

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

**District Board at the City of Canon City Special Meeting
April 28, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Phil Lund in the meeting room located at 128 Main Street.

ROLL CALL

Board Members Present:

Cooper Trahern
Melissa Smeins
Andrew Palmasano
Sean Rodgers

City of Canon City:

Present: Phil Lund Kathy Worthington Amy Schmisser
Fred Toney Gerald Meloni Jeremy Reeves
Tim Dennehy
Ryan Stevens-City of Canon City Administrator

Staff: Kyle Horne Executive Director
Dawn Green Finance Director

Attorney: Dan Slater

Recreation District Letter and Pool Project Discussion

The joint meeting between the Recreation District and the City of Canon City started with opening remarks by Mayor Phil Lund and Recreation Board President Cooper Trahern.

Mayor Lund stated the topic order for this joint meeting on the pool project: status of where we are at; options going forward; citizen comments; council and board discussion on moving forward. Clarification on the letter the Recreation District sent to City Council will also be discussed.

In his opening remarks, Recreation District Board President Cooper Trahern commented on the following: thanking the City and their pool committee on their efforts to find operational funding for the pool; the intent of the letter was to clarify misinformation circulating in the public; the Recreation District has made no firm decision to downsize the pool or determine the type of facility; it is the Recreation District's fiduciary duty to not build the pool without operational funding in place; to

seek clarification on the City's position to continue the sales tax; and the need for consistent communication between the two entities.

Due to inflationary cost increases, additional work is needed to get updated design costs for the facility.

Councilman Fred Toney spoke about the pool replacement process to date, including the two failed ballot questions to provide operational funding for the facility. He would like the two agencies to work together to find a way to have a pool quicker. He stated that citizens do not want a tax for the pool and he considers parking fees a tax as well as a variable source of revenue.

Councilwoman Amy Schmisser responded that per the IGA no additional funds can be expended on an updated pool design. She said that it was a unanimous decision by City Council to have City staff come up with a plan for paid parking.

The City must give the state 45 days' notice if they want to stop collecting the sales tax. To stop the collection on July 1st, an emergency ordinance would be required at the May 4th Council meeting.

Board member Sean Rodgers spoke about the District's relation with the City and their history of collaboration. A key ingredient of this is trust which is based on truth which requires honest and transparent communication. He referenced a social media post by Mayor Lund mentioning a downsized pool outside of the Recreation District. Mayor Lund responded by asking - is the pool achievable as designed and trust with the citizens is also important. Attorney Dan Slater stated that no exact pool was voted on. There is flexibility regarding this as it relates to the ballot language. That language does state that it is restricted to being built on school district property. The indoor/outdoor type of design is optional. What was put forth to the voters was a concept for a potential facility. The Recreation District is in a holding pattern as there is no internal mechanism to fund operations and maintenance. The mill levy question asked by the District failed. The City was to look at providing funding for operations. There have been no decisions on the pool until Council has an answer for operations.

Councilwoman Kathy Worthington commented that we have been "talking outside our lanes" and stepped over the line. Building the pool is a Recreation District (lane).

Kyle Horne provided some clarification on the process to date. In 2024 voters approved \$24.8 million for construction. At the time the facility's concept included an indoor 6-lane lap pool, a new building, an outdoor leisure pool with a current channel and slide. A potential add-alternate included an outdoor 2-lane lap pool. By 2025 the pool program changed due to the delay in construction. The add-alternate included an indoor program pool, but the outdoor lap lanes and current channel were cut, and the slide became an add-alternate. At this point there is no shot that the pool can be open in 2027. He went on to state that until we pay for updated estimates from the experts, we cannot have a hard number on the cost of construction.

Councilman Toney stated that the pool committee has looked at options for operational funding including a marijuana tax, paid parking and having a private entity build it - options that would not touch the City's budget. Mayor Lund would like to look at the City's general fund. Councilwoman Worthington said this would be "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Mayor Lund asked if they could tap into the revenue from the bridge and if the pool is a priority issue. Councilwoman Schmisser stated – let's look at everything, but it should be a regular, ongoing revenue source. Councilman Meloni suggested looking for a revenue source which would last for 25 years and could not be altered by any future council. The County was asked if they could contribute funding assistance and per Commissioner McFall the answer was no.

There was further discussion about the \$500,000 needed to subsidize the pool facility. The Recreation District subsidized the operations of the previous pool. Board member Sean Rodgers asked if we can't afford an indoor/outdoor design, if a seasonal pool could be pursued with the community being surveyed about this option.

Potential options for moving forward were then sought from Council and Board members. There were six. One is a seasonal option with two bodies of water- a lap pool and a leisure pool. Two a new design once the revenue source from the City is determined. Three to rebuild the Icabone Pool. Kyle Horne stated that this option is bad for cost recovery and has programming issues. Four is a phased approach to construction. (This was discussed as G.H. Phipps and B.R.S. were previously asked about this option. They replied that there would not be a worse idea as the site is small and the pool would have to shut down to start the next phase and some of the work would have to be redone. It is capital cost prohibitive. Pools are normally built once. The location cannot be changed as the TABOR ballot language stated it would be built on school district property.) Five is an indoor only option. Six is no pool.

Attorney Dan Slater stated that there may be an issue with the bond if a phased approach is taken. In speaking with the bond underwriter, Cooper Trahern stated that a phased approach would negatively impact the bond rating. This option was removed from discussion by Councilwoman Worthington.

Public Comment

Chris Moffett of RG Rio stated that Kids Klub is only able to take the kids to the pool in Florence two times this summer. RG Rio and the Whitewater Festival partners donated \$2,000 to Kids Klub so that they can go to the pool four times this summer. Fremont County is an underserved community and we need a pool. We are 93% of the way there.

Beth Gaffney stated we have three years to find operational funding (before the pool is open) and believes that 60 cents from every \$100 could be found in the City's budget to subsidize the pool. She does not see parking fees as a tax, but as a usage fee.

Dan Francis believes the cost estimate for construction is inaccurate as he is building a large facility in Missouri with a \$16 million budget. He believes there has to be a better way and it should not be built on school grounds.

Mark Sindler spoke about the potential to find large donations for capital construction or to pay for some of the features.

Jeanne Clark believes it is a bad idea to teach people to swim in the river and suggested going back to the train for funding assistance.

Mike Starika said that in 1965 Dr. Icabone saw the need to build a pool. It is not the City's responsibility to find money to put towards a swimming pool. He questioned the need to downsize the facility. Parking meters downtown were never proposed as the committee was looking at a one lot location.

Jessica Hughes read a prepared statement very quickly.

Rick Stewart has been working in commercial aquatics since 1973. He was asked if this pool can be rebuilt and suggested looking at repurposing what we have now.

Sandy Montague thought this meeting was about the parking issue. She asked if there was a charge for parking at the lot near the train, would the train still be willing to donate to the pool. She also asked why a tax on marijuana was off the table.

Rob Gilkerson supports the pool project and stated that most public pools in Colorado are subsidized.

Alexis Denslow supports option two. We have to be stewards for future generations. Conversations about the pool have been happening for three years and we can't please everybody. The focus should be on the children. Swimming is a basic life skill and pools are an investment.

Tasha Avery, a member of the City's pool committee, answered the question about the marijuana tax. The City's boundaries do not provide the base to sustain recreational marijuana businesses at a level that would raise the tax revenue needed. She asked if the City is considering a tax on medical marijuana and if the use of that tax is restricted for specific use.

After the public comment session, Board member Cooper Trahern clarified some items. The Recreation District, which is not part of the City of Canon City government, has an annual budget of \$2.3 million. If we were to pursue option 2 there would need to be a deadline. June 1st is the deadline for the report from City staff on paid parking. According to Ryan Stevens the City's annual budget is \$74 million, but it is comprised of several different funds, some with dedicated use. For the pool subsidy, the City could look at the general fund, the quality-of-life fund or the pool fund.

Josh Ary spoke and stated that the future of Canon City needs a win. Families, new businesses and businesses that want to retain employees are looking for a thriving community. He used the term "grow or die." He stated all entities need to work together to find the funding.

Councilman Toney asked for information on the parking meters. Ryan Stevens responded that based on research to date, the cost of operating them is 30-40% of revenue.

Board member Sean Rodgers is tending toward option 2, but if we can't clear that subsidy need, can we look at other options.

Councilwoman Schmisser would like to focus on what the City can commit to and then turn the issue back to the Recreation District.

Councilwoman Worthington agreed stating the City should tell the District by June 1st what it can offer.

The next City finance committee meeting is May 7th, and Recreation District board member Sean Rodgers was invited to attend.

The Recreation District board would be interested in surveying the residents if the options to downsize or change the facility are considered.

Mayor Lund would like to review the City's budget for the funding to subsidize pool operations.

Based on the discussion, there will be no emergency ordinance to end the sales tax collection at the next City Council meeting.

Board member Cooper Trahern thanked everyone for the process tonight. And clarified that the District needs a commitment from the City regarding the revenue, not where it comes from as it relates to the parking issue.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Submitted by:

/s/ Dawn Green

Dawn Green, Finance Director

Approved as written or amended:

/s/ Cooper Trahern

Cooper Trahern, Meeting Chair