

**Minutes  
Committee of the Whole  
January 23, 2023**

The Committee of the Whole met on January 23, 2023, at 6:05 p.m. in the Conference Room at the City Building. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Mayor Melissa Monich. Attendance was as follows:

Council Members:

Dan Driehaus  
Grant Hoffman  
Melissa Monich  
April Robles  
Sarah Stankorb Taylor  
Jodi Woffington  
Chris Woodside

Staff:

Rusty Herzog, City Manager  
Megan Statt Blake, Community Development Director  
Rob Nicolls, Public Works Director  
Jeremiah Caudill, Finance Director  
Brooke Brady, Police Chief  
Mike Lippert, Water Works Director

Others:

Jansen Litter, 311 Circlewood Lane

Status Report on CIP Projects

Mr. Herzog reviewed a list of the previously approved and slated for funding projects in 2023 which includes Compton Road reconstruction with sidewalks, Vermont Avenue reconstruction with water main replacement, Lime Sludge Disposal Engineering Study, Streetscape Design/Planning, Sidewalk Replacement Program, and the extension of the Hike/Bike Trail. The proposed improvements to the Village Green are not included. This project was left off of the list of CIP projects until a better understanding of the overall cost of the project is received.

Mr. Caudill reviewed an analysis of the General Fund:  
Current balance as of December 31, 2022: \$6,895,898  
2023 General Fund Revenue: \$10,850,298  
2023 Expenses: (\$13,154,536)  
Additional Compton & Vermont Costs: (\$149,204)  
General Fund Balance as of December 31, 2023: \$4,442,456

Carryover: (\$2,000,000)  
Village Green Pavilion (\$500,000)  
Anticipated Additional Cash \$1,942,456

Mr. Caudill explained that the expenditures are reflecting a high amount due to funds allocated for the Capital Improvement Projects specifically for Vermont, Compton, and the Hike/Bike Trail. That is why the expenditures are showing higher than the revenue. Based on the most recent estimates for these three projects, it is anticipated that they will cost and additional \$149,000 above what was budgeted.

At the end of 2023, it is anticipated that the balance is estimated at \$4,442,456. It is anticipated that a \$2 million carryover to next year's budget will be made, as is done every year. Taking this into account with the \$500,000 for the Village Green Pavilion, which was earmarked for that project initially, leaves us with \$1.9 million in cash that is available. Other than the Village Green project, there will not be any additional capital projects funded in 2023.

Mr. Herzog explained that this recap of the General Fund is before Council not to plan additional capital projects this year other than Village Green, but to provide a better understanding of our cash balance. Additionally, there was an additional \$1.2 million in carryover from last year due to an increase in income tax revenues and expenditures coming in under budget. It is unsure at this time what the financial outlook for the year is but a better idea of that will come at the end of April 2023.

Mr. Herzog estimated that after the \$1.2 million carryover is taken out, it leaves roughly \$750,000. Currently, it is desired to maintain the \$1.2 million carryover in case we do enter a recession, we will be prepared. It is therefore estimated that \$750,000 is available which comes out of the \$1,942,456 cash balance. This additional cash was the 2020 carryover which was rolled over to 2021, 2022, and now into 2023. Mr. Caudill explained that at the end of 2023 we will have approximately \$4.4 million in unspent funds.

Mr. Hoffman asked clarification regarding where the \$1.2 million comes from. Mr. Herzog explained that the \$1.2 million anticipated carryover is not listed in the General Fund recap because it is a rainy-day revenue on hold until we have a better understanding of our financial situation. The carryover is not necessarily required however it is good financial practice in case any unforeseen circumstances arise. Mayor Monich commented that this is a smart plan.

Ms. Woffington asked if there is a best practice or standard amount that cities of our size generally carry over. Mr. Caudill stated that typically we like to carry over three to six months of operating cash each year with approximately \$4 million representing a six month operating estimate.

Mr. Herzog explained that of the \$1,942,456 of additional cash available, \$2 million will be held back for carryover making the carryover \$3.2 million for a rainy day fund in case there is a recession. This leaves approximately \$750,000 for this year. The reason this number is important, is how it may impact the Village Green project. Currently, in our fundraising efforts, we have been advertising that the City has committed \$500,000 towards the project. Currently, the estimate for the project is \$1,350,000 resulting in a fundraising effort of \$850,000. We have currently fundraised to the point where we need approximately \$375,000 to meet our goal.

If the City were to pay the \$500,000 it earmarked plus the \$375,000 currently away from the goal it would now equal \$875,000. Mr. Herzog explained that there is now a timing issue that we had hoped not to be in however it has become unavoidable. In order to get the lowest prices and best bids on the project the earlier it is put out for bid the lower the prices will be. The ultimate request would be to get it out for bid by February 14, 2023 however we are awaiting other bid numbers that may have an impact on Village Green. The Compton Road project is out for bid now and those bids are scheduled to be opened on February 7, 2023. If the Compton Road bids come in lower than the engineer's estimate, we will be fine. If the amount is higher than the estimate, we may have to take a week or so to figure out when we can ultimately move forward with Village Green. The same scenario will apply for the Vermont Avenue reconstruction project bids and how they come in compared to the engineer's estimate. The bid opening for Compton will be held on February 7, 2023 and we would like to advertise the bid for the Village Green in the middle of February however it will be before the next Council meeting and before the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

Mr. Herzog recapped that the City has committed \$500,000 towards Village Green. We are currently \$375,000 away from our fundraising goal. We will not stop fundraising for the Village Green project; we will continue to fundraise until the bill is paid and the project is roughly completed potentially by November 2023. There have been many people who have pledged a donation however those pledges have not yet been received. Even if the number of pledges are received it will still be under the \$375,000 needed to meet the goal and begin the construction.

Mr. Herzog explained that he is presenting all of the Village Green numbers to Council tonight so that members can begin thinking about their positions on this project and what direction they would like him to take. Taking into consideration the approximate \$750,000 in available CIP funding, is why the CIP project recap was shared at the beginning. Mr. Herzog recapped CIP projects that are slated for funding in the next two years.

Mr. Hoffman questioned that as we do not have the bid yet for the Village Green project, is there confidence that it will not exceed the \$1.35 million estimate. Mr. Herzog stated that

he will be more confident once the Compton and Vermont bids are received. He added that the road projects and the Hike/Bike Trail extension engineers' estimates have been increased by 22% which is based on the engineering estimate that was just received for Compton. The biggest challenge for Compton and Vermont is that the engineer's estimated figures are approximately 1-1/2 years old however the estimate for Village Green was just recently received. Mr. Hoffman stated that in his opinion, the City could earmark the extra funds needed for Village Green and still have \$375,000 available for additional carry over. He stated that he likes the idea where the City comes to the table with at least half of the money for the project. If Council really wants Village Green to be done and feels that it is important for our City, he is personally in favor of spending more than half of the cost of the project from City funds.

Mr. Woodside commented that he likes the fact that the City purposely saves money for a rainy-day fund and that we continue to build on those reserved funds. If the City can continue to set a new bar every year then there is nothing wrong, in his opinion, with having too much rain day money because one never knows when the rainy day will happen or how bad it will rain. If the City continues to tuck away funds here and there, we can be confident that Wyoming is in a better financial standing than everyone in the surrounding areas because we have done such a good job of building instead of maintaining a base and hoping a recession doesn't get worse than that base. Mr. Woodside stated that he believes it is a good thing and a valuable thing to continue to tuck away additional funds, regardless of how much, to the raining day fund to further cement our insurance policy. Additionally, considering the fact that the City is saving a lot of money, it is able to spend some because of the success of tucking away or earmarking funds for savings. Which leads to the question of what other projects need help with funding and Mr. Woodside stated that, in his opinion, Village Green is a significant project for what it does in the optics of our City.

Mr. Woodside commented that, in his opinion, the streetscape project would be a valuable part of our City, but the project doesn't have to be done all at once, it could be spread out over several years or done in phases.

Ms. Woffington commented that she believes there is a commitment to the community to complete the Village Green project and to see it through. As the project evolves, she would like to better understand the community facing aspect of the Wyoming Community Foundation and how it works with the City, how the community perceives the two entities working together. There was some initial confusion around the fundraising and how much tax funds were going to be used, which is a valid question. Perspective around the two entities and how they work together and what the community can expect out the Foundation moving forward would be very helpful to know.

Ms. Stankorb Taylor commented that Council is in a very unique position right now with a slight influx of funds. She believes that it is wise to continue to keep building our reserves

over time. She does not feel that the City is going wild on its spending. This is a project in the heart of the City and the improvements will last a long time. It is a very unique project. Council felt at the time, when the American Rescue Act funds were received, we set the money aside and held on to it because at the time we were in good financial standings, and the City felt that the Rescue funds could be saved for something special. The Village Green project feels special in that way. It was a mix of strategy, budgeting, and getting the right people on board and accessible playground users to successfully fundraise the Crescent Park project. Village Green fundraising feels harder because it's for everyone, it is a harder message to sell. Moving forward, as we think about the Village Green project, grants are always going to be a part of all projects and she asked that Council be certain that it thinks in that direction too. We aren't going to always be in these influx places in the future however Ms. Stankorb Taylor explained that, in her opinion, Village Green improvements would be a project that the City can contribute to financially in order to see it completed.

Mr. Driehaus commended the City for having the surplus of funds available and the fact that we have three to four months minimum, already set aside makes him feel secure. The ability to seek out and obtain matching funds is wonderful; to get a mix of funds from local, state, and federal grants is wonderful, but they can be confusing as well. He believes that there are people that will give money to a much smaller organization because they know that they have to have that money or their project is over. He has not gotten the sense that people are pushing back on this project, which is generous. Mr. Driehaus asked to what extent did the Finance Committee review the General Fund balance and Village Green fundraising status. Mayor Monich stated that the Finance Committee met and reviewed the projections for 2023. Mr. Hoffman added that the Committee reviewed the numbers much deeper than what is shared tonight.

Ms. Robles commented that she agrees with the comments made thus far. She expressed concern that once the park is renovated and the pavilion is constructed, what will happen with programming and will there be funds available to do events in the park that are part of the vision. Ms. Woffington added to that if we want a business to succeed in the 400 Wyoming Avenue building, as it is an anchored part of the downtown business district and the park, that programming will also be needed in that building to help it all to be successful.

Mayor Monich commented that the Village Green renovation project is a clear priority in the City's Master Plan. This has not been a quick thinking idea, the park has been a strategic piece of the Master Plan that hundreds of people have helped over the years bring it together. Additionally, she stated that 2024 will represent the City's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the last thing she would want to see is a big construction project going on at the Village Green in 2024. So the best thing, in her opinion, would be to get the project done in 2023 and have it be a part of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 2024.

Mr. Woodside added that in terms of programming and events at the park, there could always be an opportunity for corporate sponsorships which could have a big impact and influence on future programming and events.

Mr. Herzog summarized that the City will move forward with advertising the bid for the Village Green project when the bid documents are finalized.

#### Update on Compton Road Sidewalk Infill Project and Compton/Hilltop Intersection Improvements

Mr. Herzog reported that, as many may know, the intersection of Compton Road and Hilltop Lane has been a concerned intersection for residents for some time now. The Public Safety Committee met to discuss what, if any, additional safety improvements can be made to the intersection while it is under construction this year.

At the Public Safety Committee meeting, the police chief provided a review of the number of accidents and tickets issued for this intersection. The public works director also provided feedback and suggestions as well. Additionally, a traffic engineering consultant was also present to recommend any safety improvements that could be made. Residents were given an opportunity to express their concerns at the meeting as well. One resident came forward to relay comments from the area residents, and these comments can be found in the Public Safety Committee meeting minutes from December 12, 2022.

Mr. Herzog explained that regardless of the number of upgrades to safety methods that could be added to this subdivision, there is no design element that will make any intersection completely safe. It will take everyone at the intersection doing what they are supposed to do for it to be safe. It only takes one person not doing what they are supposed to do is when tragedies can happen and that is at any intersection.

Mr. Herzog stated that Rob Nicolls compiled options based on what was presented by the traffic safety engineer and after listening to concerns of the community members. Council is being presented with what the City feels is the best option and if Council agrees, the approved methods/products will be shared with the area residents for feedback.

Mr. Nicolls explained that the existing flashing light currently at this intersection is outdated and flashers, such as the one currently at the intersection, are normally utilized where there is not sufficient sight distance to see an oncoming stop sign. There is sufficient sight distance at this intersection which means the flasher is not warranted from a traffic engineering perspective. Given the traffic counts on Hilltop, the 4-way stop is not warranted although there is no recommendation or plan to eliminate it.

The existing flasher has served its useful life and should be removed or replaced. It is not very bright and is apparently not very effective. Since it is not warranted at this location, is

apparently not effective, and is very expensive to replace. Mr. Nicolls shared the methods and their estimated costs, and he noted that Public Works would provide the labor which is not included in the estimated costs below.

Option 1: Increase the stop sign size from the standard 30" to 36" and install 3" wide post reflectors on the signposts. This could be done at all 4 signs at a total cost of approximately \$460.

Option 2: Increase sign size and add post reflectors as outlined in Option 1 but add stop signs on the opposite side of the road on the Compton approaches (this way as drivers approach the intersection, they see stop signs on both the right and left sides of the road). Total cost: \$690.

Option 3: Increase stop sign size, add post reflectors, and add red/white Spin Alert to all 4 signs. Total cost: \$890

Option 4: Install solar powered LED enhanced 36" stop signs with post reflectors on the Compton approaches and 36" signs on Hilltop with post reflectors. Total cost: \$5,030.

Option 5: Install solar powered radar activated 30" stop signs with post reflectors on the Compton approaches and 36" signs on Hilltop with post reflectors and red/white Spin Alerts. Total cost: \$7,750.

Option 6: Replace the flashing signal with a new LED signal head and controller. Total cost will be approximately \$30,000. This assumes the existing poles can be reused.

Additional measures considered include "Stop Sign Ahead" signage and "Stop Ahead" pavement markings. The "Stop Ahead" pavement markings will be added to the new pavement on the Compton approaches (two sets of lettering on each approach) during the resurfacing project in 2023. The "Stop Sign Ahead" signs are not recommended as they are redundant with the pavement markings and contribute to "sign overload" on the roadway.

Flashing lights (similar to the existing red "ball") which also incorporates a center strobe light have been utilized in other states but are not recommended/permitted due to possible seizure links. The intersection already utilizes the "piano key" style crosswalk pavement markings which are considered to be the "safest" option. These will be replaced in kind with the resurfacing project.

Mr. Hoffman asked if lighted crosswalk indicators would be an option to consider. Mr. Nicolls stated that it is not appropriate to erect those signals at a controlled intersection as they are more intended for mid-block crossings.

Mr. Nicolls stated that it would be his recommendation to move forward with Option 5. He felt that this is the best option as opposed to trying something that doesn't work and making the residents unhappy. Mr. Hoffman added that lights flashing all day and night long may disturb someone's sleep. Mayor Monich commented that it makes better sense to catch someone's attention as it begins to flash.

Chief Brady commented that she concurs with the selection of Option 5. The department fields many complaints about this intersection and officers spend a lot of time up there, but when an officer is there, drivers can see them, and no one runs the stop signs.

Mr. Woodside asked if this intersection stands out as being a more appealing place to run a stop sign than other intersections. Chief Brady stated that when drivers generally approach an intersection and see other drivers, they tend to stop. However, if a driver is approaching an intersection alone, there's a better chance they will not stop completely or at all.

Mr. Driehaus commented that he is in favor of Option 5 and asked if there is also a concern for pedestrian safety at this crossing. Ms. Stankorb Taylor and Ms. Woffington stated that pedestrian safety is a high concern. Mr. Hoffman stated that there have been people traveling upwards of 50 mph through the intersection even if there is someone standing at the curb wanting to cross. Ms. Woffington stated that Cori Besse made a good point in the Public Safety Committee meeting that through the vigilance of parents helping their children cross the street has been a significant factor in there not being a major incident.

It was suggested that after Option 5 features are added to the intersection, after the road reconstruction is complete. Mr. Herzog will have the area residents notified of the features of Option 5 and then after the road construction is finished and the equipment is installed. About three to four months after, residents be sent a postcard directing them to take a survey to gauge the opinion if the new features appear to be working or not.

Mr. Nicolls added that the new safety features will likely be installed as soon as the street reconstruction and sidewalk installation is complete. It is anticipated that the equipment can be installed in July and will be fully operational by the time school starts.

A brief discussion was held regarding the bushes on private property at the south east corner of Hilltop and Compton and whether or not these bushes cause enough of a line of sight blockage that the resident can be asked to remove them or trim them significantly to improve the sight lines. If it is determined that there is no line of sight issues due to the residents bushes on private property, the City may not be able to force the resident to remove them.



Mr. Jansen Litter, 311 Circlewood Lane, was present and stated that although he does not speak for everyone, he thanked Council for implementing a plan to improve this intersection, even if it won't happen until July.

#### Discussion of Spring Clean Up/Junk Day

Mayor Monich recalled an email that Council received from Patrick Walker, a member of the Environmental Stewardship Commission, regarding the Spring Clean Up/Junk Day. Mr. Walker's concern is that the City should be finding ways to hasten the end of Junk Day and the associated \$15,000 expense it incurs to the City. The City should also be brainstorming on creative ways to divert more of our waste out of the landfills.

Ms. Stankorb Taylor explained that Mr. Walker has always been successful in partnering with non-profit companies who benefit from collecting items that people believe are junk and no longer want. So as part of Upcycle Day that he organizes, residents donate items to these non-profit companies, and the companies haul it away for free for recycling and reuse options. The community benefits by not having to pay so much to Rumpke on Junk Day and the non-profits benefit as well.

Ms. Stankorb Taylor explained that during the pandemic, the Environmental Stewardship Commission discussed how the city was going to be able to pay for Junk Day and the members had asked why we are even paying for Junk Day, that it didn't make sense. This encouraged the ESC members to suggest that Junk Day be eliminated, and the question came before the then Committee of the Whole. A few members on Committee of the Whole at that time, had changed their minds after receiving heavy backlash from the community who learned that the elimination of Junk Day was being considered.

Ms. Stankorb Taylor stated that there is an important lesson that is learned in that if you want to change people's minds on something such as the environment, it is often more effective if there is an alternative suggested that makes people happy instead of taking away something that they like. This has become somewhat of a mantra for the ESC for most members is to create many alternatives and then over time, watch Junk Day shrink. One of the biggest hurdles has become ways to educate the community that they do not have to hold on to their junk for Junk Day. Residents are permitted to have one junk item in their trash per week, there are limitations to that, so it should not be considered a complete free-for-all. She added that Mr. Walker would like to see Junk Day eliminated however Ms. Stankorb Taylor explained that in 2023, Junk Day is scheduled for Earth Day and many people have expressed concern with the message that sends.

Ms. Stankorb Taylor commented that the Master Plan indicates that the City is supposed to be a regional leader in sustainability best practices. The ESC is trying to fulfill that mission.

Mr. Nicolls clarified that as for the cost of Junk Day, Rumpke charges the City for the time, it

is not charged based on the tons of junk that are picked up. It will not matter how much junk it places at the curb; the trucks will still drive the entire City regardless. So even if there are no junk items out it would still cost us a significant amount.

Mr. Hoffman commented that many times around Junk Day he has notices that some neighbors like to look at what other neighbors are putting out and so by the time Rumpke drives through the City, many items have already been removed from the curb. Mr. Hoffman stated that, in his opinion, he does not feel strongly compelled to change the status of Junk Day.

Mr. Woodside commented that he believes education about what alternatives exist are good for the community to discuss, understand, and digest. He stated that he believes that it helps our community to know that there is a day that people can unburden themselves with their hoarding tendencies for the moment, and encourage people to clean out their shed, their backyard, under their porches, and do a general property clean up. However, to have people's eyes open is very important to say that we can do better than what we are doing, and not just eliminate Junk Day immediately but can it be done. Is there a better way to help residents eliminate their unwanted junk items in an environmentally safe way which also could save the City financially and anywhere in between. Mr. Woodside stated that on it's face, he likes what Junk Day does. But he would also like to hear more about how we can make it a better environmental situation.

Mayor Monich shared that a tenant had recently moved out of the county and left many items in their apartment. She has been placing the items one at a time on Nextdoor and she has been able to re-home almost all of the items for free. If you have the time to put up the items you have available on social media, for example, and that they are free, there are people around the community that have a need for some items. Which again, eliminates these things from going into the landfill. Mr. Woodside added that there are also people outside the Wyoming community that know when Junk Day is, and they are also taking many items off people's hands.

Ms. Woffington commented that she believes Junk Day provides an opportunity to have harder to dispose of items effectively managed in a responsible way. There is a community building aspect to it as well.

Ms. Robles commented that she agrees with the comments made thus far however she expressed concern that Junk Day falls on Earth Day this year. Mr. Nicolls explained that when the annual Spring Clean-Up dates are scheduled, we have to be sure that the dates do not conflict with the school spring break or with the Easter holidays. It will be difficult to get Junk Day rescheduled at this time, however he can be sure that it does not conflict with Earth Day next year moving forward. Ms. Stankorb Taylor added that Upcycle Day is held the day before Junk Day and many of the vendors have already been booked and they may

not be able to reschedule at this point.

It was decided that Spring Clean Up/Junk Day will stay scheduled for April 22, 2023 and next year staff will be sure that it will not conflict with Earth Day, Spring Break, or Easter holidays.

### Miscellaneous

Mr. Herzog announced that the provider of the City's next website will be Civic Plus using their Engage product. Members were emailed a link to the company who shares a long list of various city and county websites that they represent that use the Engage module. After reviewing the various websites, there is a link to a survey where you can share your top three favorites (and why) and also your least favorite (and why). This will be one of the first steps in helping us begin to build our next website. Any part of any of the website examples we can have as well so if there is something you like very well, please mention it in the survey. The website samples and the survey will also be sent to staff members and the Promote Wyoming Commission as well.

Ms. Robles announced that the Promote Wyoming Commission has a vacancy and at this time their greatest needs is for a person with photography skills. If there is anyone in the community that Councilmembers may know that may be interested in volunteering, she encouraged them to apply for the vacancy. Additionally, she asked that for the Councilmembers that serve on boards and commissions, if there are any article-worthy projects or events that you would like shared to the community, she asked that they be sent to the Promote Wyoming Commission so they can be shared in the What's Up Wyoming publication.

It was suggested that as we begin advertising for events and activities that the public be asked to send pictures to the City if they happen to be attending, perhaps QR codes can be placed on any advertisements to make it easy to send.

### Adjourn

Ms. Stankorb Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hoffman seconded the motion. There being no discussion, the motion to adjourn the meeting carried with all voting yes. The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debby Martin, Executive Assistant

Melissa Monich, Mayor