

## COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.  
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

### AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
  - CY & Poplar Update
2. WaterSMART Grant Application
3. One Cent #17 Applications & Allocations
4. Agenda Review
5. Legislative Review
6. Council Around the Table

Mayor Knell called the work session to order at 4:34 p.m. with the following Councilors present: Pollock, Engebretsen, Haskins, Jensen, Gamroth, Bond, Vice Mayor Pacheco and Mayor Knell. Councilor Cathey was absent.

Mayor Knell stated that City Manager Napier was running late but would arrive later in the meeting.

#### 1. Council Meeting Follow-up and CY & Poplar Update

Mayor Knell introduced Andrew Beamer, Public Services Director, to update Council on options for improving traffic issues near the CY & Poplar Street intersection. Mr. Beamer stated that staff held a neighborhood meeting for the 18 property owners whose property borders the portion of the street that will be restriped and whose parking may be impacted by the lane extension. There were not many attendees at the meeting, but from those who did attend, there were concerns that they will have few places to park if their on-street parking is removed. Mr. Beamer suggested waiving parkway parking fees for those affected property owners. Council gave their thumbs up to moving forward with the lane extension and waiving the parkway parking fees for those property owners whose parking would be affected by the project.

#### 2. WaterSMART Grant Application

Mayor Knell introduced Jolene Martinez, Assistant to the City Manager, to discuss a WaterSMART grant application. Ms. Martinez explained that the Wyoming Game & Fish Department told the City they would support Casper in writing a grant for the study and design of the last two reaches of the river restoration project. They believe the City is a competitive applicant for this grant, and if the City did receive the grant, they would be eligible to apply for an additional \$20M grant for the construction phase of the project. The grant requires a 33% match, and if the City did receive the grant, there would be a three to four-year window before the construction phase to start raising that money. The match money for the design portion is already secured. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with the grant application.

#### 3. One Cent Applications & Allocations

Mayor Knell gave a summary of the Council's one cent allocations for community projects. He stated that there were \$5.85M in requests and only \$2.25M allocated from One Cent #17 to fund the community projects. He asked that Council keep in mind that some projects may not be appropriate to receive only partial funding. He also stated that the applicants are available via phone if Council has any questions during the discussion. Councilor Engebretsen stated that she does not think any non-profit would turn away partial funding. Councilor Pollock stated that she believes that some projects may lend themselves more readily to partial funding, and that any amount of funding would probably be welcome if it is paying for operational costs. She also stated that she does not believe they need to call the non-profits, as their applications contained all of the information relevant to Council's discussions.

Councilors began by discussing some of the requests that they did not want to fund. Councilor Pollock stated that the Casper Baseball Club's request to turf the Crush Baseball practice area seems outside of the scope of what community project funding should go to, as it is city-owned property and should be considered within larger capital projects. Councilor Engebretsen stated that the Recreation Board believes this is important to promoting the Casper facilities and making practice play available for tournament use and would promote tourism as well. Zulima Lopez, Parks Recreation & Public Facilities Director, added that the group is fundraising but has found it difficult to raise enough money, because the cost of turf keeps increasing. She stated that leased facilities do let the City know what their capital needs are, but some requests rise to higher priority due to safety concerns, so these solely recreational/tourism types of projects often do not receive that funding. She explained that she did not have information available tonight about the cost savings of converting to turf for the City, but could do homework if Council requested it. City Attorney Nelson weighed in that the request does meet constitutional requirements to receive the funding as it promotes the resources of the City. Council discussed how this request does not meet Council goals and gave their thumbs up to table the request until other allocations were decided upon.

City Manager Napier arrived at the meeting.

Next, Council discussed the BMX request for paving their parking lot at Mike Sedar Park. Councilor Pollock stated that she believes this request should be part of a larger picture for improvements to that area. She also discussed that the group had raised a lot of their own money to help with the project. Councilor Jensen stated that the area does get very muddy and part of the problem is that this area is utilized for snow removal storage and recommended moving the snow somewhere else. City Manager Napier responded that they can look into other areas to move the snow, but there is a declining inventory of places to offload the snow from streets. Council gave their thumbs up to table the request until other allocations were decided upon.

Council then discussed the Casper Boxing Club's request for a van. Councilor Pollock stated that the impact to the City is not broad for the entire community, so she allocated the request \$0. Vice Mayor Pacheco agreed that their scope is narrow but also stated that they do a lot of work with at-risk youth. Councilor Jensen stated that she was supportive of the idea of providing kids a constructive outlet. Council moved on without consensus on how to fund the Boxing Club.

Next, Council discussed Hope House's and Iris Club House's requests. Councilor Engebretsen and Councilor Bond expressed concern that there is a duplication of services with these requests. Mayor Knell stated that he believes these organizations will receive some of the opioid money, so the City may not want to give community project funding. Vice Mayor Pacheco and Councilor Gamroth both stated they are supportive of the organizations as they are the only places they are aware of that provide sober living/transitional housing for men. Councilor Gamroth stated he was concerned that financial data was not included in Hope House's application. Council decided to provisionally allocate \$40K to each organization, with the stipulation that they provide the missing financial data.

Council then discussed Casper Skeet Club's request. Vice Mayor Pacheco stated he did not believe the request falls within the scope of Council goals, and Councilor Pollock stated that the organization already received one cent funding to pave their parking lot. Ms. Lopez stated that she does encourage and appreciate user groups offering to partially fund projects that improve City-owned property. Council decided to provisionally allocate \$15K to Casper Skeet Club. Council also discussed the request from Casper Legion, and decided to fund this at \$0 since it is a new facility with some paved parking nearby.

Council discussed Casper Soccer Club's request for netting to protect soccer players from getting hit by softballs and baseballs from nearby ballfields, and decided to provisionally allocate \$50K towards this request. They also discussed the Casper Softball Association's request for material upgrades and money for lighting and fencing. Vice Mayor Pacheco stated that he thought there was an agreement that they would maintain these fields when the City entered into the lease agreement. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally fund the Softball Association at \$25K with the caveat that it be used for lighting and fencing.

Council discussed the 12-24 Club's request, and Vice Mayor Pacheco stated that they do an amazing job to reach many community members. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$100K to this organization. They also discussed the Arc of Natrona County's request. Vice Mayor Pacheco stated that this a huge asset to the community, and Councilors Pollock and Bond expressed that the Arc helps a population that is at most risk of isolation and high risk of mental health issues as a result. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally fund The Arc at \$30K.

Next, Council discussed Art 321's request. Councilor Jensen described that this organization improves citizens' livability and sustainability and increases civic engagement. Councilor Gamroth expressed concern with funding Art 321's request to expand their space when there are current infrastructure issues that should be addressed first. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$70K of funding to Art 321.

Council discussed the request from Big Brothers Big Sisters, and asked if they could call the organization to get more information about their request. City Manager Napier stated that he did not advise calling any of the organizations, because every agency would like to talk with Council about their requests so giving this chance to some organizations would be unfair. Council agreed

and decided not to call the organizations. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally fund Big Brothers Big Sisters at \$70K.

Council then discussed the request from the Boys and Girls Club. Council discussed that this organization has received millions of dollars from the City's one cent funds throughout past funding cycles, and decided that this round of one cent funding they would not be allocating any community projects funding to the Boys and Girls Club. Because they were asking for funding for security, Council did ask staff to look into security features around the skate park by the Boys & Girls Club to help with this issue.

Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$50K to the Brain Injury Advocates of Wyoming, and \$50K to Casper CLIMB Wyoming. Council then discussed the Casper Community Greenhouse Project's request, and expressed concern that they were basically asking the City to fund the entire project and would therefore not necessarily benefit from a partial allocation. Council gave their thumbs up to not fund the request this one cent cycle.

Council discussed the request from Casper Family Connections and agreed that they are very important partners with the City. Councilor Gamroth and Pollock stated that their financial data was missing. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$50K to Casper Family Connections, with the stipulation that they provide the missing financial data. Council also discussed Casper Housing Authority's request and gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$50K towards their request for the foundation for one portable unit.

Council then discussed Central Wyoming Counseling Center's (CWCC) request for outdoor exercise equipment. Vice Mayor Pacheco stated that research shows that outdoor activities improve relapse prevention which aligns with Council goals. Mayor Knell and Councilor Jensen stated that there are walking trails nears CWCC, so they did not support the funding. Councilor Haskins stated that there is a mommy unit at CWCC, so the outdoor equipment may be important for those children. Council Gamroth stated that the outings may be limited due to staff shortages. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$40K to CWCC, with the stipulation that they provide missing financial data.

Council discussed Central Wyoming Hospice & Transition's request for a Hospice Grief Center/Program, and discussed how the request aligns with their goals and that a large allocation could help the project get across the finish line. Council gave their thumbs up to allocate \$150K toward Hospice's project.

Council discussed the Casper Senior Center's request. Councilor Bond stated that as Council's liaison, he did encourage them to think about focusing on capital improvement requests next time they apply and look at covering the food expenses elsewhere. He stated he did support the proposal, however, because of their mission and their dedication to low income individuals within the community. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$150K to this organization.

Council then discussed Child Development Center's request for a bus to help transport kids with special needs to and from their facility for school and services. Councilor Pollock asked what happened with the City's providing an Assist Bus for this service, and City Manager Napier stated

he did not agree with CDC's characterization. Councilor Gamroth stated that Community Development Director, Liz Becher, explained that the Assist Bus was being used for one year after the City took over transit services from CATC, and agencies were notified that for the first year there would be no change in services, but then services may be reevaluated. Because this bus only transported nine children, the City decided to cut the service. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$39K towards CDC's request. Council then discussed Community Action Partnership's request and gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$52.5K to this organization. They also discussed Mercer Family Resource Center's request and decided to provisionally allocate this organization \$100K.

Council then discussed the Natrona County Library's request. Councilors Gamroth and Pollock and Vice Mayor Pacheco stated they were supportive of providing funding for books and materials as Casper has historically done for the library, but not supportive of funding for security services. Council then discussed the security issues at the library and how the Police Department could help to alleviate some of those issues. They also asked about moving the bus transfer station away from the library, and City Manager Napier stated that this would be a large project, as it would involve a route study and federal transit involvement. The City has tried to help alleviate the problem by constructing a shelter near the Rescue Mission to provide an alternative option for homeless individuals coming out of that facility. He also advised that Council should not let representatives from the Library speak on this request tonight as other organizations were not given that opportunity, and Council agreed. Council agreed to provisionally allocate \$240K to Natrona County Library for books and materials and come back to their request if there is money left over at the end of the discussion tonight.

Next, Council discussed funding for Safe Ride and gave their thumbs up to allocate \$21K to this organization. Councilor Pollock pointed out that 100% of the funding for this organization comes from the City, so it may be prudent to just add this as a line item in the City's budget as it is a very important program that benefits the community. Council also gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$141K to the Self-Help Center, \$70K to Special Olympics, \$100K towards the Science Zone, \$64K towards the Unaccompanied Student Initiative, and \$19,986 to United Way.

Council then discussed the request from Wyoming Food for Thought. City Manager Napier stated that the City discourages people from using their private equipment to plow public streets and sidewalks as was described in this application. Council gave their thumbs up to provisionally allocate \$90K to Food for Thought.

Council then discussed the request from Youth Crisis Center. Councilor Jensen stated that she thinks they need to think about funding projects for healthy people and not just the disadvantaged unhealthy individuals in the community. Council decided to fund their full ask of \$100K.

After all of these allocations, Fleur Tremel, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, stated there was \$282,514.00 left of the \$2.25M available. Council decided to provisionally allocate \$45K to the Boxing Club. They went back to discuss the BMX parking lot, and City Manager Napier stated that having this parking lot unpaved is a violation of the City's own ordinance. He stated that the Legion parking lot does not have this violation because there is paved parking in that area. Council

gave their thumbs up to allocate \$150K towards the BMX request. Council decided to give the remaining amount to the Library, making the Library's total allocation \$327,514 with no caveats.

Councilor Pollock asked if they could discuss the community project allocation process in general and asked that staff vet the applications for missing financials. Council discussed if incomplete applications should even be considered in the future. Councilor Pollock stated that she did not think this would be fair as the Excel form may have caused confusion. Councilor Jensen stated that in the non-profit world, incomplete applications are usually not considered by grantors. Vice Mayor Pacheco stated that he would advocate for follow-up with organizations with missing information and allow them to complete this information before throwing out the application. Council asked staff to add a debrief item for community project allocations to a future work session agenda.

#### 4. Agenda Review

Next, Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming regular Council meetings and work sessions. City Manager Napier pointed out that the second part to the MRG request is scheduled for May 24<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Pollock asked that that discussion include how the costs are calculated and a projected proforma on losing or keeping that flight and what the impact to the community would be. Mayor Knell stated that Mills Mayor Juarez met with Vice Mayor Pacheco and himself to discuss the MRG as well.

#### 5. Legislative Review

There were no items to discuss for legislative review.

#### 6. 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 Engebretsen asked if Council could consider discussing an item for general business licenses in Casper. Mayor Knell addressed pro-life comments he recently made on social media, stating he is entitled to his personal opinion and they do not reflect the opinions of the City or City Council as a whole. He stated he will not apologize for the comments.

The work session was adjourned at 8:41 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