

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING

**March 4, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.
Room 326, City-County Building
316 N. Park Avenue**

1. Call to order, introductions, opening comments – Mayor Collins called the meeting to order. Commissioners Logan, Haladay, O’Loughlin and Dean were present.

Staff present: Acting City Manager David Knoepke; Assistant to the City Manager Amanda Opitz; City Attorney Thomas Jodoin; Fire Chief Ken Wood; Interim Public Works Director Phil Hauck, City Engineer Ryan Leland; Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Director Kristi Ponozzo; Acting Human Resources Director Sheri Hall; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen, Kimberley Mack Building Division; Community Facilities Superintendent Troy Sampson; Helena Police Captain Curt Stinson; Public Information Officer Rebecca Connors; Sustainability Coordinator Patrick Judge; Chief Finance Officer Wayne Oberg, Budget Analysts Chris Couey and Sara Sikorski; and Interim City Clerk Dannai Clayborn.

Others in attendance included Dave Biech and TJ Lehman of the HCC, Larry Kurokawa and Conlan Burk of Bill Roberts Golf Course; Dr. Gregory Thomas and Nolan Lister of the Helena Independent Record.

2. Commission comments, questions –

Mayor Wilmot Collins introduced the Microfusion Robotics Team and their coaches, recognizing their achievements and asked them to come back to the Commission to do a formal presentation.

3. City Manager’s Report

Acting City Manager Knoepke updated the Commission on several projects which the Helena Public Arts Committee would like to present to the Commission at a later Admin meeting, seeking additional funding approval. Acting Director Knoepke stated he would speak further with the HPAC and bring it to the Commission at a later meeting date. This would include budget discussions and where additional funds could possibly be utilized for the projects, should the Commission see fit. Acting City Manager Knoepke stated the Interim City Manager item on the agenda was to be used if there was an update the Commission wanted to give on the progress in the selection process. Mayor Collins stated there could be a decision next week. Commissioner Logan stated he knew of several qualified individuals who were interested in the position and asked what if anything would be discussed on this topic at the Monday Regular Commission Meeting. Commissioner Dean stated she felt time was of the essence regarding this decision and the longer it took to make a decision the shorter the timeline for preparation of the Interim Manager to make critical decisions in the coming weeks. Commissioner Dean also inquired as to what if any materials would be included regarding this topic in the Regular Commission Meeting packet.

4. Department Requests – None.

5. **Department Presentations**

a. **PUBLIC WORKS/ENGINEERING - Engineering Update -Major Capital Projects with focus on the Knight Street Sidewalk Project and Rodney Street Project.**

City Engineer Ryan Leland reported staff will be providing on-going engineering project updates of the Major Capital Projects. Staff will focus on two specific projects - the Knight Street Sidewalk Project and Rodney Street Improvement Project. With the Knight Street Project, staff will be asking for direction from the Commission on whether they are willing to fund the construction of the project. With the Rodney Street Project, staff will be giving an update on the design and public comment.

The Knight Street Project has been an on and off project for almost the past 20 years. The project consists of installing new sidewalks on both sides of Knight Street from Benton Avenue to CR Anderson School, approximately eight blocks. The City Commission budgeted \$150,000 from the Street Maintenance to start the design of the project and get public comment. Staff and the consultant have held one public meeting at CR Anderson School, an administrative meeting, and block meetings with each individual block to get public input on the conceptual design that meets City Standards. City's Consultant has completed two designs for the sidewalks, the original following City Standards with mainly 7-foot boulevards and 5-foot sidewalks and a neighborhood design that would include mainly curbside sidewalks. The neighborhood design is based off the public comments from the public meetings and the individual block meetings. Both designs, the boulevard and the curbside, are relatively the same budget estimate.

The current estimate for the project is approximately \$800K. This estimate represents the full project with sidewalks on both sides of the street from Benton to CR Anderson School. Staff would like to determine if the Commission is willing to fund the whole project or just a portion of the project. Staff can change the project to fit any funding level the Commission desires. Staff will be able to discuss the various options with estimated costs. Once the funding level is determined, staff will bring back the design to update the Commission.

Commissioner O'Loughlin asked how this might impact the Street Maintenance Fund, and if an update from staff could be provided to the Commission at a later date on the balance of this fund. The Commissioner stated this was a priority project for the "safe routes to school" Commission objective, but when taking into the consideration of the amount of funding available this may impact the Commission's approach to how to prioritize or phase this project and others.

Staff will be presenting an update on the First Phase of the Rodney Street Reconstruction Project, which will reconstruct Rodney Street from Broadway Avenue to 9th Avenue. The project includes street reconstruction, water, sewer, and storm water replacement and improvements. Staff held two public meetings prior to hiring a consultant to start the design of the project and then held two additional public meetings with the consultant at 30% and 60% design. The main comments that staff heard at the original public meetings were to keep the overall feel of the street the same, keep the trees, and add landscaping and trees to the commercial area. The consultant and staff designed the street to meet City Standards with 10-foot travel lanes, 6-foot parking lanes, and curb and gutter (an additional 2-feet). The sidewalk varies from 5-foot curbside sidewalks to 7-foot boulevards with 8-foot sidewalks.

With the City Standard travel lanes and parking lanes the street is proposed to be narrowed around 3-feet (1.5-feet each side). In addition, bulb-outs are proposed for pedestrian safety and areas for additional landscaping. At the landowner public meeting overall comment was that the street width was already too narrow and the bulb-outs would make it difficult for delivery trucks and are not needed for pedestrian safety. Based on the comments, staff is modifying the design to keep the existing street width and modify but not eliminate the bulb-outs. The schedule for the project is to modify and complete the design to 90%. At the 90% design the staff will hold another public meeting, provide updates at the administrative, NMTAC, and HCC meetings. Staff is hoping to have the meeting in early April. After the public meetings, the plans will be complete to 100% with a projected bid advertisement at the end of May and to start construction in June or July. Acting City Manager Knoepke stated due to comments and discussion regarding debt servicing of the Rodney Street Project, he would work with Staff to provide a budget analysis of this project along with the Knight Street project at a later meeting date. Commissioner Dean asked for clarification from the City Engineer on how best to handle the allocation of funds for the Knight Street Project, and if there was any Federal funding available or was Federal funding was sought for the Knight Street project. Mr. Leland stated it seemed a budget amendment would be best for the allocation of funds and grant funding at a Federal level was not pursued as part of this project, due to the level of competition for this money and the level of this project. Commissioner Logan asked for a summary of the processes used for installing sidewalks into neighborhoods. Further discussion occurred about the current plans and outreach to the public in meetings and other forms regarding the Rodney Street project. A meeting was being held the following evening with the public regarding utilities and landscaping. Acting Director Knoepke spoke to the plans and outreach to the businesses regarding the snow removal plans for the Rodney Street area. Commissioner Haladay stated he had heard concerns from local business in the area specific to the 'bulb-outs' and what discussions had been had on this matter. Mr. Knoepke stated there were ongoing discussions regarding this matter, and a compromise would need to be found regarding the concerns and pedestrian safety.

6. **Committee discussions – None received.**
7. **Review of agenda for March 9, 2020 Commission meeting**
8. **Public comment –**
Lynn Boone offered public comment expressing concerns over the budget and city expenditures.
9. **Litigation Strategy – None.**
11. **Commission discussion and direction to City Manager – direction previously given.**
Acting City Manager Knoepke stated he understood his direction to include: City Staff would bring back to the Commission further discussion regarding the HPAC projects to include more detailed cost projections; Budget discussions with the Commission would be scheduled for April and this would also include the budget

discussion on Beattie Street, Street Maintenance, as well as any other proposed major projects for FY 20 and 21, and finally additional public outreach on the possibility of Rodney Street bus stops.

12. **Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.