

COUNCIL PRE-MEETING

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 5:00 p.m.
Casper City Hall - Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Straw Poll for Council Leadership
2. Cable Channel 192
3. Ice Arena Contingency
4. Extra Christmas or New Year's Holiday
5. Agenda Review

Mayor Freel began the pre-meeting session at 5:03 p.m. with Councilmembers Bates, Cathey, Hopkins, Huber, Lutz, Pacheco, Powell and Mayor Freel in attendance. Absent: Johnson.

City Manager Napier spoke briefly about the provisional recommendation, or straw poll, for the 2021 Council leadership. He also requested that anyone who did not want to accept a nomination for a leadership position notify staff so they may be removed from consideration. Council then held the straw poll for 2021. Fleur Tremel, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, first collected the ballots for Mayor and she and City Attorney Henley counted the votes. City Attorney Henley announced that Mayor Freel received the majority of the votes for Mayor. Ms. Tremel announced that Amber Pollock has withdrawn her name from the Vice Mayor ballot. Ms. Tremel then handed out and collected ballots for Vice Mayor, and she and City Attorney Henley counted the votes. City Attorney Henley then announced that Councilmember Pacheco had received the most votes for Vice Mayor.

Then City Manager Napier spoke about the potential use of cable government access channel 192 by a non-profit organization. He spoke about specific requirements that would need to be met in order to remain in compliance with the Spectrum cable franchise, and that this revenue stream needs to be protected. Compliance would require the following: non-profit status; the type of video content; and lack of commercialization. He emphasized that Council would need to retain control and the ability to cease operations, should there be mission creep or other non-compliance. He recommended that the terms be clearly laid out and that a request for proposals (RFP) be prepared to allow all interested parties to apply to use this channel.

Councilmember Bates asked if a non-profit entity that is running this channel could apply for Optional One Cent funding. City Manager Napier indicated that they could, and that Council could decide if the application was a funding priority.

Councilmember Bates asked if the RFP could have a local or state restriction. City Attorney Henley indicated that while some non-profits may operate locally, they may contract staffing that is not local. He also stated that precluding someone based on residency would be difficult and he would not recommend it.

Councilmember Johnson joined the meeting.

Councilmember Hopkins shared that he would like to see more local news, but that the channel wouldn't need to be handled locally.

Councilmember Powell suggested that the scoring matrix for the RFP could favor a local applicant. He also asked if the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) usage requirements could be incorporated into the RFP and if Spectrum would be monitoring the channel. City Manager Napier shared that the FCC guidelines could be included in the managing documents. Councilmember Powell asked how involved Spectrum would notify the City if there were issues with the channel. City Manager Napier stated that Spectrum has been very cooperative so far and that they they'd be a helpful partner.

Councilmembers shared concerns about the local operation of the channel, about interested entities accessing a channel of their own/privatization, and sponsorship funding versus traditional commercials. City Manager Napier said that language for the managing documents would need to be clear.

Mayor Freel asked if Council would like staff to prepare an RFP for use of cable channel 192. Council provided a thumbs up.

City Manager Napier then summarized the budget request to use the unspent monies from the Hogadon parking lot project to cover the extra costs for the Casper ice arena plant replacement, which would be an overall budget neutral transfer. Council provided a thumbs up to the shift.

City Manager Napier requested that Council consider granting employees an extra paid holiday for either Christmas or New Year's Eve. Council gave a thumbs up to providing employees a paid holiday.

City Manager Napier offered to defer his agenda review time to Mr. Hyman, should he wish to discuss the privatization of a channel versus use of cable channel 192. Mr. Hyman stated that he would like to get more information on the topic before discussing it with Council.

Freel adjourned the pre-meeting at 5:42 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Steven K. Freel
Mayor