

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING
January 19, 2011, 4:00 p.m.
Room 326, City-County Building - 316 N. Park Avenue – Helena

1. Call to order, introductions, opening comments – Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Commissioners Cartwright, Ellison, Elsaesser and Thweatt were present. Staff present was: City Manager Ron Alles; Executive Assistant Clinda Feucht; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen; Community Facilities Director Gery Carpenter; Parks & Recreation Director Amy Teegarden; Public Works Director John Rundquist; Assistant Public Works Director Phil Hauck; Human Resources Director Rae Lynn Nielsen; Police Chief McGee; Assistant City Attorney Thomas Jodion; Administrative Services Director Tim Magee and City Clerk Debbie Havens.

Others attending all or a portion of the meeting included: HCC representative Janet Hess-Herbert.

2. **December 15, 2010 Administrative Meeting Summary** – The December 15, 2010 administrative summary was approved as submitted.

3. **Commission comments, questions** – Commissioner Thweatt handed out an information summary sheet regarding the Warren School proposal that is on the January 24th city commission meeting agenda. The information was regarding a grant program that would help schools meet the water supply needs.

City Manager Alles asked if this information has been given to the school district. Commissioner Thweatt stated the school has not received this information; however, he will forward it to John Carter. Manager Alles asked if the grant is available for a well and/or a waterline. Commissioner Thweatt noted it could be used for construction of a well or waterline.

City Manager Alles noted the deadline was June 2010 for this grant submittal. Commissioner Thweatt noted there is follow-up contact information that the school district representatives could contact.

Commissioner Elsaesser stated in the current street utilities budget, there were funds set aside for sidewalks improvements and other non-motorized entities and he would be interested in dedicating Centennial Trail as a road and then not allowing traffic on it. This would allow street maintenance funds to be used for the construction. He stated he plans on bringing this proposal forward during the budget process.

City Manager Alles stated this is the type of item that could be put in the commission budget guidance resolution. Commissioner Cartwright stated any proposal for Centennial Trail has to be consistent with the right of way easement from the railroad.

B. Upcoming Appointments – There are no appointments on the January 24, 2011 city commission meeting agenda.

C. City Commission 2011 Board Appointments – Mayor Smith referred the commission to his memo that outlined the 2011 commission appointments. These appointments are on the January 24, 2011 city commission meeting agenda.

4. **City Manager's Report**

A. Commissioner Cartwright asked for a brief discussion on Warren School at the end of the meeting. He then asked how the snow removal budget is doing. City Manager Alles and Public Works Director Rundquist stated the budget is going well and recognized and thanked city staff for the work that has been done. Manager Alles noted crushed glass is being mixed with the sand and applied to the streets.

Commissioner Cartwright noted the county is trying to do their septic maintenance district and there was a letter to editor indicating the city is the biggest pollutant in the valley. He asked staff for a report at the next meeting on how to reduce the load on the wastewater treatment plant and one of the first things would be to stop accepting sludge from the septic haulers. City Manager Alles stated the information in the paper is inadequate and the city of Helena is not the biggest pollutant. Staff is exploring the option of no longer accepting sludge from the septic haulers.

City Manager Alles informed the commission the city of Helena did not receive our new wastewater permit and is currently using an administrative extension on the old permit. He will keep the commission informed on the status of the permit and other options being considered.

Commissioner Cartwright stated it is important to have this conversation and keep the public informed on what options the commission may be considering. Commissioner Thweatt stated it is his understanding, the main problem for the city is phosphorus. City Manager Alles noted there are several areas of concern including phosphorus, nitrogen and metals (zinc and copper). Commissioner Thweatt asked what the source of the phosphorus is. Public Works Director Rundquist stated the source is detergents, fertilizer, and human waste. Commissioner Thweatt suggested a public education campaign

be considered to inform the public of what household cleaning supplies contribute to the phosphorus levels. Commissioner Elsaesser stated he thought phosphorus was being phased out of most detergents. Public Works Director Rundquist concurred that most detergents sold in the stores do not have phosphorus.

Mayor Smith spoke on the information in the letter to the editor having false information. He does not believe the city's practices should be changed; however, the statement needs to be responded to. There was commission concurrence for City Manager Alles to respond to the letter to the editor. Commissioner Ellison stated a focused response with the correct information from Public Works Director Rundquist would be appropriate.

City Manager Alles noted a letter was sent to DEQ with an example letter staff is prepared to send to the septic haulers. He believes DEQ understands the city's position and believes it would benefit everyone to continue to work on an agreeable solution.

Mayor Smith reported on the Board of Health public hearing on the septic maintenance district. He hopes the Board of Health will move forward on the development of the septic maintenance program.

Commissioner Cartwright stated he visited with the consultant that is doing the county's valley-wide sewer study. He noted most of the study will simply be a collection of GIS maps.

Commissioner Thweatt referred to SB89 and noted this bill would reduce the time of subdivision review and asked staff to track the bill. Community Development Director Haugen noted it is sanitation review for local governments and noted it is on the city's tickler file for tracking.

Mayor Smith noted there are a couple of bills being offered regarding the city's relationship with private solid waste haulers. Manager Alles stated staff is aware of the two bills and will track them and keep the commission informed. Further discussion was held on the proposed legislation.

Fire Chief Larson stated there are a couple of bills being considered that would impact the fire department. One would affect the professional firefighter's status and one addresses removing the ability to enforce the residential sprinkler codes.

Administrative Services Director Tim Magee reported HB56, the entitlement bill, has gone to hearing. Staff is tracking this bill as it would have major impacts on local government if approved. City Manager Alles reported Alec Hansen with the MLCT has been tracking this and there is discussion on a compromise.

Commissioner Cartwright noted there is a bill that would regulate outdoor lighting. City Manager Alles and Community Development Director Haugen noted there are several bills dealing with subdivision and one in particular is limiting the county's ability to do interim zoning. Director Haugen will keep the manager informed.

Mayor Smith stated HB122 includes major revisions to the public employee's retirement system. He asked Human Resource Director Nielsen to look at the bill and update City Manager Alles. Manager Alles stated he has asked the director's to keep him informed on when they will be testifying at the legislature.

Police Chief McGee noted the first hearing on medical marijuana is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on Friday, January 21st. Mayor Smith stated there is a bonding bill that includes 22-million for the historical museum.

Commissioner Elsaesser noted there are several election laws being introduced, specifically expanding the mail ballot and removing same day registration.

B. Budget Guidance Resolution - City Manager Alles referred the commission to the draft Resolution Providing the Commission Guide for FY2012 Annual Budget Development.

City Manager Alles stated the document should include what the commission wants to change from year to year and should not include the status quo. He asked for input from the commission.

City Manager Alles then highlighted the following:

COLA – A 1.5% COLA is being proposed for FY 2012. – City Manager Alles explained how Human Resources Director Nielsen and staff complete a market survey every three to four years. He referred the commission to Section 3 of the resolution and noted he has added the last sentence to this draft

resolution.

Commissioner Cartwright spoke on the city's recruitment practices and noted it appears that most city employees he works with already lived and worked in the city before working for the local government.

Manager Alles explained what information is used to complete the fair market evaluations and comparing specific job classifications with other class one cities is included in the process.

Mayor Smith noted the city has defined the market as the state of Montana. Commissioner Cartwright stated he would like to know if that is the market the city is drawing from and not just from Helena residents. Commissioner Cartwright stated an example would be that police officers come from all over the state and not just the Helena market. He is not sure if that is the case with the other positions.

Commissioner Thweatt asked if we take into consideration employee retention. City Manager Alles noted the goal is to recruit and maintain employees. He hasn't seen a recent position vacancy where an employee resigned to move onto a better job. Human Resource Director Rae Lynn Nielsen gave several examples of where job classifications had been changed and salaries increased to market value in order to retain employees. Specific positions were in the engineering department and community development.

Commissioner Cartwright stated depending on how tight the budget is, the commission might have to make some decisions and his preference would be to begin by covering the costs of health insurance and then move forward.

Part Two – Manager Alles stated Part I of the resolution is the general policies; Part Two addressed the changes that he is offering. Those changes are highlighted within the resolution. He did note that there are individual department goals and an item may be listed in more than one department.

Manager Alles noted there needs to be greater emphasis on a capital improvement program. A proposal would be to take the individual departments savings and place it in a capital improvement fund, restricted for the department for their capital needs.

Commissioner Thweatt asked if the budget surplus was the source of \$100,000 that was used toward not eliminating a position last year. City Manager Alles stated yes. Commissioner Thweatt asked if those savings would help out in a tight budget year. Manager Alles explained his thoughts on using the savings towards the capital program.

City Manager Alles continued through the individual departments within the resolution. He asked for clarification on continuing the neighborhood parks development. He asked if the commission wants to continue to look for new parks or maintain the current ones. The commission can think about this and give him their feedback.

Part Three – City Manager Alles noted the items in Part III may not have budget implications and his recommendation is to move them to the matrix and not keep them be in a budget document.

Manager Alles stated he would like to finalize the document by the next administrative meeting and forward it onto a regular city commission meeting. Mayor Smith asked if Manager Alles would like the commission to submit their recommendations to him. Manager Alles concurred.

Commissioner Ellison referred to the city's web site and noted several of the commission members asked for changes to the site and he has not seen them. Commissioner Ellison requested a copy of last year's budget document. He will work on this in the next few weeks and will submit specific ideas to the city manager.

Commissioner Ellison asked when the commission would see the preliminary budget. City Manager Alles stated the commission would begin their budget work sessions in April.

Commissioner Cartwright mentioned the city's web page needs to be compatible with all devices including phones and computers. City Manager Alles spoke of new software that will put the city commission agenda and packets on the web, which will be available to the commission, staff and public. In addition, other improvements are in process for the city's web page.

Mayor Smith noted this document is workable and he would support wrapping it up in a timely manner.

Commissioner Thweatt referenced page 8 of the resolution and asked Police Chief McGee for his comments on the Police Department exploring better enforcement of speed limits. Chief McGee stated he

believes the department does the best job possible. However, traffic is not the only issue the police department deals with. Chief McGee noted December 2010 had the highest number of DUI arrests.

Commissioner Cartwright asked for an update on impact fees and if there is a budget impact it should be included. Commissioner Cartwright stated he would like to hear feedback on the proposed COLA. He again stated health care is most important to him and asked if the other commission members would submit their comments to the manager.

City Manager Alles noted it is his priority to include a COLA for FY12 and believes the employees should have a fair compensation package.

Mayor Smith referenced Part One, Section 3 and noted the resolution states the city's most valuable assets are its employees. Commissioner Cartwright again stated his first preference would be to deliver a total compensation package. However, if that is not possible he would support funding the health insurance as his top priority.

Commissioner Elsaesser stated he appreciates the document that was given to them and he will submit his changes in the next week or so. Mayor Smith concurred with Commissioner Elsaesser's comments.

City Manager Alles stated as long as he can remember the city has always funded the employees' portion of the health insurance. Human Resources Director Rae Lynn Nielsen noted she was just informed that MMIA anticipates a 15 to 18 percent increase in health insurance premiums; with a possibility of buying it down to 12% buying using reserve funds. The rates will not be confirmed until the end of April. Commissioner Elsaesser asked for clarification on reserves. Director Nielsen stated it would be through the MMIA reserves.

5. Committee discussions

- a) ADA Compliance Committee, Audit Committee, Board of Health, Civic Center Board, Montana League of Cities and Towns – No report given
- b) Audit Committee, City-County Parks Board, Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Committee – No report given
- c) Audit Committee, BID/HPC, Helena Chamber of Commerce, Transit Committee, Pre-Release Screening Committee – No report given
- d) City-County Admin Building, City-County Weed Board, Infrastructure Committee, MBAC, TCC – Commissioner Elsaesser reported the state of Montana Department of Transportation announced at the TCC meeting that a pedestrian bridge will be constructed on the north side of the capital interchange; construction is scheduled to begin in April 2011. Public Works Director Rundquist reported Sanders Street connection will go out to bid in April.
- e) Board of Adjustment, IT&S Committee, Public Art Committee, TCC – Commissioner Thweatt reported the IT&S Board discussed installing wireless internet for the City-County Building.
- f) Helena Citizens Council – HCC representative Janet Hess-Herbert reported the next HCC meeting is scheduled for January 28th. She noted the HCC is struggling due to there being no VISTA. Commissioner Elsaesser commented he does not believe the HCC will likely get a VISTA and a backup plan should be developed.

Review of agenda for January 24th Commission meeting – Commissioner Cartwright addressed the request from the school district to connect Warren School to the city water line. He stated he does not like the idea of extending the service; however, with the public funds being involved it will be a difficult decision. Mayor Smith stated he will listen to the public comments at the hearing.

City Manager Alles noted the school district needs a decision sooner rather than later, so they can plan accordingly. Commissioner Elsaesser stated he is prepared to consider the request and noted the city and county commission had the opportunity to discuss this at the December joint work session.

Commissioner Cartwright asked to what extent this request would make it easier to put in a sewer line for adjacent property owners. Commissioner Cartwright referenced the sewer line the city allowed Fort Harrison to hook in to. He noted the long term plan was to have other development hook-in; however, due to

the economy that hasn't happened yet and now the city is left with a sewer line extension with no one hooking into it. Staff will be prepared to answer Commissioner Cartwright's question at the public hearing.

Commissioner Thweatt stated he talked with John Carter with the school district and this request is being submitted due to the expansion plans of Warren School. He then asked for information on what is the need to expand the school. City Manager Alles stated the school district is not only looking at the current needs but for growth also. There is also the need for installing fire protection at the school.

Commissioner Elsaesser asked Commissioner Cartwright if the city is losing money regarding the Fort Harrison sewer line connection. Commissioner Cartwright explained with the expansion of the sewer line, there have been individual connections but not an entire area. He commented on the importance of infill having a lower impact on all city services.

8. **Public Comment** – No public comment received.
9. **Commission discussion and direction to City Manager** – No discussion held.
10. **Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.