

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, January 10, 2017, 4:30 p.m.

Casper City Hall

Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Restorative Justice Follow-up (Jen Miner)
2. Overview of Wyoming Business Council Grant Programs (Jolene Martinez)
3. Neighborhood Update by Old Yellowstone District Advisory Committee (Liz Becher)
4. Snow Operations Update (Andrew Beamer, Shad Rodgers)
5. West 18th Street Traffic Evaluation (Andrew Beamer)
6. City Manager Report
7. Future Agenda Review
8. Council Around the Table

Mayor Humphrey brought the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Councilman Hopkins, Huckabay, Johnson, Morgan, Murphy, Pacheco, Powell, and Walsh.

Mayor Humphrey introduced Jen Miner, Program Coordinator for the Casper Police Department and Natrona County Restorative Justice (NCRJ) board representative. Ms. Miner began her presentation by sharing a video of Dr. Mark Umbreit, of the University of Minnesota Center for Restorative Justice. The video provided an overview of the philosophy behind restorative justice. Ms. Miner then provided Council with information about the upcoming restorative justice conference to be held in March. Council had already received the projected budget for the conference as part of the work session materials. The conference is being sponsored by a non-profit entity, NCRJ. The conference will have various speakers and will end with an interactive dialog amongst participants. The purpose of the conference is to gather input from the community on the needs and interest in restorative justice in our area. Council previously agreed to provide financial support in the amount of \$5,000 for this conference. Councilmembers asked questions about local financial support, the future role of NCRJ, victim scholarships to attend the conference, and other ways restorative justice could be applied outside of court cases. Ms. Miner addressed these questions and indicated she would refer the scholarship question to the NCRJ board. Councilmembers then made statements about the conference. Council then agreed to provide financial support for the conference. Ms. Miner invited councilmembers to attend the conference.

Next, Mayor Humphrey introduced Jolene Martinez, City of Casper Special Projects Coordinator. Ms. Martinez provided an overview of the Wyoming Business Council Grant programs to Council. She outlined the two main programs; the Business Ready Community Grant and Loan Program, and the Community Development Block Grant Program. She spoke about the application limits, the importance of the timing and restrictions on applications as well as the increasing competition for these monies due to the declining economy. She also addressed the importance of setting a project as a priority and how the State views that commitment. She spoke regarding the increasing competition, locally and throughout the state, for less funding. She also pointed out that strategic timing of applications is now more important than ever.

Ms. Martinez provided a handout to Council that outlines the maximum grant amounts, the necessary matching commitments, and other information about these grants. Councilmembers then asked questions about the phases for the river restoration project. Ms. Martinez indicated that the next application for funding on this project would likely be 2018 and that the whole project would be slowing down because of limited funding and the need for the careful design of phase III. She further described the phases of the project, and indicated that the next phase will need to include the co-ordination of Mills, Natrona County, Wyoming Department of Transportation, as well as a private land owner. Because of this, the design of the phase III will require a lot of time for planning. She indicated that funding for this phase is currently at \$2 million but will cost \$4.6-\$5 million. Mayor Humphrey thanked Ms. Martinez for the update.

Next, Mayor Humphrey welcomed Liz Becher, Assistant City Manager/Community Development Director. Ms. Becher stated that coordinated redevelopment efforts in the Old Yellowstone District (OYD) had reached the ten year mark and some members of the OYD Advisory committee were present tonight to update Council on the area. To bring the new councilmembers up-to-date, she presented information about the 2002 Urban Renewal Plan, 2007 OYD Master Plan, and 2016 Urban Renewal Plan update. The Urban Renewal Plans are used for federal grants. The Master Plan outlined the office, commercial, and residential growth estimates for the 140-acre area over a 10-20 year period. Ms. Becher described many of the office projects that had occurred and stated that the build-out goal for the area was roughly at 50% but did not include the State office building campus, Montessori school, or Hope Church in that percentage calculation. She then described the retail efforts in the area and stated that 30% of the build-out goal had been met. However, David Street Station and Roaring 22 were not included in that number, but both were progressing. She indicated that going forward the focus would be on attracting residential housing development to the area.

Five local business owners from OYD then shared their experiences and successes with Council. These citizens included: Tom Heald (Wyoming Plant Company); Shawn Houck (AdBay.com); Lauren and John Griffith (Racca's and Urban Bottle); and Garry Yake (Corner Upholstery and Yellowstone Scooter). Each of these owners described their involvement in the area, the challenges they've faced, and desires for the future. In general they thanked the City Council and City staff for the support and expertise in transforming and revitalizing the area. Challenges facing the owners included: power and internet service, walkability and trail continuity, lighting, and liquor licensing issues. Overall, they stated that the interest and development of the area has picked up in the last three years and that there is an increased excitement and interest in the area. Ms. Becher thanked Council OYD committee members Hopkins and Humphrey for their participation and support on the Advisory committee.

Councilman Powell asked what might be limiting housing development in the area. Ms. Becher provided an overview of residential housing additions and indicated that as more amenities have been added, the housing has followed and will continue to do so. Councilman Powell then asked if the condition of Midwest Avenue was impeding development. Ms. Becher stated that the reconstruction plans for Midwest Avenue would be presented at a future work session. The project is scheduled to begin this year.

Councilman Powell then asked about Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants in the area. Ms. Becher said that the grant qualifications are updated by the federal government almost annually and that staff will continue to stay updated in order to pursue these monies. Councilman Walsh asked about the OYD Form Based Code and the amount of flexibility allowed in applying the code. Ms. Becher cited specific signage and fencing issues and how City staff, as well as OYD members, had worked to address these issues and amend the code as necessary. She further emphasized that with the many older buildings in the area, projects require individual assessment to best utilize and adapt these facilities. Councilman Huckabay inquired about interest in having a grocery store in the downtown area. Ms. Becher felt that a store or market is a need and will go hand-in-hand with the residential component of the area. Mayor Humphrey directed staff to issue a press release on the progress in the OYD.

Mayor Humphrey then introduced Andrew Beamer, Public Services Director, for an update on the snow operations. Mr. Beamer stated that the plowing budget had not been cut, but that some of the public believes that it has been. He indicated that all 17 plow trucks are up and functional and that we have had a few notable storms recently. He introduced Shad Rodgers, Streets and Traffic Division Manager, to provide more information on the plowing efforts. Mr. Rodgers opened the floor up for questions. City Manager McDonald stated that efforts during these storms had been adaptable and had included support from fleet as well as the staffing of extra phone lines. Mr. Rodgers stated that the number of phone calls was higher than in years past and acknowledged that support staff were significant to facilitating plowing efforts. Councilman Walsh inquired about citizen calls and Mr. Rodgers indicated that staff had worked well to handle calls. Councilman Powell asked if the snow operations budget needed to be revisited at this time. City Manager McDonald stated that changes are not needed at this time because the management of staff time, the efficient planning for supplies, and effective maintenance of equipment have minimized additional costs. He indicated that significant costs would include cutting staff. Councilmembers expressed their appreciation for the effort of staff to maintain safe and clear roads during difficult conditions. Councilman Morgan asked what could be changed going forward. Mr. Rodgers stated that the conditions vary each year and that this year the Gosfield area had been hit especially hard. He then briefly described the natural snow fencing that was put in place in that area to help with future storms. Councilman Huckabay asked about methods and protocols. Mr. Rodgers explained the history behind not using salt and the current practice but pointed out that the effectiveness of any treatment is limited when temperatures are extremely cold.

Mayor Humphrey then asked Andrew Beamer to provide Council with the evaluation of the West 18th Street traffic situation. Mr. Beamer indicated that staff had placed sensors to collect data, and that accident history from the area had been reviewed. He stated that the traffic speeds in the area were relatively low that the traffic volume was below the threshold that would impact access to the area, and that there had been only two accidents recently. He also spoke about his discussion with the resident that brought this matter to Council. Councilmembers asked questions about seasonal variations, about changing the speed limit, about the sensor placement, and whether visual speed indicators influence traffic behavior. Mr. Beamer stated that overall traffic in the vicinity does not warrant any changes at this time. Councilmembers then discussed

the speed limit in the area and the pros and cons of changing any speed limits. City staff will continue to monitor the area and conduct another study when the weather improves.

City Manager McDonald then presented the City Manager Report. He stated that the sales tax revenue was the only matter for this evening. The January sales tax revenue is down. This is of particular concern because the population is not dropping and therefore the revenue per capita continues to decline. Optional 1%#15 revenues have also dropped significantly and if this continues another evaluation of 1% projects will be necessary.

Next, City Manager McDonald reviewed the agenda for the Regular Council Meeting on January 17, 2017.

Councilmembers reported updates for each of their respective board meetings. Councilman Walsh requested that Council discuss repealing the smoking ban at a future work session. Councilman Murphy requested further discussion of prayer at Council meetings, also at a future work session. Mayor Humphrey confirmed that City staff would be implementing the recording and posting of Council pre-meeting audio on the City's website. There were no objections to this action. Mayor Humphrey also stated that lunch would not be provided at future leadership lunches.

Mayor Humphrey then began reviewing the list of committees and boards that councilmembers have historically served on. Mayor Humphrey proceeded to list each group individually, asking for councilmembers input on the purpose and nature of the group. Roughly thirty groups were discussed. Dialog included voting requirements, frequency, purpose, and councilmember interest in serving on any given group. It was the general consensus that some groups would no longer have an assigned councilmember, and that attendance would be voluntary. Mayor Humphrey indicated that she will review councilmembers interests and requests for assignments and would ensure coverage for the groups.

Mayor Humphrey shared with Council a reformatted outline for the Council boards and commissions by category, and requested feedback on the new layout. Councilman Huckabay asked about Council's role in overseeing the police department and requested that a time study be carried out. City Attorney Luben recommended that Council receive their initial orientation prior to getting too involved in such matters. Councilman Johnson suggested that an informative presentation by the Chief of Police at a future work session could be instructive. Mayor Humphrey then asked for further feedback on the outline she provided to Council. She then confirmed that a presentation by the Chief of Police would be scheduled for an upcoming work session.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:15.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Tracey L. Belser
City Clerk

Kenyne Humphrey
Mayor