

**SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING**  
**March 7, 2012 - 4:00 p.m.**  
**Room 326, City County Building – 316 N. Park Avenue, Helena**

1. Call to order, introductions, opening comments – Commissioner Thweatt called the meeting to order. Commissioners Ellison and Haque-Hausrath were present. Mayor Smith and Commissioner Elsaesser were excused. Staff present was: City Manager Ron Alles; Executive Assistant Clinda Feucht; City Attorney Thomas Jodoin; Police Chief Troy McGee; Human Resource Director Rae Lynn Nielsen; Public Works Director John Rundquist; Assistant Public Works Director Phil Hauck; Solid Waste Superintendent Pete Anderson; Budget Manager Robert Ricker; Administrative Services Director Tim Magee and City Clerk Debbie Havens.

Others attending all or a portion of the meeting included HCC Representative Scott Mincemoyer.

2. **February 22, 2012 Administrative Meeting Summary** – The February 2, 2012 administrative summary was approved as submitted.

3. **Commission comments, questions –**

Commissioner Ellison recognized Administrative Services Director Magee for the training he provided at the Mayor's Academy.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath reported she received an email from John Adams regarding the excessive deicing salt being used on sidewalks. She gave specific locations that Mr. Adams had identified. He asked if any of this is city property and is there anything that can be done. City Manager Alles noted most of those areas are maintained by the Parking Commission. He recognized the number one concern is the safety of pedestrians; in addition many of the private businesses use salt. Manager Alles offered to visit with the Parking Commission regarding the type of deicing material they are using.

City Manager Alles noted it is difficult issue due to the need of the deicing materials. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if a sidewalk is damaged, who pays for the repair. Manager Alles noted the adjacent property owner is responsible for any repair, if it is on city property or a parking garage, the city would be responsible. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if staff has a set policy on how to maintain sidewalks and streets. Manager Alles gave an overview of how staff manages the snow and ice removal. She asked if there is a policy on the use of salt. Manager Alles stated no and recognized the wellness committee handed out bottles with sand and salt for employees when they are walking. Commissioner Thweatt asked if mag chloride is harsher than salt. Director Rundquist noted staff mixes mag chloride with sand.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath spoke on the Transportation Engineer position and noted the commission had received several comments on the duties in the job description. Commissioner Ellison noted he called Ms. Stringer regarding her email and noted the commission discussed this position at length; the transportation engineer will address all types of transportation and not just non-motorized.

Commissioner Ellison gave an overview of what the city has done to improve bike-ped issues in the city. After visiting with Ms. Stringer, he felt she was satisfied with his explanation of the position.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she would like bike-ped experience be included in the transportation engineer duties. Manager Alles noted he is confident the position description will address all types of transportation. He noted he is somewhat insulted that he would not hire an engineer that would handle all types of transportation. He along with city staff has the long-term commitment to address bike-ped issues.

Commissioner Thweatt concurred with some of Commissioner Haque-Hausrath's comments. Commissioner Ellison noted NMTAC is the vehicle to provide input on this position, and it was done. Now at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, the biking community is submitting recommendations. Once the position is hired, the individual groups will have the opportunity to offer input regarding non-motorized transportation.

Manager Alles noted city staff has come a very long ways in working with NMTAC to address many of their issues. NMTAC just submitted their priority list and he will bring it forward once other priorities are completed.

**Upcoming Appointments** – Mayor Smith is recommending the appointment of Kathleen Pace to an unexpired term on the Civic Center board. Term will begin upon appointment and expired March 1, 2014.

4. **City Manager's Report**

a. **Budget Guidance Document** – City Manager Alles handed out the Mid-Year Status and Executive Summary of the Resolution providing the commission guide for FY2012 annual budget development. He explained the dynamics of the document, the status quo budgets, what staff accomplishes

and what projects/ideas the commission may be interested in. Manager Alles noted the departments have submitted their budgets and he is in the process of meeting with individual staff. The commission will ultimately receive a preliminary budget and then hold several budget work sessions. By the end of June, the commission will adopt a budget that has been prepared. Manager Alles then reviewed the document with the commission.

Commissioner Ellison referred to page four and asked if SID revolving will no longer be available after FY2014. Manager Alles stated that is correct; he reviewed how the SID revolving fund works. A previous commission made the decision to use a portion of the SID revolving funds to fund the 440 fund.

Commissioner Thweatt asked if the city has flexibility to offer a higher salary when they are having a difficult time in filling a position. Manager Alles, using the Transportation Engineer position, explained most positions are hired at 85% of the market and then the five steps will bring the employee up to market value. In some instances a position may be hired at full market due to the qualifications.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath referred to Section 6 and noted a citizen wanting to install energy efficient devices has to pay a building permit the same as new construction. Manager Alles stated he and city staff has reviewed the concerns and are working on a methodology that would address the concerns.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked for a timeframe on when staff may get the review completed. Manager Alles noted staff has a lot on their plate and acknowledged he would like to see something brought forward this construction season. However, he cautioned there are a lot of items on the list.

Commissioner Ellison noted he has been contacted by Director Pembroke regarding some improvements to GroupWise and will be testing the new process.

Manager Alles asked the commission to submit their comments and ideas to him. Commissioner Ellison noted he will be bringing forward a suggestion on re-aligning 10-stormwater grates for FY2013. He noted he would like to look at adding the two positions that were cut in the police department a couple of years ago.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she would like to see funding for enforcement for non-motorized laws. She noted she is not familiar with the staffing levels to recommend a new position.

Manager Alles reported the Police Department is trying to be pro-active and hire an additional officer to anticipate any unforeseen retirements or officers being out with injuries. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath noted the staffing level in the Fire Department should also be looked at.

Commissioner Thweatt noted the intersection of Cruse, Cutler and Warren should be looked at in the next budget year to improve access, specifically non-motorized traffic. Commissioner Ellison concurred this area could use some attention; however, he was not sure who owns the property. Manager Alles noted staff will look at the intersection and noted it is currently a state of Montana route.

Commissioner Thweatt noted he would also like to see funding for neighborhood planning for the Sixth Ward area, near the Caird Property and the immediate vicinity. If this study was completed, then it should eliminate the discussion of where development should occur.

Manager Alles asked the commission to review the budget document and to submit their comments to him in the next two weeks. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath noted curb-side recycling is also an issue she would like to look at funding for the planning of this service. Manager Alles asked for clarification on how the assessment would be charged, Commissioner Haque-Hausrath suggested it should be assessed to all rate payers.

**b. Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Payment –** City Manager Alles reported the employees with the Parks, Street and Solid Waste Departments decertified from the laborer's union. Under the contract, the city signed a separate retirement participation contract. When the employees decertified the city stopped paying into the retirement fund; however, the city has since received a statement of \$200,000. Due to the city originally signing as the signatory on the participation document, it requires the city to make the plan whole. A lot of research has been done on this and it is the City Attorney's office recommendation to pay the \$200,000 due to past settlements. The three departments covered by this agreement will budget for the payment. Manager Alles recommended the city pay the entire \$200,000 and borrow funds from the cash reserve and the respective departments will pay the funds back.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked how this was originally paid if the union continued. Manager Alles explained the original agreement was the city would pay a set amount for an additional retirement fund through the union. Due to the economy, the retirement fund lost money and therefore each signatory was billed a respective amount.

Commissioner Ellison commented he supports the recommendation to pay the full amount at this time. He then asked if any other financial exposure exists with the remaining bargaining units. Manager Alles noted there are no other obligation agreements with any other bargaining unit.

**c. Solid Waste System** – City Manager Alles, using an updated PowerPoint presentation, gave an overview of the city and county solid waste systems, including the landfill, transfer station, city residential, city commercial, city-county sanitation operations, recycling, and the private landfill in Jefferson County.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked what the \$70.75 per ton is charged for. City Manager Alles explained the \$70.75 is the transfer station charge per ton for the waste brought over the scale. Of the \$70.75 that is charged, the county charges \$31.25 per ton to bring it to the landfill. Manager Alles explained all city residents are charged \$179 per year for the solid waste assessment which covers the weekly collection of residential waste and allows up to 1.5 tons to be taken directly to the transfer station. Manager Alles explained some of what comes over the scale are recyclables and are diverted from being taken to the landfill. However, the cost to recycle is more than the \$31.25 per ton. Both the city and county commissions are committed to improve the recycling programs.

Commissioner Ellison gave the example of exceeding the 1.5 ton and then having to pay \$70.75 per ton above the 1.5. Manager Alles stated that is correct; he then addressed the pay as you throw proposal and the possibility to reduce the 1.5 ton. There is work to be done on a pay as you throw program. The county allows 1.5 ton per resident; once the limit is reached, the citizen is then charged the \$70.75 per ton.

Commissioner Ellison asked if he is a private waste hauler, what requires them to bring the waste to the landfill and not take it directly to the landfill at \$31.25 per ton versus \$70.75 at the transfer station. Manager Alles explained most citizens in Helena, the county and East Helena all want the option of self haul to the transfer station; if the city has not received any revenue from the private hauler, then those residents would be charged for the tonnage. Property owners would still be charged the city or county assessment for solid waste and would then be charged again. Staff is looking at a variety of options for charging. The transfer station is the only location that accepts self haul, the county guarantees a certain tonnage per year and pays for that. The current private hauler takes the county residential waste to the landfill as it does not cost the company anything since the county pays for the residential solid waste. However, the private hauler does not take the commercial solid waste to the transfer station, as they would be charged.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked how this plays into the city using the Mergenthaler permit. Manager Alles explained the city of Helena is entitled to haul waste within our own jurisdiction; however, the city has received a request for proposals to provide services to the two high schools, two middle schools and the elementary schools. Under the city permit, the city could haul the waste from the schools within the city limits; however, could not pick up from the schools outside the city limits. If the city were to use the Mergenthaler permit, the city could go outside the city limits and pickup at the three elementary schools in the county.

Manager Alles noted the bonds on the transfer station will be paid for in two years; depending on what the long term plans are that will help with cash flow.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if the city wants to pay for the recycling, could the \$179 be increased to cover the costs. Manager Alles stated the city could do that; however, the city partners with the county and the city commission could not just arbitrarily increase the county's recycling costs. He then explained the current blue bag program and noted staff is becoming more efficient in running the program. There are more citizens participating in the program and hopefully more will sign up. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath recognized the blue bag program; however, the public would like to put their recyclables out at the same time as their regular waste.

Manager Alles stated if the recycling is for the city residents only, then the \$179 could be increased. He also addressed the landfill monitoring district that was created last year, where every customer is assessed

\$6.00 per year. Manager Alles stated the commission could look at a separate charge for residential recycling; however, the assessment should be contributed to recycling for residents and not cover the community recycling bins as non-residents use those also.

Discussion was held on the costs of a recycling program that would include automated equipment/containers and staffing. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked that staff look at what equipment is needing to be replaced and replace it with the dual stream trucks. Commissioner Thweatt asked what is the usefulness of a pickup program that doesn't include plastics; which is cost prohibitive at this time.

At the present time there is a \$500,000 recycling budget and the annual revenue from recycling is \$60,000; approximately 12% of the expenditures.

**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) IT&S, Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Committee, Board of Adjustment, Pre-Release Screening Committee – No report given.
- c) Audit Committee, City-County Weed Board, Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC), TCC – No report given
- d) BID/HPC, City-County Parks Board, TCC, L&C County Mental Health Advisory Committee – No report given.
- e) Audit Committee, City-County Administration Building (CCAB), Public Art Committee, Intergovernmental Transit Committee – No report given.
- f) Helena Citizens Council – HCC Representative Scott Mincemoyer reported the HCC met Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>; the marketing/advertising committee is working on a new brochure to inform the public on what the HCC is and how to become involved; Chair McCormick made committee assignments to the TCC, NMTAC, Water Quality Board, and Helena Open Lands Management Committee. There is a HCC position open on the Intergovernmental Transit Committee. HCC members continue to work on transportation issues, specifically Winne Avenue and mini mal-function junction.

**6. Review of agenda for March 7, 2012 City Commission meeting – No discussion held.**

**7. Public Comment – No discussion held.**

**8. Commission discussion and direction to City Manager – No discussion held.**

**9. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.**