

September 21, 2020 Work Session

The City Council of the City of Idaho Falls met in Council Work Session, Monday, September 21, 2020, in the Council Chambers in the City Annex Building located at 680 Park Avenue in Idaho Falls, Idaho at 3:00 p.m.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

There were present:

Mayor Rebecca L. Noah Casper
Council President Michelle Ziel-Dingman (via WebEx)
Councilor John Radford (via WebEx)
Councilor Thomas Hally
Councilor Jim Freeman (via WebEx)
Councilor Jim Francis
Councilor Shelly Smede

Also present:

PJ Holm, Parks and Recreation Director
Neelay Bhatt, Pros Consulting
Philip Parnin, Pros Consulting
Laura Smith, CRSA
Brad Cramer, Community Development Services Director
Kerry Beutler, Community Development Services Planning Director
Dana Briggs, Economic Development Coordinator
Eric Day, Fire Department Deputy Chief
Mark Hagedorn, Controller
Josh Roos, Treasurer
Randy Fife, City Attorney
Kathy Hampton, City Clerk

Mayor Casper called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. with the following items:

Calendars, Announcements and Reports

Mayor Casper stated the Citizens Police Academy has recently begun and is one of the largest-attended sessions. She also stated the Idaho Falls Police Department (IFPD) has reached out to the African American Alliance and several leaders of the Hispanic community and introduced the liaison program. She noted Police Chief Bryce Johnson has assigned officers to particular neighborhoods as a virtual 'beat'. Mayor Casper stated she attended the Navigate Program graduation which has been developed by the Idaho Falls Rescue Mission for homeless individuals. She stated she also attended a Chaplain faith-based program.

September 23, Rotary lunch featuring Ball Ventures

September 24, Idaho Falls Power (IFP) Board Meeting; Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) board Meeting; City Club featuring Wayne Hoffman; local officials task force briefing on Nuclear Reactors Innovation Center (NRIC); and City Council Meeting

October 8, Regional Economic Development for Eastern Idaho (REDI) Virtual Summit

Mayor Casper stated the recording of the Governors call (scheduled for September 21) will be forwarded to all elected officials; the City will be requiring identification badges for all City employees in the near future, this will allow access into individual buildings as needed; and Comprehensive Planning and Strategic Planning will be simultaneously occurring in fall 2020 by Agnew:Beck.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update:

There was no update.

Liaison Reports and Council Concerns:

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Council President Dingman stated a new name for Targhee Regional Public Transit Authority (TRPTA) will be occurring in the near future, and the closing of the TRPTA property will be occurring October 14. She also stated a formal presentation of public transportation will be forthcoming.

Councilor Hally stated he and Councilor Smede were able to participate in promotions with the Idaho Falls Fire Department (IFFD). He also stated the Community Development Services Department provided a survey at the Parade of Homes for housing and development issues. He noted the housing industry is very robust.

Councilor Radford stated, as part of the policymakers counsel for American Public Power Association (APPA), there are issues with public power and with the budget revolving around the National election. The continuing resolutions must be done by September 30, this could affect IFP.

Councilor Smede reiterated the promotion participation for IFFD, she indicated the level of expectation for the captains was very impressive. She also stated Municipal Services is preparing for the annual audit.

Councilor Freeman stated Rogers Street and North Park Drive at Tautphaus Park have been recently paved, and the gate going into Rose Hill Cemetery has been opened. He also stated the Broadway Bridge is currently being repaved, he recommended an alternate route of traffic.

Councilor Francis stated the new striping on Rogers Street will take some public education.

Acceptance and/or Receipt of Minutes:

It was moved by Councilor Francis, seconded by Councilor Radford, to receive the recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting of September 15, 2020 pursuant to the Local Land Use Planning Act (LLUPA). Roll call as follows: Aye – Councilors Smede, Hally, Radford, Dingman, Freeman, Francis. Nay – none. Motion carried.

Presentation and Discussion of Master Plan:

Director Holm stated the consultants have been working on this plan for the previous two (2) years. In July 2018, Parks and Recreation (P&R) published a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a Strategic and Master Plan, and Pros Consulting was selected by the committee in September of 2018. The first public meeting for RECreate Idaho Falls (the name of the plan) was held in October 2018, although the plan was delayed due to a change of leadership at P&R. Director Holm recognized those individuals from Pros Consulting and CRSA.

Mr. Bhatt believes a 5-10 year road map can help shape the future of P&R. Project Process - Where are we today?; Where are we going tomorrow?; and How do we get there? Mr. Bhatt stated there were a number of avenues to promote this plan including the website and the HAPPiFEET app. There were more than 700 total participants. The goal for the online survey was 350 respondents, 503 respondents were received. Mr. Bhatt stated the survey results include a 95% level of confidence with a 4.3% margin of error. He reviewed survey questions including Demographics – Gender; Demographic – Age; Demographic – Years in Idaho Falls; Overall Value from P&R; Visits to City Parks; Physical Condition of Parks and Facilities; Learning About Programs/Activities; Quality of Programs; Reasons for Not Participating in P&R Programs; Level of Support for Actions; Actions Willing to Fund; Allocation of Funds; Top Priorities – Parks and Facilities; and Top Priorities – Programs.

Mr. Parnin stated Idaho Falls was compared to Salt Lake County, Utah; Bend, OR; Sioux Falls, SD; Boise, ID, and Medford, OR for benchmark findings. Mr. Parnin reviewed the Study including Parks (Idaho Falls has 32.25 total acres per 1,000 residents); Trails (Idaho Falls has .40 trail miles per 10,000 residents) Capacity (Idaho Falls has 12.5 Full-Time Employees (FTEs) per 10,000 residents); Non-tax revenue (\$80.25 revenue per resident); Operating Expense (\$226.35 per resident); Cost Recovery (35% – NRPA median = 27%); and Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) (\$645,000 – includes renovation, development, acquisition, and other).

Ms. Smith stated considerations of the Feasibility Study include site assessment; peer community facilities; and community input. She reviewed considerations for Sports Field Lighting at Old Butte Park (would maximize healthy outdoor venue, has highest potential number of simultaneous events/patrons, least expensive improvement of the three (3) facilities); Rec Center and Indoor Aquatics (important all-season use, existing facilities are expensive to operate, and cannot expand without eliminating needed parking); and Splash Pad (healthy outdoor venue, and first on community's list of wanted new facilities).

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Mr. Bhatt believes the key will be funding. Funding strategy considerations include grants – Federal and State; earned income – user fees, capital, and operational sponsorships; private funding – foundations, businesses, and non-profits; volunteer sources – conservancy, trusts, and fundraising; and operations – advertising, web-page revenue, and concessions. He stated there was a visioning workshop with a large group of P&R staff with the idea to start with Core Values that include diversity and inclusion; excellent customer service; healthy fun (safe and secure experience); stewardship (social, environmental, and financial); and teamwork (initiative, collaboration, and building relationships). Mr. Bhatt stated the vision is to be the leaders in providing healthy, fun experiences. He also stated the new mission statement is to enrich the community.

Mr. Bhatt reviewed big moves and strategies (for the next 10-15 years) including trail expansion and infrastructure improvements; implement the recommendations of the Wes Deist Aquatic Center assessment; feasibility of a new multi-gen recreation center with a pool; adequate resources to effectively and efficiently operate (staffing, dollars, equipment, etc); evaluate market potential for athletic complex to support leagues, host local, regional, and state tournaments; and improve and upgrade revenue generating facilities – Tautphaus Park, the Zoo, and Funland. Next Steps including feedback from Council (the report has been reviewed by the P&R Commission), and final report.

General discussion followed including vandalism issues at restrooms and parks (possibly using sensors or timed-locking doors); multiple/additional uses at the golf courses (walking paths, open dog park spaces, and club house uses); and impact fees (for new projects). Director Holm stated the draft report has been received, approval will be requested in the near future. He believes this will be a good plan moving forward in P&R.

IdaHome Committee Presentation:

Director Cramer stated the IdaHome Committee consists of several individuals from the private and public sectors who traveled to Grand Junction, CO earlier in the year as part of Community Builders. Community Builders hosts Building Better Places Training for cities and counties who are struggling with growth issues. The Idaho Falls application focused on a severe need to address housing issues. Director Cramer stated per a 2018 study by the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, out of 3007 counties there are no individuals who could afford* (*spending no more than 30% of their income on housing) a 2-bedroom apartment at the fair market rate from a minimum-wage, 40-hour work week. He indicated wages have stagnated while housing costs have increased and housing is one of the largest costs for individuals. Mr. Cramer reviewed cost burdened renters for Idaho Falls and cost burdened owners for Idaho Falls. He stated a range as high as 91% of owners are paying more than 30% of their income for housing costs. He also reviewed cost/price per square foot – \$117 as of August 28, 2020 (Director Cramer indicated this may be a low amount); median list price – \$356,000 as of August 28, 2020 (Director Cramer believes this may be somewhat attributed to supply and demand); and For Sale inventory – 171 as of July 19, 2019 (Director Cramer indicated there is less than 30 days of inventory on the market). Director Cramer stated additional housing concerns are focused around growth pressures including projects at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and constant new jobs/businesses coming. He noted this has been one of the busiest years for his department. He stated another housing concern is the increased rate of land consumption for low-density housing. He noted while housing is important it doesn't cover its costs to provide the necessary services for infrastructure. Director Cramer stated staff has worked hard in the zoning updates to try to encourage/incentivize building alternative-types of housing although there is still significant 'not in my backyard' and there still is reluctance from the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) and City Council for controversial housing projects. He noted there have been several infill projects over the last few years although the design was still not there. Director Cramer recognized additional IdaHome Committee members: Erin Cannon, developer and builder; Chris Lee, real estate agent; Margaret Wimborne, P&Z Commissioner and school district representative; Lindsey Romankiw, P&Z Commissioner and attorney; John Radford, City Councilmember; Jim Francis, City Councilmember; Ms. Briggs; and Mr. Beutler. He noted the training was focused around developing a successful strategy on how to address housing issues. The overall goal was to increase housing choices across the community as approximately 91% of the housing stock is single-unit family homes; 25% of all annexed acreage is single-unit housing; and 3.2% of all annexed acreage is multi-unit housing. There is not a diverse housing stock. Director Cramer stated the committee was asked to identify signs of success which included: strong community buy-in of a shared vision; increased diversity of housing stock; stronger continent of involved neighborhood groups; a demonstrated and proven path to profitability for quality, alternative housing types; and a

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smarter development code and development policies. He also stated the committee was asked to identify a “Path to Victory” which included: recruit influencers from the public and private sectors; put community character and needs first: develop and implement a robust community outreach strategy; and research and remove barriers. Achievements and progress made regarding the goals include: increased invitations to IdahoHome Committee meetings; developing partnerships within the private sector to provide training to staff and the P&Z Commission; contract with Agnew:Beck to develop comprehensive plan outreach strategy; identified eight (8) geographic regions of the City where we will conduct “neighborhood” meetings to talk about the specific needs and concerns of those areas; and Opticos Design report on Missing Middle Housing and recommended policies for the City’s plan and code. Director Cramer stated a kick-off event occurred at the Parade of Homes. He reviewed results of the survey including where do you live; challenges or barriers when trying to find housing; importance of diversity; preferred housing type; preferred styles/types of housing; housing types in your area; housing types with development standards and restrictions; and housing types that would not be appropriate. Director Cramer stated next steps include: Comprehensive Plan outreach (refine the survey and send to the general public and neighborhood meetings in 2021); code audit and proposed code changes; IdahoHome Committee to continue to help recruit, advocate, and collaborate; ongoing elected and appointed official training; October 29 Dr. Yun event; and Idaho Falls driving tour with Council and P&Z. He believes a neighborhood should not be exempt from radical change, however, a neighborhood should not be exempt from some change. Small changes make home ownership possible while not being intrusive.

Ms. Briggs stated Dr. Lawrence Yun is the National Association of Realtors Economist. She also stated this event is in partnership with IdaHome, the Greater Idaho Falls Association of Realtors (GIFAR), and the City Club of Idaho Falls. She believes this will be good information to share with the community. Ms. Briggs noted the IdaHome Committee has been holding monthly meetings since the conference in February. Councilor Hally suggested the survey include those individuals who may now be working at home. Per Councilor Smede, Director Cramer stated there is always an ebb and flow with construction costs. There are additional factors that may increase housing costs for a while. Per Councilor Francis, Director Cramer is unsure of local housing price increases versus other cities. Council President Dingman believes long-term residents may be being forced out of their neighborhoods due to the housing costs increase. Mayor Casper stated markets do best when provided with reliable data. She questioned if the survey data included out-of-state home buyers. Director Cramer believes data points are being collected for the Census. He stated there is a burden to citizens with new development. There is also a role for services offered and taxes charged. Mayor Casper believes these will be important points of emphasis. She also believes there needs to be a strategic philosophy of how to grow. Brief comments followed.

Donation of Ambulance to Clark County Discussion

Director Alexander stated one (1) ambulance has been scheduled for replacement. The garage estimated the replacement to be approximately \$5,000 if the ambulance was sold on public surplus. The IFFD has proposed donating this specific ambulance to Clark County Emergency Medical Services. Per Mayor Casper, Director Alexander stated the City has good relationships with smaller communities and Clark County is not expecting to put a large amount of miles on this ambulance. Mayor Casper stated the smaller communities may not have the funding to purchase this equipment. She indicated per Fire Chief Duane Nelson, the City receives several donations from the federal government. This is a way to pay-it-forward to those smaller communities. Deputy Chief Day stated the ambulance has lived its expected life with the IFFD. He also stated the ambulance purchased by Clark County was a lemon and the backup ambulance was unable to meet their needs. Clark County serves as a back to Mud Lake, therefore, IFFD has been responding as needed. This item will be included on the September 24 Council Meeting.

Law Enforcement Complex (LEC) Financing Update

Director Alexander reviewed the Certificate of Participation (COP) financing update:

Municipal Advisor – Zion’s public finance; Bond Counsel – Hawley Troxell; City Finance Team – Director Alexander, Mr. Hagedorn, and Mr. Roos; final stages of completing the financing due diligence; published Request for Proposal (RFP) for underwriter; City underwriter evaluation committee – Director Alexander, Mr. Hagedorn, Mr. Roos, and Council President Dingman; and bond trustee - price quote received.

Director Alexander also reviewed the COP timeline:

Evaluate underwriter proposals – RFP Committee by October 2

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- Discuss underwriter and trustee recommendations – RFP Committee, Mayor and City Council by October 5
- Approve underwriter and trustee recommendations – Mayor and City Council by October 8
- Financing assignments – Zions Public Finance, Hawley Troxell, approved underwriter, trustee, and City Finance Team by October 9 - November 20
- Discussion recommending finance plan – Mayor, City Council and City Finance Team on November 9
- Adopt financing ordinance – Mayor and City Council on November 24
- Negotiated bond sale – project Finance Team on/around December 10
- Bond sale closing – project Finance Team on December 30

Director Alexander stated the City wants to leverage the current finance rates. The bond rating will determine the amount and the recommended finance plan, and there is no anticipation of repaying the amount in a 10-year period. Mr. Hagedorn reviewed the estimated \$30M total cost to the City including principal and interest. He stated the longer time frame of the loan would increase the interest payment. A lower payment, approximately \$1.6M for 30 years, would amount to approximately \$17M in interest. A payment of \$2M for 20 years would amount to approximately \$8M in interest. Mr. Hagedorn noted the funding options proposal in November will give a series of choices and determine the best interest for the City. Director Alexander noted this will be a long process. She also noted regular conference calls have been occurring with Zion’s Public Finance and Hawley Troxell. She expressed her appreciation to Council President Dingman for serving on the RFP underwriter committee. Council President Dingman believes the process has gone smoothly to this point; the timeline is important for Council expectations and the various decisions; the finance team will have recommendations for the Council to consider and to control; and it’s prudent to use dollars as wisely as possible. Mayor Casper also believes the timeline is helpful. Councilor Radford does not believe there was a Council vote to approve the LEC. Mayor Casper stated that decision will occur on November 24. Council President Dingman indicated the budget that was passed for the upcoming fiscal year included a financial commitment for this project. She believes the finance team is moving forward based upon the consensus and feedback from the individual Councilmembers. She also believes this timeline would allow discussion and education moving forward. Per Mayor Casper, Director Alexander believes this aggressive schedule is achievable.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

s/ Kathy Hampton
Kathy Hampton, City Clerk

s/ Rebecca L. Noah Casper
Rebecca L. Noah Casper, Mayor