

COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall – Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Meeting Follow-up (Student Council Scholarship & Proposed Resolution)
2. Transit Electric Fleet Conversion Study Update
3. Casper Mountain Property Easement Request
4. Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Amendment #3
5. Public Officer Training
6. WYDOT I-25 Casper Marginal Enhancements
7. Agenda Review
8. Legislative Review
9. Council Around the Table

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

1. Meeting Follow-up (Student Council Scholarship & Citizen Proposed Resolution)

Mayor Knell asked Council for direction on pursuing a student council scholarship that was brought up during public comment at last week's Council meeting. Councilor Engebretsen stated that she liked the idea but would like it brought up during next year's budget process. Councilor Gamroth stated he liked the idea but felt it was more appropriate to be explored by an advisory board, such as the Casper Youth Council. Councilor Bond expressed concern with utilizing tax payer money for this, and Mayor Knell expressed concern with only offering this to students pursuing college. Councilor Haskins stated she was in favor of having an advisory group do the legwork for the City. Council gave their thumbs up for Councilor Gamroth to bring this idea up to the Casper Youth Council.

Mayor Knell acknowledged that the City received another \$25K check from the Casper Rotary Club before the work session started, and thanked them for their donation.

Mayor Knell then discussed the resolution that was proposed to City Council by several citizens at last week's Council meeting to prohibit abortion businesses in Casper. He stated that passing a resolution like this would be moot, because they would be able to operate under a stay until it is considered by the Supreme Court. City Attorney Nelson gave a brief overview of the abortion laws that have been changed and challenged since the Dobbs decision. Due to appeals and the laws making their way through the legal system, a decision on this may not come down for another year or two. Until those decisions are made, abortion is legal pursuant to previous laws. He also explained that the City does not have general business licenses, so the City did not issue a business license to the clinic. Inspections were done by the State Department of Health, and building plans were approved according to the building code in Casper. Council gave their thumbs down to pursuing the proposed resolution.

2. Transit Electric Fleet Conversion Study Update

City Manager Napier introduced Beth Andress, MPO Supervisor, to update Council on the transit electric fleet conversion study. Ms. Andress introduced consultants from HDR Engineering who performed the study. Tyler Hopkins, one of the consultants, explained that the study will enter into a public comment period tomorrow, then will go to the MPO Policy Committee for approval. He then reviewed the project's purpose, which included analyzing the current fleet, outlining the feasibility of transition, identifying costs, identifying funding opportunities, and working with Council goals. He stated that there is a significant amount of federal funding allocated to electric fleet transitions. The existing conditions in Casper require vehicles that drive 150-200 miles per day, and there are no valid options for this range with electric vehicles. There was one hybrid option, but it a repower vehicle which has maintenance and reliability issues. There are currently no hydrogen fuel cell options available either. Therefore, in order to utilize electric vehicles, the City would need to install on route charging stations, either slow depot charging, fast inductive charging, or fast conductive charging. Some of these can still take awhile to charge, so this may not be feasible.

The consultants developed transition strategies, including a pilot program which would include the purchase of two electric vehicles for delivery in 2027 and 2029. This would require only one inductive charging pad at the downtown transfer center, and would require application for funding in 2025-2026. A pilot program would allow the City to gain experience before a full transition takes place. The risks for a pilot program are that it would incur a higher upfront capital cost, local support is lacking, and it could become obsolete if ranges improve. He then discussed the financial analysis of implementing a pilot program versus staying with gas/diesel fleet, with the pilot program showing a 10% lower cost than operating gas/diesel fleet. He explained that a pilot program could also allow time for the technology to catch up for conversion of the rest of the fleet. He discussed the effects of cold weather on the range and explained that hybrid technologies are not evolving that much because most tech is going towards fully electric vehicles. He stated that the batteries for the vehicles should last the lifespan of the vehicles. Councilor Gamroth pushed back that this would be a slap in the face to fossil fuels, as electricity is currently provided to Casper via a coal-fired power plant.

3. Casper Mountain Property Easement Request

City Attorney Nelson and City Manager Napier asked for direction from Council on moving forward with an easement request for a property on Casper Mountain. City Manager Napier explained that there is not necessarily any practical use for this land other than trail and access points, and he does not see any issue with granting an easement. City Attorney Nelson stated that the requestor does not currently have legal access to the land, and the burden of cost for the easement would lie entirely on the requestor. He suggested that the City should also be compensated by the requestor for the loss of use as well. He explained that the requestor could appeal if the City denies the easement, in which case it may be out of the City's hands. He advised

to negotiate now as this is a better process than trying to deal with an appeal. Council gave their thumbs up for staff to pursue negotiations for the easement.

4. FY2023 Budget Amendment #3

City Manager Napier discussed Budget Amendment #3, explaining that a lot of the amendment is just transfer of funds, although there are some increased expenses to account for as well. Jill Johnson, Finance Director, then reviewed the major points of the \$23M amendment. City Manager Napier answered questions regarding the line item for prisoner costs. City Manager Napier stated the amendment will be on the agenda for formal consideration next Tuesday.

5. Public Officer Training

City Manager Napier discussed the public officer training that is now required by State statute via the Department of Audit and Revenue. Councilors are among those required to complete the training within one year of July 1st. Casper's Finance Department will try to conduct a training on the State's behalf. The State will need to certify the City's syllabus, and if they do not, staff will coordinate training with the State to make the training happen.

6. I-25 Casper Marginal Enhancements with WYDOT

City Manager Napier stated that the bids for this project came back at a much higher cost than was budgeted, therefore staff needs direction on which enhancements Council would like to move forward with. Public Services Director, Andrew Beamer, reviewed what the project originally included for each stretch of the project including RBG lighting, terraced walls, and wayfinding for the Poplar Street underpass and Center Street underpass; and sidewalks and decorative fencing for F Street bridge. The McKinley Street upgrades will be done once that phase of the project moves forward. The estimate for these enhancements was \$380K and the bids came in at \$600K. Staff's recommendation is to proceed with the RBG lighting and not do the terraced walls. WYDOT has agreed to do the wayfinding signage. These adjustments will bring the project within the available budget. Council gave their thumbs up to staff's recommendation. Council discussed possibly doing murals later on.

7. Agenda Review

Next, Council reviewed the agendas for upcoming regular Council meetings and work sessions. Councilor Bond asked about adding an item for the evaluation process for the Municipal Court Judge, and Council agreed to add this to a future work session.

8. Legislative Review

There were no items to discuss for legislative review.

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 Haskins discussed the Municipal Court Committee meeting, explaining that they discussed Judge Martinez’s evaluation, which is not the purpose of the committee. She is hoping to bring forward a draft of goal statements and liaison purposes for Council to consider. Councilmembers thanked Andrew Beamer for his years of service and wished him luck in retirement. Mayor Knell discussed issues with the City’s stormwater infrastructure and stated that the City will need to consider ways to improve this.

The work session was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Bruce Knell
Mayor