

Tuesday, December 8, 2015, following
Special Council Meeting
Casper City Hall
Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Utility Rates – Water and Solid Waste (David Hill & Cynthia Langston)
2. Transit Plan (Andrew Nelson)
3. Council Election Process
4. Executive Session – Property Acquisition
5. Future Agenda Review
6. Council Around the Table

Mayor Powell called the meeting to order at 5:37 pm with the following Councilmembers present: Councilman Pacheco, Miller, Hopkins, Sandoval, Schlager, Johnson, Cathey, and Mundell and Mayor Powell.

City Manager V.H. McDonald began by introducing David Hill, Public Utilities Manager to discuss establishing rates for retail and wholesale water and sewer service. Mr. Hill explained that the rate increase is based on a biannual model used has been used for 20 years, and that the model is much more capital-dependent vs. operation-dependent. The rate models were adjusted to take into account existing and anticipated grants, and used different variables such as the COLA and growth rates. The assumptions that were used in the model are the same as those used two years ago. Used things like the COLA and the growth rate. There will be a 3.6% water rate increase, which averages out to an increase of \$1.50 per month to residential bills. Most goes to regional water system. The sewer rates will be increased by 4.1% which averages out to an increase of \$1.04 per month for residential customers. This rate increases are very reasonable compared to other entities around the state. The CPU Advisory Board was also presented with the plan and rates at their November meeting and considers these rate increases to be reasonable.

Councilman Sandoval asked if this is an example of incremental increases in rates as opposed to large increases. Mr. Hill responded that these are incremental and that the Water Board agreed to adopt a policy of raising rates incrementally. Mayor Powell asked if there is any more information for Council about capital construction needs, specifically, the Waste Water Treatment Plan (WWTP). Mr. Hill responded that the major requirement changes from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will probably not occur until the year 2023. The consultant that was hired to work on the WWTP study will be meeting with the regulatory agencies, and will be able to answer some of the more specific questions. Mr. Hill also described some of the other projects that may need attention in the coming years including the corroding North Platte Sanitary Sewer pipe and secondary system piping at the WWTP among others. He stated that an engineering firm

is looking at the system and piping and will make recommendations that will be able to be utilized in the future. He further explained that the nutrient removal requirement by the EPA is inevitable. However, the current Selenium control measures being used by other outside entities may be able to convince the EPA that Selenium removal is not necessary.

Mayor Powell stated that Council asked the Conservation District to propose requests for money in the budget that may prevent that removal through remediation efforts. Councilman Cathey added that it would be much cheaper to help the Conservation District with the remediation efforts than to build a new WWTP. He also noted that the reason the North Platte River is currently on the EPA's list of "bad" rivers was to qualify for the City for grants. Mayor Powell stated that the City still needs to have an insurance policy for if and when the EPA requires the Selenium removed. Mr. Hill stated this will not happen until at least 2023, and that once the mandate is given, there will still be time to make the required improvements.

Next, Mr. Hill introduced Cynthia Langston, Solid Waste Division Manager, to discuss the increase in solid waste removal rates. She explained that the rates were based on a model similar to the water and sewer rates, and that there are small increases every two years. This year, the proposed rate increase will be 1.35% increase, which is about \$0.20 a month for residential customers. The rate increase will be 1.5% for commercial customers. These higher rates will help to cover the increased operational costs. There is also a recommended rate increase of 2% for using the landfill. This will help cover compost yard improvements. She also discussed a decreased rate for burning asbestos for large commercial projects in order to keep the City competitive.

Councilman Hopkins asked if there has been anymore interest from other communities to haul their trash to our landfill. Ms. Langston responded that the City is currently working with the tribes on the Indian Reservations on this, and that other counties, including Campbell and Fremont County, will probably start using our landfill within the next decade after they can close their own landfills.

Mayor Powell asked if the cells at the landfill are close to filling up and if the landfill will need to open up another cell soon. Ms. Langston responded that another cell will not need to be opened for another eight years. The last time they opened a cell, they doubled the size so that they would not have to open a new cell every four years. Now, they are working on closing the used cells every two to three years in order to spread the cost out. These costs are included in the rate model. She also noted that the City needs to continue the campaign encouraging residents to mulch-mow as opposed to disposing their grass clippings in the landfill. She stated that the biggest volume of material in the landfill comes from grass clippings and that people think their clippings are going to the compost yard when they are actually going into the landfill. She further stated that the City is currently using all compost in the compost yard, so more mulch being taken to the compost yard will help the City save money.

Next, City Manager McDonald introduced Andrew Nelson, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Manager, to update Council on two projects relating to public transit. Mr. Nelson introduced Thomas McMurtry, KLJ Engineering consultant for the Transit Development Plan.

Mr. McMurtry updated Council on the Transit Development Plan. He described results from surveys from bus-riders and community members on their backgrounds and opinions of the City's bus-system. The average age of riders is 46.7 years, and 45% are employed. Many people use the bus to go to work. The differences from surveys conducted in 2010 were that people now ride bus more often, and steady ridership has increased. The surveys also indicated that without the bus many people would not have a way to get to their destination or they would have to walk, because the large majority of riders do not have access to a car. Service on the bus and especially the bus drivers are rated very high. The average household income for riders was much lower than community average. Most community members (most of which do not ride the bus), agreed that the bus should be available to everyone and that it is essential to the well-being of people within the community it serves. Most riders indicated they would be willing to pay more for each ride than the current cost. Mayor Powell noted that the City does provide tickets to people who cannot afford the service. The bus currently averages about 700 daily trips with 26.4 people riding the system at any time. The CATC (Casper Area Transportation Coalition) bus averages about 1400 trips per month.

Mr. McMurtry stated that he has no hard recommendations currently and that more research is needed to make more concrete recommendations. He also discussed that advantages and disadvantages of using vendors vs. city owned vs. a transit authority. The next steps are to finalize a plan and present the plan to the MPO Board, the CATC Board, and City Council. These new changes will not happen for another one to two years.

Councilman Mundell asked if there is a succession plan in place for when Marge Cole, Executive Director of CATC, retires. Mr. McMurtry stated that Mr. Nelson and CATC have been working on that separately. Mr. Nelson stated that in his professional opinion, forming a transit authority is the best way to deal with this issue, but that more studies are needed. Mayor Powell asked about the applications of these plans to the budget and if there are ways to make changes that will be more efficient and cost effective. Mr. McMurtry stated that without improvements, the transit system in Casper will stay stagnant, because the system is currently meeting the needs of low-income individuals. In order to expand upon the transit system's clientele, the City will need to make some improvements.

Next, Mr. Nelson presented on the Downtown Trolley Concept. He stated that data from the transit plan allows for addressing the Council goal of enhancing the public transit systems. He suggested that providing ground transportation through a trolley could assist with some of the parking issues downtown. He then described three potential options for the trolley: (1) a downtown circulator that would go in a circle from the hotels to downtown; (2) an airport trolley that would go from downtown to the airport and some hotels; and (3) a charter trolley that would provide transportation for large events and large groups.

Mr. Nelson then discussed potential funding options for the trolley system. These options included funding the trolley through the City, working with other entities such as the CACVB, or developing an independent transit authority. He recommended that the City purchase two trolleys for FY17, using grants that would decrease the cost substantially, and create a transportation authority. He suggested implementing a WYOCity trolley using the downtown circulator option. He also stated

that if the City worked with the hotels in the area for sponsorship, the trollies could potentially be revenue-neutral for the City.

Mayor Powell asked if the City has the power to create the transit authority. Mr. Nelson responded that the City does not have this power, and that the MPO Board would make these decisions, but that a recommendation from the City would help get the process moving. He stated that the net cost to the City would be \$90,000 for two routes per year with no other funding plus the cost of two trollies (\$30,000). He then asked if Council was interested in these ideas and if they would like staff to continue working on a plan. Council agreed that they would like staff to move forward with working on a trolley transportation plan.

Next, City Manager McDonald discussed the Council election process 2016. Final vote in January to elect leadership. Council members who wish to be considered for the position of Mayor and Vice Mayor for the year 2016 will need to submit their names via phone call or email to Tanya Johnson by December 21, 2015. Ballots will be created for an anonymous Straw Poll to choose each position at the following work session on December 22, 2015. The ballots will consist of names that were submitted, and there will also be a space for write-in candidates. Council members can nominate others. A final vote will take place in January to elect leadership. Councilman Cathey and Councilman Johnson submitted their names for the position of Vice Mayor and Councilman Sandoval submitted his name for the position of Mayor.

City Manager McDonald presented Council with a review of the future agenda. Councilman Cathey suggested that the utility rate increases be taken off consent so that a statement can be made about why the increases are taking place. Council agreed to take this item off consent resolution to allow for an explanation.

Councilman Mundell stated that she will be officially resigning her position directly following the meeting on January 5, 2016. Council asked staff to advertise for applications for the open seat. City Manager McDonald said the advertisement will be published in the next two or three days. They decided that the deadline for applications will be December 31st, 2015. Council will make a decision on the interview dates and times at the next work session on December 22, 2015.

Council adjourned into executive session to discuss property acquisition at 7:48 pm, moved by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilman Johnson.

Council adjourned out of executive session and into the regular work session at 8:57pm, moved by Councilman Cathey and seconded by Councilman Miller.

Councilman Cathey discussed concerns with the land swap and some confusion about pricing and where the boundaries for the land is. City Manager McDonald stated that staff will send out some talking points to Councilmembers about the land swap so they are better able to answer questions from citizens.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING

ATTEST:

A Municipal Corporation

Tracey Belser
City Clerk

Charlie Powell
Mayor