Canon City Area Metropolitan Recreation and Park District
575 Ash Street
Canon City, CO 81212
(719) 275-1578

District Board Special Meeting with Canon City Council
August 5, 2026

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Phil Lund, in City Council Chambers located at 128 Main Street.

ROLL CALL

Board Members:

Present:	Cooper Trahern Melissa Smeins Andrew Palmasano Kristina Post Sean Rodgers

City of Canon City:

Present:	Phil Lund	Kathy Worthington	Jeremy Reeves
	Fred Toney	Gerald Meloni	Tim Dennehy *(virtually)*
	Amy Schmisseur	Sarah McCullar	
	Ryan Stevens - City of Canon City Administrator		
	Katie Vera - City Attorney *(virtually)*		

Staff:	Kyle Horne	Executive Director
	Dawn Green	Finance Director

Attorney: Dan Slater *(virtually)*

Discussion with Canon City Council on Revised Pool Project and Potential Ballot Language

The meeting started with a statement by Mayor Phil Lund. On Monday evening the City Council passed a motion on the pool project. There will be approximately $2.2 million collected by the .3% sales tax by the end of the year. If the Council goes to the ballot with a tax question, the language is due by September 1st. The City Council would have to approve this language at the August 17th meeting. The City and Recreation District would need to move forward with an IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) and appoint members for this task as it has a September 8th deadline. The election is on November 3rd, and it should be an informed decision by the citizens. Citizen leaders are needed to move the issue forward. If the ballot does not pass, the City Council and their attorneys will need to look at refund scenarios. The issues to be discussed tonight include: if the tax should be kept as a lump sum of .3% or split .25% and .05%; the school district involvement; any TABOR issues; and negotiation of the IGA.

Mayor Lund opened the meeting for public comment.

Ben Googins highlighted the fast timeline and that compromises in the details may be needed. He urged the Board and Council to be willing to compromise, to work together, and ask hard questions.

Dan Francis said he wants a pool for Canon City but doesn't believe the location is proper. He would like to step back as the pool cost, including interest and operations and management (O &M) is not there. The right numbers need to be put out.

Vernon Bethel asked where the numbers are for operations and management. He did some research into the costs of running the R.C. Icabone pool for three months a year, including using money from the District's general and CTF funds. He utilized a bond calculator and an $18 million bond at 5% for 20 years requires $10.8 million in interest. This is without O & M. He referenced the City's population and poverty rates. The town needs something for the children but not this elaborate.

The public comment period was followed by a presentation by Kyle Horne and Ryan Stevens.

This is a citizen led project and Kyle Horne recognized their efforts. The proposal is based on the 2024 feasibility study which included a lot of public input including on the committee, stakeholder meetings, a dedicated website and numerous public presentations. Option 2 from the study has a current estimated cost of $16-$18 million and should serve a population of 10,000 to 30,000. The two bodies of water should serve the needs of most.

Previous tax questions for the pool included 2A for the sales tax and 6B for the bonds which both passed. But the questions for operations and maintenance – 6A (a mill levy increase) in 2024 and the excise tax question in 2025 both failed. Construction of pool facility was approved in 2024.

This proposal would change the .3% sales tax to include O & M. It has the least bonding risk and requires a positive vote of the people. (A no vote would lead to the tax ending on December 31, 2026). The projected construction cost is $16-$18 million with an annual operational subsidy of $250,000. This proposal is under serious time constraints. Mr. Horne stated this is flipping what has been done. The budget will be set and that will drive the design. He spoke about cost drivers for public pool construction. These include cost escalation of 3-8% annually; constructing a facility with a 50-year life span; public pool construction is a niche market populated by a handful of companies; the site work needed due to expansive soils and the desire to build a facility that will last as long at the R.C. Icabone pool. The bond rating is estimated AA to low AA with a 4.5%-5% interest rate. Using a .25% sales tax estimate, the repayment on $16-$17 million would be $27.8 million. The tax sunsets on December 31, 2050.

After the presentation the Council and Recreation District Board discussed whether to split the tax, school district participation and work on a new IGA.

Councilman Toney stated a bond rating model is included in the Council packet.

Board member Cooper remarked on the numbers being circulated about the pool project. He stated the $750,000 spent previously was not for the feasibility study but for design. The (approximately) $100,000 for the feasibility study was mostly funded through donations. He said the operating costs circulating online are being used as a scare tactic. He used the difference in the cost of purchasing a truck and then adding the amount of money spent on the vehicle over the time of ownership (fuel, insurance, repairs) to illustrate the difference between initial and lifetime costs.

Ryan Stevens listed pros and cons on whether the sales tax should be split in the ballot language. A pro for not is that it provides flexibility. A con is that it would appear to the voters as a blank check. If it was split, it would be clearer to the voters but would mean less flexibility. Councilman Meloni urged to keep it simple, to not change the number, but wants protections for the City and Recreation District incorporated in the IGA. Kyle pointed out that the money is for the pool, its construction and operations. Councilwoman Schmisseur suggested putting the bonding cap in the IGA. It would provide flexibility and transparency. Councilman Toney agrees that it should be a lump sum to keep it simple. Board member Cooper Trahern suggested the more precise you can make the language, the better.

Kyle met with the District's owner's representative and there may be a way to get the site costs down by fitting the facility on the existing site (1.25 acres), leaving 12th street intact and potentially placing a small parking lot on school grounds. Initially the school district is amenable to this. At this location and with school starting earlier in the summer, the (seasonal) pool could provide more programming for the school district. There is desire to actively try and make the site work. There would need to be an IGA or MOU (memorandum of understanding) between the Recreation District and School District. This may not need to be spelled out in the ballot language. Kyle did ask if the location should be included in the ballot language. Ryan Stevens suggested removing the language that states it be on school district owned land. Board member Melissa Smeins asked if parking is required and Ryan Stevens answered in the affirmative. In addressing concerns about the location, it was pointed out that there was an overwhelming response to keep the pool at its current location. Kyle said money has already been spent at this site on a survey and stormwater and geotechnical analysis (during the design process). Ryan Stevens said changing the site will also require acquisition costs. There was discussion about adding language to remain at the Icabone site. Attorney Dan Slater stated that we want to keep it as short as we can, as longer ballot language is confusing. Councilwoman Schmisseur suggested using the IGA for this. Councilman Toney stated kids need to be able to get to the pool and the current location is a central spot. Councilwoman Schmisseur asked if the parking lot ownership is a question to be addressed in the ballot. Attorney Slater said the language of the (previous) ballot needs to be reviewed. Attorney Vera stated it is not in the language for the school to maintain the parking lot. Board member Cooper

Trahern said that an IGA or MOU with the School District is needed to work on this. Kyle Horne stated this proposal will not take the entire front lawn of the high school. The school district did spend money to get the work done on this area and a refund of the BEST grant money spent on this may be needed. Attorney Dan Slater stated the school district may ask the state to waive the refund. Councilwoman Schmisseur said the approximately $160,000 in refund costs is less than the cost to vacate 12th Street. Adam Hartman from the school district stated that they are wrapping up the high school project and they will have to investigate the requirements for undoing work completed with the BEST grant. If the parking lot is smaller the reimbursement would be smaller. The school board is interested in knowing the details and this would include the size of the lot, and who would be responsible for liability and operation.

Mayor Lund asked if what was being discussed would comply with TABOR. Attorney Vera stated there needs to be approval to retain the tax or it needs to be refunded, which is complicated with a sales tax. Attorney Slater stated the question for the sales tax was approved to repay a bond for the purpose of constructing a pool. So, it is still in compliance. If the voters turn down the question there is one opinion that the tax would need to be refunded. But Attorney Slater said we would still be in the same position as we are today. In answer to a question, he stated the ballot issue did not specify the type or size of pool and Attorney Vera agreed. She did say the sunset date remains in place. Councilwoman Schmisseur asked if what happens if it fails can be spelled out in the IGA to provide protections for the entities and clarity for the taxpayers. There was a question about when the IGA needs to be executed, which may be after the election. Attorney Slater said the entities need to plan for what to do one way or the other. Councilman Toney asked if it was an issue that on June 9th the Recreation District board voted for option three, to let the tax go and start over. Attorney Slater responded no, as the board voted to reengage with the City. The project was not discontinued, and the Recreation District still has the authority to bond.

Sean Rodgers stated that as public officials they need to lead with vision and with resources that are affordable. He said it is a challenge dealing with numbers that we don't deal with in our households. We are not the most wealthy community and we need to be responsible. He used 2024 census numbers to illustrate. The Recreation District has 12,000 households and the mean family income is $91,969. If you multiple these numbers the income is $1.1 billion. If a household has an income of $65,000 is the pool affordable? This equals a monthly income of $5,400. He used the example of a Planet Fitness membership at $20 a month which is .003% of monthly income. If you extrapolate this and use a high figure of $3 million a year for the pool and divide it by the income of the District's households ($1.1 billion) it is .002%. By comparison, the pool is less than a membership to Planet Fitness. Mr. Rodgers stated we do need to watch spending, but to provide a service for 12,000 households and visitors you have to invest. He feels it is affordable for the community. Mayor Lund stated sales tax is fluid, and the City has been seeing a slight decrease. Ryan Stevens said various factors affect this trend including the fire, drought and the low river. Buying local does help. Councilman Toney stated that by using the per capita figures on the Eagle pool as a comparison, it is well within Mr. Rodgers scope. He also said there is no time for a survey. He mentioned a P.R. campaign to get information out to the public. He asked about numbers. In answering his question, Kyle Horne said the second option in the feasibility study was never designed, it was a concept. He referenced the analogy used by BRS for baking a cake. The previous work on the design was like getting it into the oven. But now we are changing the cake and have to go back and get the ingredients. Some work will carry over, such as the geotechnical, abatement, stormwater and survey. We have a roadmap but have to go back to schematic design to reaffirm the budget. We previously used $734,000 for design work. This was agreed to in the IGA between the City and the Recreation District.

A question was asked about what the Council is allowed to do in support (or not) of the question. Attorney Vera answered that once the ballot language is set on August 17th, City resources cannot be used to urge a vote one way or another. The council can pass a resolution in support of the ballot question and can issue a neutral pro and con statement. An educational packet for voters should be assembled before the 17th. Attorney Slater stated the Recreation District board is under the same obligations as the City Council. The board can pass a resolution in support of the City's measure.

Mayor Lund asked who would represent the entities to work on the framework for the IGA. For the City it is Ryan Stevens, and council members Amy Schmisseur and Fred Toney. And as before, it will be board members Coooper Trahern and Sean Rodgers.

In closing comments, Mayor Lund stated that it is on you (the citizens) to decide on November 3rd. Leadership needs to come from the citizens as well. It is your right as a citizen to advocate for the proposal or provide a contrary view. He would like it not to turn into a divisive issue in the community. Board President Cooper Trahern thanked everyone who has been a part of the project. The ballot issue is an end of the line one way or another. He urged citizens to do their homework and research and be careful of misinformation online. Do not accuse the District of not being transparent, reach out and get information.

Ballot language for consideration will be included in the packet for the August 17th City Council meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Submitted by: | Approved as written or amended:

/s/ *Dawn Green* | /s/ *Cooper Trahern*

Dawn Green, Finance Director | Cooper Trahern, Meeting Chair