

City of Rock Springs)
County of Sweetwater)
State of Wyoming)

City Council met in special session on April 23, 2020. Mayor Timothy A. Kaumo called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. Members present included Councilors Keaton West, Rob Zotti, David Halter, Tim Savage, and Jeannie Demas. Councilors Glennise Wendorf, Billy Shalata, and David Tate were absent from the meeting. Department Heads present included Scott Nelson, Dwane Pacheco, Richard Beckwith, Jim Wamsley, Paul Kauchich, Dave Lansang, and Matt McBurnett. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUESTS

Community Fine Arts Center

Debora Soule, Director of the Center, stated that some of their programs have been postponed and that they hoping to do Wyoming Shakespeare in the future. There are 2 artists coming up later this year, one of those scheduled for September, which may need to be rescheduled. During the closure, they have been promoting on social media as often as possible. The children's exhibits have also been closed but put on Facebook for the parents to view. They are working with the Wyoming Arts Council on some exhibits that have been cancelled and they are hoping to reschedule those. Chad Banks was the main writer of the proposal, which will be a pilot program to promote the arts in Rock Springs. Ms. Soule believes that they can carry over \$10,000 from their budget into the next fiscal year; therefore, their request will be reduced by \$10,000 in the hopes of assisting with the City's numbers. Mayor Kaumo stated that he truly understands what she is up against, and that he appreciates that she took a look at where she could cut, changing their request to \$15,400.

Rock Springs Library

Lindsey Travis stated that things are a little strange lately; the libraries have been closed for 5 weeks. Staff is working on training, and the discovery center work has somewhat continued. There is \$7,000 left in their budget from the City's funding, which are set to be used for security cameras and some maintenance items. Their request stands at the same as FY 2020, at \$23,085. When they are open, they are very busy. Education, maintenance and the Children's Discovery Center are their 3 main priorities for the upcoming year.

Rock Springs Chamber of Commerce

Rick Lee, CEO of the Rock Springs Chamber of Commerce, stated that he wants to get things open again, and not have businesses surviving, but thriving. Congress's stimulus did not provide for 501(c)(6) companies, as the Chamber is. He stated that they are struggling to come up with funding sources to supplement the loss of the fair and much of the travel & tourism in the area. The Chamber has recently become part of the Wyoming Business Federation, a statewide initiative for information sharing among chambers across the state, where they work together as a coalition to support the whole state, community of Wyoming. The goal is to encourage folks to shop local, and keep their money here in their community. This reset will give us an opportunity to be better and stronger than we were before. It is anticipated that things will get better. Their request will remain the same as it has in past years, at \$39,501. Councilor West stated that there is a large gap that needs to be met to balance the budget, sitting around \$7 million, and he asked what the effects of cutting funding may have on each agency. Mayor Kaumo asked if the Chamber's budget were to be cut from the City in the amount of 10%, could they still provide services to the community. Mr. Lee confirmed that they would make it work, if needed. Mayor Kaumo stated that

we are up against unprecedented times, and we are going into this already 40% down on sales tax and will do our best to continue to grow with the community.

STAR Transit Authority

Judy Owens, Director of Star Transit, introduced Mary Seppie, the Assistant Director, who will be replacing Judy when she retires this year. Judy stated that the amount requested was the same this year, at \$42,911, and they would like to reduce their request by \$10,728 at this time. They would also like to request that the 4th quarter of 2019-2020, which is another \$10,777, be cut. CARE Act funding will be received by STAR Transit from WYDOT, which will cover the 4th quarter of 2019-2020 and the 1st quarter of 2020-2021. Mary stated that currently, the fixed route has been closed down and door-to-door appointments are being taken, with 4-5 people on the bus at a time. They are trying to accommodate the best they can, while continuing to offer rides, and are sanitizing as much as possible. They should know more about the closures and re-evaluate by the end of the month, as to whether the route will open back up. Mayor Kaumo stated that he really appreciates their offer, and that they do a great job and obtaining funding from this disaster has been so helpful.

Red Desert Roundup Rodeo

Travis Garrison, Board Member, stated that the rodeo appreciates the opportunity to video conference, and that they plan to continue with their normal request of \$12,000. They are hoping to decrease their costs by reducing the rodeo to 2 days instead of 3, but are also looking into cancelling, if need-be. Sponsorships have been very difficult this year due to the economy. Attendance has averaged about 4,300 in the past two years, but stamping does not currently include children under the age of 5, since they do not need a ticket and they are difficult to track. It was stated that the rodeo will be July 24 and 25, and what the drop-dead date would be with planning needing to take place. Mayor Kaumo asked if the City Council were to consider a 10% decrease in funding, whether the board would be able to continue as planned or not. Mr. Garrison stated that if they were able to get their normal request from the City and the County, it would give the volunteers more incentive to push forward. Their next board meeting is on May 19, so final decisions will need to be made by then. They would like to proceed with the golf tournament on July 24 and the parade on July 25. If the rodeo is cancelled, a parade may still be organized.

Treatment Court of Sweetwater County

Augusta Clayton-Davis, Director of Treatment Court of Sweetwater County, highlighted a few things that the 2020 funding created. Their program produced 28 graduates, and 2 sober babies were born into sober households, 4 clients enrolled in college, 3 earned a GED, and 11 earned their driver's license. They have been able to expand and work with agencies in Rock Springs and Green River, to create law abiding, tax-paying citizens in our area. The request has been increased by \$2,000 this year, due to no limit being present as to how many clients can enter the program, they are funded by a state grant, and there are other grants waiting for the legal process to take place, so the need for more funding is present. Through COVID-19, court has been held through Zoom meetings, and drug testing has been taking place through mouth swabs in the drive through. Counseling services are also offered. Councilor Savage stated that every dollar invested in drug court is ten dollars saved on court costs, incarceration, and police costs. He believes the program is well-funded. Dwane Pacheco, Police Chief, stated that Treatment Court is in good hands right now, and hearing about the innovative strategies they have taken to do the things they need to do during this pandemic is very impressive. He reiterated Councilor Savage's statement regarding dollars being saved through the program. Mayor Kaumo also agrees with the statements made by Councilor Savage. It helps the community in the long run.

Joint Powers Combined Communications Board

Rick Hawkins stated that the Combined Communications budget committee and, eventually the board, decided to keep their request as close as possible to last year, with a slight increase of \$148. After the budget was submitted, a discussion among the board will take place since the pandemic situation has arisen. A radio tower is needed to be built in Rock Springs, and that project has not been completed yet. Mayor Kaumo confirmed that the request of \$1,358,303 remains the same, even though the budget was requested to be paired down. The goal for the Combined Communication is to join forces and provide a good, quality product, with good individuals on board. Mr. Hawkins statement is that they have saved many costs, there were 30 employees on board when each entity was separate and combined, and currently, there are only 25. Every entity was facing the situation where equipment needed to be updated, which was very expensive, and at the Center, it was done only once as opposed to 3 times. Staff has not been increased over the past 8 years. Mayor Kaumo asked about the definition of Joint Combined Communications, are the City of Rock Springs, City of Green River, and Sweetwater County, all working together? Is it truly a joint communication effort? Mr. Hawkins stated that they are mostly combined, and working toward a goal of becoming more efficient by further combining efforts. Councilor Savage asked about an increase of domestic violence calls, and whether they have done so. Mr. Hawkins stated that the severity of calls has increased, not necessarily quantity. Councilor Demas asked how much of the budget is based on wages and Mr. Hawkins stated that it is between 80-85%. Councilor Halter stated that if any questions arise, feel free to reach out to him and he offered a tour of the center to show which projects have been completed this year.

Southwest Wyoming Regional Airport

Devon Brubaker, Director of the Southwest Wyoming Regional Airport, stated that he's not sure of another industry that has been hurt worse than the travel agency during this pandemic. 96% of the nation's air travel has disappeared in the past 6 weeks. Those are nationwide statistics, which also include the flight crews that travel for work. 70% of commercial flights have been lost, and 80% of general aviation traffic has been lost as well. Through the end of February, the airport was on track to have its best year in history. They worked hard to keep cash on hand, but it has diminished. It is projected that the airport will be able to get through the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Brubaker stated that it is still unclear as to how bad it could get for the aviation industry. Flight changes will take place in May, which will also contribute to decreasing revenue. This year, the airport is forced to request a 66% increase in funding. In terms of capital, a robust capital plan is in place this year, and a significant amount of construction will still be taking place at the airport. All capital projects are covered mostly by federal or state grants. Jobs will also be created by these projects, with construction work taking place to complete them. It's difficult to anticipate the effect on travel by COVID-19. This pandemic is stated to be 9 times worse than 911, including psychological impacts on travelers. There are rumors that the FAA will be doing a redistribution of funds due to this situation. If this happens and funding is awarded, the airport's request from the City may be reduced. Councilor West asked for clarification regarding the CARES Act that was awarded, which Mr. Brubaker clarified that this amount is \$1,094,717.

Rock Springs Recycling Center

Devon Brubaker, President of the Recycling Center Board of Directors, stated that the Recycling Center is still up and running and the Paycheck Protection Program was awarded to them to help them get through the end of the fiscal year. An uncertain future is still present with the Center due to an uncertain funding situation. They are still working with the Solid Waste District to obtain more secure funding. The amount of the request for Fiscal Year 2021 is \$218,008, which is the entire amount needed to function, because of the uncertainty of the funding coming from any other source. They are keeping in

contact with the Solid Waste District and trying to keep professional, open lines of communication regarding funding the Recycling Center. He believes that there is already a tax in place to fund the Center. The market has not done well, and they have been holding onto a large amount of product, as cardboard prices were dropping and have now increased. They are hopeful that the trend of the market price will continue. The significant demand of paper products over the past month have contributed to the increase of market prices. If market pricing continues to stay consistent or improve, they may be able to reduce their request. Mayor Kaumo added that he would like to see the Recycling Center succeed, as it is our moral obligation to keep it running. Councilor West stated that he agrees that the Solid Waste District should be funding the Center in full, and that it is a benefit to them and they should be stepping up to fund the Center.

Young-at-Heart Senior Center

Ryan Rust thanked the City of Rock Springs for its partnership to the Chamber of Commerce for its assistance to high risk individuals during this time of need by offering running services for groceries. Avoiding institutional care is the main goal of their elderly program, their meals on wheels program is important and contains the added benefit of a daily visit, providing socializing opportunities as well. In-home services programs are offered such as homemaking and respite care, which allow the elderly to remain in their homes. Studies on aging exhibit the effectiveness of the programs. 60% of home meal recipients stated that this one meal is over half of their food for the day. Two requests have been submitted, the first is for maintenance costs, and the second request is for support of the programs, which has been increased by 20% per year. An unprecedented increase of seniors in our community is currently taking place. Mr. Rust expressed his appreciation to the City of Rock Springs for its past and future support. Councilor West asked whether the City is the only funding source for the meal program, and Mr. Rust stated that the County also contributes to this service. Councilor West asked about how cuts could affect the Center. Mr. Rust stated that no doubt, a cut would significantly impact the Center. A reduction in the number of services would be offered, waiting lists would be necessary, and a cut in funding would cause some elderly citizens to be institutionalized earlier since they would be put on a waiting list. Councilor Savage stated that the services that Ryan and his staff provide really do keep seniors out of nursing homes and facilities like Deer Trail. It is truly a lifesaving mission. Mayor Kaumo expressed appreciation for his presentation.

DEPARTMENT REQUESTS

Mayor Kaumo stated that each department can make a presentation regarding the cuts that have been made. The order was discussed. Each department will be mentioned and questions asked afterward.

Municipal Court

There were no questions for Scott Nelson, Municipal Court Judge.

City Attorney

Rick Beckwith, City Attorney, clarified the costs of his software licenses. Councilor Savage asked that the Council receive an update on all of the legal cases that are out there. There are outstanding items that he hasn't been updated on. Mr. Beckwith stated that an executive session recently took place to apprise the Governing Body of current litigation.

Fire Department

There were no questions for Jim Wamsley, Fire Chief.

Police Department

Councilor West stated that he sits on the budget committee, and that many cuts have already been made. Dwane Pacheco, Police Chief added that there is only an increase showing for the Animal Control budget, to separate spays and neuters to allow for better tracking of that information.

Mayor Kaumo stated that he requested additional cuts be made prior to the meeting tonight, and that \$1.5 million is still left to be cut. He added that he does not want to see employees affected by these cuts with furloughs or layoffs.

Parks & Recreation

There were no questions for Dave Lansang, Parks & Recreation Director. Mr. Lansang stated that he did revisit his budget this afternoon to identify other ways to cut.

Engineering/Operations & Public Services

Paul Kauchich, Engineering/Operations & Public Services Director stated that he is continually looking at the budget and discussing with his supervisors to find cuts anywhere possible, to keep employees working and still provide services that are needed for the community. Councilor West thanked Mr. Kauchich for his efforts to cut the budget as much as he has. Mayor Kaumo reiterated the same statements, adding that it has been frustrating and depressing going into this budget session with 40% less revenue and then also COVID-19. Department Heads understand where the City needs to be going with the community.

Finance & Administration

Councilor Halter asked whether IT was able to get around the issues with CenturyLink. Matthew McBurnett, Administrative Services Director, stated that yes, the VOIP phone system is fully up and running, and that cuts have been made with regard to phone line costs. Councilor Halter stated that he hopes it is a significant savings from before. Mr. McBurnett thanked the department heads and staff and stated that he appreciates all the work that has been done on the budget.

Mayor Kaumo stated that these have been challenging times, and he hopes to see a reopening of businesses.

Councilor Zotti stated that the first three outside agencies presented cuts to their budget, which really helps, but that he is disappointed that others have not looked harder at their requests to see what can be cut. He added that he really appreciates the cuts that have been made by department heads also. Mayor Kaumo reiterated that agencies should look closer at their budgets to see what can absolutely not be gone without, and what could be cut. With this unprecedented year upon us, teamwork is required.

Mayor Kaumo stated that Mr. McBurnett will put the new cuts into the budget, both for outside agencies and for departments, to allow everyone to see where the City stands.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

By: _____
Council President

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor