

**SPECIAL STUDY SESSION NOTES**  
**CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO**  
**City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
**June 27, 2022**

Upon adjournment of the Regular City Council Meeting, the Mayor called this Special Study Session to order (after a short break) at 8:02 p.m.

This meeting was conducted both as a virtual meeting and hybrid, where some members of the Council or City staff were physically present at the Municipal building, and some members of the public attended in person as well.

After calling the meeting to order, Mayor Starker stated the rules and procedures necessitated by this meeting format.

Mayor Starker welcomed the Council, other elected officials, staff and interested citizens.

The Mayor also explained the virtual/hybrid meeting format, how citizens will have the opportunity to be heard, and the procedures and policies to be followed.

Council members present Judy Hutchinson, Korey Stites, Amanda Weaver, Janeece Hoppe, Rachel Hultin, Scott Ohm, Leah Dozeman, and Valerie Nosler Beck (virtually).

Also, present: City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick; City Manager Patrick Goff; City Treasurer, Chris Miller; Assistant to the City Manager, Marianne Schilling; Director of Administration, Allison Scheck, guests and interested citizens.

**Public's Comment on Agenda Items –**

No one came forward to speak.

**Note about Wheat Ridge Speaks:**

Citizens may visit the Wheat Ridge Speaks website and enter written comments of up to 1,000 words on any Council agenda item. The deadline for citizens to submit comments is 12:00 Noon Mountain Time on the day of a Council session so that Council members, other elected officials and City Staff have time to review the comments before the meeting on Monday evening.

The City Clerk's Office transcribes those Wheat Ridge Speaks comments into these minutes, placing each comment along with the record for that agenda item, including items that include a public hearing (verbatim, if the comments do not contain lascivious language or unlawful hate speech).

There were no citizen comments entered into Wheat Ridge Speaks related to this session.

## **1. Community Partners Grant Program Committee Recommendations**

### **Issue**

City Council created the Community Partners Grant Program (formerly the Outside Agency Program) Committee in June 2016 to review outside agency applications and present recommendations to City Council on the funding amounts each organization should receive. The purpose of creating this committee was to provide an additional opportunity for residents to participate in the budget process, and to give the committee members the opportunity to weigh community needs against available resources and provide recommendations to City Council.

### **Staff Report**

Kathy Milkey and Jerry DiTullio, from the Community Partners Grant Program Committee came to testify and make a specific budget request for their programs in calendar and fiscal 2023. She summarized the benefits this effort is providing to City residents of all ages. They provide services that are currently more under-funded than usual, so the City's contributions are more vital than ever.

Marianne Schilling, Assistant to the City Manager spoke on the background of the committee where the total amount of funds distributed in early 2021 was \$133,800. In May 2022, two new Wheat Ridge residents were appointed by City Council to serve on the committee for a two-year term to expire in July 2023. Moving forward each year, new members will join for a two-year term so that the committee will be comprised of both experienced and new members each year

Also noted was that the committee reviewed applications and listened to presentations from 23 different community organizations, totaling \$182,630 in requests. This is an overall increase in funding requests of \$25,480 compared to last year.

The total number of applicants is down by two agencies compared to last year. However, three new applications were received for the 2023 Community Partners Grant Program: Foothills Regional Housing, Hope Connection and Community, and The Rising/Mission Arvada.

The review committee is recommending granting \$160,000 to community partners in the 2023 budget.

### **Councilmembers had questions and comments:**

CM asked detailed questions about the Committee's procedures for evaluating applications and making their recommendations.

CM commented that the description of the various community partners' requests was helpful.

Three new applicants appear on this year's list, which is great. How do we communicate to eligible agencies that they might be eligible to apply? Ms. Schilling and Mr. DiTullio provided detailed replies.

What inspired the City to begin this effort? Mr. Goff reported that he brought the idea from another City where he used to work.

CM appreciated the decisions the Committee has made in making their recommendations, for many reasons but especially the Committee's willingness to actually recommend grants larger than the applicant sought when that seemed warranted.

Several members thanked the staff and the Committee.

How is the eligibility of an agency determined? Ms. Schilling gave a detailed reply.

CM strongly endorsed this effort and the recommended grants.

The Mayor proposed a consensus to direct staff to carry this forward.

**Consensus achieved.**

## **2. 2E Bond Update and Future Bonding Discussion**

### **Issue**

At the regular general election held on November 8, 2016, the electorate of the City approved ballot question 2E, which temporarily increased the sales and use tax levied by the City by one-half of one percent (3% to 3.5%) for up to 12 years or \$38.5 million, whichever occurs first. It also authorized the issuance of debt to finance City investment in public infrastructure to facilitate economic development opportunities. Sales and use tax revenue bonds were issued on May 2, 2017 to finance four specific City investments including Anderson Park, Wadsworth Boulevard, Wheat Ridge Ward Gold Line station development and the Clear Creek Crossing development.

The purpose of this study session is to provide an update to City Council on the status of the 2E bond projects, the 2E Bond Fund and to start the conversation concerning a potential extension of the 0.5% tax increase and the issuance of additional bonds for capital infrastructure projects.

### **Staff Report**

Mr. Goff gave a brief history of the issue, beginning on January 22, 2007, when City Council officially ratified the creation of Mayor DiTullio's Drainage, Infrastructure, Roads and Trails (DIRT) Task Force. The mission of the Task Force was:

To identify and prioritize projects that will protect and improve the quality of life for citizens, complement the business community and make Wheat Ridge a city where citizens want to live, work, play and become stakeholders within the community.

The Task Force was made up of ten Wheat Ridge residents, the Wheat Ridge City Treasurer, the WR2020 Executive Director, three council members, one rotating council member and two youth representing Wheat Ridge High School. The Task Force met over several months to review over \$143 million of unfunded infrastructure projects identified by City Council and staff.

City Council met in study session on July 11, 2016, July 25, 2016 and August 1, 2016 and discussed the DIRT Task Force recommendations and a consensus was reached to consider a sales and use tax rate increase for the 2016 ballot to fund a portion of the DIRT Task Force recommendations.

On August 22, 2016, City Council approved Council Bill No. 17, an ordinance giving notice of and calling for a special municipal election to be held November 8, 2016 and submitting a ballot question concerning a temporary increase of one-half of one cent (\$0.005) in the City's sales and use tax rate (cents per \$10).

He also spoke on the following 2E funded topics:

- Improvements to Anderson Park
- Clear Creek Crossing Access Ramps
- Wadsworth Improvement Project
- Wheat Ridge · Ward Station

The next steps identified over \$113 million in unfunded transportation, facility, floodplain, bicycle/pedestrian, drainage, and parks and recreation infrastructure and other maintenance projects. Historically, major infrastructure and maintenance projects in the City have been deferred for long periods or were funded through a "pay-as-you-go" model. Although the 2E Bond Fund projects have not been fully completed, I believe this has been an effective model for funding major infrastructure projects in the City.

Staff requests further discussion and direction from City Council on continuing a bonding model to fund the City's critical infrastructure needs.

1. Is bonding an effective model for funding critical infrastructure projects?
2. Considering the current temporary sales and use tax increase of 0.05% will expire in 2024, should the City consider a ballot question to extend the tax for a certain period of time?
3. Should the City issue additional bonds for infrastructure projects?
4. Should the City conduct polling to determine the communities' level of support for an extension of the temporary sales tax and additional bonding authority?

Mr. Goff indicated that November 2023 would be the best time for putting this issue before the voters, if Council agrees that continuing the sales tax is a good way to generate the necessary revenue.

**Councilmembers had questions and comments:**

A discussion ensued, focusing on the four questions stated above.

CM Hoppe remarked on the history of the sales tax and municipal bond vehicles to fund infrastructure. She asked Mr. Goff for a suggestion about how to proceed. He commented on prior processes the City has used and options Council might consider going forward.

Mr. Goff emphasized that we need to employ both community engagement process and planning process.

CM Hultin commented that we have a lot more data from several credible sources than Council did when the current infrastructure plan was designed, and funding approaches considered. We have a lot of guidance from our community about how to proceed.

Mayor Starker asked for a **consensus** on answers to the four questions:

1. Yes, proceed.
2. Yes, proceed.
3. Yes, proceed.
4. Yes, proceed.

### **Consensuses achieved.**

CM asked how the next steps will work and the timing. Mr. Goff gave a set of specific recommendations for next steps and a timeline.

CM Hultin expressed her support for polling the residents on their preferences for this funding. A discussion ensued about when to schedule the 2023 residents' survey.

### **3. Staff Report(s)**

Nothing further at this time, as staff made reports already in tonight's Regular Council

### **4. Elected Officials' Report(s)**

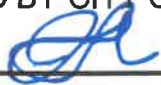
CM Dozeman announced that our annual celebration of the City's incorporation is August 12-14 with the parade on Saturday, August 13. Registration for the parade closes July 30<sup>th</sup>. We are planning a District IV meeting, as announced earlier this evening, Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m. to about 7:30 or 8:00. She thanked the Audacity Lounge for hosting a meeting with residents last week.

CM Hultin reminded us that one week from tomorrow is Neighborhood Night Out. This year we will have this event as a City park, one park per District. On the following night there is a meeting at New Image Brewing for people to meet their officials and have a dialogue about the City's future.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Special Study Session adjourned at 8:44 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON August 22, 2022.



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Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



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Rachel Hultin, Mayor Pro Tem