

## **COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.  
City Hall - Council Meeting Room

### **AGENDA**

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. RFP for Cable Channel 192
3. Council Goals & Objectives Update
4. Proud to Host the Best
5. Tobacco Ordinance
6. Agenda Review
7. Legislative Review
8. Council Around the Table

The work session was called to order at 4:33 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Johnson, Pacheco, Cathey, Pollock, Engebretsen, Knell, Gamroth, Mayor Freel, and Vice Mayor Lutz.

There were no items for Council follow-up.

City Manager Napier began by discussing the Requests for Proposal (RFP) for the use of cable channel 192. He explained that the RFP was designed to ensure that the City does not lose access to franchise fees due to a disparity with the use that is allowed in the cable franchise agreement with Spectrum. City staff met with partners at Spectrum to better understand what type of content and sponsorships would be allowed. He stated that the channel will follow a non-commercialized PBS model that is outlined in the franchise agreement, and the draft RFP has specific language to ensure that the channel stays within the constraints of an EG (education-government) model. He also discussed the importance of the business plan approach to the operation of the channel, stating that the RFP requires a non-profit status, a certain level of liquidity to ensure there is cash on hand, and a local base to ensure that the channel is producing local content.

City Manager Napier then introduced Fleur Tremel, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, to further elaborate on the details of the RFP. Ms. Tremel stated that if Council approves of the RFP, it will be released this Friday and will be due back to the City in April which will allow time for the selection of a proposal in May. The one-year contract will then be awarded in July and programming will begin in August. She then detailed the sections of the RFP and how the business model and financial viability pieces were included at Council's direction. She also stated that Spectrum was not comfortable with the "donate here" language being used on the broadcast or on social media, so that will be removed. Also, they were unsure of the RFP's requirement for operators to access the City's equipment remotely, so that requirement may be removed as well. City Manager Napier added that there will be no out of pocket cost to the City for the operation of the channel and that this was made clear in the RFP. He also stated that the City will determine if the content is inappropriate or inconsistent with the EG model and will have the power to cease programming and pull out of the arrangement if necessary. Council gave their thumbs up for the RFP to be released on Friday.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed Council goals. He described that Council goals are different than the City's long-term plans, but that Council should keep those longer arching plans in mind when setting their goals. He then explained that there were goals and objectives set by the last Council and reviewed the accomplishments from those directives.

Under the business and workforce development goal, he described "K" Street improvements which included workforce housing development. He added that there was a 70% reduction in crime rates in this area after the improvements. He also described workforce housing developments on Beverly Street that were bid out to the Casper Housing Authority. He stated one goal that was not met was creating development incentives to target development opportunity areas. He recommended that Council consider this for their next goal setting. Another accomplishment was the focus on infrastructure to develop better broadband service throughout the City which helped Casper become a gigabit community. He stated that the City still needs to make improvements in this area, especially within its own facilities. Improvements in this area may require renegotiating with the City's provider or considering running its own network.

City Manager Napier then discussed the goal targeted at marketing and citizen engagement, including partnership with Visit Casper and the Parks & Recreation Department to reach out to the City's constituency. He stated that citizen awareness and engagement need improvement, and the City needs to increase its efforts in the social media realm.

He then discussed the previous Council's public safety goal accomplishments, including increases in police recruitment, staffing, and training. He stated that the Police Department developed their own training academy for new officers when the Police Academy shut down due to COVID. The police department has also seen increases in felony and drug arrests and has had great results in response to the PORT (Problem Oriented Response Team) implementation. The Police Department also focused on active shooter training throughout the community and had a great response from local organizations. The Fire Department also focused on mapping structures, particularly downtown, and creating an appropriate inventory of buildings to aid in fire fighting efforts. City Manager Napier stated that there are concerns about security in City facilities, but given the budget shortfalls progress has not been made to address those issues. He stated that he will have suggestions for the new Council to improve the safety and infrastructure issues in City facilities if the Council supports moving in that direction.

City Manager Napier then discussed the goals focused on retaining employees. A class and compensation study was conducted to address this goal, but was not implemented due to budget shortfalls. If Council sees fit, the implementation of that study could take affect in the coming budget year. He also discussed the goal targeted at the sustainability of the health fund, which was made unnecessary by the offer of the City to join the State's health plan. Staff is currently reviewing the differences in coverage and benefits between the two health plans.

City Manager Napier then discussed the goal targeted at cost recovery and decreased subsidization. He showed a graph outlining the different subsidization amounts of different facilities throughout the City, with the Municipal Golf Course being the only facility not requiring subsidization due to its high revenue. He stated that Hogadon has decreased its subsidization needs drastically and

recently had its most profitable weekend on record. The subsidization of all facilities costs the general fund \$3.5M each year. City Manager Napier recommended that staff and Council look at these subsidies and ways to reduce costs. Councilmember Gamroth asked if Council could get a summary of how these decreased costs at facilities would affect amenities. Council discussed how decreasing amenities can be very difficult due to its affect on user groups.

City Manager Napier then discussed the new Council's goal setting, stating that he would recommend this occur in the next six weeks as it may have budget implications. Council directed staff to compose recommendations for goals and schedule the goal setting and discussion for the February 23, 2021 work session.

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Brook Kauffman, Visit Casper Director, to discuss the Proud to Host the Best financial request. Ms. Kauffman explained what the Proud to Host the Best Committee does, including raising \$170K to \$180K per year to make high school tournaments sustainable. Every four years, the Proud to Host the Best Committee bids on these tournaments to the Wyoming High School Activities Association, and 2021 is a bid year. The Casper Events Center, Casper College, Natrona County School District, and Proud to Host the Best have signed an MOU agreeing to host the tournament for another four years. Visit Casper and the Economic Development Joint Powers Board have agreed to increase their funding to \$50K, and Proud to Host the Best is asking that the City to also contribute \$50K per year for the next four years in order to ensure that the tournaments stay in Casper. Ms. Kauffman stated that the tournaments bring in \$13.9M to the community. Council discussed how the contribution helps leverage millions of dollars for the community. Councilmember Knell asked about using CARES dollars for this contribution, and City Manager Napier stated he will look into this. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with formal approval of the \$50K per year contribution.

Next, City Manager Napier introduced City Attorney Henley to discuss the Tobacco Ordinance. City Attorney Henley explained that the current ordinance is not in line with State statute, and when an ordinance in line with state statute came before the previous Council they voted it down and asked that the current ordinance be repealed. However, this new Council directed staff that they would like to reconsider the ordinance that reflects State statute, the draft of which was in Council's work session packet. City Attorney Henley then reviewed pieces of the ordinance which includes language on vaping, a change in age of possession and use to 21, and a decrease in fines to \$25 per occurrence. He also stated that passing this ordinance allows these cases to go to Municipal Court as opposed to Circuit Court. Councilmembers discussed their opinions on the age of use and possession being changed to 21, and most Councilmembers stated they support passing the ordinance because they prefer the cases to go to Municipal Court. Police Chief McPheeters stated that passing this ordinance will be better for the Police Department, because the charges are better suited to Municipal Court and prosecutorial assistance is very limited in Circuit Court. The majority of Council gave their thumbs up to move the ordinance forward for formal consideration.

Next, Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming regular Council meetings and work sessions. Mayor Freel asked that information regarding liquor establishments that have had issues be included in the work session materials for the February 9, 2021 work session discussion.

Councilmember Knell asked about having an executive session during the police discussion on February 9<sup>th</sup>, and City Manager Napier stated that he will look into this.

Next, City Manager Napier reviewed legislative items impacting the City of Casper. He stated that there is a bill in formation regarding the firefighter aid pension that would lay the entire fiscal liability of the pension on cities and towns and would have a large financial impact on the City of Casper. He said that he is seeking a meeting with the primary sponsor of this bill to share his concerns about this financial impact. He also discussed how Representative Harshman assigned a revenue-based discussion to the Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM), and stated that he will keep Council informed on how WAM's proposal will affect the City. He also discussed concerns about legislation that may affect the direct distribution funding to cities and towns, which could cost the City \$400K. Staff is not preparing the budget to reflect this and is strongly advocating against this type of legislation. He also briefly discussed the City's outstanding \$600K tax bill to the State and said staff has a couple of ideas to mitigate this balance in order to not impact the general fund. Legislation may be needed in order to facilitate these ideas.

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective board and committee meetings and share ideas and concerns related to public matters of interest. Councilmember Engebretsen discussed the need for street improvements on Mitchell Street and the ordinance involving vehicles in yards. Councilmember Knell discussed switching the meeting dates for work sessions and regular meetings to better accommodate citizens who would like to attend the regular Council meetings as well as County Commissioner meetings. Councilmember Cathey asked about a traffic issue around Kingsbury and 21<sup>st</sup> Street, and City Manager Napier stated he thinks research was done on this topic and he will investigate this. Mayor Freel asked about restitution being paid to the Fire Department. Council also asked staff to provide general information related to the City's allocation of CARES funding, including project eligibility requirements and balances. Council also directed staff to add the issues related to Council work session/regular meeting dates and vehicles in yards to the future agenda item on the Council grid.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING  
A Municipal Corporation

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Fleur Tremel  
City Clerk

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Steven K. Freel  
Mayor