

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Meeting Follow-up
2. North Platte River Park No. 2 Master Plan
3. Rec Enterprise Business Plans Part 2 – Ft Caspar & Pony Express
4. Casper Recreation League Association Agreement
5. Banner Health & Fire Agreement
6. Council Goals Follow-up
7. Agenda Review
8. Legislative Review
9. Council Around the Table

Mayor Knell called the work session to order at 4:36 p.m. with the following Councilors present: Cathey, Engebretsen, Jensen, Pollock, Bond, Haskins, Gamroth, Vice Mayor Pacheco and Mayor Knell.

1. Meeting Follow-up

There were no items for Council follow-up.

2. Banner Health

Council agreed to move the Banner Health item up on the agenda. City Manager Napier discussed that this agreement has the potential to clear up inconsistencies with regards to who is responding to calls. The agreement will also provide relief to Casper Fire-EMS Department by providing coverage from an ambulatory standpoint and reducing overlapping services. The agreement has a 30-day notification clause that will allow either party to withdraw from the agreement if the partnership is not working out.

He then introduced Lance Potter, Banner Wyoming Medical Center CEO, to elaborate on the agreement. Mr. Potter stated that Casper currently has a high level of response, and Banner wants to continue to provide that high level of care. The agreement will reduce city expenses, improve service for residents, and maintain a high level of care. It will also protect the service from further erosion. He explained that ambulances are expensive to run and it is difficult to recruit EMT's. This agreement will help protect the market share, so Banner is able to continue to support the program. It will also allow Fire Department leadership the ability to evaluate each call and decide if a fire truck response is necessary or if an ambulance will suffice. Without this agreement, another ambulance company could start to compete for those calls which can cause miscommunication between responders. It is lower in cost to have an exclusive relationship as well. For-profit ambulance companies also have aggressive billing and collections systems which is difficult for patients. The new agreement should further improve response times.

Mayor Knell stated that this will also save on wear and tear on the fire trucks, because they will not be responding to unnecessary calls. Fire Chief Black explained that the Fire Captains are

already triaging calls, so there would be no additional workload for this piece of the agreement. He stated that right now they are operating at 48% overlapping volume, so this will be reduced with the agreement. After trends are monitored over the next few years, true cost savings can be determined. He also explained that the ambulances will need to be placed strategically around the City to allow for four to seven-minute response times. He also explained the process should Banner not follow through with their end of the agreement. He explained that an evaluation committee will be formed to ensure efficient processes. Council gave their thumbs up to move the agreement forward for formal consideration at a regular Council meeting.

3. North Platte River Park No. 2 Master Plan

Next, City Manager Napier discussed the first draft of the master plan for N. Platte River Park No. 2. He reviewed how Council asked for a development plan pertaining to the 111-acre area north of the Ford Wyoming Center and WYOSports Ranch. He explained why this area is strategically important to the City, and how staff and Council have been cognizant of planning the area out in a methodical way. He then introduced Beth Andress, MPO Supervisor, who stated that this draft has not gone out for public comment yet, but will go out next week for a 30-day period. Those comments will be incorporated into a final plan.

Ms. Andress then introduced consultants from Ayres Associates to discuss the first draft of the plan. The consultant discussed that having a concept plan can help guide discussions with entrepreneurs and aid in development interest in the property. He explained that the plan allows for flexibility and serves as a foundation for future development. The consultants held a stakeholder workshop earlier this year to help establish parameters for the area. They then held a public workshop which included nearby landowners, community youth, business owners and residents. From these workshops came the concept plan and sketch renderings to show what the site may look like. This serves as a foundation, and helps guide discussions with entrepreneurs and potential developers. Some of the areas discussed included site infrastructure, complimentary services, recreation uses, safe places for pedestrians, interconnected trails, and downtown shuttles. These comments were used to help create a bubble diagram to develop a land use scenario which included the following bubbles: innovation employment, destination retail, highway services, recreation outdoor facilities (campgrounds, fields etc.), events center village (hotels, pedestrian space, etc.), and shared parking. They also discussed branding and suggested calling the area the “Casper Highlands”, which can be used to attract developers.

The consultants explained that the next step will be to put the proposed plan forward for public comment. Those comments will be included in the final plan which will then be presented for Council’s formal adoption. Several Councilmembers asked questions about the next steps and specific questions about the different areas of the plan. Councilor Engebretsen discussed if the location of the Skeet Club would be an issue with drawing business to the area. Councilor Pollock suggested that once the finished plan is adopted, Council prioritize market responsiveness and make it known what type of developments fit with the vision for the area without being too prescriptive. City Manager Napier added that things are already in the works regarding the recreational master plan, which will be useful to incorporate into the recreational areas of the plan. He also explained that staff would like to approach Wyoming Business Council in partnership with

WYOSports Ranch to fund the infrastructure needs that this area will require, specifically the sewer infrastructure. A formal resolution will be brought forward to Council to authorize an application for those funds.

He then discussed the land south of the Ford Wyoming Center that also presents development opportunities, in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Staff is currently analyzing uses for this that compliment the area discussed tonight. Staff will bring homework back to Council with local market research and amenities that will need to be included to fit the needs of those spaces. Council gave their thumbs up to staff continuing to look into these areas and to the plan moving forward for public comment. Councilor Jensen abstained from direction and discussion involving the BLM land.

4. Rec Enterprise Business Plans Part 2 – Ft Caspar & Pony Express

Next, Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation & Public Facilities Director, reviewed the rate model and proposed strategies to increase revenue and reduce expenses that were presented for Fort Caspar earlier this year. She stated that the cost recovery goal for FY23 was 20%, and the City fell a little short with a final cost recovery of 16.7%; this amount was more than the budgeted amount. She emphasized that the budget is very lean and the operational staff and maintenance costs are not flexible. For FY24, staff budgeted a conservative 15.9% cost recovery. Some of the strategies to reach this goal are improving marketing, improving the website, ecommerce opportunities, and establishing an online gift shop. Some of the rates will also be raised slightly.

Ms. Lopez then discussed the possibility of the City to accept a Pony Express collection donation. This was originally offered to the City in 2018, and the City ultimately passed on the collection. The collection has been offered by the Nardone family again, after a failed attempt at a donation to a museum in Utah. They have expressed that Fort Caspar Museum is the priority location they would like the collection housed. Staff has spent time combing over data about other Pony Express collections, and has concluded it would be worthwhile to complete a feasibility study to analyze the collection, compare it to other collections and similar museum exhibits, and see if the increased visitors would be worth the increased infrastructure costs that would be required to house and maintain the collection. The cost of the feasibility study is estimated to be \$10K to \$15K, and staff will seek grants and donations to fund the study.

Richard Young, Museum Supervisor, has stated that a small portion of the collection could be displayed in the interim until the museum is expanded to display the entire collection. The collection is a free donated collection, so the investment is a capital investment required to expand the museum. The Fort Caspar Museum Association (FCMA) would help to fundraise money to pay for that expansion. Council discussed that the feasibility study makes sense and that the Fort Caspar Museum is an excellent fit for the collection. Mayor Knell stated that he was disappointed that the FCMA did not want to have the Windshenge sculpture at Fort Caspar to help lower their subsidy. Ms. Lopez explained that the collection is not being offered to other museums at this time, and the owner is aware that if the feasibility study comes back positive, that is the point at which the City would enter into a donation agreement. The collection is one of a kind, and the owner estimates that it is worth \$1.5M. Council gave a thumbs up to move forward a formal letter of intent to conduct a feasibility study.

5. Casper Recreation League Association (CRLA) Agreement

Next, City Manager Napier discussed the updated agreement between the City and the CRLA, which has been designed to help the City recapture some of the costs associated sports programming. Ms. Lopez explained that the City has had a long-standing agreement with CRLA where they helped staff for large tournaments. This agreement presented challenges with reimbursement for City staff time and included very low costs for field rentals that did not represent what the City's true investment was. There were also gaps in terms of the structure for staffing that opened the City up to liability issues. The restructured agreement protects both parties and addresses financial and liability concerns. The CRLA will still help with staffing large tournaments, but the City will receive all of the revenue and will contract with CRLA and pay them to provide officials, etc.

6. Council Goals Follow-up

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Pete Meyers, Management Specialist, to follow-up with Council on Council goals. Mr. Meyers began by discussing the progress from Council's last set of goals, with 72% of these being complete. The remaining portion were in progress with the exception of six tasks that were not started due to extenuating circumstances. City Manager Napier then discussed the reworking of the current goals and expressed appreciation for Council's awareness to not overwork staff. He then reviewed each of the goals and the tasks assigned for each goal. Council discussed the tasks and discussed measurement of the goals. They were supportive of the direction presented.

7. Agenda Review

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

8. Legislative Review

There were no items to discuss for legislative review.

2. 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.

The work session was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Bruce Knell
Mayor