

February 27, 2024

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

Council-Manager Form of Government

Adjourned Meeting – 6:00 PM

A) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Jeni Arndt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 300 Laporte Avenue, Fort Collins, Colorado.

B) ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Mayor Jeni Arndt
Mayor Pro Tem Emily Francis
Councilmember Julie Pignataro
Councilmember Susan Gutowsky
Councilmember Kelly Ohlson
Councilmember Melanie Potyondy
Councilmember Tricia Canonico

STAFF PRESENT

City Manager Kelly DiMartino
City Attorney Carrie Daggett
Interim City Clerk Heather Walls

C) ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Resolutions to Adopt 2024-2026 Council Priorities.

A. Resolution 2024-013 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Operationalize City Resources to Build and Preserve Affordable Housing.

B. Resolution 2024-014 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Improve Human and Social Health for Vulnerable Populations.

C. Resolution 2024-015 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Advance a 15-Minute City by Igniting Neighborhood Centers.

D. Resolution 2024-016 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Improve Animal Welfare Through Public Education and Policy.

E. Resolution 2024-017 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Pursue an Integrated, Intentional Approach to Economic Health.

F. Resolution 2024-018 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Create Pathways for Zero Waste Infrastructure and Policies.

G. Resolution 2024-019 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Reduce Climate Pollution and Air Pollution Through Electrification.

H. Resolution 2024-020 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Protect Community Water Systems in an Integrated Way to Ensure Resilient Water Resources and Healthy Watersheds.

I. Resolution 2024-021 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Advance a 15-Minute City by Accelerating Our Shift to Active Modes.

J. Resolution 2024-022 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Develop a Hughes Site Master Plan.

K. Resolution 2024-023 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Operationalize City Resources to Make Government More Accessible, Approachable and Fun.

L. Resolution 2024-024 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Continue Stewardship of Our Civic Institution.

The purpose of this item is to consider resolutions to adopt 2024-2026 Council priorities.

Assistant City Manager Rupa Venkatesh stated Council priorities involve priority setting, determining how the priorities will be accomplished, and implementation, reporting, and tracking. She provided information on each priority organized by strategic outcome areas and outlined what changed since the work session in February.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Rowan facetiously suggested Council adopt a resolution to compel the Natural Resources Department to identify the Hughes Stadium site as a location for the voter-approved grey wolf reintroduction program and outlined the ways in which this would help with other Council priorities.

Suzan Gregg spoke in support of Pet City and encouraged Council to allow pet stores to stay open.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

A. Resolution 2024-013 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Operationalize City Resources to Build and Preserve Affordable Housing.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Pignataro, to adopt Resolution 2024-013. Yeas: Arndt, Francis, Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: none.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

B. Resolution 2024-014 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Improve Human and Social Health for Vulnerable Populations.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Canonico, to adopt Resolution 2024-014. Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

C. Resolution 2024-015 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Advance a 15-Minute City by Igniting Neighborhood Centers.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Gutowsky, to adopt Resolution 2024-015. Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

D. Resolution 2024-016 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Improve Animal Welfare Through Public Education and Policy.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis stated she would not be able to support this resolution as she believes animal welfare is outside the scope of City focus.

Councilmember Pignataro stated the language addresses wild animals and things like the wildlife rehabilitation center, Nature in the City, and other items that would be incorporated into this resolution, none of which seem to fall under 'animal welfare.'

Assistant City Manager Venkatesh outlined the input from the Council retreat which included items such as not supporting commercial breeding facilities, education that it is illegal to have cats off leash as they can be destructive to the environment and birds, and defining success as educating the public on the impact of outdoor cats, considering local breeding facilities, identifying ways to protect and impact bird population threats, hearing public opinion on the matter, and ensuring City policy reflects the City's stance on animal welfare.

City Manager DiMartino suggested the policy item around animal welfare could be accomplished as an Other Business item as it is a stand-alone policy item; however, other topics such as education live more with the Humane Society and other organizations and that could be emphasized in communication as part of ongoing operations as opposed to something separate that would be tracked as a priority.

Councilmember Pignataro stated she met with the owners of Pet City and there is agreement that puppy mills are horrible. The owners have personally visited about half of the places they get their puppies. She stated policy should not be made based on stories but on facts and data and commented on the community requesting some type of priority around this topic which would allow for resources to be allocated to acquire those facts.

Councilmember Potyondy stated this priority does not necessarily seem to fit with regard to the scope and noted the City does not have staff dedicated to animal welfare; therefore, some partnerships may make more sense. She stated she would prefer to discuss commercial breeders under Other Business in future meetings.

Councilmember Canonico concurred with Councilmember Potyondy and stated other City partners are more dedicated and have better resources. She stated she would oppose the resolution, but does want to see the issue remain an action.

Councilmember Ohlson stated he would support the resolution as he views it as a local role to look out for animals, be they domestic or wild. He commented on the impact of outdoor cats on the depletion of songbird species diversity and habitat disruption. Additionally, he stated the City funds the Humane Society which fails to address the issue. He also supported putting resources toward getting objective information dealing with pet stores and breeding facilities. He stated he would still like to see the issues be dealt with even if the resolution fails.

Councilmember Gutowsky concurred with Councilmember Ohlson and stated she would be disappointed if the issue was abandoned.

Councilmember Potyondy clarified that she does believe there is value in the resolution; however, she sees the issue as having discreet tasks that are potentially better suited to Other Business and the other priorities seem much broader in scope.

Councilmember Pignataro moved, seconded by Councilmember Ohlson, to adopt Resolution 2024-016. Ayes: Councilmembers Pignataro, Gutowsky, and Ohlson. Nays: Councilmembers Potyondy, Canonico, Mayor Arndt, and Mayor Pro Francis.

THE MOTION FAILED 4-3.

- E. Resolution 2024-017 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Pursue an Integrated, Intentional Approach to Economic Health.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Potyondy, to adopt Resolution 2024-017. Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

- F. Resolution 2024-018 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Create Pathways for Zero Waste Infrastructure and Policies.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Potyondy, to adopt Resolution 2024-018.

Councilmember Ohlson stated this item and the following two do not resemble what he brought up at the Council retreat. He opposed the lack of specificity and the use of the term 'create pathways' as it does not seem to show action. He stated pathways already exist through the adopted road to zero waste and he would like to see additional action-oriented language.

Councilmember Potyondy suggested the use of 'accelerate,' 'improve,' or 'implement.'

Mayor Arndt stated she would also support a name change.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis suggested 'advance.'

Councilmember Pignataro asked staff if the wording change would change their understanding of what the priority means. Jacob Castillo, Chief Sustainability Officer, replied the language was chosen intentionally with framing based on what could be materially advanced in a two-year period. He stated the suggestions that have been made do help to clarify that action is required to make moves on the priority and he suggested using 'improve,' 'advance,' or 'accelerate' and stated staff does recognize the need to do more than create pathways.

Councilmember Canonico supported the use of 'accelerate.' Other members concurred.

City Attorney Daggett noted there are three places in the resolution that would require the wording change.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis and Councilmember Potyondy accepted the use of the word 'accelerate' in place of 'create pathways' as a friendly amendment.

The vote on the motion was as follows: Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

- G. Resolution 2024-019 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Reduce Climate Pollution and Air Pollution Through Electrification.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Canonico, to adopt Resolution 2024-019.

Councilmember Ohlson expressed concern that solely addressing electrification is limited and suggested changing the wording to add 'and other policies and action' after 'electrification.'

Councilmember Canonico requested input from staff as to why the wording was chosen. Jacob Castillo, Chief Sustainability Officer, replied much of the discussion was around greenhouse gas reduction, and there is significant overlap with reducing the extraction and use of fossil resources and associated air pollution. He acknowledged they are not wholly overlapping and there are other pollutants such as volatile organic compounds, nitrogen oxide, and others, that may not be fully addressed through the way the language is presented and other strategies could be put in place that are not related to electrification, such as monitoring, enforcement opportunities, and an overall reduction in use.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis stated she appreciated the focus on electrification as it is a big move from Our Climate Future to focus on what staff presented as what can be done to make an impact. She expressed concern about broadening the focus as she is tired of monitoring air pollution and electrification can make a big impact.

Councilmember Ohlson outlined the retreat discussion and stated staff has taken too much leeway with the language and combining items. He commented on his desire to address air pollution, specifically air pollution other than ozone, and requested clarification as to whether any further action will be taken on air pollution other than electrification. Assistant City Manager Venkatesh replied all of those items will be incorporated under one of the other priorities of 'improving human and social health for vulnerable populations.' Castillo stated staff is interpreting the priorities such that there is an emphasis on these activities, but they will not replace to completely cast out other activities that are ongoing related to air quality, including monitoring and the work of the Air Quality Advisory Board.

Councilmember Ohlson stated he would not support the resolution and reiterated his concern that too much leeway was taken by staff.

Councilmember Canonico stated she introduced the idea of electrification as it is something that could be focused upon and advanced. She stated there will be opportunities for federal funding in conjunction with local funding to make a difference in the area over the next two years.

Councilmember Ohlson commented on the fact that much of the City's electricity comes from a coal-fired power plant and questioned how air quality is being positively impacted through electrification in that sense.

Councilmember Potyondy stated she would prefer the language to read 'reduce climate impacts' rather than 'reduce climate pollution.' She supported having a focus on electrification; however, she stated it may be a bit narrow if climate impact and air pollution are being considered.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis expressed support for the language but asked why 'climate pollution' was used instead of 'greenhouse gases.' Castillo replied 'climate pollution' is language that is being used more frequently at the state and national level and staff was attempting to mirror that language.

Councilmember Gutowsky requested additional information as to the meaning of 'climate pollution.' Castillo replied climate pollution is upstream from climate impacts and it references greenhouse gases, which are the emissions that are warming the planet and are oftentimes from the same source as other environmental pollutants.

Councilmember Gutowsky suggested the placement of other air quality measures under the priority addressing vulnerable populations is misplaced and stated she would like to see those various methods and strategies included in this priority, perhaps with an emphasis on electrification.

Mayor Arndt commented on the fact that 2/3 of community emissions come from buildings and stated emphasizing building electrification can have the biggest impact on meeting some of the goals of Our Climate Future.

Councilmember Potyondy stated she would be more comfortable using the wording 'through best practices, prioritizing electrification' as she would like the priority to leave some wiggle room for other strategies.

Councilmember Potyondy made a motion, seconded by Mayor Arndt, to amend the motion to change the language of the priority to state 'reduce climate pollution and air pollution through best practices, emphasizing electrification.' Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: Mayor Pro Tem Francis and Councilmember Canonico.

THE MOTION CARRIED 5-2.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis stated she would support the motion but did not believe the language change was necessary and makes Council's goals more confusing. Councilmember Canonico concurred.

The vote on the amended motion was as follows: Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

- H. Resolution 2024-020 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Protect Community Water Systems in an Integrated Way to Ensure Resilient Water Resources and Healthy Watersheds.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Potyondy, to adopt Resolution 2024-020.

Councilmember Ohlson questioned why the language referencing ditch companies was removed. He suggested renaming the Pleasant Valley and Lake Canal Rehabilitation Project to the Wildlife Habitat and Tree Destruction Project and stated the ditch company, 79% of which is owned by the City, is demolishing many trees. He also commented on ditches being wildlife movement corridors and providing recreation opportunities. He suggested some reference language in the priority or Strategic Plan and asked Jason Graham, Water Utilities Executive Director, why he was so enthusiastic about removing the ditch company reference. Graham replied he was not enthusiastic; however, he did not see any harm in changing the language to reference regional partnerships. He stated staff intends to provide a summary of how the City interacts with the ditch companies.

Councilmember Ohlson questioned how it would be known that regional partnerships include ditch companies.

Mayor Arndt noted ditch companies are their own legal entities that have legislative protections and powers. She stated she would be uncomfortable mentioning legally owned entities in a priority.

Councilmember Pignataro asked if the language excludes having anything to do with ditch companies. Castillo replied it is not the intention that it would exclude ditch companies.

Councilmember Pignataro stated all of the previously adopted priorities have open-ended components with the outcome as the goal and some intentionally vague language. City Manager DiMartino stated the language is broader and one of the next steps identified is to identify more details regarding scoping and work plans for the priorities at a work session.

Councilmember Ohlson stated he would support the resolution given more detailed work will occur. He reiterated the fact that the City owns a large number of shares of ditch companies and commented on the importance of the triple bottom line of social, environmental, and financial goals. He stated he would like to see a Council discussion to create some policies where the City can lead by example on some of the issues related to trees, habitat, and recreation, particularly for the companies in which the City holds a majority stake.

The vote on the motion was as follows: Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

- I. Resolution 2024-021 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Advance a 15-Minute City by Accelerating Our Shift to Active Modes.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Canonico, to adopt Resolution 2024-020.

Councilmember Ohlson asked why the two 15-Minute City items were not combined. Councilmember Pignataro replied the different sides of the 15-Minute City involve the mode of transportation used and the destination.

Mayor Arndt commented on the importance of prioritizing Safe Routes to School as resources become available and suggested a language change in the description of the priority to reference Safe Routes to School as a priority within the goal.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis suggested 'implement the Active Modes Vision Zero Plan and complete the Safe Routes to School network.'

Councilmember Pignataro asked if the Vision Zero Plan refers to Safe Routes to School. Caryn Champine, Planning, Development, and Transportation Director, replied the Active Modes Plan and Vision Zero Plan both tie back to Safe Routes to School and the integration of Safe Routes to School into the active modes prioritization is captured in one of the short-term goals to be executed as part of this priority.

Mayor Arndt asked if Safe Routes to School are prioritized as funds become available. Champine replied staff will work to figure out the best way to prioritize Safe Routes to School as part of this priority.

Councilmember Potyondy commented on the importance of not only completing the Safe Routes to School network but also improving some of the existing network and suggested 'emphasizing Safe Routes to School.'

Councilmember Canonico asked if prioritizing Safe Routes to School could negatively impact complete streets elsewhere. Champine replied there are different funding streams and sources.

Mayor Arndt suggested eliminating the language related to creating inefficiencies and missed opportunities. Mayor Pro Tem Francis accepted the amendment as friendly.

Members commented on the use of seemingly extra wording in the description and asked if eliminating some of the language would change the direction for staff. Champine replied in the negative and stated staff feels very clear about what Council is trying to accomplish.

Councilmember Pignataro outlined the proposed language to eliminate some of the wording and make the description one sentence. Mayor Pro Tem Francis and Councilmember Canonico accepted the amendment as friendly.

The vote on the motion was as follows: Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

- J. Resolution 2024-022 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Develop a Hughes Site Master Plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Potyondy, to adopt Resolution 2024-022.

Councilmember Pignataro stated the other priorities involve broader goals that address urgent social or environmental needs and questioned how this priority fits in.

Mayor Arndt agreed this priority is more concrete and discreet; however, it was also a ballot initiative and making it a priority to develop a plan for the use of the land in the next two years is not a bad thing for Council to make a formal statement upon.

Councilmember Potyondy stated the development of a master plan will be a significant undertaking and is significantly more than a task, particularly with regard to outreach.

Councilmember Ohlson supported having the item on the work plan.

The vote on the motion was as follows: Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, and Gutowsky. Nays: Councilmember Pignataro.

THE MOTION CARRIED 6-1.

- K. Resolution 2024-023 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Operationalize City Resources to Make Government More Accessible, Approachable and Fun.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Ohlson, to adopt Resolution 2024-023.

Councilmember Canonico commended the use of the word 'fun.'

Assistant City Manager Venkatesh stated the inclusion of 'operationalize City resources' was inadvertent but could remain. It was noted that the Resolution language did not include the wording.

The vote on the motion was as follows: Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

- L. Resolution 2024-024 Adopting a 2024-2026 Council Priority to Continue Stewardship of Our Civic Institution.

Mayor Pro Tem Francis moved, seconded by Councilmember Canonico, to adopt Resolution 2024-024.

Councilmember Ohlson suggested using ‘modernize and update the City Charter’ rather than ‘continue stewardship of our civic institution.’ Mayor Pro Tem Francis and Councilmember Canonico accepted the amendment as friendly.

The vote on the motion was as follows: Ayes: Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Councilmembers Ohlson, Potyondy, Canonico, Pignataro, and Gutowsky. Nays: None.

THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

C) OTHER BUSINESS

None.

D) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

Chief Deputy City Clerk