

Special Study Session – City Council
CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO
City Council Chambers 7500 W. 29th Avenue
July 10, 2023

Immediately upon adjournment of the Regular City Council Meeting, the Mayor called this Special Study Session to order at 7:09 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, Amanda Weaver, Scott Ohm, Janeece Hoppe, Rachel Hultin, Korey Stites, Valerie Nosler Beck, and Leah Dozeman.

Also, present: City Manager Patrick Goff; City Attorney, Gerald Dahl; City Clerk, Steve Kirkpatrick (virtually); Deputy City Manager, Allison Scheck; guests and interested citizens.

Public 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). Those comments appear in the minutes for tonight's regularly scheduled City Council business meeting.

No comments appeared in WR Speaks for this session.

1. Staff Report

a) 2023 Jefferson County Multi-Hazard Plan annual report

Issue

Natural hazards in Jefferson County and the City of Wheat Ridge have historically caused significant disasters resulting in damage to property and natural resources, and in some instances, loss of life. Undertaking hazard mitigation actions in accordance with a multi-hazard mitigation plan reduces the potential for harm to people and property from future hazard occurrences.

Council adopted the current Jefferson County Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan (MHP) on November 8, 2021. The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires that an annual report be completed as a condition of future funding for mitigation projects under Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) pre- and post-disaster mitigation grant programs. The City of Wheat Ridge has made progress on some actions and has fully participated in the annual report of the 2021 Jefferson County Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan.

Staff Report

City Manager, Patrick Goff and Projects Supervisor Mark Westberg gave detailed reports on how the city didn't receive any hazard mitigation grants in the last year, so City specific information isn't included in the annual report. However, progress has been made on some actions, so the City's project table has been updated to reflect the current status of the listed actions.

Referencing that the Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program managed by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The CRS program recognizes and encourages locally managed floodplain management that exceeds minimum NFIP standards and in turn provides discounted flood insurance rates to the City. Participating in the MHP, including providing an annual update to Council, helps to maintain the City's CRS Class 5 rating and the resulting 25% discount that the City's flood insurance policy holders receive. Only ten other communities in Colorado and 199 nationwide, out of 1,510 CRS communities, are rated at a Class 5 or above.

They finished that keeping the City's high Class 5 rating and 25% discount is critical as flood insurance rates continue to rise for many policy holders due to ongoing changes in how those rates are calculated with FEMA's Risk Rating 2.0. The primary goal of Risk Rating 2.0 is to have the rate for each property to be such that it accurately reflects the risk for that particular property.

Councilmember questions and comments:

CM thanked the staff for their hard work on this issue.

A lengthy and detailed discussion of topics and specific questions followed among and between staff and CM. For example, the Mayor asked the implications of our class 5 rating, and whether other cities in Colorado have better ratings. CM Hoppe asked about progress on our watershed master plan.

CM opined that this report is a delight to receive.

CM Hoppe noted that there are fewer than 200 communities in the US with these class 5 ratings.

Several CM expressed strong support for moving forward.

2. City Clerk's Office staffing capacity

Issue

The demands of the City Clerk's Office (CCO) have evolved over the last several years due to an active constituency, business community and legislature. Additionally, recent events such as the pandemic and the cyber-attack have placed greater focus on the need for the modernization of processes. In recognition of this, City Council has requested the topic of the CCO staffing and capacity be studied to determine if altering the structure and or staffing is warranted.

Staff Report

City Attorney, Gerald Dahl, Deputy City Manager Alli Scheck and City Clerk Steve Kirkpatrick detailed the duties of the CCO. Also giving the structure of the CCO where of the 273 Colorado municipalities, five have an elected City Clerk and the remainder have a mix of Council appointed, City Manager hired, or City Manager hired, and Council confirmed City Clerks. The cities with elected City Clerks include the City and County of Denver, Idaho Springs, Walsenburg, Victor and Wheat Ridge

Reported also how the Wheat Ridge CCO is staffed with an elected City Clerk who may serve up to two four-year terms. The Deputy City Clerk is a professional staff position that currently reports to the elected City Clerk. While the Deputy City Clerk assists with all duties of the CCO, this position applies particular focus to liquor licensing and serves as the liaison to the Liquor Authority Board. The administrative team including Executive Assistant, Assistant to Mayor and Council and Administrative Specialist assist the CCO where possible and when requested.

Councilmember questions and comments:

CM expressed their support to continuing to elect the City Clerk for the foreseeable future and add a professional staff member to the CCO.

CM asked to whom the new staff will report, in light of the Charter provision that mandates CCO staff reports to the City Clerk. Mr. Dahl responded in detail.

CM Hoppe asked for a **consensus** to direct staff to bring forward a proposed plan and budget item to fulfill option 3 in the memo about the CCO in tonight's packet in 2024.

Consensus attained.

3. Staff Report(s)

Nothing more.

4. Elected Officials' Report(s)


CM Hultin commented on a business that recently declined to participate in Ridge Fest due to licensing requirements. Staff explained that we have potential solutions already in place.

CM Dozeman reminded all that the 54th Annual Carnation Festival is in about a month. Registration for the Parade closes July 29th. She acknowledged the Local Works event calendar, which includes events like the Farmers' Market, the upcoming Gardens Tour sponsored by the Grange, Yoga on the Green, among others. CM Dozeman encouraged other businesses and organizations to avail themselves of listing on the Local Works calendar.


ADJOURNMENT

The Special Study Session adjourned at 7:55 pm.

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL ON July 24, 2023.



Steve Kirkpatrick, City Clerk



Korey Stites, Mayor Pro Tem