

COUNCIL PRE-MEETING

Tuesday, January 19, 2021 5:30 p.m.
Casper City Hall - Council Meeting Room

AGENDA

1. New Bookmobile
2. Coates Road Discussion
3. North Platte Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation
4. Financial Support for Employees at Ford Wyoming Center
5. Agenda Review

Mayor Freel began the pre-meeting session at 5:38 p.m. with Councilmembers Cathey, Engebretsen, Gamroth, Knell, Pacheco, Pollock and Mayor Freel in attendance. Absent: Johnson and Lutz.

City Manager Napier shared that the new Natrona County Public Library (NCPL) bookmobile is onsite for Council to tour and asked for more information from library staff.

Kate Mutch, NCPL Assistant Director, explained that this bookmobile came from the combined efforts of the City of Casper and Natrona County through the use of Optional One Cent funding. She shared that this bookmobile has a lift and that it will start visiting day cares right away and hopefully services will return to normal once pandemic restrictions allow. She invited Council to step outside to tour the vehicle.

Once Council returned from viewing the bookmobile, City Manager Napier spoke on the matter of asphalt surfacing a portion of Coates Road. He explained that the costs would be evenly split between the City, Natrona County and the neighbors. He requested further information from staff.

Andrew Beamer, Public Services Director, explained that this project would pave the portion of the road within the City limits to control dust and would not involve curb, gutters, or street lights. He stated that the cost assessed to the property owners would be based off acreage. He also shared that the County will pave an additional portion of the road solely at their cost.

City Manager Napier also shared that there had been discussion about responsibility for the plowing of this road. Mr. Beamer said that if this detail has not been included in the memorandum of understanding (MOU), that an arrangement will be agreed upon. Councilmember Knell asked about the extent of maintenance and possible upgrades of the road in the future, which Mr. Beamer addressed.

Next, City Manager Napier highlighted the significance and complexity of the North Platte sanitary sewer rehabilitation project and requested staff to provide more information.

Mr. Beamer spoke about the scope and history of the project in detail and provided an explanation of why the change order for design services is needed and how it can be paid for. Councilmember Engebretsen asked about the duration of the project and the impact on service during the project.

Mr. Beamer indicated that it would likely take two construction seasons to complete, and although there may be traffic disruptions, there would not be any sewer service disruptions.

Councilmember Cathey asked about fire protection on Coates Road, which Mr. Beamer said he did not address that, but rather plowing. Councilmember Cathey shared that arrangements for plowing are not in the MOU with the County and asked if it needed to be addressed tonight. City Manager Napier indicated that the details would need to be discussed with the County and could be brought back for amendment at a later time.

City Manager Napier provided information on the request for a change with Spectra to increase the subsidy at the Ford Wyoming Center (FWC), previously the Casper Events Center. He shared that Spectra had budgeted a much lower than normal subsidy from the City, but with the number of events that had been cancelled due to the pandemic, things were different from the projection. He stated that some FWC staff had been furloughed, some were laid off, and many had taken reduced salaries for an extended period of time. He suggested that getting staff working and back to normal pay would be good at this time.

Councilmember Knell asked about using Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) funding for this as well as the responsibility of the City to Spectra for their management of the FWC. Mayor Freel stated that many of the FWC employees were former City employees who had stayed on with Spectra and had been crucial during the transition in management of the facility. Councilmember Knell asked when Spectra took over. City Manager Napier indicated that Spectra had taken over management of the FWC five years ago, and that Spectra had voluntarily asked for a reduced subsidy of the budget prior to the pandemic, but may have a right to additional money under the contract.

Councilmember Gamroth asked for more information or for a copy of the contract with Spectra so he could better understand the arrangement. Tim Cortez, Parks and Recreation Director, indicated that the contract would be provided to Council and shared that it is in the best interest of Spectra to reduce the subsidy. He also shared that there probably are limited options, and probably not much in place for something like the pandemic, but that we do have a good partnership with Spectra.

Councilmember Engebretsen asked about possible future subsidy issues, because of the likely limited number of events going forward. Mr. Cortez shared that there are no guarantees, but events are being held and will continue to increase in frequency as school tournaments happen this spring.

City Manager Napier asked if there is a cap to the subsidy provided by the City. Mr. Cortez said that at a certain point Spectra would be required to cover half of their management fee, and then the City would cover costs beyond that.

Councilmember Engebretsen and Councilmember Knell spoke about the amount of bookings and use of the FWC. Councilmember Cathey asked about the FWC staffing and unemployment. Mr. Cortez stated that City employees were getting money back for their voluntary leave and furlough arrangement whereas FWC employees will receive their normal salary for the rest of the fiscal year (rather than the 20% reduction they are currently at). Councilmember Cathey shared that he feels our arrangement with Spectra is to our advantage because of their management network.

Councilmember Gamroth asked for an overview of the subsidy arrangement with Spectra. Mr. Cortez stated that the cost to run the FWC is roughly \$3 million dollars a year and the income is around \$2 million dollars each year. Spectra offered to set the subsidy at about \$800,000, but is now requesting close to \$925,000. These costs could get worse or they may be better. The City will need to pay the roughly \$925,000 regardless, but staff is requesting around \$40,000 to get Spectra staff back to their normal salaries.

Mayor Freel moved on to agenda review. Councilmember Cathey asked for more information on the bids received for the parking structure cameras. Mr. Beamer stated design build proposals were received rather than standard bids and firms were required to describe their experience and equipment. Liz Becher, Community Development Director, listed the proposal amounts for each of the firms.

Councilmember Engebretsen asked about the need for and previous use of cameras in the parking structure. City Manager Napier said that cameras have been a recommended improvement for some time. Ms. Becher stated that the police department had requested improvements to the camera system in the parking structure and therefore the improvements had been included in the capital plan. She also said that lighting improvements have already been completed and additional upgrades will be made to signage and a ticketless system. She also shared that additional cameras, with better views and angles, will be installed and that City information technology staff as well as the parking management company had shared input on the project.

Mayor Freel adjourned the pre-meeting at 6:21 p.m.

ATTEST:

CITY OF CASPER, WYOMING
A Municipal Corporation

Fleur Tremel
City Clerk

Steven K. Freel
Mayor