

**COUNCIL PRE-MEETING**  
Tuesday, December 7, 2021 5:15 p.m.  
Casper City Hall - Council Chambers

AGENDA

1. Budget Calendar
2. Baseball Club
3. Health Department's Use of City Property (formerly SourceGas)
4. Municipal Court Staffing
5. Agenda Review

Mayor Freel began the pre-meeting session at 5:19 p.m. with Councilmembers Cathey, Engebretsen, Gamroth, Knell, Pacheco, Quest and Mayor Freel in attendance. Absent: Councilmembers Johnson and Pollock.

1. Baseball Club

City Manager Napier spoke briefly about the possibility of changing the arrangement of the rental format for baseball fields and asked staff to present further information. Zulima Lopez, Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities Director, provided a recap of the 2021 baseball season with regard to the City managing the rental of the facility. She indicated that shortly after the last informative presentation to Council in October, the City was approached by the Casper Baseball Club (Club) to enter into a partnership.

Councilmember Knell asked if the improved subsidy rates could be maintained if the City entered a partnership with the Club. Ms. Lopez that it was a possibility and that point was discussed with the Club.

Councilmember Gamroth asked about the management and use of the facilities prior to the new rental/management run by the City. Ms. Lopez shared that Legion Baseball had primary use of the facility and that maintenance costs for at least the last five years are similar to the current costs.

Mayor Freel asked if Council would like to hear from the two user groups in attendance this evening. Councilmember Knell requested that the groups speak to the matter of the possibility of sharing the facility with other users. City Manager Napier suggested that if the time allotted this evening is too brief, that the matter can be discussed in depth at a work session.

Scott Brownell, Casper Baseball Club Board Member, described the recent changes made to the area youth baseball program and shared the board's vision of stability and longevity for the program. He indicated that the group would like to enter into a 5-10 year agreement, with their commitments as stakeholders in the facility, to align with their vision.

Councilmember Gamroth asked if the partnership would change the current rental format. City Manager Napier said that if a partnership was entered into, the City wouldn't want to lose the progress that had been made by the current internal management of the facility. He also said that

he hopes that a contract would still allow other user groups to use the facility and that capital improvements would be part of any arrangement.

Councilmember Gamroth asked if the Club had thought about the current fee schedule and what they were looking to gain by entering into a partnership. Mr. Brownell shared that the Club would like to be in a stronger position to grow the program and that a firm commitment with the City would help improve fundraising and donations.

Mayor Freel suggested that this evening Council gather information and that further discussion can be held at a future work session.

Chuck Heeman, Casper Horseheads co-owner, shared that the rental arrangement worked very well for his organization last season and that it would continue to work going forward. He said that last season went very well, but they would participate in a request for proposals (RFP) process if needed.

Councilmember Knell asked if a group, such as Casper Baseball, took over the management of the field if that would be detrimental. Mr. Heeman said it would be dependent upon the terms.

Council provided a thumbs up to bring this topic to a future work session.

## 2. Budget Calendar

City Manager Napier summarized the budget timeline process and indicated no decisions are needed at this time, rather this is just an update and presentation of the budget calendar. Jill Johnson, Financial Services Director, came forward for questions.

Councilmember Engebretsen asked if staffing issues would be filled now or in the next fiscal year. City Manager Napier said that staffing changes would be for the new fiscal year beginning in July. Council had no further questions.

## 3. Health Department's Use of City Property – formerly SourceGas Land

City Manager Napier said that the Casper-Natrona County Health Department (NCHD) has been seeing unprecedented numbers of citizens related to COVID-19 issues, and that they have requested temporary use of City-owned property to allow them to meet the needs of the community.

Anna Kinder, Executive Director of the NCHD, further described the need for the additional space and the plan for the use of the land. She shared that the NCHD would pay for all expenses, should they be allowed use of the land.

Vice Mayor Pacheco acknowledged the need for the expansion and spoke in favor of the project.

Councilmember Knell asked if there is a clause to keep this arrangement temporary. City Manager Napier said the intended term would be likely eighteen months and that there would be terms in place to keep the arrangement short-term.

Eric Nelson, Natrona County Attorney, said the contract would have a limited duration with notification provision should the City need to terminate the agreement, and that there would be no cost to the City. He also said that the County is actively looking at long-term solutions as well.

Councilmember Gamroth also spoke in support of the arrangement.

Ms. Kinder described how busy their facility is, and added that they will soon be treating COVID-19 patients in addition to the testing and vaccinations already occurring. She also said that they have secure funding for these services.

Councilmember provided a thumbs up to bringing forward an agreement with the NCHD.

#### 4. Municipal Court Staffing

City Manager Napier shared that the Municipal Court needs support with overall court security as well as a bailiff. He said that staff suggested a partnership with the Police Department for an officer, which the court would provide a portion of the funding for, and court would also have a part time bailiff independent from the Police Department staff member. He also said that the Police Officer position would then need to be back filled, in order to not remove an officer from the current staffing. He said this would likely be in the spring, rather than waiting for the next fiscal year, but that unspent monies would cover the cost in the interim.

Councilmember Cathey asked what the current staffing level is for sworn Police Officers. City Manager Napier said that the funding for staffing is in place, but that recruitment is an on-going goal for the department, and that they are not fully staffed. Councilmember Cathey asked if this arrangement would take a Police Officer off the street. City Manager Napier said that yes, the officer would spend part of the day off the street.

Mayor Freel asked if there are new recruits that are going to be joining the force soon. Police Chief McPheeters said that there are currently 101 sworn officers. He said that staffing of Municipal Court by police staff has been handled by the traffic division and that enforcement has been impacted. He shared that there are ten viable candidates that are being vetted and two officers that will be starting in January.

Councilmember Engebretsen asked if Municipal Court receives bailiff support from the Sheriff's office. City Manager Napier said that we do not receive support from the County for bailiff services.

City Manager Napier asked how many authorized positions the Police Department has. Chief McPheeters said that they have 107 positions, but during the current year some of those positions were not funded because they would not be able to be filled immediately. City Manager Napier clarified that those positions have been allowed for, for the end of the year and no funding action is needed.

Councilmember Knell asked if the bailiff is required to be a sworn peace officer. Chief McPheeters said it is not a requirement, however it is recommended that an armed person perform those duties and because of liability issues, hiring a sworn officer is easier. Councilmember Knell asked if it is

a hardship to staff the bailiff position. Chief McPheeters said the reputation of the department is making it more likely that the department will be fully staffed soon.

Nicole Hatfield, Clerk of Municipal Court, spoke in support of the need for security at the Municipal Court. Councilmember Knell said he supported having an armed bailiff, he just wanted to be sure that staffing of the Police Department could also be met. Ms. Hatfield said that their current part time bailiff has prior police experience, but that re-certification has been an issue.

Vice Mayor Pacheco spoke in support of the position. Councilmembers provided a thumbs up to move forward with this item.

Mayor Freel moved on to agenda review. City Manager Napier stated that the purchase of the reserve fire unit will be removed from the consent agenda this evening.

Mayor Freel adjourned the pre-meeting at 6:04 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING  
A Municipal Corporation

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Fleur Tremel  
City Clerk

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Steven K. Freel  
Mayor