

## COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, September 27, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.  
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

### AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. Credit Card Fees
3. Fort Caspar Subsidy
4. Amendment A
5. Alarm Ordinance
6. Agenda Review
7. Legislative Review
8. Council Around the Table

Vice Mayor Knell (Mayor Pro Tem) called the work session to order at 4:33 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Cathey, Gamroth, Sutherland, McIntosh, Humphrey, and Vice Mayor Knell. Councilmember Engebretsen attended the meeting virtually. Councilmember Pollock and Mayor Pacheco were absent.

#### 1. Council Follow-up

There were no items for Council follow-up.

#### 2. Credit Card Fees

City Manager Napier discussed the option for the City to start transitioning credit card fees to customers. There would be an estimated budgetary savings of \$168K to the City, and the Finance Committee agrees with this proposal. Finance Director, Jill Johnson, explained that the City is only charged 1.3% for credit card transactions for utility bills, but customers will be charged 2.95% for these same transactions. She explained that credit card companies, such as Visa and Mastercard, require a third party processor, and that processor receives this transaction fee. She also explained that there is a \$2 minimum fee charged for each transaction, regardless of the amount paid. She stated that there are three options for Council to choose from: transition credit card fees to customers for all departments, transition credit card fees for only some departments, or do not transition any credit card fees to customers. Brandy Coyle, Accounts Receivable Supervisor, explained that the customer receipts will include the service fee as a separate line item. Council discussed that Community Development is trying to transition all of their payments to payment by card, so excluding these transactions from the fees may be fairer as the customer does not have any other options for payment. The Recreation Division uses a different processor, so they are not being considered as part of this implementation but will be looking at implementing credit card fees in the future. Council gave their thumbs up to move credit card fee implementation forward for formal consideration, excluding Community Development customers for the time being.

#### 3. Fort Caspar Subsidy

City Manager Napier introduced Zulima Lopez, Parks, Facilities & Public Facilities Director, to discuss the Fort Caspar subsidy. Ms. Lopez began by recapping fiscal year 2022 at Fort Caspar,

which included events, new exhibits, and school tours. She also reviewed the travelling/temporary exhibits and collections at Fort Caspar, explaining that 5-6% of the entire collection is on display at any given time. She stated that Fort Caspar's current cost recovery is 20.7%, which meets the 20% cost recovery goal for the facility. She then reviewed all of the funding sources for the museum as well as adverse consequences to programming should funding be cut. Some of the consequences included eliminating free educational programming, closing seasonally, decreasing hours, and increasing admission rates. She explained that there is only 7.5% of discretionary spending for the museum as most of the costs are utility and personnel costs which cannot be cut. She then proposed strategies to aid in reducing the operational costs, including reducing credit card fees, maximizing volunteer staffing, seeking grants to fund programming, improving marketing, creating exciting travelling/temporary exhibits, increasing rentals of parks/rooms, bolstering gift shop sales, hosting more events, utilizing collaborative partnerships, and expanding museums and exhibits. She explained that the Fort Caspar Museum Association (FCMA) is an important partnership for the museum, and they help to find and apply for grants. Councilmember Gamroth suggested partnering with ServeWyoming and Americorp to recruit volunteers, and Ms. Lopez stated that they are looking into this option. She also discussed that the Tripeny Drug Store exhibit is awaiting a new space to display it, and the FCMA has raised \$500K towards that expansion.

Council also discussed the wind sculpture and its proposed location in front of Fort Caspar. Ms. Lopez stated that she has not discussed this with the FCMA and explained that she and other staff would just want to make sure that any sculpture respects the mission of the museum. Council discussed engaging stakeholders to figure out where it best fits. Council discussed that a news article quoted the Vice President of the FCMA, and it seemed like the FCMA was not in support of the sculpture being located near the museum. There were also concerns about bodies being interred on that ground. City Manager Napier stated that staff would not recommend building a sculpture over a burial site, but they do not think this land is on a burial site, although it may be adjacent to one. Council discussed that wind energy is a part of Casper's history now. Councilmember Knell stated that he hopes the FCMA will consider the revenue that could be brought in with this sculpture and how that revenue could decrease the Fort Caspar subsidy.

Ms. Lopez then described strategies that the museum will be implementing this year to help with the subsidy, including implementing credit card fees, utilizing volunteers, increasing rentals, increasing gift shop sales, improving marketing, minor increases in attendance fees, increasing the cost of discovery trunk rentals, hosting new events, and considering sponsorships. She then discussed what rates and rentals would look like if the subsidy goal was 40% cost recovery and if there was no subsidy at all, explaining that this would not be feasible. Council discussed progress on the museum's website and how that could help boost gift shop sales and museum attendance. City Manager Napier stated that staff will implement some of the discussed strategies into a business plan and will bring that back to Council in the future.

#### 4. Amendment A

City Manager Napier introduced Brenda Janikowski and Kermit Wille, members of the Investment Advisory Committee, to discuss what Amendment A is and how it could help increase returns for the City. Ms. Janikowski explained that Amendment A allows municipalities to invest in corporate

stocks and allows for up to 20% of the investment portfolio to be in these types of stocks. They showed a couple of slides, and Ms. Janikowski explained that over time, these types of investments are on average positive. She emphasized that this is a long-term strategy and also described how the gains would be taken off the table once a target amount is reached in order to balance any risk. Mr. Wille explained that this is one of the few ways to increase revenue without getting the money from constituents in the form of revenue or taxes. He also asked about Council discussing this ballot issue, and City Manager Napier stated that the City can only take an educational role on ballot issues as opposed to an advocacy role. Ms. Janikowski explained that the City would rely on the financial advisors at First Interstate Bank to monitor the investments and diversify the portfolio in order to protect the City from risk. She stated that the State is currently allowed to invest in corporate stocks, and 70% of their portfolio is these stocks with an annual average return of 12.3%.

#### 5. Alarm Ordinance

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Police Chief McPheeters to discuss updating the ordinance regarding alarm licenses and false alarms. Chief McPheeters reviewed the conversation that Council had a few months ago regarding false alarms, and the amount of time that is wasted on responses to false alarms. Since that discussion, staff has reviewed data and held stakeholder meetings with two overall findings: the vast majority of license holders are not the problem, and offering leniency to problem users is counterproductive. In reviewing this data, staff identified that the current Chapter 8.08 of the Municipal Code is outdated, therefore they are proposing a new ordinance to replace this section of the code. The proposed ordinance includes allowing for two false alarms before fees are implemented, and the fee amount will increase each time a false alarm occurs. It also addresses hold up/panic alarms which are usually accidentally pressed which is burdensome for the Police Department. For these types of false alarms, the ordinance proposes only allowing one false alarm and implementing the higher fees. Stakeholders, including the alarm companies, are in favor of the new ordinance. Council discussed that 99.2% of alarms are false alarms which is a huge waste of Police Department resources. Chief McPheeters explained that residential alarm holders will be required to obtain a license if their system notifies dispatch when tripped. Council gave their thumbs up to move the ordinance forward for formal consideration at a regular Council meeting.

#### 6. Agenda Review

Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming regular Council meetings and work sessions.

#### 7. Legislative Review

There were no legislative items to discuss.

#### 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. Councilmember Sutherland discussed that she felt there needed to be more conversation regarding the wind sculpture location. She also discussed a mental health

stakeholder interceptor meeting that she attends, and stated that the City will be invited to get involved in the future. She said she will continue to provide updates to Council.

The work session was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING  
A Municipal Corporation

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Fleur Tremel  
City Clerk

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Ray Pacheco  
Mayor