

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL  
UNTIL APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL,

SPECIAL STRATEGIC  
PLANNING MEETING  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

February 14, 2026  
8:30 a.m.

**Call to Order & Roll Call**

The special meeting of the City Council was called to order at 8:41 a.m. at One Culver: 10000 Washington Boulevard, Culver City.

Present: Freddy Puza, Mayor  
Bubba Fish, Vice Mayor  
Yasmine-Imani McMorrin, Council Member  
Dan O'Brien, Council Member  
Albert Vera, Council Member\*

\*Council Member Vera exited the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Puza led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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**Receipt and Filing of Correspondence**

Jeremy Bocchino, City Clerk, indicated that no correspondence had been received.

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Mayor Puza welcomed everyone to the Strategic Planning Retreat which he hoped to be productive; thanked everyone for coming on a Saturday; discussed his intent for a new Culver City during

his mayoral term; the new City Manager; the passage of Measure CL; inclusion of a financial summit to be more strategic in how monies are spent; the unprecedented amount of Action Items on City Council agendas; and focusing on priorities to meaningfully accomplish during the year.

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**Public Comment**

Mayor Puza invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the City Council:

Patrick Godinez congratulated Culver City on the reduction in homelessness; discussed the Emergency Proclamation from January of 2023; dependence on Los Angeles Housing Services Authority (LAHSA) for certain services; the need for coordination to address homeless encampments; support for prioritizing interaction; homeless individuals around the borders of Los Angeles; and he suggested focusing on the relationship with Westside Council of Governments (COG) to develop detox centers.

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**Action Items**

Item A-1

**A - (1) Welcome to Strategic Retreat by City Manager Odis Jones, (2) Retreat Overview by Assistant City Manager Lisa Soghor, (3) Introduction of Facilitators, and (4) Council Expectations for the Retreat, and**

Odis Jones, City Manager, expressed gratitude for being selected to manage Culver City; discussed the first 90 days as a key to predicting success; appreciation to staff for their collaboration; evaluation of the organization; goals and objectives; defining criteria to measure success; addressing the fiscal crisis; the goal to deliver a balanced budget in May without reducing services or laying off staff; work with the consultant, Ernst & Young; his experience leading insolvent cities out of difficulty; suggestions on how to address cash flow challenges; financing affordable housing items to relieve restrictions on reserve funds and allow for more cash flow within the General Fund structure; allowing options for doing additional projects in the future; RDAs (Redevelopment Agencies)

no longer in existence; information from outside legal counsel; KPIs (Key Performance Indicators); the importance of the way the City moves forward after balancing the budget; increasing efficiency of operations; Lean Six Sigma; a book provided to Council Members by Andrew Klein from Ernst & Young; the need for solid financial planning and intention on how Culver City operates; the focus on the bifurcated priority-based budget; community engagement; understanding community concerns, wants, and wishes; inviting community members to the table to provide input; engaging in a traditional CIP (Capital Improvement Project) process and plan; uncovering unknown risks; adoption of five year financial, affordable housing, and economic development plans with measurable benchmarks; the vital role of business in the Culver City budget; the large role of community; culture, climate, and tone of a city; value brought by the citizens; addressing affordable housing and homeless challenges; 80% of employees who cannot afford to live in Culver City; and looking at workforce housing.

Mayor Puza expressed appreciation to the new City Manager and welcomed him to Culver City.

Lisa Soghor, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Assistant City Manager, discussed work on a new process for the budget; efforts to engage in a priority-driven budget process and deliver a balanced budget; identification of items that have to be completed for the next year; setting the financial picture; and meeting agenda and format.

Yolanda Gorman, facilitator, provided background on herself; discussed previous work done with Culver City; progress made on previously identified priorities; understanding the financial context in which priorities need to be set; providing a framework for decision-making moving forward; continuous planning; KPIs as an opportunity to assess progress and make adjustments; identification of priorities for the coming year; data needed to understand progress toward meeting goals and objectives; commitment to community outcomes; and Council Member expectations for the retreat.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding appreciation to staff for their efforts and for working on a holiday; a suggestion to identify 3-4 priorities per Council Member that can be accomplished in the next year; honest conversations about true priorities; the financial summit; finding innovative ways to generate revenue or streamline processes within the organization; the importance of intentional

listening; working together to accomplish goals; the fact that if everything is a priority, nothing is a priority; differing ideas between Council Members but unanimous support for the City Manager; varying definitions of the same things; ensuring specificity by using KPIs; goal setting; accountability; the importance of providing clear direction and a viable path forward; different ways of achieving the same goals; consideration of what the core responsibilities of a city are; other important matters; connecting residents and business owners with staff who can address concerns; measuring success; Public Works issues; focusing on supporting staff to allow them to ensure goals are achieved; interest in more data; telling the story of the work they are trying to do; the power of care and trauma-informed approaches; homelessness and housing efforts; having positive touches with the community; holding the standard of positive interaction across the board; innovation; looking at approaching things in a different way; and continued, sustainable investment in supporting housing and unhoused services in the community.

Additional discussion ensued between Ms. Gorman, staff and Council Members regarding incorporating objectives in future discussions; setting the context; and understanding the financial condition.

Lisa Soghor, CFO and Assistant City Manager, discussed where the budget currently is; efforts to grow revenue; faith of the voters in Culver City and being willing to tax themselves; and honing in expenditures to come into balance.

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, provided background on himself; discussed the book he wrote about transforming the budget and improving city government in Baltimore during the Great Recession; the process; the structurally unbalanced budget in Culver City with insufficient revenues to cover recurring costs of maintaining the current level of service; fiscal solvency vs. service solvency; meeting the needs of residents; achieving priorities and goals; deferred maintenance that does not show up on the balance sheet; guidance to staff in development of the 2027 budget; priorities; ways to drive greater efficiency within government operations and generate new revenue; prioritization; development of a long-term financial plan; enhancing performance management to improve service delivery; effectiveness and customer satisfaction; key takeaways from the presentation available on the Culver City website; collaborative efforts and appreciation to staff; the flip from surplus into deficit in fiscal year 2024; revenue and expenditure trends;

infrastructure; usage of fund balance; recent deficit spending; policies around the contingency reserve; the need for a Replenishment Plan from the City Manager; having better documented policies regarding when fund balances should be used; best practices; looking at risks, vulnerabilities, and probabilities; determining the range of reserves that should be maintained; revenue growth; Culver City tax rates compared to neighboring jurisdictions; and maintaining economic competitiveness.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Klein, staff, and Council Members regarding the unchangeable share of total property tax received by Culver City as compared to other jurisdictions; revenue from Measure K in Santa Monica designated to Public Safety; and challenges with tax evasion.

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed expenditures; flat population numbers; growth in spending per capita that exceeds inflation; and personnel compensation and program expansion.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding increased salary costs and benefits; the position chart; actuals during the pandemic; years when there were vacancies and positions were frozen; and increased benefits and salaries related to MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding).

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed Public Safety as half of the total spending that has nearly doubled since 2020; growth in General Government and Housing and Human Services; evaluation of all services and cost centers on their merits; performance and alignment with priorities; not making determinations on the age of programs; employees per 1,000 residents; service optimization work; ten year forecast scenarios; the difference between revenue and the cost of maintaining current levels of service; baseline projections; adherence to current law; expiration of Measure CC; reliance on economically sensitive revenue sources; increased risk management in the current year; and inflation affecting costs across the board.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding inclusion of Measure CL in the baseline and the call off of Measure CC: inclusion of kiosks; increases to red light camera citations; removal of Wellness Village from the baseline in fiscal year 2028 due to development of an affordable housing project on site; the approved hotel included in the baseline in fiscal year 2029; growth of business license taxes; and TOT (Transient Occupancy Tax) revenue.

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed the pessimistic vs. the optimistic scenario and ensuring that finances are in good shape to weather storms.

Additional discussion ensued between Mr. Klein, staff, and Council Members regarding the optimistic scenario.

**B - Discussion of (1) Key Financial Considerations for the Culver City Budget Including: Financial Forecast, Revenue Enhancement and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Framework, (2) Potential Creation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), (3) Priority-Based Budgeting and Key Performance Indicators, and**

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed the CIP; examination of documents; conversations with Public Works; liabilities related to deferred maintenance; maintenance vs. repair vs. reconstruction; number of miles of road resurfaced per year; lifecycle and maintenance cycle for City assets; reactive capital investments based on complaints rather than on conditions and needs; the process to build a more robust CIP to reflect capital needs going out five years; and funding decisions.

Further discussion ensued between Mr. Klein, staff, and Council Members regarding time to create a true five year CIP for future discussion; work to compile a comprehensive list from all departments; taking City Council priorities into account; trade-offs; limited dollars in the General Fund; funding sources; dollars with competing draws on them; the need to double output on maintenance, road repair, and sidewalks; unknown risk factors; parks; pursuit of targeted grants; potential funding; matching funds; looking at how to fund full wants and needs; austerity as not the only way; growing entrepreneurialism opportunities; event planning; economic development; expanding tourism to generate additional revenue; parks as a component to economic development; taking a wholistic view to everything being done; and ensuring an effective strategy to help small businesses grow.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Klein, staff, and Council Members regarding best practices to fund a portion of the CIP from current General Fund revenue; the action to zero-out the current revenue contribution; heavy reliance on unreliable funding sources for the capital program; the Facilities Reserve dependent on surpluses; diminishment of gas tax as a funding source; lack of debt; generational wealth; debt that can add

liquidity and be effective; cash flow dynamic; and taking on intentional and responsibly planned debt.

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed risk factors; community needs; balancing needs and demands for government services with fiscal solvency and conditions; labor negotiations; the voter initiative that ties Public Safety raises to other jurisdictions; reduced autonomy over pay increases; current contract negotiations; consideration of other funds that have experienced deficits in recent years; and increased pressure on the General Fund.

Additional discussion ensued between Mr. Klein, staff, and Council Members regarding funding the Housing Authority out of the RDA, and depleted resources requiring the General Fund to take on certain Housing Authority costs.

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed state and federal funding; the state deficit; reliance on economically sensitive revenue; federal actions that will be hitting the states over the next few years; ripple effects at the local level; projections for exhaustion of reserves; existing costs and other pressures; achieving priorities and serving residents; guidance to make difficult decisions to balance the budget in the long-term; and the intent to achieve priorities in a sustainable way.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) recommendations for reserve levels; the plan to replenish reserves to keep existing policy; structuring a fund mechanism to shift liability of Jubilo and other affordable housing issues; GFOA adoption of a Risk-Based Reserve approach; the 30% reserve set by a former Council based on economic risk; moving forward looking at natural disasters; communities impacted last year; unforeseen circumstances; taking a wholistic look at things; trade-offs; priorities; having a strong plan to grow in place; understanding how special reserves affect overall fiscal health; dedicating funds; looking at being less reliant on the General Fund; concern with limiting flexibility by having too much money dedicated to specific purposes; dependence on surpluses; using one-time sources of funding for one-time purposes; keeping up with capital needs; the inability to use funds for ongoing costs; and looking at a reliable way to fund capital projects.

Odis Jones, City Manager, discussed JPA (Joint Powers Authority) fund creation; adjusting risk profiles to put Culver City in a

better position from a cash flow standpoint; previous RDAs as a way of financing affordable housing initiatives; infrastructure downtown that led to economic growth; priority infrastructure initiatives; looking at ways of advancing affordable housing trust TIF (Tax Increment Filing) structures; looking at a JPA structure; transferring the obligation of Jubilo to relieve the security item in the reserve fund; allowing the City Council to take on other special projects; addressing infrastructure needs; proceeding in a legally and financially prudent way; understanding structure; and the process.

Jade Turner-Bond, Orrick, Herrington and Sutcliffe, provided background on herself; discussed financing infrastructure projects; legal background on JPAs and how they could work; creation of a separate legal entity from the City staffed by City employees; benefits of having a JPA; the authority to issue debt to finance CIPs; Lease Revenue Bonds; obligation to repay debt obligations; term of the bonds; steps in the process; lease assets to develop the Lease Revenue Structure; lease of the property to the JPA; maintaining City control; selection of board members by the City Council; and the common structure to fund social infrastructure projects used by other entities.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding opportunity for the City Council to have a board reflective of the overall community including business members; the obligation to include the debt service into the budgets every year; bond proceeds; the ability to use funds from the Affordable Housing Impact Fee to repay the debt service; alternative sources of revenue to apply to the debt service depending on what the bond proceeds are used for; revenue bonds; the project agreement requirement between the City and the JPA; the annual process; establishment of annual priorities; approval of projects every year; keeping control of what is being done to ensure alignment with priorities; use of intentional language; creation of something flexible; annual repayment of the debt service through the General Fund; ensuring a balanced budget; the difference between a bond that goes to the voters; freeing up reserves to increase cash flow; development fees; different variances for the balance; typical bond lift; appreciation for the approach being taken; the citizen committee component; appointment of a JPA Board; ensuring appointment of a balanced board; visibility in the community; accountability to voters and residents; enhancing and increasing community engagement; organizational documents; and the role of the JPA Board.

Additional discussion ensued between Jade Turner-Bond, staff,

and Council Members regarding the timeline for establishing a JPA; repercussions of not paying the JPA; the Right To Relet; pricing consequences for removing the Right to Relet; the timeline for a direct purchase vs. a public offering; working to get resources available for the next budget cycle; risks involved; paying for the cost of the money; increased costs for not repairing infrastructure; addressing things that need to be done right away; looking at what is worth bearing the interest costs for; doing an improvement earlier that will yield benefits; determining the level of borrowing; looking at what can be accomplished in the immediate timeframe; ensuring against overspending; impact fees; projects for funding the debt service from affordable housing impact fees; infrastructure-related projects; alleviating burden on the General Fund; Quimby Fees; different types of development; Parkland Acquisition Fees; costs for developers; and Facilities Fees.

Jade Turner-Bond, Orrick, Herrington and Sutcliffe, discussed broad context for the financial condition of Culver City; potential options to generate additional support to address continuing needs; and examination of priority-based budgeting to provide a framework for making decisions.

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed outcome budgeting; priority-based vs. traditional budgeting; looking at goals for the next year rather than last year's spending; funding targets; budgeting by priority rather than by department; indiscriminate across the board cuts that favor lower priority programs and punish those that are higher priority; allocation of funds based on priorities; breaking things down to the service level to illuminate that money is being spent on many things people may not be aware of; looking at what is being gotten for the money; the budget debate; building a budget from the ground up rather than looking at cutting what there is; development of priority outcomes; indicators that define priority outcome; development of strategic outcomes around priority outcomes; looking at what will work to achieve outcomes; budgeting for equity; cause and effect mapping; development of strategies to provide clear guidance; pooling money around outcomes rather than departmental siloing; disruptive innovation; supporting City-wide goals over individual department goals that should be derivative from City-wide goals; appreciation to the Recreation Department for how it has broken the budget down to the service level; working with departments to provide a level of detail with a view into the base budget to allow better decision-making; evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness; outcomes; changes in the conditions of what is trying to be impacted; performance

measures at the department level; timeliness of police and fire response; response to service requests; less information that has been made available about quality, outcomes, or efficiency; defining services and developing effective performance measures for them; performance management; figuring out what to measure and gathering data; formation of Results Teams of employees and community members around each of the priority outcomes; the strategic plan for each priority; comparing how the budget proposal aligns with the strategic plans; disconnect; pushing departments to be more innovative to align with priorities; oversight by the City Manager and CFO; alignment with priorities and performance; consideration of trade-offs; diverting resources to high priority services that are underperforming; the priority-based budgeting cycle process; making the budget process more inclusive; allowing for new perspectives; leadership development; initial work with department heads to allow understanding of the process; rewards for entrepreneurial and innovative department heads; discomfort for those who feel entitled to their base level of funding; and the organizational change management element that is important to navigate.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding developing talent; creation of positive friction; community involvement; efforts to eliminate blind spots that happen with group thinking; getting a better understanding about what other departments do; an example from another city where nurses were put in the 911 call center to connect those regularly calling on minor issues to the services they needed; the robust process; the inability to go through the entire process for the next budget year; and the intent to develop the comprehensive process for future years.

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed creating a critical path to a balanced, priority-based fiscal year 2026-2027 budget; closing gaps between expected revenue and cost of maintaining current services; sustainable budget actions with no service or policy impact; efficiency review; categorizing services; opportunities to recategorize services; revenue options; and community outreach.

Additional discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding listening sessions with community members; providing different groups challenges to solve; priorities informed by the community; looking at real financial constraints; the short timeline; looking to the future for a longer-term vision; appreciation to everyone for their work; additional information included in the book by Mr. Klein and

other books related to budgeting and government; difficult choices to make; reallocation of resources; creating a culture of fear; involving the community in difficult decisions to be made; funding set aside for a civic assembly; the need for a robust economic development plan to grow the business base; delivering a balanced and equitable budget that meets the needs of the community; new ideas from the civic assembly process; the bifurcated process due to the short time frame; creating a climate for growth; connectivity; transportation; executing in a way where residents, staff, and the City Council are happy; reorganization of talent within the organization; managing changing culture; helping people understand change management; the need for defined priorities and measurable indicators; optimization of value; getting back to the basics; and basic functions of a city.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding use of the civic assembly to ensure the process is designed and vetted by the community; looking at what works and what does not; and understanding the structure.

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#### **Recess/Reconvene**

The meeting recessed from 11:48 a.m. to 12:38 p.m.

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#### **C - (1) Discussion and Establishment of the City Council's Strategic Priorities for 2026-2029, (2) Identification of Metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to Provide Insight into Progress of Established Priorities, and**

Yolanda Gorman, facilitator, discussed the format for the afternoon portion of the meeting; initial City Council priorities considered; strengthening long-term financial sustainability; collaboration on sustainable revenue strategies; ensuring responsible stewardship of public resources; investment in public infrastructure and community spaces; advance planning and improvements that support safety, accessibility, long-term community needs, deliver high quality public services, enhance Housing and Homelessness Services, promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), and deepen community engagement; and feedback from the City Council on priorities.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding support for getting back to the basics; looking at what people really want; ensuring sidewalks and alleys are paved, streetlights come on, and police and fire are responsive; business retention; economic development; relationships with the City Manager's Office; and providing stability and vibrancy in Culver City.

Additional discussion ensued between Yolanda Gorman, staff, and Council Members regarding digging deeper into priorities listed; the community as the customers; quality of life; things taken for granted; safety and maintenance of streets and the parks; a suggestion to condense some of the priorities; the comprehensive list; including increased community engagement, promotion of DEI, and high quality public services throughout everything as part of goals and values intrinsic to the organization; maintaining infrastructure and community spaces; advancing climate action; reiterating identified priorities to refine and clarify; items that can be subsumed under others; looking at where resources and investments can be made; providing direction to staff for the coming year; investigating longer-term items over the next several years; and continued leveraging of partnerships.

Further discussion ensued between Yolanda Gorman, staff and Council Members regarding delivering high quality public services; crime rates; measuring response to crime; investment in public infrastructure and community spaces; deaths and injuries on the streets; metrics for measuring efficacy of Housing and Homeless Services; use of a common understanding and language to think more specifically about how to measure; looking at having a more affordable city; Universal Basic Income (UBI) and childcare; health and safety, affordability, and civic engagement; adding affordability as a missing piece; DEI as coinciding with affordability; and the importance of environmental sustainability.

Discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding values vs. priorities; focusing on most important areas based on needs and desires of the community; narrowing the focus; pulling out values which are not budget-based; values that run through the decision-making process; and looking at how to invest resources.

Jenn Wells, UCLA, discussed getting more specific; the focus on sequencing; looking at building long-term sustainability; pressures; ranking categories and definitions; impact of delays;

community risk; building momentum; and including community engagement in any activity.

Discussion ensued between the consultants, staff and Council Members regarding sustainability; affordability; treating community engagement as its own objective; length of City Council meetings; putting limits on the amount of time Council Members can speak; expediting recognitions; meeting frequency; structure vs. process; outcomes vs. metrics; agreement to add a category for sustainability; lack of applicable data from all departments; structure to facilitate the conversation; the shift in process from previous years; method to identify priorities; and defining indicators.

Council Members circulated around the room placing ranking dots under their preferred topics.

Additional discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding categorization of items; patterns; categories vs. values; strategies and approaches; the finite number of choices; support for DEI as it does not always trickle down; implicit understanding that Culver City already offers a high level of City services; consensus on affordability, public infrastructure, community spaces, and long-term financial sustainability; commitment to the community; priorities for the current year vs. long-term priorities; the budget as indicating that the highest priority is Public Safety; delivery of high quality services; inertia that ends up separating the budget from its values; and alignment.

Further discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding public safety as the foundation of any community; ensuring people feel safe with a responsive police and fire department; long-term financial stability in safe communities; the convergence of foundational and urgent items; providing a framework to make decisions about trade-offs; the budget that reflects priorities; making decisions in the current situation; decisions made with public safety as the first priority; the many facets of public safety; prevalent culture around scarcity, fear, and zero sum around budgeting; widespread preference to keep things the same in Culver City; the culture that can be hostile and prevent people from speaking up; taking a broad view of public safety; the context of how budget conversations are typically had in Culver City; making room to question the way things have always been done and having structured conversations around how to achieve priorities; the traditional model of public safety; increases to call volume

since the study indicating adequate staffing levels to keep Culver City safe in terms of police and fire was conducted; the danger of coming from a fear-based budgeting perspective; opportunity to have conversations around specifics; making important choices to ensure against significant financial challenges; looking at the long-term vision for Culver City; structuring the process to accomplish the vision; the public safety apparatus; and including Public Works as part of the public safety apparatus.

Discussion ensued between consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding investment in public infrastructure and community spaces; advancing planning improvements that support safety, accessibility, and long-term community needs; navigating change in the approach; the importance of long-term financial stability; stabilizing the budget; public infrastructure as most needed; the foundation of neighborhoods; affordability; things within control of Culver City; DEI and community engagement as the basis of everything; and expectation that Culver City deliver high quality services.

Additional discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding important outcomes; ensuring civic assembly and community engagement processes allow for meaningful input; measuring whether the balanced budget meets community needs; streamlining programs; prioritizing grants for outside money; proactively addressing liabilities; understanding how to leverage assets; making data and accountability more user-friendly and providing a topline understanding; and focusing on wellness and retention of City employees.

Further discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding public infrastructure and community spaces; roads; parks; sidewalks; deferred maintenance; looking at areas that need immediate attention; the playing fields at Bill Botts; facilities assessment maintenance; planning and transparency; mobility projects; completing interventions before the Olympic games; work with the Westside COG; addressing the largest cause of death for children in the county; complaint-driven investment; evaluation of where investments are being made; ensuring equity is part of the conversation; not allowing people to skip the line; setting a standard and priorities; plans vs. implementation; effective communication; people who mobilize their neighbors to get things fixed; honoring the plan; and ensuring everyone is able to be supported in a transparent manner.

Discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding affordability; the JPA; the Housing Trust Fund; local and state incentives to build more affordable housing; Culver City as an expensive place to do business and live; taxes; good intentions that can make things more difficult and costly for everyone; finding a way to meaningfully communicate where the tax is going; the narrative that Culver City is expensive; investments the City is asking the community to be in partnership with; helping people feel that the investment is worth the cost; partnership with childcare; those with a fixed income and rising costs; providing context for the discussion; understanding the baseline; keeping things simple; childcare; people who depend on the afterschool programs and summer camps as a way of being able to work; looking at what neighboring cities do; UBI; long-term goals; homelessness prevention as sound fiscal policy for cities; available county funding; the prohousing designation that could provide funding; Culver City as one of the few cities in the region that does not have a minimum wage; whether working people have the ability to stay in the community that they serve; things Culver City has already done to push affordability forward; consideration of establishing an ad hoc subcommittee on affordability initiatives; feedback and civic participation; looking at what residents need; the starting point to structure priorities for the budget; the importance of community engagement; the tendency to think they know what people want and need; ensuring alignment; the responsibility of the City Council to the City; the process; number of people attending the current meeting; mundane processes where very important things happen; new voices in the community that come out in reaction to things; creativity in engagement; utilizing a variety of strategies to invite more voices; City Manager meetings; structures that create boundaries; the shift in the way the budget is being looked at that will generate interest; helping people understand how and why decisions are made; concern with timing of the current meeting on Valentines Day; engagement in spaces and groups that already exist; development of relationships with existing communities; having engagement in different areas of the City; the importance of educating the public and bringing them along for the overall health of the community; the fact that if everything is being kept the same they are not moving forward; willingness to think differently; the situation that requires innovation and creativity to move out of; the need for many conversations; building a new muscle in how Culver City is viewed; engaging in a way that brings vibrancy for Culver City; making adjustments; incremental changes; and additional discussion on performance indicators.

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**Recess/Reconvene**

The meeting took a short recess from 2:40 p.m. to 2:52 p.m.

Jeremy Bocchino, City Clerk, reported that Council Member Vera exited the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

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**Item C Continued:**

**C - (1) Discussion and Establishment of the City Council's Strategic Priorities for 2026-2029, (2) Identification of Metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to Provide Insight into Progress of Established Priorities, and**

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed measuring success; providing definition to priorities; sample indicators; looking at priorities from the standpoint of outcome; adding specificity to priorities; and accountability.

Discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding difficulty not basing revenue streams on volatile generators; reserve amount; the risk-based process; potential for a policy change; the requirement to have a five year plan for repayment; establishing a financial plan for Culver City; setting targets; the trend line; the ability to create a situation where the quarter cent tax is not needed; growing the reserve; creation of a structural expenditure with enhanced homeless services; establishing a financial plan; length of the horizon for the financial plan; revenue related to business; the economic development plan; tourism; sales tax growth rate in line with the CPI as a measurement of the growth of the local economy; combining data and accountability with user-friendly transparency; ensuring that the community understands how things are being prioritized and accountability is measured; implementation of accountability; misinformation about the budget process; the large amount of changes being made all at once; ensuring that residents are informed and understand the budget process; the importance of communication; the Communications Officer hired last year; technology upgrades; looking at how to incorporate siloed data into an integrated format; City Council priorities for community engagement; tools to track performance improvement; collaboration to drive

efficiencies; going beyond awareness to active participation; and allowing public input into the City's most foundational document.

Additional discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding liabilities and assets; data clarifying impact on the City; evidence of a reduction in liabilities or payouts; unfunded liabilities; making it clear why certain investments are necessary; deferred maintenance; recent bus purchases through grants; finding a permanent solution for regrading of fields; investment in public infrastructure and community spaces; revenue growth; strategic grant applications; measuring operational performance; having a strategic plan around each of the priorities; efforts to establish outcome language; staff responsiveness to resident issues; ensuring money is used efficiently and items are addressed to minimize risk to the community; use of clear and understandable language to ensure public understanding; establishing a timeframe to address issues; creating a system to ensure equity in addressing issues; historical investment; looking at how sidewalk repair is prioritized; ensuring investment is made where it is needed; looking at how people engage with government; barriers; people who feel heavily policed in the community; people who experience safety in different ways; addressing opportunity gaps in order to service all members of the community; terminology; different types of infrastructure; and appreciation to EPO (Environmental Programs and Operations) for their efforts regarding stormwater infrastructure.

Further discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding comparing where Culver City is to accepted standards; the PCI (Pavement Condition Index); the current median PCI for Culver City as compared with other westside cities; aspirational goals for the PCI; the Serve Robotics pilot program; clarification on what a tripping hazard is; the intent to aim for an 80% KPI; annual park playability rates provided to the county; impacts of street conditions on residents and the City; liability; ensuring accessibility of public spaces; setting goals based on a metric including liability, deaths, injuries, and accessibility; team efforts involving many departments; the tree canopy; and condition of buildings in the City.

Discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding housing and homelessness; affordability; measuring the housing burden; cost of living issues; net new

affordable housing units; average length of stay in transitional housing; gaging food insecurity; the annual unhoused count; measuring how many Culver City residents fall into homelessness; quantifying the number of residents Culver City prevents from falling into homelessness; data to identify people at risk of falling into homelessness; feedback loops; surveying those who use offered services to determine how much they help; childcare; ensuring follow up to quantify how the City is supporting families, seniors, foster youth, and those on the margins; being clear about the targeted populations; housing insecure students at West LA College; looking at what the City has the capacity to invest in; providing Right to Counsel; continuing relationships; average length of transitional housing and how many people are placed into permanent supportive housing; and quantifying the cost savings of mitigation efforts.

Additional discussion ensued between the consultants, staff, and Council Members regarding transit frequency and timeliness as allowing people to work in the City; potential for increased ridership if better transit service is provided; having a metric around pedestrians and bicyclists; data from the Transit Department; and the importance of transit to affordability.

Andrew Klein, Ernst & Young, discussed the cycle of planning, budgeting, and performance management in a well-managed City; essentials of performance management; providing visible data; setting targets and comparing the target with the actual; positive accountability; innovation; training; process improvement; gain sharing; performance incentives for staff; managed competition; the book *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough* by Mark Friedman; trend forecasting; the turn the curve process; jumping to a solution before understanding the problem; identification of partners; development of criteria and a concrete action plan; prioritization; creation of a menu of options to turn the curve; the example of the bus ridership curve or trend; the acute bus operator shortage; factors contributing to changing commuting patterns; positive factors; engagement of partners to increase ridership; employee incentives; support for local businesses; low cost/no cost ways to improve ridership; the route study; building more destination transportation; micro-transit and on-call transportation; increased number of bus stops; appreciation for the information given; the process; submission of a budget that reflects indicators, goals, and priorities informed by the community; and the importance of the conversation.

**D - Discussion of Council Rules and Council Meeting Efficiencies, and**

Jeremy Bocchino, City Clerk, discussed tools to reduce meeting length; increasing efficiency; enforcement of agenda discipline; limiting time for information from Members; use of a buzzer; consideration of the issue by the Standing Governance Subcommittee; addressing event sponsorships all together; estimates on meeting length with information from department heads; the number of agenda items that receive consensus for discussion; the need to get laser-focused; she indicated that she would create a booklet with official City Council rules; discussed the existing handbook online; and she requested City Council consensus to enforce the rules that exist and improve efficiencies.

Discussion ensued between staff and Council Members regarding factors that contribute to lengthy City Council meetings; public comment; perception that if people come to a City Council meeting en masse they will have more impact; letting people know that one person can speak on behalf of a group; the need to allow public comment; the successful Community Conversations with City Manager Jones that allow people to come out and say what they want to see; driving items more into Community Conversations; concern with limiting public comment to 20 minutes at the beginning of the meeting; allowing plenty of notice if changes are going to be made; feedback from the community indicating that undue focus was being placed on public comment in the discussion of increasing meeting efficiencies; recommendations coming forward from the Subcommittee to the City Council including reducing the length of commendations, limiting Council Member remarks, consolidation of public comment, and ensuring that presentations are available to the public in advance to provide context; the addition of the request to speak software; ceding time; the Mayor's discretion; trying things out for a limited time; the actions of other cities; moving things from Action Items to Consent Items; the inability to submit motions in advance; allowing people to understand that once something is agendized it cannot be discussed further by the City Council; the ability to ask what the subject matter is for Items NOT On the Agenda; opportunity for the Mayor and the City Clerk to remind the public that they do not need to speak if their item has already been agendized; people who want to be heard; letting people know that there could be a different way to address issues rather than going to a City Council meeting; allowing people to submit items they want considered that could be summarized by staff; the educational component; people who

come forward to submit what they think are petitions; people concerned about a specific topic; items ready for consideration by the City Council; and next steps.

**E - Direction to City Manager as Deemed Appropriate**

Yolanda Gorman, facilitator, acknowledged the amount of work done; discussed identification and refinement of priorities and consideration of indicators of success; the opportunity for staff to process information, get community input and then return to the City Council with additional specificity; formulation of clear strategies for community engagement; engagement as a through line for priorities; addressing expectations; appreciation for the conversation and intentional listening; acknowledgement of willingness to be open to engaging in a different process; elevating innovative ideas; the importance of care for community; the invitation for innovation; priority-based budgeting; clarity around indicators; next steps; and appreciation to all meeting participants for the commitment and creativity that went into the conversation.

Mayor Puza expressed appreciation for the work of the consultants, and he was looking forward to next steps.

Odis Jones, City Manager, indicated that he would be returning to the City Council for further action to make sure they were executing.

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**Items from Council Members**

None.

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**Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 4:53 p.m., the City Council adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on February 23, 2026.

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Jeremy Bocchino  
CITY CLERK of Culver City, California

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FREDDY PUZA  
MAYOR of Culver City, California

Date: \_\_\_\_\_