

## COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, January 24, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.  
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

### AGENDA

1. City Attorney Oath
2. CY & Poplar Intersection
3. Council Meeting Follow-up
4. Sports & Recreation Subsidy
5. Athletics Fund & One Cent #17 Fund
6. Natrona County Recreation JPB Grant
7. Agenda Review
8. Legislative Review
9. Council Around the Table

Mayor Knell called the work session to order at 4:33 p.m. with the following Councilors present: Cathey, Gamroth, Engebretsen, Haskins, Jensen, Bond, Vice Mayor Pacheco and Mayor Knell. Councilor Pollock attended the meeting virtually.

#### 1. City Attorney Oath

Mayor Knell issued the oath of office to the newly-appointed City Attorney, Eric Nelson.

#### 2. CY & Poplar Intersection

City Manager Napier introduced Joel Meena, Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) traffic engineer to discuss issues at the CY and Poplar intersection. Mr. Meena gave an overview of the issues at this intersection which included unique traffic signal operation, skewed intersection, high traffic volume, zipper merge issues South of Walgreens, high amounts of crashes in intersection, high amount of angle crashes, high amount of head-on crashes, blind spots turning left, and long wait times during peak hours. He said there were only two crashes in the zipper merge area, and Mayor Knell stated that he has witnessed over a dozen over the past year. Mr. Meena discussed changes that have been made by WYDOT to try to improve the intersection, including extending green light based on vehicle volume, coordination to progress traffic up and down the highway, prohibition of yellow during peak hours, no flashing yellow light when pedestrian is on crosswalk, and installing cameras for remote monitoring. He discussed a plan for changes moving forward which included, restriping, recounting/retiming all of the signals, and allocating the green light time differently. He discussed how to improve southbound movement where the zipper merge occurs, stating that the lane utilization is currently at a 90/10 split instead of the optimal 50/50 split. He stated that he thinks this would be improved with restriping and extending the merge lane a few blocks to allow drivers more time to merge. He added that there is room to do this without widening the street and instead, just restriping that portion of Poplar Street to accommodate two lanes. He also stated that he does not think it will help to have double right turn before the intersection going South. Moving forward, he suggested WYDOT hire a consultant to conduct an operational/safety study on the intersection. Council directed staff to look into lane extension options.

### 3. Council Follow-up

Council was trained on using Microsoft Teams' hand raising tool to provide the Mayor with a way to accurately queue and track Councilors wanting to speak at Council meetings. He stated that it will be useful to him and hopes it will be useful for Councilors as well.

### 4. Sports & Recreation Subsidy

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation, and Public Facilities Director, to review the sports and recreation subsidy. Ms. Lopez recapped FY22 for this subsidy, including different events including sports leagues, camps, classes, tournaments; participation numbers including memberships, rentals, punch passes, daily admissions, class attendance, and camp attendance; and operational hours and staffing. She then reviewed the recreation's funding sources and the adverse reactions should funding be cut, including Sunday closures, reduced hours, and reduced programming. She reviewed proposed strategies to reduce expenses and increase revenue including completing fitness room for specialized fitness programming; restructuring partnerships to reflect increasing operating cost in requested reimbursements; reducing operation costs; selling ads in activity guide; managing part time staffing; passing on credit card fees; improving marketing of programs classes, passes and facility rentals; improving events, programming and services; developing more outdoor recreation themed programming; expanding child care for facility users; evaluating and modifying membership packages and user rates; and creating a sports/athletics enterprise fund and transfer expenses and revenue to that fund. She explained that this will save the recreation and general funds, and stated that sports and athletics should not be subsidized and that fund should be breaking even at the very least. She explained that they will also look at expanding merchandise and concession sales. She then reviewed the current and budgeted rate model and reviewed rate adjustments. She stated that she believes the City can meet its 50% cost recovery goal with improved marketing and increased usage. She stated that she believed the Recreation Center is there to offer recreation opportunities for all citizens at an affordable price. Councilor Jensen asked about networking with other organizations, and Ms. Lopez responded that staff does work with many organizations to offer services to groups such as the Boy Scouts.

Council discussed increasing rates for rental spaces at the Recreation Center. They advised that it may be better to wait to adjust rates yet again until they have more data on the current rate increases. Ms. Lopez stated that with more strategy she believes the City can rely less on rate increases by using the space more strategically. Council gave their thumbs up for staff to continue on the path they are in with these funds and subsidies.

### 5. Athletics Fund & One Cent #17 Fund

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Jill Johnson, Finance Director, regarding creating separate funds for athletics and One Cent #17. Mayor Knell asked if the creation of the Athletics Fund will increase the subsidy to the recreation fund, due to decreased revenue from athletics being pulled out. Ms. Johnson responded that the athletics currently resides in the General Fund, not the Recreation Fund, therefore this change will not negatively impact the Recreation Fund or its City subsidization. City Manager Napier stated that this move will actually improve the Recreation

Center subsidy because there were maintenance expenses that will now be paid for out of the Athletics Fund as opposed to being paid out of the Recreation Fund. He added that staff's hope is that by segregating revenues, this change will help the General Fund, and the Athletics Fund will and be self-sufficient and possibly profitable.

City Manager Napier also discussed surplus One Cent #16 revenue and suggested putting the anticipated \$5-6M in the Opportunity Fund. He stated that this is truly surplus revenue over and above the amount allocated in the resolution for One Cent #16. Council gave their thumbs up for these proposals.

#### 6. Natrona County Recreation Joint Powers Board Grant

City Manager Napier introduced Ms. Lopez to discuss a grant that the City has received from the Natrona County Recreation Joint Powers Board (NCRJPB). Ms. Lopez explained that the City is expected to receive a \$100K grant and staff would like to use that grant to fund half of the master plan for parks and recreation. She stated that the City is hoping to work Natrona County and surrounding communities to consider the entire parks and recreation system and regional amenities. She stated that the goal is to make strategic decisions moving forward in order to develop Casper and the surrounding community into a sport and recreation hub regionally. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with the proposed plan for this grant.

#### 7. Agenda Review

Next, Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming regular Council meetings and work sessions.

#### 8. Legislative Review

City Manager Napier introduced Jolene Martinez, Assistant to the City Manager, to discuss state legislative bills that currently being discussed during the legislative session. Topics discussed included bills related to direct distribution, abandoned buildings, property tax credits, unsafe structures building codes, liquor license bills, annexation regulations, WyoLink trust fund, pharmacy benefit enhancements, procurement bill, and residential rental properties. Ms. Martinez asked that Council have interim legislative topics to her by February 7<sup>th</sup> in order to be ready for discussion on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### 9. Council Around the Table

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective board and committee meetings as well as matters of public interest. Councilor Cathey stated that the City audit as presented to the Finance Committee looked good. He also asked for the liquor report to be provided to Council early for review. Chief McPheeters responded that the report is fairly benign with no major issues for any license holders. Councilor Pollock stated that the LGBTQ Advisory Committee is ready to present an update to Council and asked for this to be added to a future work session agenda.

The work session was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING  
A Municipal Corporation

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Fleur Tremel  
City Clerk

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Bruce Knell  
Mayor