

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, February 9, 2016, 4:30 p.m.
Casper City Hall
Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Alcohol Demerit Report (Chief Wetzel)
2. Murals & Traffic Box Wraps Discussion (Pete Meyers, Beth Andress)
3. Street Banner Ordinance (Liz Becher)
4. Recreation Center Fees (Carolyn Griffith)
5. City Manager Report
6. Future Agenda Review
7. Council Around the Table

Mayor Sandoval called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Councilman Powell, Miller, Hopkins, Heili, Johnson, Cathey, and Sandoval. Councilmen Pacheco and Schlager were absent.

Mayor Sandoval introduced Chief Wetzel to discuss the Alcohol Demerit Report. Chief Wetzel briefly summarized the Alcohol Demerit Report that was included in the Council packet. He stated that he felt that the report was positive in regards to demerits. Councilman Heili asked about establishments that have incidents but no demerits. Chief Wetzel explained that establishments may have incidents that are unrelated to their liquor licenses.

Councilman Hopkins asked if Mike Reid could briefly present on Safe Ride (formerly Topsy Taxi). Mayor Sandoval introduced Mr. Reid, Co-owner of Poplar Wine and Spirits, to update Council on Safe Ride. Mr. Reid described Safe Ride's background and purpose and explained that it is funded through different liquor establishments. The organization has also held fundraisers, like Thankful Thursdays, to help raise money. He noted that the number of DUI's issued in Casper and Natrona County has fallen significantly since the implementation of Safe Ride. Councilman Cathey asked about the Beacon's involvement in Safe Ride. Mr. Reid responded that the Beacon donated money once but has not donated since. He explained that the bars cannot be forced to pay into the organization even if their patrons use the rides.

Mayor Sandoval pointed out that this is a grassroots effort funded by stakeholders that are not funded by government but are working with the government. He asked how the program started in Casper. Mr. Reid responded that in 2010, a gentleman from Casper Cabs rented a CATC bus from the City to pick people up during the holiday season. It cost \$3300 to pay for insurance, gas, etc. and local businesses raised the money in order to provide that service over

a six week period. The businesses liked the idea of providing a similar service year-round, so they contacted communities in surrounding areas that have similar programs and put together a program for Casper. It is a joint effort between the businesses, the Casper Police Department, and a third party who actually administers the program. Now they are able to fund it and make it viable.

Councilman Miller stated that these programs help lower DUI rates compared to general advertising. The Police Department created one central number for Safe Ride so that patrons would not have to use different cab numbers. Councilman Miller said the state should be encouraged to fund programs like this. Councilman Powell thanked Mr. Reid and Mr. Sweeney along with the other individuals and businesses involved for their efforts. He also complimented the collaborative effort with the Police Department which has led to a decrease in the number of police calls.

Mayor Sandoval asked Chief Wetzel what it would be like without the government's prevailing interest in substance abuse issues and if he thought intervention by law enforcement helps. Chief Wetzel responded that it does help. He added that he would like to see a Crisis Stabilization Center for some of these individuals to seek help that is somewhere other than Wyoming Behavioral Institute, jail, or the Emergency Room. Developing that type of center will take a collaborative effort with the City, the Police Department, and the community. The State of Wyoming does not currently have a useful model to mirror, so he would like to use models he has seen in Washington and Oregon that have produced consistent results.

Next, Mayor Sandoval introduced Beth Andress, Volunteer Coordinator for Keep Casper Beautiful, to discuss murals and traffic box wraps around the City. Ms. Andress gave a summary of what Keep Casper Beautiful does and some of their recent projects. These recent projects included things like underpass art that was produced in conjunction with Serve Wyoming. The mural has decreased graffiti in the underpass from ten instances a year to one instance.

Ms. Andress then explained what the current proposed project entails. It will consist of two parts: a downtown parking garage mural and four traffic signal wraps. The Downtown Parking Garage has graffiti issues, so the mural should help to decrease this. They have selected Fort Atelier, LLC to paint the mural. They do not currently have a design but will be basing their art around the WyoCity brand and will work with Keep Casper Beautiful and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to produce the design. The second part of the project will consist of signal wraps at four different stop lights. They will be partnering with Art 321 and will be receiving submissions of designs from local artists for the wraps. Only artists who reside in Natrona County will be able to submit art and they will be asked to produce art that represents what the City means to them. If Council allows them to move forward with the

project, the art submissions will be collected between February 15 and April 28, and the wraps will go into the boxes by July. The budget for the mural and wraps is \$7,400. The DDA will help raise money and the remaining amount will be supplemented by the Keep Casper Beautiful budget.

Mayor Sandoval asked how announcements will be made for the Signal Wrap contest and who will decide the winners. Ms. Andress replied that there will be a press release and Art 321 will be releasing information to artists. The Stakeholder Committee will choose three of the wraps and the fourth wrap will be chosen by the public. Councilman Cathey asked if this is a way for Keep Casper Beautiful to use up their budget because they have some money left over. Ms. Andress replied that this was set aside in last year's budget before they knew that they would have leftover money. Originally they were short on the money, but because they have some flex room in their budget they can now afford it. Councilman Miller asked about the statistics for decreased graffiti after murals are painted. Ms. Andress explained that this decrease in graffiti occurs nationwide and that many other communities have seen success with murals reducing graffiti. Mayor Sandoval asked Council for a thumbs up vote to let the organization move forward with the projects, and Council voted to allow the organization to move forward.

Next, Mayor Sandoval introduced Liz Becher, Director of Community Development, to update Council on the Street Banner Ordinance. Ms. Becher stated that Council previously asked Staff to research the installment of street banners in the City. Staff started by researching where citizens would want the banners and concluded that the best location would be on either South Center Street or on 2nd Street. Staff then researched how and where the banners would be attached. The banners need to be at least fourteen feet above the street and would need structures to anchor to. The globe heads on the street lights are too short at twelve feet, so Staff researched what properties the City owns along each street that could be used for anchors. The City does not own many structures along Center Street and does not own land on 2nd Street, so staff researched other properties that the City could set up anchors to. Engineering staff worked on calculating the wind loads for different locations and found that there would be concerns over the wind on Center Street. This presents legal liability issues because of the risk of the banner coming down. Staff could look at working with private land owners to build poles on easements that the banners could anchor to.

Staff would prefer to utilize the Downtown Street Banner Program. This program utilizes small banners on street lights to promote activities. These vertical banners currently cost \$200 each. The Events Center also currently utilizes electrical signs to promote events. Mayor Sandoval asked if using the current vertical street banners would save the City money and if it would be less dangerous than the horizontal cross-street banners. Ms. Becher responded that it is cheaper and less dangerous to use the current banners. Councilman Powell asked if private land owners would incur the liability if they decided to put up these banners themselves. Ms. Becher responded that fifteen years ago Council decided not to let private owners do this, so there

would need to be an ordinance change if Council wanted to allow this. If Council did want to pursue this, there would need to be engineering criteria for the banner and anchors because of the wind dangers. Councilman Hopkins suggested creating a structural “Welcome to Casper” sign that could display an electronic message. Councilman Cathey suggested putting some vertical street banners on Poplar leading to the Events Center, since that is where most of the City’s events occur. Council decided not to move forward with the Street Banner ordinance and thanked Staff for doing research on this topic.

Mayor Sandoval introduced Carolyn Griffith, Recreation Division Manager, to discuss dues increases for the Recreation Center. She began by discussing several recent renovations to the Recreation Center. She then discussed membership numbers, including average use on weekdays and weekends. Daily admissions and passes have declined, partially due to other gyms being built in Casper. She then discussed increases in different usage fees including a \$10 per year increase in annual membership passes. She explained that the increase in fees will help make up the difference from the projected shortfall in the budget. There was a \$7,000 shortfall last year from decreases in passes. Councilman Powell noted that there is a scholarship program to help people who cannot afford these fees. Ms. Griffith added that the Board does help some members through a scholarship program that pays for 75% of the pass and registration fees for those who cannot afford it. The Recreation Foundation reimburses the City for those funds.

Councilman Cathey asked why the dues for the Fun Shine Corner were increased by such a large amount in comparison to all of the other fees. Ms. Griffith responded that the experience for the Fun Shine Corner was completely different before the renovation. She also added that Staff would like the Fun Shine Corner to only be rented out part of the time so that it is accessible to the public the majority of the time. There is a very high demand for these rooms, so personnel and utility costs have increased, therefore the fees need to increase at the same rate.

Councilman Heili asked when the last time dues were increased and why the increase is occurring now. Ms. Griffith responded that staff reevaluates the fees every two years so that dues are increased in small increments as opposed to one large increase. Councilman Heili asked if the dues are keeping pace with budget. Ms. Griffith responded that to date the Recreation Center is a little behind, therefore increasing fees in addition to increasing users is responsible. Councilman Powell noted that the dues increase first goes to the Leisure Board, which includes members of public, before it comes to Council. The Leisure Board unanimously voted for the dues increase this year.

Ms. Griffith also explained that a new management software program was implemented in December that makes registration much easier. This new software will help improve

efficiencies and may help with staff costs. Councilman Hopkins asked what the relationship is like between the Senior Center and the Recreation Center. Ms. Griffith responded that there have been increases in the number of seniors using the Recreation Center ever since the Recreation Center hosted the Senior Olympics. She explained that the hallway between the centers is now handicap accessible. The Senior Center and the Recreation Center help each other when either of them has space issues by sharing facility space when necessary. Mayor Sandoval asked Council for a thumbs up vote in support of moving forward with the fees increases, and Council voted to move forward.

City Manager McDonald told Council that the recording volumes for the Work Sessions have been off, but that IT has fixed the problem. He gave a brief update on the land boundary situation that was discussed at previous Council meetings. He then updated Council on the demolition of the Star Apartments, and stated that he and the Mayor had received emails that demolition is complete.

Next, City Manager McDonald updated Council on the budget and stated that a more significant comprehensive report would be discussed at the next Council Work Session. He stated the \$90 million from the State to Wyoming municipalities is still being considered by legislature. He and a couple of Councilmen are planning to drive down to Cheyenne to meet with members of the legislature and discuss their ideas and concerns. Mayor Sandoval noted that Governor Mead is very supportive of City government funding, and would sign for more than \$90 million if the legislature proposes that number be increased. Councilman Powell stated that the Joint Appropriations Committee is obligated to support the \$90 million number, because that is what they originally decided upon. Any changes to that number would have to occur on the floor at this point. That number is a 40% decrease in city funding compared to last year.

City Manager McDonald then gave a brief update on where the sales tax revenue currently stands. Staff will be revising the estimated deficit from \$5.4 million to \$6 million. They will begin looking at the 1% sales tax and the impact the downturn in sales tax revenue will have on the 1% projects. City Manager McDonald stated that Staff will need instruction from Council on prioritizing those projects. Mayor Sandoval asked if the reserves are being used at this point. City Manager McDonald responded that the City could just start using reserve funds.

City Manager McDonald presented Council with a review of the future agenda for the Regular Council Meeting on February 16, 2016.

Councilmembers reported updates for each of their respective board meetings. Mayor Powell suggested using a standardized system for responding to citizens' suggestions after their issues

are discussed. This will help involve citizens in the process. Mayor Sandoval stated that there are steps to use regarding these types of notifications in the State Statutes. Council decided that writing a letter or email to these citizens would be appropriate and that as the voice of Council, the Mayor should be in charge of writing these responses.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Tracey L. Belser
City Clerk

Daniel Sandoval
Mayor