

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.
City Hall - Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. Council Meeting Follow-up
 - Prostitution Ordinance Amendment
2. Police Building
3. Annexation of East Robertson Road Addition Update
4. Utility Rate Model Review
5. Liquor License Renewal and Police Report Discussion
6. Agenda Review
7. Legislative Review
8. Council Around the Table

The work session was called to order at 4:33 p.m. with the following Councilmembers present: Engebretsen, Johnson, Gamroth, Cathey, Lutz, Knell, Pollock, Vice Mayor Pacheco, and Mayor Freel.

City Manager Napier introduced City Attorney Henley to discuss possible amendments to the prostitution ordinance that were discussed at last week's regular Council meeting. He proposed language that would more clearly define performance prostitution and limit the area to being in the same building or car. This would ensure that streamed online content would not be entangled in this ordinance. Councilmembers discussed the proposed language. City Attorney Henley stated that a Councilmember will need to motion to amend the language at the next regular Council meeting, and then Council will vote on that amendment.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed the liquor license renewal and police liquor report review. Before the discussion began, Councilmember Pollock declared a conflict of interest on this item and absented herself from the Council Chambers for the duration of this discussion item. City Manager Napier then introduced Police Chief McPheeters to review the liquor license report. The review included statistics on police service calls, which declined this year at events, possibly due to the pandemic. He stated that there were no establishments throughout this year that rose to the notice of the Police Department. He stated that there was one egregious compliance issue where a 15-year old was selling alcohol to minors. Another issue came up where an establishment was caught selling to a minor twice within the same month. He stated that that establishment is now under new ownership.

City Manager Napier then introduced Fleur Tremel, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, to discuss liquor license renewals. Ms. Tremel stated that the renewals were a success this year after an ordinance change last year that required late applications to be assessed a fee and establishments that were more than 10 days late to lose their license. She stated that four establishments had to pay a late fee, but no establishment was late enough to lose their license.

Council then discussed asking establishments that have been deemed to have issues with the liquor license compliance to come speak to Council during the liquor license renewal public hearing next

week. Vice Mayor Pacheco stated that he would like Travis Taylor to come speak on why he has not kept his promise to better utilize his retail liquor license. City Attorney Henley elaborated on the issue with Mr. Taylor, and explained that the City owns the license and, as the licensing authority, has the power to not renew a license if it is not being utilized properly to promote variety, competition, and economic development. Mayor Freel stated that he would like the owners of Pizza Ranch to come to the meeting as well to explain their violation with serving to minors. Council directed staff to contact these two business owners and request that they come to the Council meeting next week.

Next, City Manager Napier introduced Police Chief McPheeters to discuss the new police building. Chief McPheeters began by giving a historical timeline of where the Police Department has been housed since its inception. He then referenced the 2019 feasibility study analysis of the space needed for a modern-day police force for a city the size of Casper, which was estimated to be 65K sq. ft., which is almost twice the space that the Police Department currently operates under. He reviewed the several different spaces that the department uses for administration, records, evidence, courts, and training, and expressed the need for the department to all be housed in one space. The estimated price for a new building to meet these needs is \$42M. He then reviewed the pros and cons of several different city-owned properties that could possibly house the police station, including land by the Events Center, 12th and Conwell Streets, and Yesness Park. He briefly discussed some of the possible funding sources for the police station, including a 6th cent tax, bonding, and Build Wyoming loans. He also discussed locations that were ruled out for various reasons, including the Eastridge Mall.

Councilmember Knell expressed support for building a new station, and emphasized the \$250K rent that the City is currently paying for police department facilities. Chief McPheeters added that the Sheriff's Department would be able to immediately use the vacated space in the Hall of Justice if the police department were to move to a new location. City Attorney Henley explained the way a 6th cent tax would work, explaining that there would need to be community buy-in and support from other entities. It was also explained that a 6th cent tax is only in effect until the purpose of the tax has been fulfilled and then it goes away.

Council discussed putting a committee together to research and analyze the options for building the police station. Council gave their thumbs up to putting together this committee and also asked for the committee to consider other public safety items that require large amounts of money. Mayor Freel asked that those Councilmembers who are interested in participating on the committee email Carter. Mayor Freel will then make the ultimate decision of who the three committee members from Council will be. Relevant staff members will also be appointed to the committee.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed the annexation of East Robertson Road, explaining that the portion of land being annexed is surrounded on all sides by City land and most of the residents within the annexed portion are already receiving City services. Community meetings were held with residents who will be affected by the annexation, and the negative comments about the annexation mostly centered around concerns about the City's restrictions regarding things like storage of vehicles on property. He stated that the annexation will add \$40K-\$50K per year to the general fund. He stated that the annexation has met all statutory requirements and he would

recommend that Council accept the report and approve the annexation at next week's Council meeting. Council gave their thumbs up to move the accepting of the annexation report forward for formal approval.

Next, City Manager Napier discussed the pro forma performance of each of the utilities. He invited Tom Pitlick, Finance Director, to share an excel presentation of each of the utilities showing actual and projected data, reserves, and the projected trend lines. City Manager Napier explained that the ideal operating condition is to have a fund that is healthy and above the reserve line. He then reviewed data for each of the utilities. The water fund is operating favorably and has accrued a small amount of savings. He explained that the water fund receives money from the one cent fund, which helps keep utility rates lower. He also explained how this data is simulated to project if rates need to be raised.

He then reviewed the sewer fund, and explained that the rates are based on water usage during lowest consumption rates of the year which are during the winter months. The sewer fund is also operating above the ideal operating condition moving into the next fiscal year. He discussed how there will be a huge cost to the City in the next few years to pay for updates to the sewer plant, and stated that the rate model will probably not be able to bear the entire cost of the repairs to the plant. He stated that the rates for this utility will be considered in November and December of next year, and that is when Council will need to consider a savings goal for the updates to the facility.

City Manager Napier then reviewed the refuse fund which manages trash pickup and includes the cost of replacing trucks and dumpsters. He explained that due to the pandemic, most of the commercial accounts needed less trash pickup, which decreased the commercial revenue, and most of the residential garbage increased. This increase in residential garbage was not compensated for, therefore this fund does not look as healthy as the previous two funds. He suggested that this was an isolated phenomenon and stated he would like to wait until summer activity is tracked before looking into adjusting rates. Council asked if there has been a return to normalcy, and Cindy Langston, Solid Waste Supervisor, responded that these trends will not be able to be accounted for until late spring and early summer, because winter months are always the slowest months. She also explained the actual cost of refuse collection and how it is billed to entities whose citizens use that utility. She discussed that there was a large increase in the use of utility bills to dump things at the landfill which increased the cost to that fund.

City Manager Napier then discussed the balefill fund, and explained that this fund follows a V-shaped trend, because there is a high cost to the fund whenever a cell is opened and closed, and in those years, the fund dips. To ensure that there is enough money to pay for the regulatory requirements for opening and closing cells, this fund is rate driven. He also stated that the wind turbine disposal has been a consistent source of revenue to this fund, despite state legislative setbacks.

Next, Council reviewed the upcoming agendas for Council meetings and work sessions. Councilmember Cathey asked about a 7th street vacation that he has received phone calls about, and City Manager Napier stated that this will be discussed in the pre-meeting next week. Council discussed the format of the goal setting session on February 23rd and asked that metrics and

measures as well as goal documents from the previous Council be provided to Council. City Manager Napier stated that this information will be sent out in the Info Packet. Councilmember Engebretsen discussed a community problem with graffiti, and asked about abatement programs. Chief McPheeters explained why the previous abatement program had ended, but stated he would be open to reconsidering a program if a vendor was hired to manage it appropriately. Council gave their thumbs up to add this item to future agenda items for work sessions. Councilmember Knell expressed interest in requiring seat belts to be worn on school buses. Chief McPheeters explained the various reasons why this is not federally required, including that school buses are designed to be very safe and they are heavily regulated. He stated that deaths due to school bus crashes are extremely rare and that type of enforcement would be very difficult for the police department. He suggested that Councilmember Knell instead talk with the Natrona County School Board about this issue to see if they had any interest in having their drivers enforce this measure. Councilmember Knell stated that he would first talk to the school board.

City Manager Napier reviewed state legislation that is pertinent to the City of Casper, stating that there are several issues that will directly impact Casper and he will keep the City Council updated.

Next, Council went around the table to discuss their respective board and committee meetings and share ideas and concerns related to public matters of interest. Councilmember Gamroth explained that he did not understand voting on consent agenda resolutions at the last meeting, and would have voted no on an item had he known he was able to. He also discussed the amendments that he recommended to the language of the prostitution ordinance.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Steven K. Freel
Mayor