

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, July 12, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. Ford Wyoming Center Study
3. One Cent Follow-up Discussion
4. Agenda Review
5. Legislative Review
6. Council Around the Table

Mayor Pacheco called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Cathey, Sutherland, Knell, Gamroth, Engebretsen, Vice Mayor Freel and Mayor Pacheco. Councilmember Johnson joined the meeting at 4:58 p.m. and Councilmember Pollock joined the meeting virtually at 5:37 p.m.

1. Council Follow-up

There were no items for Council follow-up.

2. Ford Wyoming Center Study

City Manager Napier introduced consultants from Strategic Venue Studies and JLG Architects to review their recommendations from the Ford Wyoming Center Study (FWC) in order to make the facility a stronger economic driver in the community. The consultant from Strategic Venue Studies discussed the study methodology, which included a market analysis, a site visit, and comparisons to surrounding competitive event venues. She stated that Casper is one of the smaller markets so there is a limit to the size of events the facility can host. She also discussed that the FWC is outside of the central business district, so adding additional commercial development to that area would help create a walkable environment for visitors. She then discussed the recommendations, including new meeting/convention infrastructure with a multipurpose hall with a flexible wall system, kitchen, and separate entrance. She also discussed recommendations for the arena building, including an upgraded box office, entrance, VIP lounge, and balcony party suites. She stated that for smaller annual touring events, the Lyric facility would probably meet those needs best and would not necessarily compete with the FWC. She then discussed the added economic benefit of doing a full renovation, with an estimated \$11.5M economic benefit to the community, with \$10.1M of that being from the infrastructure expansion.

The consultant from JLG Architects then reviewed the conceptual predesign drawings for the FWC. These included exterior renovations, lobby renovations, premium/club level floor plans, balconies, and drawings for the separate multipurpose convention building. He estimated a \$113.8M total renovation cost if all of the recommendations were implemented which included the cost of the improvements, construction, deferred maintenance, contingency, and escalation. City Manager Napier stated that this is informational only and staff is not asking for any direction

at this time. Councilmember Knell reiterated that this study was brought to the City from Visit Casper, and Council is not considering spending this large amount of money on complete renovation of the FWC.

3. One Cent Funding

Mayor Pacheco stated that after speaking with the City Attorney and doing some research, he does not need to recuse himself from discussion and decisions related to one cent funding. City Manager Napier stated that staff has some alternative proposals to present for one cent funding allocations based on Council's previous direction. He stated that there were representatives from the non-profit agencies, the Casper Housing Authority, and the Platte River Trails Trust to give 10-minute presentations to Council on the importance of one cent funding for their agencies and programs.

He then introduced Anna Wilcox, Wyoming Non-Profit Network Executive Director, to represent the non-profit agencies and discuss the services they provide to the community. Ms. Wilcox described the essential services that are provided by these agencies and explained that local funding is often required in order to apply for other funds that can be leveraged. She also described how many agencies utilize each other's services and losing access to funds can impact many agencies. She stated that some agencies may apply for a different type of funding than they did last time and also explained that operating expenses are much easier to leverage and match. She emphasized that the operating expenses are usually really staff expenses that are necessary to provide a specific program or service, so they are really programming expenses. She also stated that these non-profits seek funding from other municipalities and entities that use their services as well.

City Manager Napier explained how the vetting process will work for allocating one cent funds to non-profit agencies should Council decide to move forward with it. He stated that Council can determine application filters and give appropriate allocations depending on which services Council deems appropriate to leverage City services. Council discussed the use of one cent funding for operational expenses for the non-profits. Mayor Pacheco stated that the non-profits will outline this in their applications, and Council can decide what types of expenses will qualify for allocations at that time. City Attorney Henley explained the statutes that govern what tax money can be used for, including the support of the poor. Several Councilmembers discussed that these non-profit agencies provide services to the community that the City does not, and for that reason, the City should support them monetarily with one cent funding.

Mayor Pacheco then introduced Kim Summerall-Wright, Executive Director of the Casper Housing Authority (CHA), to speak about their one cent funding. She explained the different services that are provided at the Life Steps campus, including housing for homeless teens, transitional housing, etc., and explained that CHA maintains the facility and grounds. She stated that if one cent funding of CHA ended, the programs would also end. She also discussed that the buildings need to be upgraded in order to make them safer. Councilmembers thanked CHA for their management of the property and their efforts to make it safe.

Next, Mayor Pacheco introduced Angela Emery, Executive Director of the Platte River Trails Trust, to discuss the Trust's one cent funding needs. She described how the one cent funding has been necessary in order to leverage Wyoming Department of Transportation and Federal

Transportation Administration grants as well as other private funding. She also emphasized that the trails did rank high on the one cent survey, just below City utilities. She then described some of the recent projects that have utilized one cent funding. Council asked some follow-up questions regarding endowment funding and funding from other agencies. Ms. Emery stated that they do not receive funding from Evansville.

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Liz Becher, Community Development Director, to review one cent funding for transit programs. Ms. Becher stated that they are not looking at raising prices for assist rides or bus tickets. Councilmember Cathey discussed removing bus sites off of main roads. Councilmember Gamroth also brought up moving the library's bus stop as it has created security concerns for the library. City Manager Napier explained that the stops are placed with FTA's approval, and moving those stops is not an easy process.

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Pete Meyers, City Manager's Office Analyst, to review the one cent subsidy for aquatics. Mr. Meyers presented a spreadsheet and showed different scenarios that would help to decrease the City's subsidy, including increasing entry fees. He explained that if the entry fees increase, attendance will probably decline, therefore increasing the fees too much will not necessarily result in a decreased subsidy. City Manager Napier also explained that lessons are more profitable than open swim time, which is why the pools are closed for swimming lessons for several hours throughout the week. He also explained that this subsidy has been in place for at least the past 20 years. He then reviewed the utility subsidies and showed how the utility rates would increase if there was no one cent subsidy.

City Manager Napier then discussed the overages that each one cent cycle has produced, and stated that the City estimates a surplus of \$5.16M from the current cycle. There is also \$2.9M leftover from the previous cycle. He then reviewed options of how to rearrange priorities in order to give \$2.25M to the non-profit agencies. One option was to reduce subsidized swimming by half, remove the Fire Station No. 1 Design project, and remove the fiber project, which would equal the cost of the money going to the non-profit grant program. He suggested that the fire station design and fiber projects should still be completed and that Council could use some money from the opportunity fund to cover those projects and then backfill that fund with the one cent overage. He stated that the general fund would need to cover the rest of the swimming subsidy if Council did not want entry fees to increase. He then introduced Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation & Public Facilities Director, to discuss another option in order to make up the \$2.25M. She stated that there are major facilities, parks and trails improvements that should not be cut. In order to make up this difference, she said she believes the best proposal would be to look at the facilities ask of \$5.95M. Specifically, she suggested reducing the HVAC distribution cleaning & repair figure by \$650K to cover subsidized swimming. She explained that this still leaves funding for the primary components of the HVAC systems and would not put the facilities at high risk for any catastrophic failures. She then reviewed the proposed roof, elevator and anticipated building repair one cent allocations.

Council discussed the Police allocation in one cent funding, and specifically asked about Metro Animal not receiving any one cent allocations. City Manager Napier stated that the armored

vehicle could possibly be paid for out of different fund and the \$150K that had been allocated to that vehicle could be used towards Metro Animal funding.

Council gave their thumbs up to the proposed one cent allocations, with the public building repairs being decreased by \$650K and the community grant program being funded at \$2.25M. City Manager Napier stated that staff will prepare a resolution to reflect Council direction for the allocations of one cent #17 for Council to formally consider at a regular Council meeting.

4. Agenda Review

There was no discussion for agenda review.

5. Legislative Review

There was no discussion for legislative review.

6. Around the Table

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective board and committee meetings as well as matters of public interest. Councilmember Engebretsen discussed water shut-offs for non-payment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Ray Pacheco
Mayor