic Plan as a “Three-Year” goal. Mayor Breman pointed out that this may become a budgetary item and that staff and the rest of the Council should just treat it as a “footnote” for now.

Mr. Bennett listed the recent affordable housing projects in Fruita, and pointed out that the units are rentals and are not for home ownership, therefore, the City needs an updated Housing Study to determine what specific gaps there are.

Mayor Breman said he thought that there was a concern about locations for affordable housing and requested that they be part of the assessment.

Mr. Bennett stated that when the City first began conversations about affordable housing, new developments were not to be all in one location and that currently, there are two projects that are next to each other, but the other three are not.

Mr. Bennett pointed out that partnerships for affordable housing options such as Habitat for Humanity, Housing Resources of Western Colorado, and Headwaters could be included in the Strategic Plan, however, the Prop 123 Funding has not yet been included just yet. The Council had a discussion about making the partnerships piece more broad, and not to be limited to those.

There were also some discussions concerning the City’s Growth Boundary edges, which went from hard to soft edges in a previous plan approved in 2009, then back to hard edges in 2020, at least on the east side, but also brought that boundary in. Edges are well-defined to the south. And to the west, there are some limitations with sewer. The City needs to reevaluate the future land use to the northeast and the evaluation should include infrastructure extension feasibility as well as existing zoning and land use compatibility.

An objective in the Core Services Delivery priority in the Strategic Plan is for the City of Fruita to be an Employer of Choice to attract and retain team members and deliver exceptional community services.

Mr. Bennett stated that staff needs direction concerning what Council’s expectations are for City facilities. He explained that an Investment Grade Audit can project needs into the future including maintenance plans for facilities and a potential energy audit through the state called the ESCO Plan, where the City can join the energy audit, but whatever the recommendations are, the City would have to implement. Mr. Bennett said the cost is based on square footage so staff is evaluating doing the audit for some and not all City facilities.

Mr. Bennett suggested scheduling a Workshop agenda item to review this and present more examples to narrow the price only to the facilities that need it most, which over the next 10-15 years would be the Civic Center and potentially the Police Department building. The City is not near an expansion phase of the Fruita Community Center as it is not at capacity, although it is usually pretty busy.

Mike explained that Capital Improvement Projects in the Strategic Plan are located on the City's website, although staff will be bringing the Council a more finalized list in early December.

Councilor Hancey said it would be nice if staff could get some more firm dates for a Housing Study. Mr. Bennett agreed and added that the City would be able to compare study results to existing plans to realistically look at capacity, timing and other Capital Improvement projects.

Councilor Hancey requested that staff take out the reference to Habitat for Humanity in the Strategic Plan because he feels it should not include specific vendors.

2. DISCUSSION ON THE 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET & REVIEW OF OUTSIDE AGENCY FUNDING REQUESTS (7:00 – 8:15 PM)

Assistant City Manager Shannon Vassen reviewed the budget presentations coming up and explained that the final All Fund Summary would be presented at the first Council meeting in December.

The November Workshop meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of the month will be a final check-in before the December 3rd adoption date. Mr. Vassen asked if the Council had any feedback or questions.

Councilor Williams stated that he wanted to keep pushing for a woodchipper to make mulch for the Fruita Bark Park dog park.

Mayor Breman noted that he read a narrative about franchise fees and asked why the City doesn't get them from other utility providers besides Xcel Energy? City Manager Mike Bennett explained that franchise fees are typically for public utilities, which are defined by state statute. Traditionally, internet/fiber not included. In most cases, they are applied to power (Xcel Energy and Grand Valley Power) and cable TV. Some cities have collected franchise fees with broadband, but usually only when there is only one provider. Mr. Bennett pointed out that Spectrum does not have a Franchise Agreement with the City for internet, only television. Matthew added that it was his understanding that the City can't make providers of utilities get a business license.

Mr. Bennett noted that an updated Housing Study will be completed in 2025. The City is usually able to apply for and get awarded an administrative grant from the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), which are almost guaranteed for grants under \$100,000. Staff might want to budget for a matching grant and will investigate the cost.

Mr. Vassen stated that Staff received four (4) applications for outside agency funding. He explained the process: Staff has posted the application on the City's website, reached out to partners and people who have applied for funding in the past to ask if they want to apply again.

Staff received four applications; three of them have applied for the funding before, but one is new from Rivers Edge West.

Mayor Breman asked if the Council had any concerns about the three applicants who applied in previous years.

Councilor Miller stated that it seems to her like Grand Valley Pets Alive has made an impact. In the past, they received \$6,000 from the City, which equates to about spays or neuters. Staff also looked into whether vouchers could be accepted by all local veterinarians and it didn't work out, but Mr. Vassen stated that staff can re-evaluate. The Council decided to fund Grand Valley Pets Alive the same amount as last year (not to increase the funding for Grand Valley Pets Alive).

Councilor Hancey said he thought there should be some money left over from Grand Valley Pet Alive and Mr. Vassen explained that there are 8 or 9 vouchers left that will be used by the end of the year.

Mayor Breman said he does not like the mentality that if there are unused vouchers, Grand Valley Pets shouldn't get funded the following year.

Council discussed how GV Pets Alive have definitely done some good work.

Councilor Purser said she wanted to talk about the Chamber's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Council before discussing the funding request.

Councilor Williams said he feels all the One Riverfront's focus is going to be in Palisade and asked why Mesa County stopped funding them in 2013. City Manager Mike Bennett explained that Mesa County led the efforts for the Riverfront Trail for many years, but then decided to not fund trails for a while. He explained that the City of Fruita does receive value for its relationship with the One Riverfront; they seeded money for matching grants and remains a partner in the One Riverfont's annual Summer Concert Series.

Councilor Williams requested that staff should have the One Riverfront put in writing that it will coordinate with the City on the dates for the One Riverfront Concert Series so as to not schedule any of their concerts on Thursday nights, when the City is holding its Thursday Night Concert Series.

The Council decided they were good with funding the One Riverfront and Grand Valley Pets Alive as proposed by staff.

Mr. Vassen explained that there is a line item in the 2025 Budget for a one-time expense for the Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative/RiversEdge West to plan out future recreation on the Colorado River. All area jurisdictions are pitching in. Mayor Breman wondered if this will help the City of Fruita at all with "The Launch" future development and requested that staff let them know about the project.

Mr. Bennett noted that it could come into play when the studies are done and noted that Parks and Recreation Director Marc Mancuso can provide an update during his budget presentation to the Council.

All Council members were in favor of providing the proposed funding for the Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative/RiversEdge West.

3. DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH FRUITA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DISCUSSION (8:15 - 8:45 PM)

Councilor Hancey reminded the City Council that he had asked at a past Council meeting about the value the City of Fruita receives for the amount of funding it supplies to the Chamber. Subsequently, the idea of drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and Chamber came up.

City Manager Mike Bennett explained that as a City, Fruita financially supports the local Chamber of Commerce with an annual appropriation, but that amount must be requested by the Chamber on an annual basis. The City of Fruita also provides in-kind support such as leasing the Rock-a-day building on Aspen Avenue to the Chamber at no charge along with free electric, gas, water and sewer utilities and maintenance of the building systems and grounds.

The City also provides the Chamber with some in-kind services (street closures, traffic control, etc.) during Chamber events such as Fruita Fall Festival, Farmers Market and the Parade of Lights. The Chamber has expressed a desire for the City of Fruita to expand its in-kind support, but Mr. Bennett suggested that this be handled through the City's Special Event application process and not in a MOU.

Staff is in the process of drafting an MOU between the City and the Fruita Chamber for adoption at an upcoming Council meeting. The funding will be broken out into thirds in the MOU as follows:

- 1/3 of the funding is for general monetary support.
- 1/3 of the funding is for reporting of regular specific business checks as well as two (2) presentations to the City Council per year.
- 1/3 of the funding is to be for feedback from the City Council concerning Chamber events.

There was consensus among Council members that in-kind contributions to the Chamber for Special Events should be discussed on an event-by-event basis according to the City's ability and capacity to provide the in-kind support. The Chamber is currently re-evaluating the number of events they do each year.

Mayor Breman informed the Council that the Chamber wants to have some say in who sits on their Board. He also reported that this will be the first year in many that the Chamber anticipates operating "in the black."

Councilor Hancey said it would be nice to see the Chamber become more successful and independent. Councilor Williams said it has not been for lack of trying. Mayor Breman pointed out that it is almost impossible for a Chamber in a smaller town to survive without help.

The Mayor and City Council all agreed that this year's Fruita Fall Festival was better this year.

Mr. Bennett noted that he would make the changes to the MOU and email it to the Council and the Chamber for any final changes before including it in the Council packet for the Regular Council meeting of November 19, 2024. Executive Director Kayla Bowers will provide the Council with a presentation and the Council will be able to act on the MOU directly following that.

OTHER ITEMS (8:45 PM)

- Councilor Williams commended Drew Gorgey with Columbia, Ltd., the recruitment firm the City of Fruita hired for recruiting the City Manager position. He said he was very impressed, feels confident that Drew listened to the City Council members and was very respectful. All the other Council members and Mayor agreed.
- Councilor Downs reported that the Arts and Culture Board is beginning to plan for the next Coco Vino at Our Lady of Perpetual Motion to be held on March 14, 2025. She also noted that she would be attending a Museums of Western Colorado (MWC) Board of Directors tomorrow.

- Councilor Parrish reported that the Fruita Tourism Advisory Council (FTAC) saw five presentations from Marketing and Promotion firms, most of which are located in Western Colorado. Two of the presentations were in-person and the other three were virtual and Councilor Parrish said he thinks they definitely came across better in person. The FTAC will meet again on Thursday, October 24th to decide on which firm to recommend to the City Council, followed by a presentation to the Mayor and Council. Councilor Williams requested to see the contract from the City's previous marketing and promotions vendor for comparison.
- Councilor Miller reported that the Livability Commission members participated in a trail cleanup of the Riverfront Trail (between 18 Road and Heritage Park) and it was easy because the trail is already so clean. She said it was a fun day with gorgeous weather.
- Mayor Breman reported that he and City Attorney Mary Elizabeth Geiger went over best practices with Fruita Municipal Court Judge Dan Robinson. The Mayor said he learned that the City has an on-call interpreter and he got a note back from the Judge thanking the City Council for their interest. The Mayor said the Council and staff need to look at 1) trespassing and, 2) criminal mischief, to make sure the City of Fruita is in alignment with state statutes. Judge Robinson has a draft list of questions for the Municipal Court Judge review process to make sure the right questions are being asked by the Council going forward. City Manager Mike Bennett agreed that it was a great and informative check-in with the Judge.

Mayor Breman requested that the Council members get the following dates on their calendars:

- ✓ This Friday, October 25, 2024, staff should be receiving a draft of the brochure for recruitment of the City Manager position. Staff will forward it to all City Council members and the Mayor needs all feedback by 8:00 a.m. on Monday morning, October 28th. Minor adjustments to the brochure are anticipated.
- ✓ At the December 17, 2024 City Council Workshop meeting, Mayor Breman would like to start at 5:00 p.m. to go over all City Manager candidates and narrow them down. City Manager Mike Bennett will update the calendar invite and resend as a Special Meeting with an Executive Session.
- ✓ On January 9, 2025, there will tentatively be a community engagement event at the Fruita Community Center (FCC) for community members to meet the finalists for the City Manager position and for Council to receive feedback afterwards from community members.
- ✓ On January 10, 2025, Mayor Breman requested that the Council members block out the entire day to meet all the City Manager finalists.
- ✓ Mr. Bennett suggested that there be separate "Meet and Greet" events with other groups, but staff should first talk to Columbia, Ltd.'s Drew Gorgey about it. He said it is very common for Council members to attend those as well. Mayor Breman stated that Drew's suggestion was that Council not be there because Council members could predetermine who to pick without receiving community feedback. Mayor Breman said he would tell Drew that Council wants to be there. It was noted that the recruitment brochure has the finalist dates predetermined; it is not up to candidates' schedules.

- ✓ Mr. Gorgey said that staff and the City Council were pretty consistent and pointed to the graph that talks about the process. He said this can make all the difference in the world.
- ✓ Councilor Williams reported that he attended a Police Commission meeting and the board discussed having Officer Ed Pacheco take care of the Police Department's community engagement efforts.

ADJOURN

With no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Woods
Deputy City Clerk