DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 5, 2026

Minutes

Mayor Amorose Groomes called the Monday, October 5, 2026 work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

Council members present: Ms. Alutto, Mayor Amorose Groomes, Vice Mayor De Rosa, Ms. Johnson, Mr. Keeler, Ms. Kramb and Dr. Lam.

Staff present: Mr. Barker, Chief Paez, Mr. Rubino, Ms. Willis, Ms. Murray, Mr. Urbancsik, Ms. Weisenauer, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Rauch, Mr. Connolly, Ms. Nardecchia, Mr. Earman, Ms. Uhl, Ms. Wigram, Mr. Gracia, Ms. LeRoy, Ms. Wawszkiewicz, Ms. Willis, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Fagrell, Mr. Ament, Mr. Hammersmith, Mr. Hoyt, Ms. Miglietti, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Hammersmith, Mr. Batchelor, Ms. Lehnert and Deputy Chief Lattanzi.

Others present: Joe Bauserman and Scott Rodgers, Sport Facilities Company

Ms. Alutto led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2027 Operating Budget

Mr. Barker opened the fourth and final budget work session, noting that the evening's presentation would consolidate all major components of the proposed 2027 Operating Budget and 2027–2031 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). He emphasized that the proposed budget reflects Council's strategic priorities while maintaining a commitment to sound financial management and structural balance. He thanked Chief Finance Officer Matt Rubino and the Finance team, along with all department directors and staff, for their work in preparing the budget materials.

Overview and Budget Development Context

Mr. Rubino provided context on the four work sessions held since August, covering the full CIP, financial planning and forecasting, the water and sanitary sewer CIP and utility rate study, and, in this final session, the operating budget. He noted that feedback received from Council in earlier sessions had been incorporated and had meaningfully shaped the presentation format and budget practices going forward.

Ms. Murray highlighted Council Goal 1. Foster Community Connection and Well-Being as the goal most visibly reflected in the operating budget rather than the capital plan. She reported that the proposed operating budget contains more than $970,000 in wellness-related investments spanning behavioral health, public health, education, outreach, mobility, and community services. Specific programs cited included Talk, Listen, Learn; Public Health Mosquito Management Services; Dublin Connector and Connector Plus; the DEERS survey; and the City's partnership with Syntero. Additional outreach and sustainability initiatives including the Senior Student Buddy Program, Evening of Gratitude, Walk with Your City, composting, recycling events, and prescription drop-off programs were also identified as expressions of Goal 1 in the operating budget.

High-Level Budget Summary and Assumptions

Mr. Rubino presented the high-level parameters underlying the proposed budget. Revenue estimates were developed using the City's established conservative approach, with income tax

revenue budgeted at a baseline estimate rather than the higher projected forecast, a practice designed to preserve financial flexibility. Total payroll increases were budgeted at 3.5 to 4 percent, varying by bargaining and non-bargaining status. The vacancy credit was adjusted from 6 percent in 2026 to 4 percent in 2027, reflecting actual vacancy experience observed during the current year.

The proposed 2027 operating budget totals $123.9 million in expenditures, representing a 3.9 percent increase over the 2026 approved budget. The General Fund component is $75 million, a 4.4 percent increase. A notable structural change was introduced: the SportsOhio budget has been moved from the General Fund to its own dedicated special revenue fund, with no net change to the total operating budget. The budget is structurally balanced, with ongoing revenue exceeding planned operating expenditures by just over $380,000.

Mr. Rubino presented a multi-year utilization trend chart demonstrating that actual spending has consistently tracked between the 90 percent utilization floor and the budgeted ceiling, confirming the effectiveness of the City's budget development methodology.

Revenue Overview

Mr. Urbancsik presented the revenue side of the 2027 operating budget, projected at $124.3 million, which is a 4 percent increase over the 2026 budget. Approximately 80 percent of revenue flows through the General Fund, with the remaining 20 percent across the Street Maintenance and Repair Fund, Safety Fund, Recreation Fund, and Hotel/Motel Tax Fund. Income tax and hotel/motel tax together account for approximately 75 percent of total operating revenue, with charges for services at 12 percent and intergovernmental revenue, fines, licenses, and fees each at approximately 3 percent. Over 90 percent of income tax collections are derived from the City's employment base, with net profit revenue at 16 percent and individual income tax at 8 percent.

Mr. Rubino provided an in-depth explanation of the City's income tax budgeting methodology, distinguishing between the budget estimate used to achieve structural balance and the forecast of actual expected collections. For 2027, total income tax collections are projected at approximately $124 million, while the budget estimate used as the structural balance target is $119.5 million. The approximately $3.4 million variance represents built-in fiscal flexibility that can be directed toward debt repayment acceleration, strategic land acquisition, or other Council-directed priorities. Mr. Rubino recommended continuing this practice, noting that enhanced analytics from the City's new income tax system would eventually allow deeper reporting on taxpayer trends, industry sectors, and geographic areas.

Vice Mayor De Rosa expressed strong support for the continued investment in revenue analytics, emphasizing the value of gaining insight into revenue dynamics comparable to the detail already available on the expenditure side. She noted that income tax revenue has historically been presented as a broad figure with limited internal visibility, and that better tools would be invaluable as the City navigates changing economic conditions. She asked about the anticipated timeline for enhanced analytics, and Mr. Rubino indicated that his hope was to have useful tools in place ahead of the first work sessions for the 2028 budget, following completion of the e-file system for taxpayers.

Operating Expenditures Overview

Ms. Murray presented the expenditure side of the budget. The $123.9 million total represents a 3.9 percent, or approximately $4.5 million, increase over the 2026 budget. By fund, the General Fund accounts for 61 percent, the Safety Fund for 19 percent, and the newly created SportsOhio Fund for approximately 3 percent. By service type, police and public service together represent 38 percent of the operating budget, leisure activities 27 percent, and general government 34 percent.

By expenditure type, personnel services represent the largest share, followed by contractual services at 24 percent. Staff noted that 22 percent of all operating expenditure is one-time in nature.

The primary drivers of the $4.5 million increase include salaries and benefits ($1.8 million), IT and equipment maintenance ($740,000), increased refuse and recycling contract costs, higher utility costs, tree pruning, street salt, and additional economic development incentives associated with new economic development agreements coming on board.

A multi-year operating results comparison illustrated the structural balance of the proposed budget and forecasted positive results through 2031, with revenues averaging approximately $1.7 million above expenditures annually in the General Fund, and approximately $7 million above expenditures on a total operating fund basis.

Staffing

Mr. Barker presented the proposed staffing changes for 2027. The budget proposes four new positions: three police officers and one forestry worker. The three police officers fulfill the second phase of a staffing plan identified in the prior year's operations workload analysis, which called for six additional officers over two budget cycles to achieve full coverage of all six patrol districts across all shifts. Two positions are eliminated: one of two Director of Engineering positions, reflecting the planned retirement of Paul Hammersmith at year-end, and one Tax Auditor position eliminated as a result of efficiencies from the new AI-enabled income tax system. The net result is an increase of two full-time positions, bringing the citywide total to 432, compared to 430 in 2026.

During discussion of staffing, Ms. Kramb raised the matter of funding a second Deputy City Manager position, noting that this had been discussed previously among Council members and that the work session was the appropriate forum to advance the request. Mayor Amorose Groomes indicated support, as did the balance of the other members, and Mr. Barker confirmed that the position would be incorporated into the budget presentation accordingly.

Proposed reclassifications were also presented, including the reclassification of three Communications Supervisor positions to Communications Technician, yielding approximately $35,000 in savings, along with additional reclassifications in Public Service, Finance, and Taxation. The net cost of all reclassifications is approximately $20,000.

Operational Efficiencies and Inflation Comparison

Mr. Rubino presented a summary of operational efficiencies and cost-saving strategies implemented across divisions, including AI-driven tax automation, an ACT-A customer response program in building standards, AI-assisted police property intake, compressed natural gas fleet operations, workers' compensation self-insurance, flexible staffing strategies, AI email filtering, electronic bid advertising, a cashless Dublin Irish Festival, and EtchSnow and IceWrap automation.

An inflation-comparison chart was presented showing actual operating expenditures from 2022 through 2026 alongside a hypothetical inflation-adjusted baseline using CPI. The analysis demonstrated that actual expenditures have grown by approximately 13 percent over the period, while a pure inflation adjustment of the 2022 base year would have yielded approximately 23 percent growth — a difference of roughly $6 million in 2026 alone. Mr. Rubino attributed this favorable result to the combination of conservative revenue-based budgeting, utilization-driven appropriation, and ongoing efficiency measures.

Vice Mayor De Rosa and Dr. Lam both expressed interest in a further breakdown of this comparison by service category, to understand where the City has and has not been able to outpace inflation and what may or may not be sustainable. Mr. Rubino agreed to provide additional

analysis as a follow-up. Ms. Kramb and Ms. Johnson both commended the Finance team for the clarity of the budget memo.

Dr. Lam asked for a consolidated accounting of AI-related expenditures and savings across the budget, noting that with $1.9 million in AI and automation commitments, it would be valuable to assess the overall return on investment. Mr. Rubino agreed to provide follow-up information on that topic.

Department and Division Operating Budgets

Legislative Services

Ms. Delgado reported that the Legislative Services budget is largely unchanged, with a modest increase attributable to a change in benefit elections for one employee. The Boards and Commissions budget is also unchanged. Mayor Amorose Groomes raised the question of whether compensation for board and commission members, which was historically intended to offset site visit and related expenses had kept pace with actual costs, noting that the amounts had not been revisited in at least 16 years. Staff agreed to note this for consideration in the 2028 budget process.

Office of the City Manager

Ms. Murray presented the Office of the City Manager budget, noting personnel service changes associated with the reclassification of an Operations Administrator to Deputy Director and the addition of an Administrative 3 position. An increase in contractual services reflects implementation of the deer management program. A decrease in other charges and expenditures results from the removal of Intelligent Community Forum funding. The miscellaneous accounts reflect the transition of the Syntero and Community Health Worker/Forever Dublin expenditures between line items, as well as the change in vacancy credit from 6 to 4 percent.

Legal Services

Mr. Rubino noted that the legal services budget, primarily the City's legal services contract, reflects an approximately 10 to 11 percent increase over average utilization in recent years, based on current utilization patterns and pending contract renewal.

Economic Development

Mr. Gracia reported a 0 percent net change in the Economic Development budget, as line items were reallocated among contractual services, economic development incentives, and professional services rather than reflecting new spending. Notable items include tracking the ROI on economic development agreements, ongoing business retention and expansion activities, and a $40,000 allocation for a strategic plan update, supplemented by participation in the Columbus Regional strategic planning effort being conducted by Ernst and Young. Vice Mayor De Rosa inquired whether the strategic plan update budget was sufficient for a meaningful effort, and Mr. Gracia indicated that it would be combined with a separate implementation line item and supplemented by the regional effort. Ms. Kramb confirmed that the business retention and expansion activity funding, which decreased from $72,000 to $57,000 was still adequate for planned activities.

Court Services

Ms. Murray presented the budgets on behalf of Court Services, noting a decrease in contractual services in Court Services due to a reduction in prisoner boarding driven by legislative procedural changes and the elimination of credit card fees. The Mayor's Court computer fund reflects savings from the transition to the Civica management system, generating approximately $12,500 in annual savings. Records Management reflects shared staffing changes consistent with Court Services.

Facilities and Fleet Management

Mr. Barker presented the Facilities Management budget on behalf of the vacant Director of Fleet and Facilities position, noting that interviews for that position were actively underway. The most significant change is an increase in contractual services for expanded park restroom cleaning now conducted daily rather than three times per week, and additional maintenance costs associated with the combined heat and power (CHP) system being commissioned at the Recreation Center. Mr. Barker noted that the CHP system, once fully operational, will serve as the primary heat source for pool water and is expected to generate significant energy savings. Ms. Kramb inquired about the quality of the restroom cleaning contractor, and Mr. Barker confirmed that the contractor had improved performance following close oversight and that positive community feedback had been received.

Dr. Lam asked whether the City was pursuing additional energy cost reduction strategies. Mr. Barker described the geothermal system at the Recreation Center, the CHP system, ongoing anti-idling practices, fleet electrification, and planned solar panel evaluation at the service center as part of the City's broader sustainability plan.

Mr. Barker reported that the CNG fleet continues to generate approximately $400,000 in annual fuel cost savings. The City is advancing its sustainability plan by adding hybrid and electric vehicles toward the goal of electrifying 50 percent of light-duty vehicles by 2035. Other ongoing initiatives include fleet rightsizing, use of the Faster Software for lifecycle management, and autonomous mowing technology.

Human Resources

Ms. Miglietti reported a 2 percent increase in the general HR budget, attributable to higher insurance and bonding costs and increased personnel services for new hires and training. The self-insurance fund reflects an 11 percent increase due to rising health plan expenses, partially managed through pharmacy rebate programs, negotiated discounts, cost sharing, and incentives for in-network utilization. Workers' compensation self-insurance has generated over $5 million in cumulative savings since 2006. Vice Mayor DeRosa invited Ms. Miglietti to elaborate on health insurance cost containment efforts, including a forthcoming recommendation for the Hinge Health musculoskeletal program, which will enable employees to access physical therapy via a mobile application.

Information Technology

Mr. Connolly presented a 12 percent increase in the IT operating budget. Key drivers include increased support costs for CAD services during the transition to a new system for police and NRECC; a cybersecurity consulting contract (vCISO); transitioning the Gartner/Infotech knowledge services contract from the Innovation and Analytics budget to IT; a 17 percent increase in supplies reflecting the transition of 2026 CIP projects including the tax solutions system, new HR software, cybersecurity hardware, and AI solutions into the operating budget; and a 30 percent year-over-year increase in hardware costs. Mr. Connolly noted that wireless carrier renegotiations are expected to yield close to $100,000 in savings. A 30 percent increase from Microsoft for software licensing was also flagged as a significant driver.

Ms. Kramb and Vice Mayor De Rosa noted that the term "equipment maintenance" as used in the budget is somewhat of a misnomer in the modern subscription-based environment, and that consolidating software subscription costs in the IT budget for aggregate visibility would be valuable. Mr. Connolly confirmed that approximately 90 percent of software costs are already consolidated under IT, an effort that predates his arrival.

Vice Mayor De Rosa raised a request for a meaningful refresh of the City's website, emphasizing the need to enhance mobile usability and leverage AI-enabled features to better serve residents. Ms. Kramb and Ms. Johnson both expressed support for a full website redesign rather than incremental fixes. Mr. Connolly committed to working with the Communications and Marketing team on this matter.

Mayor Amorose Groomes raised a question about the City's contract with Madison AI, noting a public demonstration at the Ohio Municipal League conference where Dublin was identified as a participating city. She expressed concern that the City may be serving as a primary data source enabling Madison AI to build corporate valuation without receiving any reciprocal financial benefit. Mr. Connolly acknowledged the question and agreed to explore whether such a conversation with the vendor was appropriate.

Innovation & Analytics

Mr. Connelly reported an 11 percent decrease in the Innovation and Analytics budget, primarily due to the completion of multiple data analytics dashboards and GIS upgrades in 2026. Efficiencies highlighted include the use of drone technology in place of manned aircraft for aerial photography, mobile device technology at the Irish Festival, Microsoft Copilot and process automation, and AI-assisted inspections across multiple departments.

Communications & Marketing

Ms. Weisenauer reported a 2 percent decrease in the Communications and Marketing budget. The decrease reflects the consolidation of marketing and public relations professional services from other divisions such as Community Events and Recreation Services into this budget, offset by the elimination of one-time expenditures from the prior year, including funding associated with the 50th Anniversary of the Memorial Tournament and other special projects. All Memorial Tournament sponsorship dollars are budgeted within Communications and Marketing.

Community Events

Ms. LeRoy reported a 1 percent change in the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund, primarily reflecting the absence of the America 250 initiative that had been included in 2026. A planned purchase of a mobile screen through the CIP will reduce the annual expenditure for the summer concert series and Irish Festival. The Recreation Fund for shelter rentals and park usage reflects a 4 percent increase, attributable to the transfer of OPRA conference travel expenses from the Hotel/Motel Fund to the Recreation Fund. A new event management software platform has reduced the administrative burden on both event organizers and city staff.

Outreach & Engagement

Ms. Nardecchia reported a small budget increase of $2,700, driven by an anticipated background check cycle for volunteers on a five-year rotation and a modest increase for recognition activities. She described several low- or no-cost programming initiatives currently under development, including a neighbor-to-neighbor program matching teens and seniors and a proposed Dublin Teen Civic Council, emphasizing that the primary cost of these programs is staff time rather than direct expenditure.

Police Operations & Communications

Chief Paez presented the Police Department operating budget, which reflects a 9 percent increase in the police operations budget, primarily attributable to the three additional patrol officer positions. Chief Paez explained that these positions complete the second phase of the staffing plan developed through the prior year's operations workload analysis, enabling full coverage of all six patrol districts on all three shifts, 365 days per year. He noted that the department is currently at

full staffing in patrol, with one projected retirement already covered by an identified candidate. The additional officers will allow the department to increase overnight shift minimums and focus attention on areas of coverage need, including the northern part of Dublin and the Bridge Street District, which has experienced increased late-night activity. Mayor Amorose Groomes noted constituent concerns about visibility in the Bridge Street District and expressed support for increased presence there.

Chief Paez invited Deputy Chief Lattanzi to present the Communications budget, recommending the reclassification of three Communications Supervisor positions to Communications Technician, based on a staffing analysis indicating that frontline call-handling capacity is the most pressing need in the NRECC partnership. The cost of communications is shared among eight public safety entities across six communities. Remaining police-related funds showed no significant changes.

Finance

Ms. Murray presented the Finance general fund budget, which reflects a 1 percent increase. Personnel services increased 4 percent due to the reclassification of a Senior Accounting Specialist to Contract and Procurement Coordinator and benefit election changes. This increase is largely offset by decreases in contractual services and supplies, reflecting efficiencies from online competitive bidding (saving approximately $10,000 annually) and centralized office supply procurement. The Hotel/Motel Tax portion of the Finance budget reflects a 7 percent increase corresponding to growth in Hotel/Motel Tax revenue and cashless Irish Festival operations, which reduced staffing requirements from approximately 60 shifts to 30, saving approximately $10,000 in staff time. Vice Mayor DeRosa confirmed with staff that increases in the income tax distribution charges and expenditures are fully offset by corresponding revenue and do not represent a policy change.

Ms. Lehnert presented a 10 percent overall increase in the Taxation budget, driven primarily by a $2,380 increase in contractual services for potential on-site coordination with the income tax system developer during the e-file launch planned for February 1, 2027, and an increase in the refund budget to $3.7 million based on a four-year average refund rate of 3.3 percent. Ms. Lehnert provided an update on the new AI-enabled income tax system, noting that the auditor-side portal is operational and well-received by staff, and that the taxpayer-facing e-file portal which will allow residents to upload tax documents for automated processing is in advanced testing. Vice Mayor De Rosa expressed enthusiasm for the taxpayer-facing AI functionality and confirmed that the system would provide both a self-service filing option and an upload-and-process option for residents.

Community Planning & Development

Ms. Rauch reported a minor reduction in contractual services, reflecting the completion of large-scale planning projects and the continuation of multi-phase efforts such as the code audit and update and Metro Center guidelines. New project funding has been allocated for potential work stemming from the State Route 161 corridor working group. The most significant percentage change in the budget reflects the transfer of the Beautify Your Neighborhood grant administration from the City Manager's budget to Community Planning. Efficiencies from streamlined development review processes, including expanded Administrative Review Board staff-level approvals, have allowed the division to redirect staff time toward other projects.

Building Standards

Mr. Fagrell reported no significant budget changes. Two noteworthy items were highlighted: an anticipated reduction of approximately $62,000 in credit card fees as online permit payments transition away from credit cards toward ACH for larger transactions; and the continued use of the ACTA automated response system, which allows front-counter staff to respond to common

inquiries using a database of pre-approved answers. The system saved over 900 hours in staff time in 2026. Discussion followed regarding the potential for AI-driven chatbot tools to further automate permit guidance for applicants, with Mr. Fagrell and Dr. Lam noting that while off-the-shelf solutions exist, most have not yet achieved the specificity required for permit workflows.

Ms. Kramb and Mayor Amorose Groomes raised questions regarding the reduction in plan review and building inspection services budgets relative to the 2026 revised budget, noting that construction activity in the City, including the hospital expansion and several Bridge Park blocks, was expected to be robust in 2027. Mr. Fagrell confirmed that he had sufficient budget and staff to manage anticipated demand and that the variation reflects a rebalancing of allocations between the two line items. Ms. Murray clarified that carryover encumbrances from 2025 to 2026 affect the revised budget column and that the original 2026 budget to proposed 2027 budget shows no change in the building inspection services line.

Engineering

Mr. Hoyt presented the Engineering general fund budget, which reflects a 16 percent reduction in third-party contractual expenses, including inspection, plan review, and general professional services, and a reduction in supplies reflecting the completion of a one-time survey equipment purchase. The Water Fund reflects a 15 percent increase in the operating budget, driven by funding for non-destructive acoustic technology to assess large-diameter water mains, increased fire hydrant maintenance and repair costs, and higher material costs associated with inflation. The Sanitary Sewer Fund reflects a similar supply increase due to material costs, and introduces Pipe AD, an AI-based platform for automated analysis of CCTV video footage of the sewer collection system. The system is expected to allow the City to camera three to four times more sewer than previously feasible and to generate consistent, human-independent inspection ratings. Ms. Johnson inquired whether the system could eventually enable complete citywide coverage on a regular cycle, and Mr. Hoyt indicated that the goal is to inspect each sewer segment once every five years, with the software capable of keeping pace with the camera program.

Transportation & Mobility

Ms. Willis presented three Transportation and Mobility budgets. The General Fund budget reflects a modest increase in contractual services for potential Connector Plus operations and an overlap period with the Dublin Connector shuttle service, as well as AI-based programs for traffic control condition inventory and shared-use path asset detection. The supplies line includes the second year of the secondary wayfinding installation. The Street Maintenance and Repair Fund reflects a modest increase in contractual services for streetlight utilities and a decrease in supplies reflecting the removal of smart city technology that was not performing adequately, partially offset by a new traffic signal management technology that is performing well. The State Highway Fund reflects utility costs for traffic signals on the state highway system.

Vice Mayor De Rosa raised her recurring question about progress on signage improvements for blind turns and high-speed areas on shared-use paths, noting the increased safety risks posed by e-bikes. Ms. Willis confirmed that the AI-driven shared-use path inventory project conducted using a camera- and LIDAR-equipped golf cart driven throughout the city's path network has now produced a complete inventory of blind turns, tree-obscured areas, and other hazards. A phased signage and mirror installation program is being integrated with the secondary wayfinding project, with Phase 1 (north of SR 33 on the west side of the river) planned for 2027, followed by two additional phases in subsequent years.

Mayor Amorose Groomes raised the question of the state gas tax suspension and its financial impact on Dublin. Mr. Urbancsik confirmed that the City received approximately $228,000 in state highway fund gas tax revenue in the prior year, with an additional $2.5 million flowing through the

Street Maintenance and Repair Fund — totaling approximately $2.7 million annually. Mr. Rubino noted that the state is using General Revenue Fund dollars to backfill the local share for the 90-day suspension period. Mayor Amorose Groomes observed that the compressed timeline of such policy changes leaves the City little opportunity to respond and suggested that staff proactively study the City's vulnerabilities to changes in state and federal funding streams including gas taxes, transit dollars, and bridge grants so that Council could respond quickly and informedly if policy changes accelerate.

Asset Management and Quality Assurance

Mr. Taylor reported a decrease in the operating budget, primarily because pavement and bike path inspection programs are biennial and are not scheduled in 2027. He noted that both programs now use automated technology with human review overlay, and that the 2027 budget includes the second in-depth hands-on inspection of the Dublin Link Bridge.

Parks and Recreation

Mr. Earman presented the Parks and Recreation General Fund budget, noting a primary change driven by two landscape contracts due for renewal — the south and interchange areas, including the newly added SR 33/161 interchange — which are subject to both scope expansion and price escalation. A $3,000 reduction reflects the elimination of a one-time reaccreditation cost, as the City formally achieved reaccreditation through the National Recreation and Parks Association. Dublin is one of only 12 accredited agencies in Ohio. Recognition was extended to Recreation Administrator Kim Wigram for leading the reaccreditation effort.

Mayor Amorose Groomes raised the question of whether dormant-season tree pruning could be transferred to landscape contractors who operate at lower hourly rates than certified arborists, for smaller and younger street trees not yet requiring lift equipment. Mr. Earman agreed this was a valid opportunity and committed to coordinating with the Public Service department. Mr. Anderson confirmed that the landscape contractors already assist with bike path cutbacks during winter and expressed willingness to explore further coordination for residential street trees.

The Parks and Recreation Hotel/Motel Tax Fund (Art and Public Places program) reflects a decrease consistent with the program's biennial public art acquisition cycle, with a significant increase anticipated in 2028.

Recreation Services

Ms. Uhl presented three budget components. The Recreation programming budget reflects a 2 percent overall reduction, with modest increases in contractual services for new specialty camp offerings and a MyCamp app for parent communication, offset by the transfer of Dublin Wellness Alliance funds to the City Manager budget. The Community Recreation Center budget reflects a 2 percent increase for increased demand in personal training and Pilates (offset by corresponding revenue) and lifeguarding recertification costs on a two-year cycle. Supplies increased due to lazy river repairs, water slide maintenance, and fitness floor wipes. The Outdoor Pool budget reflects a 2 percent reduction, with supplies decreasing as certain repair items transitioned to the capital budget, and capital outlay increasing for continued valve replacement and north pool pump room refurbishment.

Public Services

Mr. Anderson presented the Public Service budgets.

- Parks Maintenance reflects a 5 percent increase for inflation-driven contractual costs, addition of certified playground inspections, and use of the Manta aquatic drone for algae mitigation. The autonomous mower program saves approximately $31,000 annually and

900 labor hours. Mr. Anderson confirmed to Vice Mayor De Rosa that the parks budget is adequate to maintain current service levels.

- The Cemetery budget reflects minor personnel service changes with no staffing changes.
- Street Maintenance reflects increases for the Smart SnowFire mobile driving simulator training program and higher ODOT/SWAT cooperative salt pricing, partially offset by anticipated savings from the EtchSnow route optimization program, which is currently in testing and expected to reduce redundant plow travel and optimize route efficiency.
- Solid Waste reflects the reclassification of the Deputy Director position and nature education coordinator into this account, as well as the increased cost of the refuse, recycling, and yard waste contract discussed at the prior Council meeting.
- Horticulture reflects a 6 percent increase for expansion of the green roof program and higher contractual labor for bed maintenance, tree removal, and tree pruning, offset by reduced in-house supply costs.
- Forestry reflects an increase for the annual street tree pruning program, with a 2027 target of approximately 5,800 to 5,900 trees for large street tree pruning, and a stated goal of stabilizing at 4,500 to 5,000 trees annually going forward.

Mayor Amorose Groomes emphasized that the long-term path to reducing large-scale structural pruning costs is consistent maintenance of younger trees before they require expensive interventions.

Sports Facilities Company (SFC)

SportsOhio General Manager Joe Bauserman, joined by VP of Venue Management Scott Rodgers and Finance Manager Jay Daley, presented the proposed 2027 operating plan for SportsOhio. The facility has been under management by Sports Facilities Companies since July 21, 2025, and serves as a multisport community and golf programming center.

Total projected 2027 revenue is approximately $3.1 million, with golf center operations contributing approximately 50 percent, indoor facility rental and leagues at 30 percent, and food and beverage and sponsorship at 12 percent. Total projected operating expenses are approximately $2.8 million, with salaries and payroll at 50 percent and maintenance and repairs at 25 percent, yielding a projected net operating income of approximately $290,000. New staff planned for 2027 include a Business Development Director, a Programs and Leagues Director, and additional maintenance and grounds positions.

Mr. Keeler asked for clarification on the management fee structure, confirming that the $240,000 annual management fee paid to SFC (at $20,000 per month) is not reflected in the net operating income figure, and that the 7.5 percent food and beverage incentive fee is applied to total revenue once the $180,000 threshold is exceeded.

Mayor Amorose Groomes raised the condition of the grounds during the 2026 season, noting that landscaping was not maintained to City standards following the July transition. Mr. Bauserman acknowledged the staffing shortfall and the loss of the groundskeeper in May and confirmed that grounds maintenance funding has been increased substantially from approximately $100,000 in 2026 to $204,000 in 2027, with new mowing equipment on order.

Mayor Amorose Groomes also confirmed that the go-kart track, miniature golf, and batting cages are planned for demolition in 2027, with the affected area to be repurposed as open green space and event pavilion space.

Vice Mayor De Rosa requested a status update on the long-term financial projection for the SportsOhio site. Mr. Rubino indicated that a comprehensive 5-year financial outlook would be developed as a follow-up to the current budget cycle, incorporating the operating trends being established in the first full year of management and any emerging strategic plans for indoor facility use and other development. Vice Mayor De Rosa emphasized the importance of a 5-year financial window consistent with the City's standard planning horizon. Ms. Kramb sought clarification on the referenced comprehensive master plan, and Mr. Rodgers indicated it encompasses the broader project site, including infrastructure and future development beyond the current SportsOhio footprint.

Revisions to the 2027–2031 Capital Improvement Program

Mr. Rubino reported that the updated 5-year CIP totals approximately $397 million, a reduction from the $425 million presented at the August 17 work session — a 6.5 percent reduction achieved through additional project prioritization and updated assumptions consistent with Council direction. Approximately $181 million, or 46 percent of the CIP, is scheduled for the first two years of the program. Funding sources continue to include income tax revenue, property tax revenues, grants, available fund balances, and debt proceeds.

Revisions to the Sanitary Sewer CIP were highlighted, including phasing of the Glick Road Relief Sewer project across 2027 and 2028, movement of the Muirfield Drive Relief Sewer to 2027, and movement of the 3A-3C extension to 2028 as a debt-funded project. An advance from the Water Fund to the Sewer Fund is proposed for 2028, with repayment in equal amounts in 2032 and 2033. Additional allocations were included for water system maintenance, booster station improvements, and sewer lining and repair.

Utility Rates and Debt Impact Analysis

Mr. Rubino presented the updated utility rate and debt impact information. With the revisions to the utility CIP in place, sewer rates can remain at an 8 percent annual increase for the first five years of the forecast, consistent with what was originally presented. In the second five years of the 10-year forecast, a 10 percent annual increase would be needed to maintain adequate fund balance — a step-up approach similar to that used in the water utility rate study. Water rates remain at 3 percent for the first five years and 5 percent for the second five years, unchanged from the prior presentation. The ending sewer fund balance under this plan would be approximately $3.3 million at the end of the forecast horizon, representing approximately 50 percent of operating and debt service coverage.

Regarding the general CIP debt capacity analysis, Mr. Rubino reported that Baker Tilly had been asked to model a revised CIP to achieve a 12 percent income-tax-backed debt service target, down from the approximately 15 percent shown in August. The current result is 12.2 percent, slightly above the 12 percent target due to interest rate increases over the past month. Mr. Rubino noted that achieving exactly 12 percent would require trimming an additional $6 to $8 million from the CIP, but that the current position is very close to the target. The municipal market rate environment was noted as a factor, with Dublin pricing debt through competitive sale and tracking the municipal money market data index, currently approximately 4.7 percent for 20-year maturities. Proposed new sewer debt of approximately $29.9 million is front-loaded in 2027 and 2028, with annual sewer debt service expected to increase from approximately $1.8 million currently to $5.6 million by 2035.

Vice Mayor De Rosa confirmed with staff that water booster station repairs and water line replacements had been added back to the CIP in response to Council feedback at the September 15 session. Mayor Amorose Groomes and Vice Mayor De Rosa both expressed satisfaction with the progress toward the 12 percent debt target.

Mayor Amorose Groomes thanked all city staff for their extensive work in preparing the 2027 operating budget and 2027–2031 CIP. She acknowledged that this work session represents one of the most consequential meetings the Council conducts each year and expressed confidence that the City remains in excellent financial shape as a result of the diligence of the Finance team and all department directors.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Presiding Officer - Mayor

Clerk of Council