

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING
November 28, 2012 – 4:00 p.m.
Room 326, City-County Building

1. Call to order, introductions, opening comments – Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser called the meeting to order. Commissioners Haque-Hausrath and Thweatt were present. Mayor Smith and Commissioner Ellison were excused. Staff present was: City Manager Ron Alles; City Attorney Jeffrey Hindoien; Fire Chief J.R. Feucht; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen; Human Resource Director James Fehr; Public Works Director John Rundquist; Assistant Public Works Director Phil Hauck; Solid Waste Supervisor Pete Anderson; Recycling Coordinator Kim Carley; Administrative Assistant Jacob Larson; Police Chief Troy McGee and City Clerk Debbie Havens.

Others in attendance included: IR Reporter Sanjay Talwani, Jamee Greer, HCC Representative Janet Hess-Herbert and John Hilton.

2. **November 28, 2012 Administrative Meeting Summary** – The November 28, 2012 administrative meeting summary was approved as submitted.

3. **Commission comments, questions –**

A.) Upcoming Appointments – There are no appointments on the December 3, 2012 city commission meeting agenda.

Commission Comments – City Manager Alles complimented the city street crews for a great job with the last storm; staff is evaluating the scheduling of the plows during an active storm. Commissioner Thweatt asked if the streets in the residential areas are plowed. Manager Alles stated residential streets are plowed; however, the emergency snow routes are plowed first.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if the city begins plowing when the storm begins. Manager Alles concurred and clarified that the crews begin plowing when the snow begins to accumulate; they do not wait until the storm ends.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if the snow plowing is paid through street maintenance and if citizens want increased services there would be an increase in the street maintenance assessment. Manager Alles concurred.

Commissioner Thweatt spoke of the complexity of the last storm due to the four inches of ice under the snow. Director Rundquist noted there were equipment problems due to the ice.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked if a storm hits during the week-end does a crew automatically go out. Director Rundquist stated yes; a typical storm would have plows beginning at 4:00 a.m. with staggered shifts. Manager Alles stated he believes the current staff is trained and uses the best practices for this area.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked what the process is once a complaint has been called into the code enforcement officer for clearing of sidewalks. Manager Alles reviewed the city's policy on how the complaint is processed. Code Enforcement Officer Dige works closely with the city attorney's office to enforce the ordinance. Attorney Hindoien also spoke of the enforcement and the issuing of citations.

4. **City Manager's Report-** City Manager Alles reported Narrate Church will be hosting a volunteer firewood splitting & loading/delivery event at the Donaldson Barn (East end of Early Bird) on December 1st between 9:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. This event will involve volunteers spitting approximately 50 cords of firewood that will be loaded into periodically arriving LIEAP client vehicles.

5. **Department Discussions**

Public Works - City Manager Alles recognized Solid Waste Superintendent Pete Anderson, Recycling Coordinator Kim Carley and Administrative Assistant Jacob Larson.

Director Rundquist commented staff has put together a good presentation; he stated he believes the city of Helena offers the best city operated recycling program in the state.

Recycling Program Review –Solid Waste Superintendent Pete Anderson gave a PowerPoint presentation on the City Recycling Program; topics included:

- City Recycling Program began in 1991

- Currently recycle 21 commodities
- Beginning and Current Status
- Items Diverted for Recycling and Composting
- City Sponsored Recycling Programs
- Recycling Diversions 1993-2012
- Special Events – What, Where, When
- Recyclables and Processors
- Curbside and Container Commodities
- Curbside and Container Paper Recycled
- Curbside Recycling in Montana
- Recycling Summary

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if the green waste is composting material only. Superintendent Anderson stated yes and further explained the composting program Billings is providing. One of the biggest issues Billings is facing is people dumping regular solid waste in the designated composting containers.

Commissioner Thweatt asked how much room does glass take up in the landfill and is it crushed prior to being landfilled. Superintendent Anderson responded that he believes the majority of the glass would be crushed prior to being landfilled.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked how much of the waste stream is recycled. Superintendent Anderson stated 37,000 tons was hauled to the transfer station and 6,400 tons were diverted. Director Rundquist noted there are additional outlets that people use to recycle; therefore, the number of recycling tons would be increased if you added all the components.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked the following questions:

1. How is the electronics recycling program been running. Superintendent Anderson noted the last two events have been well attended. In November, staff implemented a new rate structure that will increase what electronics can be recycled. Approximately 10 tons of electronics have been received
2. What electronics are still being charged for. Superintendent Anderson explained the current highest charge is \$20 and that is for televisions and monitors; prior to November it was \$50. With the cost reduction program it will encourage participation and there is no charge to recycle many electronic devices.
3. At what point would Ashgrove stop accepting the glass. Superintendent Anderson noted Ashgrove annually has a six-week shut down period in February and during that time, glass is not accepted. However, there have been no other instances when they have not accepted the glass.
4. Is there any potential to begin recycling construction waste; for example working with the re-store. Superintendent Anderson noted staff is open to looking at all options to work with community partners. At this time, no construction waste is recycled and if there is interest they are referred to the county landfill.
5. Is the Blue Bag program still solvent within the residential program. Superintendent Anderson stated yes and noted they had additional citizens sign up at the America Recycling Day event. Recycling Coordinator Kim Carley explained how the monthly blue bag pick-ups work. Director Rundquist noted there has been interest in expanding curb-side recycling; staff needs assistance in completing those recommendations. There is the option of doing public/private partnerships.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath noted she is interested in seeing the analysis of expanding the curbside recycling program; she suggested four alternatives to see if there is interest from the citizens and if they want to pay for the expanded services. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser spoke of the options that are out there to expand the services and include a public process. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she is interested in work sessions to discuss the expansion possibilities. She asked if staff could do the initial analysis or would a consultant need to be hired. City Manager Alles stated he believes staff could begin with the end product the commission is interested in and then work backwards to answer all the questions. He suggested staff put together a proposal for commission consideration and then begin the necessary discussions.

There was commission concurrence to move forward to develop a proposal for commission discussion and consideration.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser commented he would like to see glass accepted at the drop-off sites around town. Superintendent Anderson noted a glass drop-off site is more of liability due to broken glass.

6. Is there an issue with the number of vehicles coming to the transfer stations just for recycling. Superintendent Anderson noted it has not been an issue for staff to handle the recycling components; he did note that the transfer station is a busy place.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath noted the commission had asked to get an analysis on the expansion of the recycling program. Commissioner Thweatt stated he is not interested in expanding the program; he believes the city of Helena is doing a good job and the time it takes to re-discuss recycling; other items are not moving forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser stated he is interested in expanding the recycling program while keeping the program solvent. Anyway the city can enhance the recycling program would benefit the citizens. Eventually he would like to see the city accept plastics.

City Manager Alles noted the recycling program has continued to improve and staff will continue to look at all options to continue doing so. The blue bag program is a city resident service only; however, the site containers are also used by Lewis & Clark and Jefferson County residents.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she is very interested in increasing the curb-side recycling program. It is a worthy goal to expand the program and there is public interest to do so.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser stated to get the specifics on the cost of recycling, he would suggest holding separate work sessions.

Robert Hilton, Helena Recycling, asked what is the percentage of the citizens participating in the blue bag that actually use it every month. Superintendent Anderson stated staff does not have those numbers, but could get them. The blue bag program is paid for through the current residential solid waste program and is not free as portrayed to the customers.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if there is interest in holding additional work sessions to discuss the next steps. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked the manager to begin working toward a proposal. Manager Alles asked the commission what they would like the agenda to include. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she would like to see a set of decision points and the commission would begin discussing options and costs.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser stated there are many layers to the recycling program and he would like to begin looking at case studies from other cities on what they have done. Director Rundquist noted Cheyenne Wyoming has a program that requires staff to sort the commodities; there are many options out there for the commission to consider.

Commissioner Thweatt stated he supports recycling and citizens want it made easier; however, they do not want to pay for it. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if the Helena Citizens' Council (HCC) could do a survey to see if the residents would be willing to pay an additional \$10 per month for curbside recycling.

Manager Alles stated he is attending the HCC meeting tonight and will bring it up. He asked if there is a price point the commission will consider, should it be elective or required. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated it should be required.

Robert Hilton noted if citizens are required to recycle, the commission will have to address the fact that there is only one recycling center and he does not believe Pacific could handle all the commodities if it were required. To build a secondary center would be extremely expensive. The Bozeman program lost approximately \$90,000 in the first year and had to increase the rates to break even.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked if the blue bag program accepts tin and aluminum cans in one bag or separately. Superintendent Anderson stated tin and aluminum are separate commodities. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked if the city could purchase a metal sorter just to keep the blue bag program as is. He then stated by the first quarter of 2013, he would like to discuss moving forward with the recycling program.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath noted the commission could look at reducing the amount of tonnage covered by the annual solid waste assessment. Manager Alles stated staff has had that conversation.

6. 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 (NMTAC), Board of Adjustment, Pre-Release Screening Committee – No report given.
- c) Audit Committee, City-County Weed Board, Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC), TCC –Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser reported MBAC has hired a new director and there will be discussion on the funding for the continuation of MBAC.
- 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 member Janet Hess-Herbert reported the monthly HCC meeting will be held this evening at 7:00 p.m.; the main topic is to discuss the vitality of the HCC and how it improve the citizen involvement. She also noted the members are more than willing to do a survey as suggested by Commissioner Haque-Hausrath.

7. Review of agenda for December 3, 2012 City Commission meeting – City Manager Alles noted there are two public hearings that will follow consideration of the non-discrimination ordinance.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she will be offering an amendment to include familial status in the ordinance for employment purposes.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked for clarification the process of how a complainant would choose to file with the Human Rights Bureau or Municipal Court. He stated he may offer an amendment that would require a complainant go to the Human Right Bureau first; then if it is not accepted it would go to Municipal Court. Attorney Hindoien noted he has begun to draft the amendment and would have it available prior to the December 3rd city commission meeting.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath spoke on the previous concept that a person is already limited on where they can file a complaint. Discussion was held on the intent of Commissioner Elsaesser's proposed amendment.

Commissioner Thweatt stated he is considering two amendments; he is concerned with a transgender using a women's restroom/locker room and may ask that swimming pools and locker rooms be taken out of the ordinance. The second amendment would remove language on recovering any attorney fees.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath noted Jamie Greer with the Montana Human Rights Network has researched and responded to the concerns with the incident at Evergreen College.

City Attorney Hindoien reported Missoula City Attorney Nugent has authored an opinion letter on some of the questions arose after the city of Missoula adopted their ordinance.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked with the adoption of the ordinance, it would not require new construction requirements. Attorney Hindoien concurred.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she is hesitant to remove locker rooms; there would be no recourse if an individual were denied access to any locker room.

City Manager Alles noted an email address to submit comments on the non-discrimination ordinance will be set up. Although first passage of the ordinance is a regular agenda, the Mayor will accept public comments. The public hearing is scheduled for December 17, 2012.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked if the resolution on the tobacco free policy would only have one public hearing. City Attorney Hindoien concurred.

8. Public Comment – Jamee Greer reported he has a statement from Evergreen College that he will forward to the commission.

9. Commission discussion and direction to City Manager – No discussion held.

10. **Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.