

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING

October 2, 2013– 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 Ellison, Haque-Hausrath and Thweatt were present. Mayor Smith was excused. Staff present was: City Manager Ron Alles; Executive Assistant Sarah Elkins; Police Chief Troy McGee; Fire Chief Sean Logan; Public Works Director Randall Camp; Assistant Public Works Director Phil Hauck; HATS Supervisor Steve Larson; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen; Human Resources Director James Fehr, Administrative Services Director Tim Magee; City Attorney Jeff Hindoi; HCC Coordinator Kelli McLane and City Clerk Debbie Havens.

Others in attendance included: HCC Representatives Don Hunsaker and Elizabeth Andrews, Cindy Barrels, Vivian Crabtree, Bob Maffitt, Les Clark, David Nielsen, Nancy Everson, Eric Bryson, Matthew Cramer and Consultant Lisa Ballard.

2. September 18, 2013 Administrative Meeting Summary – The September 18, 2013 Administrative Meeting summary was approved.

3. Commission comments, questions –

Board Appointments – Mayor Smith is recommending the reappointment of Chris DeVerniero and Art Pembroke to the Bill Roberts Golf Course Advisory Board. Terms will begin upon appointment and expire October 30, 2016.

There was commission support for the recommended appointments.

Commission Comments – City Manager Alles reported at the MBAC board meeting a discussion was held on the membership of the board of directors. It is MBAC's position that there needs to be a contribution from the city in order to have a member on the board of directors. Manager Alles concurred with the recommendation the city contribute \$1,000 to MBAC.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser noted MBAC controls a lot of public funds and it is important to have a city representative on the board of directors. He spoke of the leadership skills of the Executive Director. There was commission consensus to contribute the \$1,000.

4. City Manager's Report

a. Overview of County Finances – City Manager Alles introduced the topic and Administrative Services Director Magee gave a PowerPoint presentation on Lewis & Clark County's Tax Year 2013 Mill Values; Overlapping Mill Levies; Levies – Inside Cities and Towns Not Voted; Levies – Inside Cities & Towns Voted; County's All Purpose FY 2014 Budget; and Public Safety – FY2014 Budget.

Commissioner Ellison asked County Administrator Eric Bryson how the Mental Health services are funded by the county and do any of the mills the city of Helena residents pay go toward mental health services. Mr. Bryson gave an overview of the funding of mental health services that is paid from the counties to the state and then distributed to the mental health centers. Lewis & Clark County has historically contributed an average of \$65,000 annually. In addition, for FY 2014, Lewis and Clark County funded \$800,000 in 'bricks and mortar' for the construction of a Crisis Stabilization Facility and approximately \$252,000 for the Crisis Response Team (clinical staff to respond to mental health crisis in the community through a contract for services with Western Montana Mental Health). A separate agreement is in place to subsidize operation of the Drop-Off Center; the county is obligated to pay on their behalf \$36,000/year to offset their operational costs after accounting for any revenues generated. City residents pay approximately 50% of the general county levy.

County Administrator Eric Bryson commented the residents in the city do receive county services to include motor vehicle registration, county attorney's office, elections, library, district court, health department and the coroner.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath noted what people focus on is the public safety budget and asked is any of that spent inside the city limits. City Manager Alles echoed the comments of Eric Bryson and stated there are many partnerships between the city and county to fund projects and programs which include the Lewis & Clark County jail which is a huge portion of the public safety budget. Also included in

the public safety budget is the 9-1-1 dispatch center. The county is responsible for the building of all bridges within the county; city residents do pay a portion of those mill levies.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser stated he too is aware of the joint projects. County Administrator Bryson noted county residents pay a road maintenance that the city residents do not pay. In addition the county levies 2 mills for planning outside the city limits.

b. Priority Matrix Discussion – City Manager Alles noted with Mayor Smith excused, he will bring this back at a future administrative meeting.

5. Department Discussions

Public Works

Transit Plan – City Manager Alles introduced the Transit Plan. HATS Supervisor Larson and Consultant Lisa Ballard gave an overview of the changes from the first draft.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if any other communities provide curb to curb to persons who live less than ¼ mile from a fixed route stop. Consultant Ballard explained curb to curb is required for anyone who lives within ¾ mile of a fixed route. The recommendation would be to provide curb to curb service for all persons with disabilities within the city limits.

HATS Supervisor Larson noted if the recommendation to add one additional fixed route is adopted, it would require curb to curb service for persons with disabilities for the entire city.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath clarified the proposal is to provide curb to curb for persons with disabilities within the city limits. Consultant Ballard concurred.

Manager Alles referred the commission to the memo from Supervisor Larson that outlines what the city needs to do to implement the 2013-2018 Transit Development Plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked if the proposal is to expand the fixed routes for all day or for peak hours. Consultant Ballard stated the current recommendation is to run the fixed routes 12-hours per day; in order to do accomplish that an additional \$220,000 would have to be saved from somewhere else. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked if there are options for the fixed routes to run a reverse route.

Consultant Ballard noted if a reverse route was implemented the costs would be \$18,000 per year.

Consultant Ballard stated it is a policy decision on the fixed route options. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser referenced the discussion of demand management and asked if that includes partners with businesses.

Consultant Ballard noted there was not a lot of discussion other than how to provide bus service. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked what it would entail to look at demand management. Consultant Ballard stated the goal is mobility bus service is a means of mobility; other means of mobility would be land use decisions, car/van pooling and coordinating with other services. The transit system can move toward a mobility agency and not just a bus service. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser stated the overview of goals relates back to the degree of services offered. Consultant Ballard concurred.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked how the lack of intercity bus service affects the residents of Helena and the budget. Consultant Ballard noted it effects the residents due to services are not being offered. HATS Supervisor Steve Larson explained the closest bus service is in Butte. There are a lot of hidden costs by not having the intercity bus services. Assistant Public Works Director Phil Hauck explained the impact of losing the intercity bus services.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if there is a proposal to bring back the intercity bus services to Helena. HATS Supervisor Larson stated representatives from the Montana Department of Transportation are working with a company to get service back; no timeline has been indicated to get this accomplished. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser asked if the transit center would have qualified for federal funding if the intercity bus service was not available. Assistant Public Works Director Phil noted it was a very small amount of federal funding that was applied to the transit center; due to the project being under budget some of the stimulus funding was returned and would have covered it.

Commissioner Ellison thanked Consultant Ballard and HATS Supervisor Larson for the updated report. He then referred to page 1-5, Challenges, the last sentence where it states “We have no information that would lead us to believe that future federal transportation bills will majorly cut investments in public transportation.” Commissioner Ellison stated there was the loss of JARC funding, which comes through a federal source, and was cut by 50% for FY14 and 50% for FY15; therefore some of the information is available. There are also other indicators that federal transportation funding has been cut with the closure of a number of FAA facilities.

Commissioner Ellison stated he is uncomfortable with the statement as written and asked that staff and consultant consider re-writing it. Consultant Ballard concurred to look at the statement. She

then commented the JARC funding was consolidated into the World Transit Plan 5311 funding. Ms. Ballard noted one of the parts that did well in the last transportation funding bill was the 5311 funding.

Commissioner Ellison asked theoretically if an elected official who has served on the Intergovernmental Transit Committee, the Non-Motorized Committee and the Pre-Release Committee, has ridden the bus numerous times, has a fiduciary responsibility for the HATS budget and had volunteered as an elected official to be interviewed by the consultant and/or sub-consultant as a key stakeholder; wouldn't this be a person that should have been interviewed. Consultant Ballard stated there was a set budget for a certain amount of interviews; additional interviews would have been done if there was the budget to do so.

Commissioner Ellison commented by excluding the elected official for whatever reason, it created a lot of work for staff. Commissioner Ellison again stated he had volunteered to be interviewed and for some reason the sub-contractor for the consultant had chosen not to interview him. Commissioner Ellison stated he had a lot of questions that he submitted and would have explained at the time of an interview. Commissioner Ellison stated he hasn't read the entire report; however, he likes a lot of the information in the portions he has reviewed.

Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser referenced page 5-13, the bulleted box where it stated "Applied to HATS ridership: \$1.4 million socio-economic benefit (2012 dollars) and asked for clarification. Consultant Ballard noted that is a correct statement and is only a portion of the benefit.

Commissioner Ellison referred to page six of the comments section where "Last sentence on page states that increasing fares is not viable for significantly increasing funding." Commissioner Ellison commented it has been approximately 30-years since the fares for HATS have been increased; however, every other area of city services rates and fees has had increases. He asked Ms. Ballard for her opinion on those who use the service believe the city will not increase the fares; wouldn't a modest increase every year send a message that the city wants to grow the service and those who use it will have to pay a little bit more. He recognized the increase in fares would not solve the HATS funding. Consultant Ballard stated the fare increases is a policy decision; any time you increase the fare you impact those who use the service.

Public comment –

Les Clark asked Ms. Ballard how much does a bus ride in Bozeman charge. Consultant Ballard noted it is a free fare system. However, the funding sources are different than Helena as MSU pays ½ of the costs. Ridership goes up when it is free.

Mr. Clark asked what the current parameters of paratransit service are. Consultant Ballard explained the ADA requires the bus to be available within ½ hour of the set time. Mr. Clark asked if the parameters would change if the service changes. Ms. Ballard noted ADA requires those parameters and they would be the same window with any service.

Bob Maffitt addressed the commission on the previous service of HATS versus what is currently being offered, including fixed route, curb to curb, paratransit. The city already has a fully integrated system; however, there is a belief there is a need for more. Mr. Maffitt stated he is concerned that if only persons with disabilities can use the curb to curb service, then it would create an unnecessary segregation. He asked the commission to review the goals and not create a system that might segregate persons with disabilities.

Vivian Crabtree stated she does not concur with Mr. Maffitt's comments about creating a segregated service for persons with disabilities. If a person wants curb to curb service who is not ADA qualified, they would pay a premium fare. She spoke of the current services being offered and the amount of time it takes to transport persons with disabilities. Ms. Crabtree encouraged the commission to provide the most service for the amount of funding available.

Les Clark referenced a functional assessment that is related to the paratransit system and asked if this is part of the transit plan. Supervisor Larson explained one of the items needed in the plan is an assessment for persons who would qualify to be a person with a disability. Staff has developed the criteria for a functional test that would meet the criteria. The assessment is not part of the transit plan; it would be brought forward at a later date.

Consultant Ballard noted overall there seems to be in agreement; however, there are some small disagreement. The overall consensus that more transportation services are needed.

Supervisor Larson reviewed the next steps for acceptance of the plan; this does not commit the commission to implement any portion of the plan. He then handed out a memo with the proposed tentative schedule to bring the Helena Transit Plan Update forward to the City Commission acceptance.

City Manager Alles also thanked Consultant Ballard, staff and the commission for the work that has been done to move the Transit Development Plan forward.

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 – Commissioner Ellison reported NMTAC recently held elections for officers and Ryan Kettle is the new chair.
- c) Audit Committee, City-County Weed Board, Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC), TCC– Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser reported the TCC members will receive proposals from three firms for the Transportation Plan and the pedestrian tunnel should be open in the very near future. Mayor Pro Tem Elsaesser also spoke on MBAC and some of the work they are doing to change the loan criteria to include energy savings projects.
- d) BID/HPC, City-County Parks Board, TCC, L&C County Mental Health Advisory Committee – Commissioner Thweatt reported discussion was held at the Parks Board meeting on the cross walk adjacent to the swimming pool, MDT has been notified of the concerns. Parks & Recreation Director Teegarden gave a presentation on the bike park at Centennial Park. Updates were also given on the swimming pool and the promotion of mountain biking. Commissioner Thweatt commented with the additional use on the trails, it will have an impact.
- e) Audit Committee, City-County Administration Building (CCAB), Public Art Committee, Intergovernmental Transit Committee – Commissioner Haque-Hausrath reported the PAC is looking at a couple of grants.
- f) Helena Citizens Council – HCC representative Doug Hunsaker invited the commission to let people know about the HCC's October 23rd meeting and encourage anyone interested in serving on the HCC write-in their names on the November ballot.

7. Review of agenda for October 7, 2013 City Commission meeting –No discussion held.

8. Public Comment – No public comment was given.

9. Commission discussion and direction to City Manager – Manager Alles reported objections on the Upper Tenmile project have been filed by Sarah Johnson, Native Ecosystems Council and Steve Kelly, Montana Ecosystems Defense Council. Michael Garrity, Alliance for the Wild Rockies filed an addendum on behalf of the MEDC and NEC.

Staff will be sending an update on the Henderson bridge project to the commission.

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