

May 26, 2026, Joint Council-Finance Committee Agenda Comments

The following comments on items on the joint City Council-Finance Committee [agenda](#) are submitted by:

Jim Mosher (jimmosher@yahoo.com), 2210 Private Road, Newport Beach 92660 (949-548-6229)

Note: it is common for the first business item on an agenda to be approval of the minutes from the body's previous meeting. In the present case, the last joint meeting was held on May 27, 2025, and the [minutes](#) were approved by the City Council as part of [Item 1](#) on their June 10, 2025, agenda. It is not clear to me if the Finance Committee ever saw or had a chance to comment on those minutes.

Item 1. Review of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026-27 Operating Budget

The agenda gives the public relatively little to go by. While the Council members have likely been offered copies of the proposed budget being reviewed, the PowerPoint slides attached to the agenda do not appear to tell the public where they can find it.

At the recent Finance Committee meeting I believe I announced that printed copies were available for review at all the City's libraries. If I did so, I was wrong. A more careful reading of the [library catalog](#) reveals that only the Central Library has a single printed copy of the proposed Budget Detail. The branches have only a single copy each of the proposed Capital Improvement Program. Helpfully, the catalog indicates where digital copies can be found online.

Regarding the PowerPoint, the last bullet on Slide 2 (setting a budget focus to "Address City Council priorities identified at the January 31, 2026, Planning Session") raises an interesting question: didn't the priorities considered at the Planning Session need to be confirmed by a formal, agendaized vote of the Council at a later meeting? Did that ever happen? Or will the June 9 budget adoption be that vote? If the latter, that seems a very obscure and opaque way of announcing agreement on priorities since they are not clearly identified in the budget.

As always, there are many things I don't understand about the City budget, but (as also often happens) I have not allowed myself enough time to make comprehensive comments in writing.

But a couple of small points I might mention are that at the May 12 Council meeting it was announced that a very deserving employee had been promoted to the position of Deputy City Manager. Yet, when I look at the budget the City Manager is requesting approval for it seeks (on printed page number 122) a budget for two highly-paid Assistant City Managers (as well as an Assistant to them), and has no budget for a Deputy City Manager.

I am also puzzled why on printed page number 106 the City Clerk's Office is seeking to eliminate the Assistant City Clerk position. Not only does it seem important to have a qualified person to step in should the Clerk be unavailable, but it is an extremely small department to begin with, and this would make it even smaller.