

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

City Hall – Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
2. Platte River Trails New Director Introduction
3. Edness Kimball Wilkins Easement
4. Capital Budget Review
5. Budgeting for Grants
6. Poplar & CY Intersection Lane Extension
7. Municipal Court Committee
8. Agenda Review & Council Leadership Process
9. Legislative Review
10. Council Around the Table

Mayor Knell called the work session to order at 4:34 p.m. with the following Councilors present: Cathey, Pollock, Engebretsen, Haskins, Jensen, Gamroth and Mayor Knell. Councilor Bond attended the meeting virtually. Vice Mayor Pacheco was absent.

1. Council Meeting Follow-up

There were no items for Council follow-up.

2. Platte River Trails New Director Introduction

City Manager Napier introduced Rachel Spear, new Executive Director of the Platte River Trails Trust, who is replacing Angela Emory who is retiring. Council welcomed Ms. Spear.

3. Edness Kimball Wilkins Easement

City Manager Napier then introduced Eric Easton, Platte River Trails Trust Board Member. Mr. Easton discussed the goals of the trust to create a trail from one end of Casper to the other. He stated that they have the option to extend the Casper Rail-Trail to Edness Kimball Wilkins State Park, but this goes through State land so they will need to ask for an easement. The extension includes an overpass which will provide for a safer trail. The ownership would remain with the City, and the application would be on behalf of the City. He stated they are not asking for money at this point, just support to apply for the easement. Council gave their thumbs up in support of the easement application.

4. Capital Budget Review

Next, City Manager Napier discussed the \$45M proposed capital agenda for Fiscal Year 2024. He reminded Council that the proposed capital budget includes only projects that have money on hand or grant commitments to fund them. He stated that all of the projects are needs within the budget, and the proposed capital agenda has been whittled down from a much larger list of capital needs. He then introduced Pete Meyers, Finance Analyst, and department heads to review larger projects and answer questions from Council. Police Chief McPheeters began by explaining that his biggest

need was funding for police cars. Many of the existing fleet vehicles are original 2013 vehicles when the one to one program began. He also discussed the police facility project, and stated that they are currently on the 3rd iteration of the floor plan drawings; these are being finalized in the next few weeks in preparation for presentation to Council. Following that presentation, the Police Department will be in a position to start putting the project out to bid to estimate the cost of the project. Council asked about the RFP process and prioritizing Wyoming companies. City Manager Napier replied that there are limited for options of Wyoming companies that can be bonded for a project of this scale. However, the City will try to seek local work as much as possible. He also answered questions regarding funding sources, including questions about excess one cent funds and the opportunity fund. Councilor Pollock asked about the stabilization of the replacements for police vehicles, and Chief McPheeters responded that they will try to frontload to the extent possible. The Police Department prioritizes vehicles that have reached a lemon status and are more expensive to keep than get rid of. Future plans include trying to address the replacements more on an annual basis and to try to get at least seven years out of a well-maintained vehicle. He also discussed the need to have backup vehicles available for use when primary vehicles are being worked on.

Next, Liz Becher, Community Development Director, discussed transit capital projects including garage floor replacement, office roof replacement, and HVAC for the transit office. She also discussed elevator replacement at the parking garage and irrigation at the LifeSteps campus. Council discussed their safety concerns at the parking garage, and Chief McPheeters stated that the Police Department is trying to address this with foot patrol sweeps and has made safety a top priority for the parking garage. Ms. Becher stated that the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is also looking at ways to improve this.

Next, Michael Szewczyk, IT Manager, discussed IT capital projects, including a cyber intrusion detection service purchase to provide cyber security for the City, and AV system equipment upgrades, specifically to improve the Council meeting AV capabilities.

Next, Andrew Beamer, Public Services Director, discussed the street projects outlined in the capital agenda. He reviewed some of the larger projects at the Balefill, Waste Water Treatment Plant, and for Casper Public Utilities. He explained that the capital budget for FY24 is smaller than FY23, because FY23 was a catch-up year and funding for FY24 is a combination of 1%#16 and 1%#17. He also explained that streets projects are often a combination of grant funding and one cent funding. City Manager Napier discussed the City's capacity to do more streets projects, explaining that large projects are farmed out to consultants, so if more funding was available the City could handle additional capital streets projects. Councilor Gamroth asked about the water quality testing process, and Mr. Beamer responded that the water is continuously tested and the tanks are drained at least annually. They are also inspected every three to four years.

Next, Fire Chief Black discussed the Fire Department's capital requests, including roof replacement for Fire Station No. 3, extrication equipment, and vehicle replacements. He noted that the City is receiving the bond back for the Fire Station No. 3 roof damage which will help with the purchase of that roof replacement.

Next, Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation, and Public Facilities Director, discussed her department's large capital requests, including the Phase 1 of the Washington Park project, which has received a 1:1 match for a State grant. This project includes the conversion of two of the tennis courts to pickleball courts, replacing lights/fixtures at the ballfield, and renovating the restrooms in the midget football storage room. Other department capital projects include the Aquatics Center roof replacement, purchase of sewer inspection equipment, and purchase of irrigation equipment. She stated that facility maintenance request funding will come out of their respective divisions' budgets.

City Manager Napier stated that there will be further budget discussion in the next couple of months. He asked that Council provide any feedback to staff. Council gave their thumbs up for the proposed capital agenda to be included in the proposed FY24 budget.

5. Budgeting for Grants

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Jill Johnson, Finance Director, to discuss the City's new grant budgeting policy. Ms. Johnson explained that many federal grants require the City not to supplant budgeted expenses with federal dollars. Due to this requirement, the City will not include these grant-funded projects in the budget until the grant is awarded, at which time it will come back to Council as a budget amendment. Council discussed projects that may be getting grant funding, such as the river projects. Council also discussed other budgetary questions related to the capital agenda.

6. Poplar & CY Intersection Lane Extension

Next, Mr. Beamer discussed a follow-up item concerning the Poplar Street & CY intersection lane extension. He explained that by shifting the double yellow line east to create an extra lane heading south between CY and 19th Street, the southbound lanes will have more time to merge. This can be done within the existing street structure and will just involve removing some on street parking, repainting the stripes, and adding some signage. The cost is nominal; he estimated around \$2K. Mayor Knell asked about extending the extra lane to 25th Street, and Mr. Beamer responded that this would be a much larger project with a much larger cost associated with it. Councilor Gamroth advocated for a feedback process from the neighbors that will be affected for the proposed lane extension. Council gave their thumbs up to send out a letter to all property owners that will be affected between 17th and 19th streets and gather neighborhood input. The feedback will be brought back to City Council before proceeding with the lane extension.

7. Municipal Court Committee

Mayor Knell discussed the evaluation process for Municipal Judge Martinez, and stated that Judge Martinez would like the Council to form a Municipal Court Committee with two liaisons from City Council to aid Council in helping to evaluate her. Councilors Haskins and Bond volunteered for the Committee. Mayor Knell stated that the public information from the minutes from those meetings will be available in the Info Packet. Council discussed whether to meet with Judge Martinez as a group or in executive session quarterly. City Attorney Nelson stated that he would advise discussing pending investigations and anything about security in an executive session.

Council decided to add a Judge’s report to the April 18th pre-meeting and to go over her evaluation in the executive session after the regular meeting. They asked that the first Municipal Court Committee meeting be scheduled for the first week of April.

8. Agenda Review & Leadership Process

Next, Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming regular Council meetings and work sessions. Councilor Gamroth asked about the grid addendum, and Council agreed that they would discuss these items more at the next pre-meeting. Council discussed the Council leadership selection process. Councilor Gamroth explained that he would advocate for the entire selection process to be in an open meeting to provide transparency. City Attorney Nelson clarified that the formal vote has to be in public, so the selection process that is being discussed tonight is the straw poll for Council leadership. He stated that statutes do allow deliberation of the leadership appointments to be in done in an executive session, but whether or not to do that is up to Council. Council discussed having an open ballot versus conducting the ballot filling and counting in executive session. They also discussed that if the ballots are filled out in a work session, they are open to a records request. If the ballots are filled out and counted in an executive session they are not open to be requested in a records request, because they would be considered executive session materials. The majority of Councilors gave their thumbs up to fill out and count straw poll ballots in executive session and have the leadership winners announced publicly afterwards. Councilor Gamroth gave a thumbs down to the proposal.

9. Legislative Agenda

There was no legislative agenda discussion.

10. 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. Council discussed concerns from downtown business owners regarding homeless individuals. Mayor Knell discussed that the WYO Sports Ranch will be completed before the College National Finals Rodeo and the operators of the new complex will work with the CNFR and provide support for that event. He discussed the Municipal Court Committee explaining that it will be important for the Municipal Judge’s evaluation. He also discussed his conversation with Municipal Court Judge Martinez, and stated that she said Council is always welcome to visit the Municipal Court.

The work session was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
ATTEST:

A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Bruce Knell
Mayor