

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up (Grid Addendum Item Status)
2. MRG Request
3. Highland Park Tennis MOU Amendment
4. Camping Ordinance
5. One Cent Applications/Process
6. Agenda Review
7. Council Around the Table

Mayor Knell called the work session to order at 4:02 p.m. with the following Councilors present: Pollock, Engebretsen, Haskins, Jensen, Gamroth, Bond, Vice Mayor Pacheco and Mayor Knell. Councilor Cathey was absent.

Mayor Knell stated that the Grid Addendum Item Status topic will be added to the end of the meeting. He also discussed that there was a person posing as a Councilor and creating problems at the library recently. This individual was in fact not a member of the City Council.

1. Council Meeting Follow-up

There were no items for Council follow-up.

2. Minimum Revenue Guarantee (MRG) Request

City Manager Napier discussed a request by the Casper-Natrona County International Airport Board and the Casper Fly Alliance for the City to support an MRG with Delta Airlines/Skywest. He stated that Council is not obligated to provide a yes or no answer tonight as it is a complex issue. He then introduced members of the Airport Board and Fly Alliance to explain the MRG and the request. Kermit Willie began by discussing the current MRG agreement that the Natrona County Commissioners approved to maintain air service with SkyWest between Casper and Salt Lake City. He explained that Casper is fortunate to have been offered this opportunity, as the air service was cancelled in many other communities and not given the MRG option. Glenn Januska, Airport Director, then discussed how other communities in Wyoming have had to use similar types of MRG's to sustain flights. Casper was self-sustaining until pilot shortages during COVID. Due to issues around that time, Delta asked the airport to implement an MRG, and the board worked with Natrona County and Wyoming's Aeronautics Commission to put one in place. SkyWest has requested another MRG for 1/1/23-6/30/23 for \$880.5K, 40% of which has been traditionally funded by the State of Wyoming. They explained that this funding from the State is stable and will be implemented going forward. The Fly Casper Alliance is asking the City of Casper to contribute \$50K to this MRG to show broad-based community support for the agreements. He stated that they are looking at utilizing larger 70-90 passenger airplanes starting in July which is much better for the market and helps with recruiting good pilots. The larger planes cost more to operate but also have a higher revenue potential. The Fly Casper Alliance members also discussed how the budget is what they predict the loss to be, which has ended up being much less than predicted.

They also explained that eventually if the flights are self-sufficient, they would not be required to pay anything to SkyWest/Delta.

Councilor Engebretsen asked if United Airlines is going to implement a similar type of MRG, and Mr. Januska replied that Natrona County's airport has many more flights with United, so an MRG is less likely. Mayor Knell discussed how Wyoming has too many small airports and would benefit from combining air service to a place like the Casper-Natrona County Airport which is centralized. He also asked if the Airport Board and Fly Alliance had been seeking private sector investment as well. They responded that they had been working with the private sector and Advance Casper to obtain funding to support the air service. Tassma Powers, from the McMurry Group, also discussed private sector involvement and explained that the Fly Casper Alliance is looking at the MRG as a short-term solution, and they are working hard to keeping and improving air service in Casper. Members of the Fly Casper Alliance spoke about their optimism that this would only be a short-term solution going forward. Councilor Pollock stated that it would be a mistake for Casper to lose the Delta flight, as this is one of the most important flights for business travelers travelling to and from Casper from the western United States. She also stated that she does not anticipate that trying to consolidate airports in Wyoming is a practical reality in the near future, as each community wants the convenience of having their own airport. She also discussed how losing the Delta flight would negatively impact tourism. Ms. Powers discussed plans the Fly Casper Alliance has to increase revenue, including a pilot-training program, becoming a regional hub, and increasing marketing of the airport. The Alliance members stated that they would like an answer from Council by next month about contributing funding to the MRG, and Council directed staff to put a follow-up for this item on a work session agenda in May.

3. Highland Park MOU Amendment

Next, City Manager Napier discussed a potential amendment to resurface some of the courts at Highland Park for pickleball, in addition to the tennis courts that are already being added. The City's commitment would be strictly for resurfacing, and the School District would continue to be responsible for maintenance of the courts. The school district is resurfacing the other courts, and the amendment would only be for eight courts on the northernmost portion of the tennis complex. Council gave their thumbs up to move forward with the MOU amendment for formal consideration at a future regular Council meeting.

4. Camping Ordinance

Next, City Manager Napier introduced City Attorney Nelson to discuss the possible amendment to the City's camping ordinance and possible solutions for addressing the homeless situation in Casper. City Attorney Nelson discussed how this is part of the homeless initiative and how it can be broken into three portions: camping on public/private property; homeless camps, especially by the river area; and designating/zoning certain areas of the City to prohibit camping. He discussed how some of these issues are complicated, but policies and laws addressing clear health and safety issues are easier to argue and to implement. He explained that there could be legal challenges to some of the proposed policies, and there is not much case law to base Casper's ordinance upon. He suggested possibly beefing up some of the current ordinances to prohibit things like sleeping

on a park bench. He also stated that the City could develop operating procedures to aid in addressing some of the homeless issues. Chief McPheeters then discussed issues his officers have run into trying to address squatters who are trespassing on vacant private property. He stated that they are limited in their ability to protect distant owners of estates under the current circumstances. In order to address these issues, he recommended strengthening private property laws in the City. City Attorney Nelson explained that the issue with the squatters is that the police are many times unable to verify if they have permission to be on the private property. Chief McPheeters stated that he did not think the RV parking issue is a problem anymore, but code enforcement does have issues with people living in RV's on properties and this is not currently addressed in the ordinance.

Councilor Pollock stated that she does not feel comfortable giving direction until Council has received a more comprehensive presentation from the Homeless Coalition. She expressed concern that making homelessness illegal is not a good answer to the problem and could create more problems than answers to the situation. Councilor Gamroth stated that as a liaison to the Homeless Coalition Task Force, he is supportive of the policies discussed tonight and is in support of adopting a policy of compassionate enforcement. He also suggested Council consider creating a policy to prohibit things that should not be allowed and that will help to protect citizens and eliminate safety hazards. Mayor Knell stated that Council does need to consider stopping this problem before it gets worse and there does not necessarily have to be a compassionate component introduced at the same time. City Attorney Nelson stated that he does have concerns that there may be constitutional issues with drafting an ordinance that criminalizes behavior without offering services that give the individual another option, and therefore make homelessness illegal. Council gave their thumbs up for the City Attorney's Office and City Manager's office to start working on ordinances that would address some of these issues. They also gave their thumbs up to City Manager Napier to develop a protocol for dealing with routine complaints about things like campsites in the river corridor and to come back to Council with standard operating procedures from a policy standpoint to deal with some of these issues.

5. One Cent Applications & Process

Next, Council discussed what process they would use to review one cent community project applications and allocations. Council discussed that they did feel each Councilor should read all of the applications and assign a dollar amount to fund each, with a total allocation of the budgeted \$2.25M. Then they decided they would review everyone's allocations at the April 25th work session. Mayor Knell suggested that Council consider if each of the asks meet Council goals. Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, Fleur Tremel, stated that City Attorney Nelson did review the applications to ensure they all met statutory requirements for funding.

Council discussed whether or not to allow Casper Speedway to submit an application for consideration two weeks late, and agreed that this would not be fair and they would not consider that application. Council agreed that they did not need to schedule interviews with the agencies, as enough information was included in the applications. Council discussed what to do with agencies that had incomplete applications and decided to make a note of those agencies and take their omissions into consideration during the allocation discussion. They also asked staff to outline the major asks for each organization in the spreadsheet. Council gave their thumbs up to this

process and asked that each Councilor submit their allocations to Ms. Tremel for combination into the final spreadsheet.

8. Agenda Review

Next, Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming regular Council meetings and work sessions. Council gave their support for the Mayor to sign an opioid settlement agreement that will then be formally ratified on April 18th during the regular Council meeting.

9. 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. Councilor Engebretsen expressed concern about asking employees to come to work to conduct a Council meeting during a snowstorm and stated that this is unsafe. Mayor Knell responded that employees always have the option to be excused if they feel unsafe to come to work.

The work session was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Bruce Knell
Mayor