

## COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, November 28, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.

### The Lyric

1. Meeting Follow-up
2. Casper Housing Authority Update
3. Ford Wyoming Center Expansion Study – Part 2
4. Casper Business Center Design
5. Center Street Underpass
6. Leadership Nominations
7. Agenda Review
8. Council Around the Table

Mayor Pacheco called the work session to order at 4:40 p.m. with the following Councilors present: Bond, Haskins, Jensen, Cathey, Gamroth, Pollock, Vice Mayor Engebretsen, and Mayor Pacheco. Councilor Bond was absent.

#### 1. Council Meeting Follow-up

There were no follow-up items.

#### 2. Casper Housing Authority Update

Kim Summerall-Wright, Executive Director of the Casper Housing Authority (CHA), gave a presentation updating City Council about what CHA does and their current projects. She discussed their vision and mission, including providing quality affordable housing and discussed their housing programs and recent housing developments. She discussed the programs offered at the Life Steps Campus, including Foundations, CHA Transitions, All Children Matter, Adult Teen Challenge, Healthcare for the Homeless, Unaccompanied Student Initiative, and Community Kitchen/Gardens. She then discussed CHA partners and CARES, which is a housing partner that allows for outreach throughout the State. She discussed the economic benefits of CHA and CARES, providing affordable housing, \$56M in construction, \$3M into the rental market, and employment. She discussed CHA's five-year plan, which includes the Willard Envision Center, which will offer a classical/Montessori preschool, an edible playground, urban thistle food hub, and a change course career center. The self-sufficiency team and programs will be in the building. Councilors Gamroth and Sutherland discussed how the community is lucky to have this organization.

#### 3. Ford Wyoming Center Expansion Study – Part 2

Next, City Manager Napier discussed a more refined approach and recommendation for a Ford Wyoming Center (FWC) expansion project. Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation, and Public Facilities Department Director, recapped the study that was initiated in 2021 and reported to Council in 2022. She then discussed the attendance and economic impact data, showing that 2023 is on track for the best year economically for the FWC in recent history. She then recapped the feasibility study, discussing how the purpose was to understand the market potential to attract regional events and how new or renovated building program elements could affect that potential. The study included a comparison to similar sites in other cities, finding that FWC is one of the smaller venues

with lower demand, partially due to limited air access. She discussed how FWC is small but stable and is able to support fee-based events. She then reviewed some of the study recommendations from the study that was reported to Council in 2022 including arena improvements, a multipurpose event building addition, main entrance, premium seating, concourse improvement, city-view seating, and additional elements to create a VIP experience. Now, 18-months later, there have been significant changes to the landscape of FWC, including the addition of the Wyoming Sport Ranch, the North Platte Park master plan, land use studies, a secured College National Final Rodeo contract, renewal of the OVG360 contract with funding for capital investment, purchase of a new sports court, conversion to Ticketmaster ticketing, hiring of new General Manager Kirk Goodman, premier parking, upgraded sound system, improved security, Fan Food implementation for VIP food and beverage service, improved food and beverage equipment, south walkway replacement, locker room renovation, and pending Wi-Fi improvements. Ms. Lopez discussed that with the surrounding improvements to the North Platte Park development and the WYO Sports Ranch, any expansion and renovation should compliment those projects.

Therefore, staff is recommending an update to the study to reflect the significant development over the last 18 months. The updated study should help the City determine which improvements are most desirable, help to identify funding opportunities, and include the feasibility of renovations to decrease the FWC subsidy. Council discussed certain elements suggested in the first study including convention and outdoor space. Mr. Goodman discussed how VIP seating raises the status and value of the facility as a whole, and is an area where the FWC could recoup costs. Ms. Lopez estimated that the update to the study would cost a quarter of the cost of the original study. City Manager Napier added that the study will help the City to understand what will provide the biggest bang for our buck in terms of improvements. He also discussed that this data will help if the City decides to approach the Wyoming Business Council for funding opportunities in the future. Councilor Cathey stated he would recommend moving the Rock Star balcony so that people there can view the rodeo better. He also suggested looking at partnering with community partners on the project. Councilor Jensen asked Mr. Goodman what he would recommend in terms of improvements. He responded that better food and beverage access and improving the guest experience by focusing on traffic issues, improving mountain views, and adding to the VIP experience, would be at the top of his priority list. Ms. Lopez stated that the facility condition assessment will also be incorporated into any study updates, as those maintenance costs may be necessary and will help to invest money as efficiently as possible. Council gave their thumbs up to looking into updating the study and reaching out to partners to help with funding that study.

#### 4. Casper Business Center Design

City Manager Napier introduced Tom Brauer, Chief Operating Officer, to discuss where the City and contractors are at with regard to the design of the Casper Business Center, which will eventually be the public safety facility for the City. Mr. Brauer began by updating Council on where the project stands budget-wise, with the current project estimate being at \$38.7M, with no contingencies, and the available budget being at \$20-25M. He stated that it would be foolish to

move forward without contingencies in place, and the difference in the estimate and available budget is too large of a gap to be value-engineered. Therefore, staff is recommending phasing and the project to help save costs, primarily into Phase 1 and Phase 2. He reviewed the different phases described in the memo and reviewed the proposed layout and major budget items for each level of the building. He also described the reasons why construction cost estimating can be challenging, including volatile construction pricing, supply chain issues, unavailability of skilled/semi-skilled laborers, and freight costs. He then discussed different project delivery methods that can be utilized, including the design bid build model and the construction manager at risk model (CMAR). He explained that with the latter, the City would select a CMAR, who would prepare cost estimates and work collaboratively with the City and architect. This model allows the City to be involved in competitive subcontractor bidding and requires a guaranteed maximum price provided. Any change in conditions utilizes the contingency, as opposed to requiring change orders. Some of the benefits to the CMAR model is that the manager will work with the City through construction and will allow the City to help in hiring subcontractors that are the lowest price but qualified to complete the job. They also work collaboratively with the City to do value engineering when necessary. Usually the contract with CMAR will come with the guaranteed maximum price plus a 5-7% contingency, which can be negotiated.

Staff is recommending the City utilize a CMAR model for the CBC project, and solicit an RFP for a CMAR in the coming weeks if Council is amenable. The cost for the pre-design services will be an estimated \$50-70K, and the City will get a competitive bid as part of that RFP. The City is also planning to engage an asbestos testing and abatement consultant, with one of the proposals being less than half the cost of the other asbestos testing/abatement proposal received. This asbestos testing and abatement should also come with training for City staff which will help in future remediation efforts. He then reviewed the proposed schedule for the project, with the complete design estimated to occur in the second quarter of 2024, bidding to occur in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2024, and construction to begin by the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2024.

Council asked questions regarding the increased costs of construction industry-wide. Vice Mayor Engebretsen asked about the plan for the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, which is currently planned to be empty, and Police Chief McPheeters stated that this allows for growth in the future. Councilor Sutherland asked about the costs associated with the different phases, and Mr. Brauer responded that Phase 1 will cost \$25M or less, altogether. The CMAR will prepare a cost estimate for the entire facility as part of their proposal and it will be phased out after that. He explained that there is not much to value-engineer in Phase 1 of the project, and that it has to be durable but will be built modestly. City Manager Napier explained that the “risk” part of the CMAR title is referencing risk to the CMAR if they do not manage the project well. The contingency should cover any risk for changes for the City. Mr. Brauer emphasized he feels this is a good model and the best option for the CBC building project. Councilor Cathey stated that the CBC Design Committee is also in favor of utilizing the CMAR model. Council gave their thumbs up for moving forward with RFP’s for the CMAR, moving the proposal for the asbestos contract forward for formal approval, and the

remaining portion of the design.

#### 5. Center Street Underpass

Next, Mr. Brauer discussed the complexities that have come up regarding the Center Street underpass project. He explained that the original industrial coating bids came in very expensive, \$350-400K altogether if all surfaces were to be covered. A second option is to only cover the vertical surfaces, and a third option would be to skip the slope painting. He explained that these types of projects require epoxy-based industrial paint products, and finding contractors who own the equipment to do these projects has been difficult. He emphasized that this is the primary entrance to the downtown corridor of Casper, and therefore the aesthetics are important. Councilor Gamroth asked about mural painting options, and Mr. Brauer explained that this area is not suitable for mural painting due to corrosion issues. An epoxy-based industrial paint product will last much longer and will allow easier removal of graffiti and be able to withstand salt and dirt from the adjacent street. He also stated that only a limited number of people have the skills and equipment to do this type of painting. Councilor Jensen discussed the option of utilizing prisoners to do the labor, and Mr. Brauer responded that he does not think this would be appropriate due to the specialty equipment and expensive paint involved. Alex Sveda, City Engineer, stated that the agreement with the railroad company states that everything below the train tracks will be maintained by the City; this contract would be very difficult to renegotiate. Council gave their thumbs up to Option 1, repainting all of the surfaces that are currently painted. Council asked if the color could be updated, and Mr. Brauer responded that they will work with the contractor to provide some visual options for Council.

#### 6. Leadership Nominations

City Manager Napier introduced Fleur Tremel, Chief of Staff, to review the leadership nomination process. Ms. Tremel stated that Council will submit their nominations to the City Clerk by this Friday, either self-nominations or nominations for other Councilors. The City Clerk will draft ballots based on who accepts their nominations. There will be different iterations of the ballots based on who wins the Mayoral straw poll. The nominee speeches are scheduled for the pre-meeting on December 5<sup>th</sup>, and the leadership straw poll will take place in executive session that evening at the end of the regular meeting.

Councilor Gamroth reiterated that he thinks the straw poll should be done in a public meeting as opposed to an executive session. Mayor Pacheco stated that the majority of Council passed a resolution outlining the process for leadership selection, and in that resolution, it stated a straw poll may be conducted in an executive session.

#### 7. Agenda Review

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

#### 8. Council Around the Table

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 7:19 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING  
A Municipal Corporation

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Amanda Ainsworth  
City Clerk

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Ray Pacheco  
Mayor