

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall - Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. American Legion Memorial
3. 6th Cent Survey
4. Health Department Budget Request
5. Franchise Agreement with Vast Broadband
6. Tentative Budget to Council
7. Agenda Review
8. Legislative Review
9. Council Around the Table

Mayor Freel called the work session to order at 4:35 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Pollock, Knell, Cathey, Gamroth, Engebretsen, Johnson, Vice Mayor Pacheco and Mayor Freel. Councilmember Lutz was absent.

There were no follow-up items from last week's Council meeting.

City Manager Napier discussed moving the American Legion memorial from its current location to Zonta Park near Fort Caspar. He introduced Tim Cortez, Parks & Recreation Director, to discuss moving the memorial in further detail. Mr. Cortez explained that staff was approached by the American Legion about moving the memorial to a place more visible and accessible for people with disabilities. Staff presented the American Legion with some options for locations, and they chose Zonta Park. They are not asking for any resources in funding the moving of the memorial, and a maintenance agreement would still need to be worked out. Most likely, the American Legion would maintain the structure while the City would be responsible for the turf around the structure. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with moving the memorial to Zonta Park.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed a county-wide public opinion survey that asked questions regarding support of a 6th cent tax special use tax. He introduced Fleur Tremel, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, to further discuss the survey results. Ms. Tremel stated that the survey was filled out by 773 randomly selected Natrona County residents in February and March of this year, which exceeded the goal of 500 surveys. Results showed that 90% of respondents felt that the 5th cent tax has been beneficial to Natrona County and 71% responded that they would be likely to vote in favor of the 5th cent tax if the election was held the day they responded. 62% of respondents indicated that they were supportive of the 6th cent tax to fund the reconstruction of Midwest between Poplar and Walnut Streets, which is one of the projects that is being proposed for the 6th cent tax. The next step would be for Council to pass a resolution for the County to hold a special election to implement a 6th cent tax, which would also have to be supported by three other towns or cities in the County and would need to be approved by the County Commissioners. This issue has been discussed with other Natrona County cities and towns and they are supportive of

the concept. They have also been involved in the creation of the list of projects that would be proposed for the 6th cent.

Councilmember Cathey discussed concern about not getting enough support for the 6th cent tax during a special election as opposed to putting it on the ballot during a general election. He also expressed concern that having the issue voted on at the same time as the 5th cent tax may harm passing of the 5th cent tax. City Manager Napier stated that the timing of the election has been discussed with the other entities and it was felt that a special election would produce the best results in terms of its effect on passing 5th cent tax at the next general election. He also stated that he would prefer for the special election to occur in August.

Councilmember Engebretsen asked about the waterline project for Midwest and Edgerton. Mayor King and Jamie Jones discussed that Midwest and Edgerton have been fixing the waterline due to bad soil. The proposed project is to replace seven miles of the waterline through the bad soil area of the Salt Creek oilfield, which will benefit companies that do business in that area which in turn benefits Casper and other Natrona County municipalities.

Natrona County Attorney Eric Nelson then explained that this type of special election for a 6th cent special use tax would need to take place in November, and the County Clerk would need to be notified 110 days in advance of that election, which would require a July 15th deadline of notice of the special election. He also stated that the proposition can be project specific or can be proposed as an all or nothing question on the ballot. Either way, four of the six municipalities need to agree on the proposition and need to each pass the same resolution as individual entities, and Natrona County would need to pass the resolution as well. Councilman Gamroth asked for the full survey results, and Ms. Tremel responded that staff will get those sent out to Council. Mayor Freel stated that staff will get together with other municipalities to decide which project will be on the ballot and Council agreed that it would be most beneficial to propose the 6th cent tax as all or nothing, as opposed to project by project. Council gave their thumbs up to formally vote on the resolution that will go before the County Commissioners after the projects are decided upon.

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Anna Kinder, Executive Director of the Casper-Natrona County Health Department, to discuss the Health Department's budget request. Councilmember Gamroth stated that he used to work for the Health Department and had decided that he should abstain from these discussions after speaking with City Attorney Henley. He left the Council Meeting Room for the discussion of this topic. Ms. Kinder then discussed changing Natrona County and Casper funding support over the years, grant funding, and populations served. She then reviewed the programs that would be funded in part by Casper, including administrative costs, County health officers, adult health programs, the Natrona County Board of Health, disease prevention programs, environmental health programs, the Health Department building, and maternal child health programs, which are mandated but severely underfunded. She also reviewed other Health Department programs that are not funded using City dollars.

Councilmember Cathey expressed concern about expanding government programs while the population has remained stable for decades. Vice Mayor Pacheco responded that public health programs have changed over the years, and this type of expansion is needed. Council discussed

concern that other cities and towns in Natrona County do not contribute funding to the Health Department. They asked that this be explored further, especially regarding Mills, which is now a first-class city. City Manager Napier stated that he still has difficulty with the increase in funding requested by the Health Department. Council asked that a \$600K funding figure for the Health Department be considered during budget discussions next week.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed a franchise agreement with Vast Broadband. He stated that staff thought it necessary to bring this to a work session, because this agreement would possibly impact future revenue and access to rights-of-way. He stated that the agreement also indicates good growth in private industry and could be very beneficial to the community. This will also represent good competition for services of this type and will improve access to broadband. He then introduced City Attorney Henley to discuss the tenets of the agreement. City Attorney Henley explained that the format for the agreement is the same as is used for Bresnan with 5% revenue received from Vast's revenue and a 10 year term for agreement. The agreement will also include redundancy to the dispatch center. There may be some impacts to rights-of-way but will try to impact infrastructure as little as possible. Staff does not see many downsides to the agreement, and does see benefits from the competition between Bresnan and Vast. In the future, Vast will begin looking at easement agreements. City Manager Napier indicated that the budget presented next week will not include any expected revenue from this franchise agreement, because staff did not want to estimate that revenue stream until the franchise agreement has been finalized and approved. Council gave their thumbs up to move the franchise agreement forward for formal approval at a regular Council meeting.

City Manager Napier discussed the preliminary budget document that Council received in their work session packet. He stated that statute requires staff to provide this document, but that it is only a summary and the full budget document along with a budget narrative will be made available in the packets that will be posted this Friday.

Next, Council reviewed upcoming work session and regular Council meeting agendas. City Manager Napier pointed out that there will be two special work sessions for budget discussions next week. He also pointed out that the reinstatement of an open container area downtown will be discussed next week.

Next, City Manager Napier stated that interim committees have started in preparation of the next legislative session.

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective board and committee meetings as well as other matters of public interest. Councilmember Knell asked about contact information for a business regarding funding for historic preservation of buildings, and City Manager Napier stated that staff would help find the right contact person. Councilmember Knell also discussed concerns over Councilmembers not following their oaths when voting against Department of Justice marijuana funding. Several Councilmembers responded to this stating that this issue is a statutory one, not constitutional, and stated that they did not break their oaths. Councilmember Cathey asked about an email he received regarding bird infestation in Casper. Captain Chaney stated that Chief

McPheeters is still issuing permits to deal with these issues, but some applicants do not meet the proper firearm standards to obtain the permit.

The work session was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Steven K. Freel
Mayor