

October 12, 2021 Work Session

The City Council of the City of Idaho Falls met in Council Work Session, Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 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
Councilor John Radford
Councilor Thomas Hally
Councilor Jim Freeman
Councilor Jim Francis
Councilor Lisa Burtenshaw

Also present:

PJ Holm, Parks and Recreation Director
Chris Horsley, Recreation Superintendent
Roxane Mitro, AKM Architect, P.A.
Mark Hagedorn, Controller
James Shank, Idaho Falls School District 91 Superintendent
Margaret Wimborne, Idaho Falls School District 91 Communications and Community Engagement Director
Chris Fredericksen, Public Works Director

Mayor Casper called the meeting to order at 3:11 p.m. with the following items:

Calendars, Announcements, Reports, and Updates:

October 13, Chamber of Commerce Legislative Forum, and Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO)
October 14, City Council Meeting
October 25, City Council Work Session
October 28, City Council Meeting
October 29, Monster's Ball, and Regional Economic Development for Eastern Idaho (REDI) What's Up in Eastern Idaho Annual Conference
October 28-30, Boo at the Zoo
October 30, Real Heroes' Trunk or Treat
November 8, City Council Work Session
November 10, City Council Meeting
November 22, City Council Work Session
November 23, City Council Meeting
November 25-26, City offices closed for Thanksgiving holiday
The December calendar was briefly reviewed

Mayor Casper requested Council's preference for the Opioid Settlement. Mr. Fife noted the settlement amounts are still being negotiated. He also noted the State has been given a deadline to the governmental entities. Following brief discussion, Mayor Casper indicated a memo will be forthcoming for the city to participate in the settlement. Mayor Casper stated she will distribute dates for upcoming Council CUSP presentations. She also stated Operation Appreciation will be held in the following week to honor health care workers – the elected officials will be present at local hospitals on October 18 to show their appreciation.

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Liaison Reports and Councilmember Concerns:

Council President Dingman stated the Idaho Falls Regional Airport (IDA) is doing phenomenal. She indicated IDA is anticipating to exceed previous enplanement and air travel records from the previous years. Council President Dingman reiterated the Monster's Ball which will support the Community Food Basket. She also stated the regional food drive is occurring October 6-31.

Councilor Hally stated October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, the 8th Street property minimum bid is \$181,000 – a tour of the building will be held October 13 and October 14, the Ambulance Fund is making great progress, an election candidate presentation will occur at Compass Academy on October 13, and a Moderna booster (for Coronavirus (COVID-19)) should be available in the near future.

Councilor Burtenshaw stated Rotary presented a \$700,000 check to the city for Heritage Park, an additional \$100,000 will forthcoming, along with some trees, and irrigation will occur in spring 2022.

Councilor Freeman stated former Councilor Ed Marohn will be having a meet-the-author event at the Idaho Falls Public Library (IFPL) on October 26, he reminded all individuals of the upcoming election including information regarding absentee ballots and early voting ballots, and he stated revenues have increased at the golf courses over the previous summer.

Councilor Francis stated, per the Idaho Falls Police Department (IFPD), Lieutenant Shane Kaiser's retirement event will be held on October 14. He also stated, per the Parks and Recreation Department, the zoo will be open on Saturdays for the month of October and on Saturdays and Sundays for the month of November, and an Arbor Day event will be held October 20. He indicated a revision of the Block Face (downtown parking) ordinance will be forthcoming.

Councilor Radford stated the leaf collection schedule is located on the city's website, he expressed his appreciation to Idaho Falls Power (IFP) for the lack of power outages during the recent snowstorm, he noted a 44% increase in revenues nationwide, and TEENtober will be occurring at the IFPL during October.

Acceptance and/or Receipt of Minutes:

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

Update: Aquatic Center Humidification Replacement Project:

Director Holm expressed his appreciation to the multiple departments for their assistance on this project. He then reviewed the following with general discussion throughout:

Wes Deist Aquatic Center –

- Facility is 35 years old
- Facility Assessment performed June 16, 2020
- Study identified three (3) categories of recommendations: life safety; short-term; and long-term

Life Safety Concerns:

- Humidity levels in natatorium are high and degrading the building (harsh environment, corrosion on duct hangers is evident, and possible additional structural related failures)
- Indoor air quality (high level of chloramines in the space due to unreliable dehumidification units, and return air plenum)
- Replacement of dehumidification system is due to age, corrosion, reliability is vital to the well-being of the facility
- Upgrade of equipotential bonding grid (electrical equipment)

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Director Holm reviewed the cost estimates included in the facility assessment, totaling \$1,018,160, noting this amount was previously approved as an encumbered amount to complete the project in the current year. He also reviewed the project items, costs (base bid and alternates/supplementals), and status. Total cost is \$1,158,423.00, which is an average of \$140,423.00. Director Holm reviewed the bid timeline stating the bid included a requirement for liquated damages if the project is not completed within 180 days to ensure the start of the aquatics season. He also reviewed the project timeline that would begin October 15 with completion by or before mid-April. He noted the facility will be closed November 7 through April 2022.

Director Holm reviewed the proposed funding options stating there were \$150,000 savings in power poles for Heritage Park due to IFP using metal poles versus laminated poles because of the manufacturing timeframe. He also suggested postponing the Ryder Park bentonite liner project to reserve \$80,000 for any additional overages. Councilor Radford stated although he appreciates a funding option, he is not in favor of using the \$80,000. Per Councilor Francis, Director Holm is unsure of the bentonite timeframe. Councilors Francis and Freeman agreed with Councilor Radford. Councilor Burtenshaw also agreed with Councilor Radford to not use the \$80,000 and possibly use other funding for any overages. Per Councilor Radford, Mr. Hagedorn stated this funding is a cash transfer which requires Council approval. He also stated he recommended Director Holm have a contingency plan, thereby presenting the \$80,000 option. Director Holm stated he will find contingency funds elsewhere, he will not use the \$80,000 allocated to the bentonite liner. Director Holm reviewed the summary of issues and proposed solutions stating the construction bid is good for 30 days from the time the bid was submitted, and the project team recommendation is to accept the bid with alternatives for a total of \$840,148 with the project shortage of \$140,423. This item will be included on the October 14 City Council Meeting agenda.

Guest Presentation: State of the District—discussion of student achievement, financial status, facilities planning, and Q&A:

Dr. Shank believes there should be high levels of learning and success for all students, barriers to learning should be eliminated; focus on why the institution exists and prioritize distractions that take attention away from learning; and excellence in all programs. He stated School District 91 (D91) serves approximately 10,300 students. He briefly reviewed the meal program, the number of students in each grade, the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) for the school district as compared to the State of Idaho, schools performing above the ISAT, 3-year trend data, and the graduation rate (22% of students did not graduate). Dr. Shank stated responding to performance is to recognize and maintain that the fundamental purpose of school is learning, and all things connect outward from the central focus. He also stated goals and direction of the district is to seek clarity of focus and directions through High Reliability Schools (HRS) which is the framework for continuous improvement in D91. The district has set the goal to attain Level 1 (Safe and Collaborative Culture) certification in 35% of six (6) of its schools by the end of this school year. Dr. Shank stated the budget is approved annually based on the number of students – the budget was set at 90%, district fund balance = \$8.3M, and district contingency reserve = \$3.4M (one (1) month of expenditures). He also stated challenges include recruitment and retention of staff, competitive salaries and benefits, facilities improvements, and State reduction in discretionary spending (\$2M). He noted a budget tour will occur in February 2022, and all budget information is included on the district website. Dr. Shank stated all school facilities are being evaluated on their condition. He reviewed the steps for evaluation. He also stated a Supplemental Plant Facilities Fund (SPFF) will occur in spring 2022 with another bond expected in the future as well. He reviewed the district initiatives as well as “Vollmer’s List”. Discussion followed regarding new schools and/or changing the boundary lines of the current schools, awareness and support for the district, costs for fuel (Dr. Shank noted mileage is reimbursed from the State), comparison to other school districts, legislative items (reserves, salaries and benefits, bonds, all-day kindergarten, and additional revenues), lowering the threshold for bonds, a council liaison for the school district, and facilities.

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Status Report and Discussion: Greater Idaho Falls Transit (GIFT):

Mayor Casper reminded the Council that the city will hire an employee, as a pass-thru entity, that will work for public transit, and the city has budgeted \$140,000 for several years to assist with public transit. She noted Council President Dingman was assigned as a Council liaison to the former Targhee Regional Public Transportation Authority (TRPTA) Board, which is now GIFT, and she has been working with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) moving forward. Council President Dingman gave a refresher update from the June 7, 2021 City Work Session presentation. She stated ITD created a proposal to start a micro-transit pilot program that was recently approved by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); the project was awarded \$4.1M to ITD from Section 5307 Small Urbanized Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Fund; the service area at this time will be the City of Idaho falls boundaries; the likely service will be eight (8) vehicles per day, 14 hours per day, six (6) days per week; and the proposed budget assumes base fare (one (1) way) to be \$1.50 with 30% of rides receiving discounted fares. She also stated the Request for Proposal (RFP) is currently being circulated for comments as part of the sequential signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by ITD, the city, Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO), and GIFT; the projected budget will allow the third-party provider to keep the fares; and there is a requirement to be a para-transit provider. Council President Dingman stated the funding model approved by FTA will be FTA to ITD to the city on a reimbursement basis; the city finance team has ensured the proper process is in place; GIFT will continue to search for local match, spearheaded by the new Transit Coordinator – this individual will be hired by the city under the Public Works Department with reimbursement of salary/benefits/wages under the grant by ITD; ‘local match’ are contributions that can be used to ‘match’ monies provided in the FTA grant; there is no cost to the city, GIFT, or ITD during the first two (2) years of the project – this is called the ‘pilot’ portion of the approved grant; and if demand and local match are viable, the project will continue after the first two (2) years and move into year three where local match is required – at the same service level, this amount is estimated to be \$858,625. The service level can/will be adjusted to market conditions. Council President Dingman stated next steps include Council approval of the MOA (the MOA would be modified to allow revisions after one (1) year); the city posts the job opening for the Transit Coordinator as soon as possible; once a Transit Coordinator is hired an RFP will solicit a third-party contractor to provide micro-transit service for the project; and service will begin eight (8) weeks from the contract date after the third-party contractor is hired. Discussion followed including the physical location of the Transit Coordinator, electric vehicles, routes within the city boundaries (routes have not been set at this time although fixed routes are not viable), revisions of the MOA by any entity, and ridesharing. Council President Dingman recognized the additional GIFT Board: Rick Cloutier, IDA Director; Lisa Farris, Grants Administrator; Michael Walker, Dean of Students for the College of Eastern Idaho; and Arnold Cantu, Director of Medical Services for the Community Council of Idaho. She emphasized the GIFT Board has no affiliation with the prior TRPTA operations. Mayor Casper stated she is anxious for this pilot program, however, she expressed her concern for the MOA as she believes the MOA does not allow GIFT day-to-day interaction with the operations. She also believes the MOA isolates GIFT from the leadership in a problem-solving role. She expressed her frustration that year three may fall to GIFT and the city as she believes ITD is cutting the authority out of their responsibilities. She does not believe much dialogue has occurred with the signatories. Council President Dingman stated she does not disagree with Mayor Casper. She also stated ITD refuses to give GIFT more responsibility or authority, ITD will not allow GIFT to hold the money, ITD will not allow GIFT to hire or train the Transit Coordinator, and ITD will not allow GIFT to be the first or second point of contact for transit complaint issues. Per Councilor Francis, Council President Dingman stated GIFT will be an advisory capacity to the project. She also stated the GIFT Board will be granted monthly updates, or any ITD updates, from the Transit Coordinator. Also per Councilor Francis, Council President Dingman believes the Council could receive regular reports from the GIFT Board at any time. Director Fredericksen stated the city is not a transit provider, hence, the third-party provider. Council President Dingman believes ITD is expecting a higher level of leadership due to the previous TRPTA issues, and it was ITD and FTA’s responsibility to oversee the programs they were funding and directing. She also believes ITD believes the MOA puts the bare minimum of legal

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responsibility in GIFT's hands. Councilor Hally believes the city needs to do due diligence to make sure the project goes beyond two (2) years as the city needs a transit system, and the city has the most benefit to gain. Councilor Francis believes the pilot program would give the city a chance to see if a transit program is needed or not. Council President Dingman stated the pilot project will provide data that will make data-driven decisions beyond the pilot project. Director Fredericksen believes this is one of the most difficult programs to work with due to the high match, this project may create other projects outside of Idaho Falls, and he is unsure of other public transit options for the community. Discussion followed regarding the risk of the project. This item will be included on the October 14 City Council Meeting agenda.

It was then moved by Councilor Radford, seconded by Councilor Freeman, to move into Executive Session (at 6:27 p.m.). The Executive Session is being called pursuant to the provisions of Idaho Code Section 74-206(1)(c) to acquire an interest in real property which is not owned by a public agency. The Executive Session will be held in the City Annex Conference Room. At the conclusion of the Executive Session the Council will not reconvene into Council Work Session. Roll call as follows: Aye – Councilors Francis, Dingman, Freeman, Hally, Radford, Burtenshaw. Nay – none. Motion carried.

The City Council of the City of Idaho Falls met in Executive Session, Tuesday, October 12, 2021 in the City Annex Conference Room in the City Annex Building located at 680 Park Avenue in Idaho Falls, Idaho at 6:39 p.m.

There were present:

- Mayor Rebecca L. Noah Casper
- Councilor Jim Francis
- Councilor John Radford
- Councilor Jim Freeman
- Council President Michelle Ziel-Dingman
- Councilor Thomas Hally
- Councilor Lisa Burtenshaw

Also present:

- Bear Prairie, Idaho Falls Power Director
- Randy Fife, City Attorney

The Executive Session was called pursuant to the provisions of Idaho Code Section 74-206(1)(c) to acquire an interest in real property which is not owned by a public agency.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

s/ Kathy Hampton
Kathy Hampton, City Clerk

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