

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, November 8, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up (Non-Discrimination Ordinance Updates)
2. Drug Court Update
3. Ice Arena Subsidy & Expansion
4. Fire Station Safe Zone & Cameras
5. North Platte Subdivision Master Plan
6. Agenda Review
7. Legislative Review
8. Council Around the Table

Mayor Pacheco called the work session to order at 4:33 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Cathey, Gamroth, Engebretsen, Sutherland, McIntosh, Humphrey, Pollock, Vice Mayor Knell, and Mayor Pacheco.

1. Council Follow-up

City Attorney Henley discussed the amendment that was voted on for the non-discrimination ordinance at the last Council meeting and also concerns over ambiguous language. He stated that the City Attorney's Office has written some amendments to the definitions for Council to consider at next week's meeting. Another modification that was discussed would be to include age, with the proposal being the inclusion of people 50 and older. Retirement homes were considered and this should not impact them. He also explained that mere speech is not in violation of the ordinance unless the speech engages violent action. He also described the definition for a dwelling unit as a common sleeping area and the reason behind the definition. Vice Mayor Knell asked about the issue brought up regarding search and seizure, and City Attorney Henley stated that this is so rarely used and would be unlikely in a violation of this ordinance. He stated that the ordinance needs to be specific enough for officers to enforce and is currently based on protections under Title VII of Federal Law, and he suggested not broadening it more than that. He stated that staff will script the amendments for Council to consider if they so choose. Council gave their thumbs up to including the proposed amendments in the packet and including them in the script next week.

2. Drug Court Update

City Manager Napier introduced Jeremiah Volk, from Natrona County Drug Court, to update Council on how the agency is doing. Mr. Volk explained that Drug Court is a voluntary alternative sentencing program for two or more drug or alcohol related offenses. It is highly researched and monitored and combines the legal system with drug and alcohol treatment. They have had a 76% success rate with graduates not interacting with the legal system. He described their staffing, explaining that they have one fulltime police officer on staff and two probation officers from the Dept. of Corrections. They also have a good relationship with CWCC for residential treatment. He described the program's schedule and how people move through it to battle their addiction. It is a long program, with an average of 18 months, and it is very difficult to be terminated from the

program. Although the program is voluntary, once the individual is in the program they cannot choose to leave, and it is 100% grant-funded. He described that the graduates often go on to have successful careers and many work within the field to help others with addiction. Their goal is to have 50 clients per fiscal quarter, and they usually have 10-15 graduates per year. He asked that the City continue to show support for Drug Court.

3. Ice Arena Subsidy & Expansion

City Manager Napier introduced Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation & Public Facilities Director, to discuss the ice arena subsidy and also the possibility of expanding the arena to include a second sheet of ice. Ms. Lopez recapped the ice arena's FY22 subsidy, including the number of passes, daily admissions, participation in classes, league participation, group rentals, concession cost/revenue, merchandise cost/revenue, revenue from skate sharpening, birthday parties, and primary user group ice rentals. She stated that because of the demand on the one sheet of ice, the arena is open 17 hours a day during the busy season, and that the 2022 cost recovery was 62%. She then reviewed the ice arena's funding sources and the adverse reactions should funding be cut. She reviewed proposed strategies to reduce expenses and increase revenue including passing on credit card fees, management of non-fulltime staff, improving advertising, sponsorship/naming opportunities, expanding the concessions menu, adding alcohol sales to concessions, improving marketing, growing the recreational adult leagues, leveraging classes to feed user groups, modifying rental rates, and possibly constructing a second sheet of ice. Vice Mayor Knell asked about the possibility of selling liquor, and Ms. Lopez explained that it would be a special malt beverage permit, and based on the Horseheads implementation of a similar liquor license, she foresees a large increase in concession revenue from those sales. Staff feels that they will be able to meet the 65% cost recovery goal in FY23 with the minor changes proposed.

Ms. Lopez then reviewed the proposal to add a second sheet of ice. She stated that no subsidy would be required in this scenario, but alcohol sales would be required to allow for that possibility. Representatives from the user groups spoke that they are willing to contribute capital to the project, but they need assurances from the City that they will follow through with the project should they fundraise the amount the City indicates. They also asked that the City indicate a percentage or dollar amount they would like the private fundraising to contribute. They also explained that sports tourism is growing, and Casper could be a centralized location for these ice sports. The closest arena with two sheets of ice is in Colorado. Ms. Lopez also reminded Council that they made the \$2.5M investment to move the chiller from the Events Center to the ice arena to support a second sheet of ice. Council discussed their concern over the high cost of a second sheet of ice. City Manager Napier discussed the other large projects that the City has on its horizon and the funding that will be used for those projects, including Fire Station No. 1 construction, Casper Business Center Remodel, and Project SAFE. He said that the Perpetual Care Fund and revenue bonding could be considered to cover some of the cost. Council directed staff to do homework on a proposal for possibilities to fund the project, and at that time they will decide on how to move forward.

4. Fire Station Safe Zones & Cameras

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Fire Chief Black to review the history and usage of safe rooms and cameras at fire stations. Chief Black stated that the concept of a safe room is a safe area protected from exterior threats where an individual can go for temporary shelter or infant surrender. There is an emergency button inside the room that indicates to staff that there is someone in the room in need of possible assistance. There is currently a safe room in Fire Station No. 3, and the safe room has never been used for infant surrender or to escape a violent situation. He also discussed that there are challenges with educating the public about the rooms without attracting the wrong kind of attention. He expressed concern that the safe rooms blur the lines between police and fire and require staff to deal with violent situations that they are not trained to handle. He also expressed concern that there are not always staff manning the stations if they are out on calls, in which case a person could be waiting in the room for a long period of time. He stated that safe rooms were omitted from Stations 2, 5 and 6, due to lack of use, cost savings and low square foot allotments. He stated that the total cost to retrofit the current stations to have safe rooms is estimated at \$172K. Video surveillance is also an option, and would take that total cost up to \$247K.

Vice Mayor Knell expressed that because this is so underutilized, the City should not be spending money on safe rooms. Councilmember Engebretsen stated that it was her daughter who brought this issue up, and she was unaware that there was even a safe room to go to. She also stated that having security cameras at high traffic stations would be useful. Councilmember Pollock asked if there is an industry standard for safe rooms, and Chief Black stated that there is no standard, some places have them and some do not. Councilmember Sutherland agreed that it would make sense to have cameras and to have a safe room at the Police Department. Council discussed that they were concerned about advertising the safe rooms because it could bring crime into a building where staff is unequipped to handle it. Chief McPheeters stated that there will be a safe room in the Police Station, as case law has stated that there is a reasonable expectation of citizens to be protected once they are in the police station. Council directed staff to do more research on the usefulness of security cameras around the fire stations.

5. North Platte Subdivision Master Plan

Next, City Manager Napier discussed a master plan for the land around the Ford Wyoming Center in light of recent rezoning of some of those lots. The Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) was willing to put up \$25K toward a master plan for this area. Council discussed that these are strategic pieces of land with tourist draws and important City assets, so a master plan would be useful to help staff and Council direct development of that area. Vice Mayor Knell stated that he will need to abstain from part of these discussions, and thinks bringing industry to the community is important. City Manager Napier stated that the scope could possibly be split into phases, with the second phase being the lots further east for possible industrial development. He also stated that a public art piece could be included within the scope as well. Liz Becher, Community Development Director, stated that if Council agrees, the plan will go out for RFP's and the MPO will be overseeing the project. It will also include drone footage, topography, utilities assessment, etc. Then they will put together designs that will be vetted by the subcommittee and will develop

commercial and industrial applications. The final step would be to present to Council regarding their recommendations. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with the master plan RFP.

6. Agenda Review

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

7. Legislative Review

There were no legislative items to discuss.

8. 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 7:28 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Ray Pacheco
Mayor