

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall - Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. MPO Public Participation Plan
3. 40th Anniversary of Ford Wyoming Center
4. Health Department Budget Request
5. Council Goals & Objectives – Part 2
6. Agenda Review
7. Legislative Review
8. Council Around the Table

Mayor Freel called the work session to order at 4:36 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Gamroth, Johnson, Engebretsen, Knell, Cathey, Lutz, Pollock, Vice Mayor Pacheco and Mayor Freel.

City Manager Napier introduced Liz Becher, Community Development Director, and Jeremy Yates, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Supervisor, to update Council on the MPO public participation plan. Mr. Yates explained that the plan is required by federal statute for transportation organizations such as the MPO. He then introduced Tara Bettale and Katie Angell from HDR, Inc. to review the plan. Ms. Bettale explained that the plan will be pared down to a citizen handbook. She then reviewed an overview of the plan which included the goals of the plan, the federal requirements, census/socioeconomic data, education/input tools, outreach strategies, and engagement graphics. She explained how they did research to develop the plan, including analyzing existing communications processes, conducting stakeholder sessions, reviewing social media chatter, examining socioeconomic trends, identifying virtual engagement tools, and holding self-guided online public meetings.

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Brook Kaufman, CEO of Visit Casper, to review a proposal for funds to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Ford Wyoming Center. Ms. Kaufman reviewed a brief history of the Ford Wyoming Center and stated that other organizations were contributing funds to the celebration, including \$15K from Natrona County, \$15K from Visit Casper, and \$20K from Spectra. She then asked the City to contribute \$50K to the celebrations. She stated that the funds would be used for the year-long celebration and to increase the economic revenue for the facility by marketing the facility and the community. City Manager Napier explained that the funds could come from the CARES Fund. He stated that there are not necessarily any other projects to currently use this funding, and that the funding is being kept in place as a stop gap measure in case of future financial issues. Council gave their thumbs up to give Visit Casper \$50K towards the Ford Wyoming Center anniversary celebration.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed an increased funding request from the Casper-Natrona County Health Department. The request for FY22 is \$650K. He stated that in recent years, the

amount of funding has been \$540K per year, but it was lower last year due to concern over the budget due to COVID. He then introduced Anna Kinder, Executive Director of the Casper-County Health Department, to discuss the budget request. Ms. Kinder explained that the Health Department has continued to run their normal operations as well as responding to the pandemic. She stated that they have increased their staffing from 40 to 100 people in response to COVID. She also explained that there have been new state-mandated programs that are unfunded. She stated that without an increase in funding, some of the Health Department's non-grant funded programs will be substantially cut. The most vulnerable programs will be adult health programs and personnel would probably also be cut. She also explained that while COVID services are currently being funded elsewhere, in the future those funds may be cut off while the Health Department will still be responsible for providing these services.

Councilmember Pollock discussed concerns that there may be a long-term impact on the community if some of these programs are cut. Councilmembers Gamroth, Knell, and Cathey expressed concern over the increase in funding and frustration with the state's unfunded mandates. City Manager Napier also expressed concern over the increased cost, because this funding comes out of the City's general fund. Ms. Kinder explained what the City's funds are used for, including environmental health, administration, the health department building, immunizations, and child and adult health programs. Mayor Freel suggested that Council meet in the middle and offer funding at \$600K and also stated that he knows the Health Department needs this funding. Councilmember Pollock stated that while she agrees that it is unfair of the State to mandate unfunded programs, she feels that not providing funding for these programs will only punish the citizens. Vice Mayor Pacheco agreed and expressed concern over the human impact of not funding these programs. Councilmember Lutz stated that she does not think this is too big of an ask for funding, and that programs like maternal-child healthcare are essential to the community. Councilmember Gamroth asked for more detailed minutes from Health Department meetings, and Ms. Kinder responded that she would work on communication between entities. Council asked for more historical data about the funding for the Health Department, more detailed information from the health department about the funding needs, and information on the gap in State funding. Mayor Freel stated that the follow-up will be scheduled for the first work session in May.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed Council goals and objectives. He stated that the last time Council spoke about this topic there was a lot of direction given to staff, and staff has tried to summarize all of that information into three primary goals: basic infrastructure support, civil engagement, and business investment. The goals were designed so that each has smaller goals under them. He then asked for Council's feedback on staff interpretation of the goals and objectives. Council discussed the structure of the goals and Council's priorities. City Manager Napier stated that he can bring specific examples of what it would cost to fund different priority projects at a higher rate, including the cost to get to different levels of improvement for things like street improvements. Council discussed that they would like there to be a Public Information Officer for the City and a better digital presence for the City. City Manager Napier responded that he would take the adoption of these goals and objectives as a mandate to take a look at staffing for these purposes.

Next, Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming Council meetings and work sessions. Ms. Becher told Council that the survey results showed support for the renaming of CATC as Casper Area Link for the fixed route and Casper Area Assist for the door-to-door route. City Manager Napier stated that the budget for the Casper transit system will be discussed at the pre-meeting next week.

City Manager Napier then discussed the legislative report that summarized the most recent legislative session.

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective boards and commissions and other matters of public interest. Councilmember Cathey asked about removing a stop sign on 1st Street by a school that is no longer being used. Councilmember Knell stated that he received a request from a downtown business owner for the no overnight parking to be removed for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights during the summertime in the downtown area in order to decrease drunk driving.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Steven K. Freel
Mayor