

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. SRO Contract
3. COLA
4. Utility Rate Model Review
5. Agenda Review
6. Legislative Review
7. Council Around the Table

Vice Mayor Knell called the work session to order at 4:33 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Cathey, Gamroth, Engebretsen, Sutherland, McIntosh, Humphrey, Pollock, Vice Mayor Knell. Mayor Pacheco arrived at 5:10 p.m. Councilmember Humphrey attended the meeting virtually. Andrew Beamer, Public Services Director, filled in for an absent City Manager Napier.

1. Council Follow-up

There were no items to discuss for Council Follow-up.

2. SRO Contract

Police Chief McPheeters discussed expanding the School Resource Officer (SRO) contract with the school district. At the beginning of the school year they reached out and requested two more officers, for a total of seven officers plus one supervisor. He stated that the Police Department is not currently in a position to be able to staff these two additional positions due to injured officers and leaves of absence. The draft contract says that if sufficient applicants apply, the City can hire them for the SRO positions at the soonest opportunity and prorate their compensation. The new draft contract is for five years at a fixed rate of reimbursement. He stated that the Police Department is supportive of this relationship with the school district and believes in the success of the SRO program and the student/mentorship relationships it provides. Councilmember Engebretsen asked about the SRO's role in shutting down schools when there is a threat, and Chief McPheeters responded that the SROs are intricately involved and work to act quickly in the event of a threat. Council gave their thumbs up to move the SRO contract forward for formal approval at a regular Council meeting.

3. Cost of Living Adjustment

Next, Mr. Beamer introduced Jill Johnson, Finance Director, to discuss a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for staff. Ms. Johnson stated that a 3.5% COLA is already part of the collective bargaining agreement with the Fire Department. That agreement states that if the City's sales tax receipts exceed budgeted sales tax revenue by \$425K, the Fire Department employees would receive a 3.5% COLA. The budget message also stated that if the sales tax receipts were above this level, staff requested to visit with Council again about an additional COLA for all

employees. The sales tax receipts are \$935K above the seasonally adjusted monthly budget benchmark established (year-to-date). Ms. Johnson also discussed the high inflation rate, and how Wyoming has a higher rate of inflation than the national average. She also stated that inflation is projected to remain high in the near future. She then discussed options, including giving all employees a COLA, waiting until July to do a COLA, or doing no COLA. She stated that the Fire Department COLA will happen regardless, because it has already been agreed upon. She also reminded Council that part of this Fire Department agreement says that anytime a COLA is provided to the rest of City staff, it must also be provided to Fire Department staff. Therefore, if Council decided to wait until July to do a COLA for all employees, the Fire Department staff would get an additional COLA, one now and one in July. She stated that the increased personnel dollars can be supported by the budget. Council discussed that this COLA was promised to employees if the benchmark was reached. They gave their thumbs up to giving a 3.5% COLA to all employees in January.

4. Utility Rate Review Model

Next, Mr. Beamer discussed the utility rates and how the different enterprise funds are performing. He stated that all of the models have a built in 6% inflation rate and half a percent growth also built in. The Balefill Fund is increasing but not high enough for the next cell construction, so these rates will need to be looked at again next year to reach that amount by the time it is needed in 2032. Councilmember Gamroth asked about the wind blade disposal program, and Cindie Langston, Solid Waste Supervisor, explained how the blades are buried in space-saving ways. She stated that the City has not received any in awhile and the industry is moving towards recycling the blades in the future. Vice Mayor Knell asked about an issue he had at the Balefill regarding being charged an expensive rate, and Ms. Langston stated that it is a guess by the clerks based on weight. Councilmember Sutherland asked for the rate models to be updated to show a star for the fund total goal that needs to be reached. Mr. Beamer then discussed the Refuse Collection Fund, stating that this fund will see 6% rate increases in January. Councilmember Cathey asked about utilizing red fuel, and Mr. Beamer stated staff will look into that. Mr. Beamer then discussed the Water Fund, stating that this fund will see a 7% rate increase for the next several years to counteract inflation. He stated that the one cent subsidy was decreased for this fund but it will still need capital expenditures to replace water mains in the near future. He then discussed the Sewer Fund, stating that this fund will see an 11% increase next month. Next year Council will need to review how aggressive of a rate increase is needed to adjust for capital expenses.

5. Agenda Review

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

6. Legislative Review

Mayor Pacheco stated that several Councilmembers will be attending a Wyoming Association of Municipalities meeting in January. He suggested not holding a legislative dinner this year due to legislative scheduling, and to instead focus a more targeted approach in Cheyenne during the legislative session.

8. 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 asked if staff could draft a letter opposing a proposal to change zoning in the county, as this will affect City ordinances and code enforcement and could make properties in industrial areas difficult to sell. Vice Mayor Knell stated that he sent messages to all Councilmember asking for committee and board assignment requests. He stated that he plans to appoint Paul Bertoglio to a citizen seat on the Water Board, because he is currently on the board and his knowledge will be helpful over the next couple of years due to potential litigation.

The work session was adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Ray Pacheco
Mayor