

A Special Meeting of the City Council was held via teleconference on Tuesday the 14th day of April 2020.

Present online were Councilmen Brown, Carsrud, Lundvall, McLeland, Montgomery, Neary, and Mayor Carter-King; City Administrator Davidson and City Attorney Reyes; Directors, Aguirre, Cole, Henderson, Hloucal, Muzzarelli, and Wilde; Managers Schoen, Palazzari and Toscana; and City Clerk Staskiewicz.

Agency Funding Requests

Council of Community Services: Mikel Scott, Executive Director, Mary Campagna, Finance Director, and Christina Perry, Board of Directors Chairperson, represented the Council of Community Services, via teleconference. Director Scott stated that the Council of Community Services is requesting \$50,000 for funding the soup kitchen program, and \$30,000 for funding the emergency shelter. She added that federal grant funding is available from Housing and Urban Development (HUD), but not enough to fully fund the emergency shelter; and there is no additional grant funding for the soup kitchen, which is funded by donations. The need for food pantry services has greatly increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the emergency shelter is now operating 24-hours per day. The Council of Community Services has also been supporting community members with rent and utility assistance. Councilman Lundvall inquired about HUD funding and the use of previous building maintenance funding from the City. Director Scott stated that HUD funding has a cap of \$50,000, allotting approximately \$20,000 for direct client funding, with the balance utilized for funding operational costs. Director Scott informed Council that a contractor was hired at an approximate cost \$150,000 to replace the siding on the buildings. The remainder of the City's funding was earmarked for obtaining matching grants. With the outbreak of COVID-19, more community members needed financial assistance for rent. Director Scott requested, from the City Administrator and the Mayor, permission to use \$50,000 of the City's funding to help the community through the pandemic, which, under the circumstances, was granted. Director Scott disclosed that further funding may need to be allocated to continue community aid. Councilman McLeland inquired about federal aid, and Councilman Brown asked about the percentage of revenue funding for administrative costs. Director Scott stated that they are seeking limited federal funding, and through the CARES Act they may get some funding for the food pantry and to help with dental cost assistance. She stated that the Council of Community Services has two administrative positions, with most of their funding utilized directly for Staff salaries working directly with clients. Director Scott added that they rely heavily on community donations, and added that grocery stores provide un-utilized food for the soup kitchen. Director Scott informed Council that usage of the food pantry has greatly increased, and the soup kitchen usage remains consistent. Mayor Carter-King thanked the Council of Community Services for all that they do for the community.

Salvation Army: Jenny Hartung, Director, represented the Salvation Army, via teleconference. Councilman Brown inquired about administrative costs. Director Hartung informed Council that administrative fees are no more than 10% of revenues, with the remaining revenues allocated for direct client support services. Director Hartung explained some of the services provided by the Salvation Army, and stated that in a typical month, the Salvation Army would provide 150-200 food boxes. With the current pandemic situation, the Salvation Army has provided 1,359 food boxes since March 13th. Director Hartung stated that with the current COVID-19 situation, the Salvation Army Western Division began pooling funds to assist with rent and utilities. A call center is handling the assistance requests, which helps people stay in their homes and pay their utilities. Director Hartung stated that the funds for this request would be used next fiscal year for assisting with rent and reducing homelessness in the community. Mayor Carter-King thanked the Salvation Army for all that they do for the community.

Gillette Main Street: Jessica Seders, Executive Director, and Josh Pierce, Board President, represented the Gillette Main Street via teleconference. Director Seders advised that most Gillette Avenue businesses are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with some businesses offering online shopping, delivery, and curbside pick up. The Gillette Main Street's revenues are predicted to be 50% less than anticipated. Event fund raising will be limited because most businesses won't be in a financial position to offer sponsorships. Planned events have not been canceled, with the realization that if the events take place, they will have a completely different look. Free Community events will be held, to offer people events that won't tax their already tight budgets due to the current economic situation. The goal is to draw people to the downtown area to support local businesses. Councilman Lundvall requested information regarding their marketing plans. Director Seders stated that their marketing plan didn't begin until January. Matt Wagner, consultant, was brought in to assist with rebranding and marketing and to educate the public on the

Gillette Avenue mission. Discussions took place with the cities of Buffalo and Sundance to pool Business Council funding. Plans are currently on hold. Councilman Lundvall commended the partnerships with other communities. Director Seders commented that main street programs are designed to partner with cities or government entities, depending on each community. The program's progress can mature and change along with the relationship with the City. Councilman Lundvall thanked the Gillette Main Street for all they do for the community.

Mayor Carter-King asked the City Clerk to read a letter submitted by the Gillette Abuse Refuge Foundation (GARF), requesting a funding increase of \$5,000 to help offset the increase of their services associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Police Chief Hloucal provided statistics for domestic violence calls, noting that there has been an increase in domestic situations in the last month, but incident reports and arrests have remained consistent with last year. Chief Hloucal stated that victims in need of GARF's services tend to go directly to GARF rather than calling the Police Department. Mayor Carter-King asked Council if they would consider an increase in funding for GARF. Councilman McLeland asked if United Way funding was returning to Campbell County. Councilman Brown stated that he would contact the United Way in Casper. All Council Members stated they would support an increase of \$5,000 for GARF. City Administrator Davidson informed Council that the agreed upon 6.5% of 1% funding, allocated for social service agencies, would not accommodate an additional \$5,000 expense. Administrator Davidson stated that Staff would be directed to research funding options for the request.

Mayor Carter-King asked Council if Staff should proceed with their recommendations for the funding requests for the Council of Community Services, the Salvation Army, and Gillette Main Street. Council agreed to proceed with Staff's recommendations. Councilman Lundvall agreed, but expressed concerns with the use of previous funding provided to the Council of Community Services. Administrator Davidson informed Council that the upcoming budget would reflect the social service agency funding.

ACTION ITEM:

**ORDINANCE 20-05
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE GILLETTE CITY CODE
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN ARTICLE II §17-21 TO ADJUST MONTHLY
WASTEWATER RATES AND DEFINE ABANDONED SEWER SERVICES,
ARTICLE III §17-56 TO ADJUST MONTHLY WATER RATES, AND §17-26
TO DEFINE ABANDONED WATER SERVICES.**

Councilman Carsrud made a motion to approve the foregoing Ordinance on second reading; seconded by Councilman Montgomery. City Administrator Davidson explained the Ordinance and the need for rate increases in the amounts of \$1.10 per month fixed charge for water services, and \$4.04 per month for sewer services, both fees based on a typical residential 1" meter. The effective date of the Ordinance would be May 1, 2020, and because of delays with the COVID-19 situation, and the need for three (3) readings of the Ordinance, the 2nd reading is taking place at a Special Meeting, rather than a regular Council meeting. Mayor Carter-King asked the City Clerk to read public comments. The following citizens submitted comments, which were read, verbatim, opposing utility rate increases: Sonya VanNortrick, no address provided; Gypsy Graham, no address provided; Becky Dime, 5301 Stone Trail Avenue; Kevin Crimm, 1603 Morning Glory Court; Toy Buell, 4400 Radio Road; William Chase, 2604 Sandalwood Street; Joseph Robertson, 206 W Boxelder. Council discussed the repercussions of not raising utility rates. Administrator Davidson reminded Council that the rate increases have been planned for a few years, and stated that the Wastewater Treatment Facility is in need of repairs, and will eventually not meet EPA standards without the upgrades. A grant application for 20 million dollars has been submitted to SLIB for funding the WWTF upgrades, the rate increases will be necessary to generate enough revenue to pay the first installment of the loan payment. Mayor Carter-King reminded Council that enterprise funds must be self-funded. Administrator Davidson explained that enterprise funds are "stand alone entities" created by Statute to ensure rates are not raised in one fund to provide monies for a different fund; the funds must remain segregated. Rates must be periodically adjusted to accommodate costs; 1% funds can be used in conjunction with the enterprise fund, but cannot be used to fully fund the enterprise fund. Councilman Carsrud asked if there could be a six (6) month delay on the rate increase, because of the current economic conditions. Councilmen Neary and Brown concurred. Utilities Director Cole stated that this rate increase was the first of several planned increases, which would stagger the rate adjustments over a three-year period, rather than facilitating one large rate increase all at once. He stated that the loan documents would be presented to SLIB in June, including a pledge that future wastewater fees would cover the loan payments. Mayor Carter-King asked if the project would be delayed if the rate increase was postponed. Director Cole advised that the project would continue as planned, but future rate increases would be necessary to generate revenue to repay the loan. He suggested amending the Ordinance to include a future effective date for the rate increases, which would align with SLIB requirements. Councilman Neary asked

if the State would still have funding available for municipalities. Administrator Davidson explained that the funds for SLIB loans are from Permanent Mineral Trust Funds, which is a special fund for large improvements. It is assumed that the funds are still available for funding projects. Considering the current pandemic, federal funding is earmarked for costs directly involving COVID-19; the SLIB funding is separate from the COVID-19 federal funding. Staff will research the availability of funding. Administrator Davidson gave an overview of the deteriorating conditions of the WWTF. Director Cole reminded Council that bonding the project required repayment to begin immediately. The SLIB loan repayment would not start until the project was nearly completed, allowing more time to gradually increase rates to prepare for repayment. Director Cole requested that the rate increase not be extended farther than six months, the State would still be given a commitment of the future rate increase to assure the funds would be available for repayment of the loan. Mayor Carter-King asked for recommendations on how to proceed. Administrator Davidson suggested that Council amend the Ordinance on second reading, which would allow for further amendment on third reading, if necessary. City Attorney Reyes suggested that the Ordinance be amended on second reading to extend the effective date to July 1, 2020, which would allow time to extend the Ordinance to a further date, if needed. Councilman Carsrud made a motion to amend the Ordinance to extend the effective date of the rate increase to July 1, 2020; seconded by Councilman Brown. All voted aye. The motion carried to amend the Ordinance. Mayor Carter-King asked for a vote on the amended Ordinance. All voted aye. The motion carried, and the amended Ordinance was approved on second reading.

Splash Pad Bid Review

City Administrator Davidson informed Council that the bid opening for the Energy Capital Sports Complex all-inclusive park, splash park, and restroom facility took place earlier in the day. Development Services Director Muzzarelli stated that the engineer's estimate for the project was 2.807 million dollars. Three local (3) bids were submitted, with Powder River Construction the apparent low bidder with a bid of 2.498 million dollars. The engineering consultant, KLJ, will review the bids and present a letter of recommendation for the project. Director Muzzarelli explained that the bids were structured with four (4) schedules. Schedule 1 – Dirt Work to Grade; Schedule 2 – ADA Park; Schedule 3 – Splash Pad and Pump equipment; Schedule 4 – Facility for the Bathrooms, Pumps, IT Room, and infrastructure. Mayor Carter-King informed Council that the bid award would come before Council for consideration on the April 21st Council Agenda. Discussion continued regarding certified installation of the playground equipment, in-house planning and specifications of the playground equipment, and recognition of the Kiwanis Club for their monetary donation for a musical feature within the park. Mayor Carter-King reminded Council that the State Soccer tournament for 2021 was awarded to Gillette. The bathroom facility would need to be completed to accommodate the tournament. Councilman Brown asked if portions of the project could be completed, with a delay on other portions of the project. Director Muzzarelli advised that the project was integrated together, and would be best completed in one project, but stated that some of the park structure could possibly be delayed. Councilman Brown asked if the project could be delayed a year. Director Muzzarelli stated the project would need to be re-bid if delayed a year. Councilman Lundvall inquired about securing the area so that unauthorized vehicles could not access the park. Director Muzzarelli stated that the area would be fenced and bollards would be in place to restrict motor vehicle access.

Review of April 21st Agenda

The Mayor and Council reviewed the upcoming agenda items.

Executive Session

Councilman Carsrud made a motion to move into an executive session to discuss personnel and litigation; seconded by Councilman Lundvall. All voted aye. The motion carried.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

(S E A L)

ATTEST:

Cindy Staskiewicz, City Clerk

Louise Carter-King, Mayor

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