

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall - Council Chambers

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. Film Commission/Event Policy
3. In-Kind Support – Christmas Parade
4. Employee Voluntary Vaccine Incentive Program
5. Ford Wyoming Center’s Freight Elevator
6. Potential for Surplus Specific Purpose Tax Revenue
7. Agenda Review
8. Legislative Review
9. Council Around the Table

Mayor Freel called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Knell, Quest, Pollock, Engebretsen, Gamroth, Vice Mayor Pacheco and Mayor Freel. Councilmember Johnson arrived late to the meeting. Councilmember Cathey was absent.

Mayor Freel read a statement about the death of Lieutenant Daniel Dundas and led the City Council in a moment of silence in honor of Lt. Dundas.

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Brook Kaufman, CEO of Visit Casper, to discuss the City’s support of creating a film commission that would help to streamline a film permitting process for Natrona County. She introduced Kelley Eastes, who has been contracted by Visit Casper to institute the commission, to elaborate on the process. He stated that Visit Casper is asking for a formal resolution of support for a Film Casper official film commission from the City of Casper and Natrona County. He explained that the commission would be the point of contact for production companies and would provide logistical support. He also explained that currently Wyoming does not have an incentive available for film projects, which has caused the loss of movies and shows being filmed in Wyoming in favor of surrounding states like Montana and Nevada that do have incentives. State Representative Pat Sweeney explained that the legislature will be discussing reinstating the Wyoming Film Production Incentives Program using the statewide lodging tax and will consider the proposal in the upcoming legislative session. Ms. Kaufman also explained that the film commission would be separate from the tax incentives but would help to pair projects with those funds. Councilmembers discussed their support of the project. City Manager Napier explained that staff needed direction from Council for a formal resolution supporting the commission and also direction to bring forward a streamlined event policy process. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with a formal resolution and for staff to work with partners to create a streamlined event policy process.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed funding for the Christmas parade. He explained that the funding is usually provided in the form of in-kind support including trash pickup, street closures, and Police Department support. The full funding ask is \$3K for the in-kind support this year. He

then introduced the new sponsor of the Christmas parade, the Chamber of Commerce, to further discuss the event and funding request. Gena Jensen, Chamber of Commerce officer, stated that the parade had very recently become the Chamber's sponsorship responsibility which is why it was not applied for as usual in the City's community promotion funding. She stated that they have begun looking into private sponsorship but would likely need the City's in-kind contribution for the parade to move forward. City Manager Napier explained that the funding could come out of the Council's budget or one-cent funding. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with providing in-kind support to the Christmas parade.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed the voluntary employee vaccine incentive program. He stated that Council had considered this program at last week's pre-meeting but had asked for more time to consider it. He reminded Council that the incentives proposed included \$250 payments to employees who receive the COVID-19 vaccine, \$100 payments for dependents who receive the vaccine, and \$50 payments for booster shots for employees, and all payments would be after tax. If a 65% vaccination rate is reached, the financial exposure would be \$124K to the City.

Councilmember Knell stated that he had received feedback from constituents who were not in favor of using tax dollars for this purpose and stated that he felt the program was coercing employees to get the vaccination. Councilmember Gamroth stated that vaccination programs have shown short-term effectiveness and there is a financial impact to the City for employees to not be vaccinated because of the increased cost in worker's compensation premiums. Councilmember Pollock discussed that there is a significant disruption to City business when employees are required to quarantine and this has significant staffing implications across departments. Councilmembers Pollock and Quest and Vice Mayor Pacheco expressed that they would like to see additional tools explored to help prevent the spread of the virus and felt this program should be part of a multi-pronged approach.

Councilmember Johnson asked what other ways the CARES Act funding could be used. City Manager Napier responded that he believes it can be used for any purpose, but the City has been careful to use it for relevant costs for auditing purposes. Councilmember Johnson stated that the program is not coercion and employees still have a choice to either get the vaccine or not get the vaccine, and stated he would support the program. Councilmember Engebretsen stated that she has heard from employees who feel that the program does pressure them to get the vaccine. Mayor Freel reiterated that the program is voluntary and is therefore not coercion. He stated he would be in support of the program but does not like the retroactive payments. The majority of Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with the incentive program.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed the freight elevator at the Ford Wyoming Center. He explained that the original elevator is 40 years old and has been having problems for an extended period of time. The City originally budget \$90K to repair it, but the contractors uncovered additional problems while attempting to repair it. These additional issues require re-drilling of the elevator shaft, which requires a very specialized contractor. This additional repair is not currently budgeted, so a budget amendment would be needed to cover the cost of the project. He explained that staff would like to get the work order in as soon as possible. Matt Thomason, Buildings & Structures Manager, explained the repair in more detail and stated that it could not be covered by

insurance because of the age of the equipment. He also stated that Spectra has expressed that it would be difficult to continue booking events and concerts without the repair to the freight elevator. City Manager Napier stated that the funding is proposed to come from the perpetual care fund. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with formal consideration of the additional repairs.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed surplus specific purpose tax revenue. He explained that if citizens vote for the specific purpose tax, the tax cannot run for less than a three-month time period, which will likely result in a surplus in revenue above the project costs required in the proposal for the tax. The surplus revenue would be split among recipient agencies in the same percentages as the original projects, which would mean 53% of the excess revenue would go to the City of Casper. Staff is proposing the surplus revenue be used for street construction and repair projects. Council gave their thumbs up to move a resolution forward for formal consideration spending the surplus tax revenue on street projects.

Next Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming Council meetings and work sessions. Councilmember Knell stated that he would like a future work session item focused on parliamentary procedure and proxy voting.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed state legislative issues that are pertinent to the City of Casper. These included discussions about Fire Pension A.

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective board and committee meetings as well as matters of public interest.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Steven K. Freel
Mayor