

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, August 23, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. Indoor Sports Complex
3. Advance Casper
4. City Facility Fiber
5. Metro Funding Priorities
6. Agenda Review
7. Legislative Review
8. Council Around the Table

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

1. Council Follow-up

Vice Mayor Freel announced that he will be stepping down from Council as of August 31st, 2022 due to moving his primary residence out of Ward III. Mayor Pacheco stated that Councilmember Johnson also announced his resignation due to moving out of Ward II, so there will be two vacancies on City Council for Ward II and Ward III. Both of those seats are up for election in November. He suggested expediting the process, so that those seats can be filled as soon as possible for the remainder of the term of those seats, which will only be about four months long. He also suggested that Council refrain from appointing a candidate who will be on the ballot in November, because it could give that person an unfair advantage in the election. City Attorney Henley and City Manager Napier explained that Council cannot necessarily prohibit people from applying but could agree as a Council not to appoint a person who is on the ballot in November. City Attorney Henley stated that there is not a set process for filling the vacancies or a set deadline. Council discussed waiting until after the election to appoint the winner for the remainder of 2022. City Attorney Henley responded that the disadvantage of this option would be that citizens from Wards II and III are missing a representative for several Council meetings. He also stated that ordinances need five affirmative votes, which could be problematic with absences or abstentions. The majority of Council ultimately decided they wanted to go through the application and interview process, as has been done during previous vacancies.

2. Indoor Sports Complex

City Manager Napier introduced Jessica Hastings, on behalf of WYO Complex, to present on the Indoor Sports Complex. He stated that if Council agrees, the lease agreement will be brought forward for formal consideration during a regular Council meeting. Ms. Hastings then gave an update on the complex, explaining that the WYO Complex organization applied for non-profit status and hired State Line No. 7 architects. She explained that the next step is leasing the land from the City and getting the City's support about the direction of the facility. She then reviewed

the plans for the facility explaining that it has expanded in size from the original proposal in order to allow for national tournaments to be hosted at the facility, which would require 12 basketball courts. She stated that this will be the only facility of its size in this region. She also discussed parking for the facility, explaining that they would like to have parking within the ground lease which could also be utilized by Ford Wyoming Center (FWC). She described that they want to have synergy with the FWC and make the facility mutually beneficial and complimentary of what already exists. She then discussed the positive economic impact that the facility would have on Casper, with an estimated \$180 per person per day spending for a tournament. She also described that the sports complex would be an anchor for development of the surrounding area, creating what is called a “halo effect”. Councilmember Knell asked about the maintenance of the facility, and Ms. Hastings responded that the complex will be owned by WYO Complex, and they will hire a management company to manage and maintain the facility.

City Manager Napier then discussed the proposed 99-year lease for the complex, explaining that the lease requires for funding to be in place before construction begins, and there is a window for WYO Complex to obtain that funding. The lease also requires coordination with FWC. Brad Murphy, General Manager of FWC, stated that OVG360 supports this project and recognizes the need for a youth sports/banquet conference space. He mentioned that parking will be an issue that needs to be worked through between the facilities. City Manager Napier stated that the parking area for College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR) will not be affected by this facility, and Ms. Hastings stated that WYO Complex has discussed not having events during that week in order to be able to support CNFR. City Manager Napier explained that the parking area for CNFR has issues that will need to be addressed regardless of this facility, and staff is hoping to address those before next year’s event. He also discussed that the driving range may need to be moved to a different location, and the School District has been notified of this. Mr. Murphy described that OVG360 is working on traffic flow and walking flow between the facilities. Tyler Holthouse, a board member for the McMurry Foundation, stated that they are very interested in supporting the WYO Complex in a major way, so funding should not be a problem. Council discussed the nominal \$1200 annual lease amount, and City Manager Napier stated that the lease figures are still being worked on, and Council can suggest changes if necessary. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with formal consideration of the lease at a future regular Council meeting.

3. Advance Casper

City Manager Napier introduced Justin Farley, CEO/President of Advance Casper, to discuss grant leveraging opportunities and marketing of Casper. Mr. Farley presented the opportunity for Casper to work with Sustainable Strategies, a company that helps to identify and write state and federal grants. Mills, Natrona County, Advance Casper, and Visit Casper have contracted with Sustainable Strategies already. He explained that the company does not write the grants but facilitates in finding the grants and guides their clients to make their applications more effective. This helps to increase the probability of a community being awarded a grant. He stated that the cost for a contract with the City would be \$10K. He also discussed Casper sending a delegation to Washington DC to help the City attain grants in the future. City Manager Napier stated that this contract would not replace a grant writing office. He explained that the contract would likely need to be a two-year pilot period where the City could see if it is worth it to contract with Sustainable

Strategies and if the contract is worth the cost. Council discussed how this could help support staff and provide a tool to answer questions regarding grants. City Manager Napier stated that this contract would need to be included in a budget amendment and suggested utilizing the rollover money from FY22 to fund the contract. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with a contract with Sustainable Strategies.

Mr. Farley then discussed an opportunity to market Casper through Livability, which features magazine and digital content that help to tell the story of a community and promote it to people outside of Wyoming. He explained that Advance Casper is planning on including other organizations and businesses in the magazine as well. He explained that the cost to the City would depend on the amount of space and pages in the magazine, and Advance Casper is planning to support and help offset the cost. He explained that the purpose of Livability is to feature business content as opposed to tourism content, which is already being done by Visit Casper. Council discussed the importance of digital marketing. Councilmember Pollock asked that a menu of options be given to staff, so the City can decide what content meets its marketing goals. Kyle Ridgeway, Board Member of Advance Casper, discussed that this helps to create a brand around business in Casper and to sell positivity about the community. He explained that this would be part of a multi-layer strategy to move business and jobs to Casper and grow the community. Council directed staff to look into this deeper and do research on the proposal.

4. City Facility Fiber

Councilmember Gamroth recused himself from discussion on this agenda item and left the Council Meeting Room for the duration of the discussion.

City Manager Napier discussed how improved City fiber connectivity and redundancy is a Council goal. He explained that the relationship that the City has with Spectrum will end in a few years, and a few years ago staff began looking into opportunities to replace the network in advance of that contract ending in 2026. Business leaders have expressed their concern with the availability and reliability of Casper's fiber optic service. A consultant estimated a \$4.5M cost for the City to install the network. Staff looked into a grant to help with the funding, but that grant is for underserved communities, and Casper will not meet that requirement. Michael Szewczyk, Information Technologies Manager, stated that the City received three proposals from broadband providers for City facility connectivity, and Mountain West Technologies had the lowest cost and best proposal at \$1.013M to provide twelve strands of fiber optic cabling (including redundancy and maintenance) and also proposed cables along the rest of its network where the City may have need in the future. He stated that there are two other providers that are also building out fiber in addition to Mountain West Technologies, which will help increase options for citizens. Councilmember Knell asked why we are doing this now instead of waiting until our contract with Spectrum is finished, and City Manager Napier explained that our current service lacks redundancy and waiting to provide this will mean causing the business community to not have its service needs met. He also stated that Mountain West Technologies is providing this for just above cost to the City, because they are incentivized to build their network out, whereas an existing network provider does not have that same incentive. The project will take two years to complete, and 50% of the cost will be paid up front, 25% upon final installation, and 25% upon final approval. Kyle Ridgeway, owner of Mountain West Technologies, discussed the benefits of fiber optic technology and stated that they already have agreement with Mills and Evansville and presence on both side

of the river. He stated they also have in-house construction, so they do not have to subcontract the installation work. Council agreed to have the contract moved forward for formal consideration.

Councilmember Gamroth returned to the Council Meeting Room.

5. Metro Funding Priorities

Next, City Manager Napier discussed one cent funding for Metro Animal Facility. He stated that Council had directed staff to use \$150K of the one cent money for Police for Metro. He emphasized that this is a very small portion of the actual needs of Metro. Chief McPheeters then discussed the priorities, expressing the difficulty in prioritizing the needs. Staff identified the top three priorities to address with the funding. The first priority is creating animal quarantine rooms to better accommodate sick animals. This improvement would include modifying two locations to house sick animals away from the general population shelter animals, new kennels, and modifications to the HVAC system. The second priority is to replace the cat kennels with new kennels that meet industry best practices for housing animals. The third priority is improving outdoor amenities to allow dogs a location for outdoor exercise, training, socialization, and interaction with potential adopters.

Chief McPheeters also discussed the need for a back up generator and building-wide surge protection as the power for the facility is susceptible to surging. He discussed the need for a portable medical room for veterinary services, so animals do not need to be transported to veterinary offices. He also stated that it would be advantageous to have veterinarian contracted as an employee. He also expressed the need for better lighting, employee lockers, and better canine kenneling. Council discussed forming a task force of stakeholders to look into improving Metro and possibly building a new animal shelter facility and asked staff to start forming this taskforce. Council also asked that the taskforce look into management of enforcement versus the shelter. They also directed staff to look into solving the generator issue in the interim. Councilmember Knell stated that he may be able to locate one that could be donated. City Manager Napier stated that improvements to the HVAC system may also be identified in the city-wide facility HVAC needs.

6. Agenda Review

Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming regular Council meetings and work sessions. Councilmember Gamroth asked that the bottling club discussion take place soon, and Councilmember Pollock asked that the special event permitting process be added to the future work session items.

7. Legislative Review

City Manager Napier stated that there are committee meetings in Casper this week. He stated that liquor legislation and Amendment A are being discussed.

8. Council Around the Table

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective board and committee meetings as well as matters of public interest. Councilmembers thanked Vice Mayor Freel for his service.

Councilmember Cathey discussed issues that may stem from the horse track betting proliferation. Mayor Pacheco stated that there will be vacancies on some boards and commissions from the resignations of Vice Mayor Freel and Councilmember Johnson. He asked that Councilmembers let him know what they are interested in serving on. He stated that the Vice Mayor seat will also be open, and he can appoint someone in the interim. He asked that those interested let him know.

The work session was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Ray Pacheco
Mayor