

**SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING**  
**February 5, 2014 – 4:00 p.m.**  
**Room 326, City-County Building**

**1. Call to order, introductions, opening comments** – Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Commissioners Ellison, Elsaesser, Haladay and Haque-Hausrath were present. Staff present was: City Manager Ron Alles; Executive Assistant Sarah Elkins; Police Chief Troy McGee; Public Works Director Randall Camp; Assistant Public Works Director Phil Hauck; HATS Supervisor Steve Larson; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen; City Attorney Jeff Hindoien; Community Facilities Director Gery Carpenter; Golf Course Superintendent Larry Kurokawa and City Clerk Debbie Havens. Others in attendance included IR Reporter Al Knauber, Cindy Barrows, Bob Maffitt, Vivian Crabtree, Elizabeth Andrews, HCC Chair Amy Fausser, Les Clark

**2. January 22, 2014 Administrative Meeting Summary** – The January 22, 2014 Administrative Meeting summary was approved as amended.

**3. Commission comments, questions –**

Mayor Smith is recommending the following appointments:

Business Improvement District/  
Helena Parking Commission

Appointment of Kathleen Harrington to the BID/HPC. The unexpired term will begin upon appointment and expire October 31, 2014.

Civic Center Board

Reappointment of Riley Johnson, Brad Culver, Trevor Parrish, Judy Kline and Kathleen Pace to the Civic Center Board. Terms will begin upon appointment and expire March 1, 2017.

Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council

Reappointment of Kyla Maki to NMTAC. The second term will begin upon appointment and expire March 31, 2017.

Mayor Smith announced he will be out of town for the February 10<sup>th</sup> city commission meeting.

**4. City Manager's Report** - City Manager Alles reported on the following items:

1. The city of Helena was successful with the MAP21 grant in the amount of \$500,000 to replace the ADA ramps in the downtown area. Engineering and construction should happen during the summer of 2014.
2. Tour of the Upper Tenmile Water Treatment Plant - City Manager Alles reported representatives from various federal, state and local representatives will be in attendance. U.S. Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Bonnie will hold a press conference regarding the NRCS funding.

**5. Department Discussions**  
**Parks & Recreation**

**Golf Course Irrigation Project Update** – City Manager Alles commented the golf course irrigation project had been put out for bid last year; however, the one bid came in way over budget. At that time, staff looked at the scope of project and made the decision to do the project in-house and bid out what was necessary.

Golf Course Superintendent Larry Kurokawa reported the irrigation system at Bill Roberts Golf Course has been in operation for 21-years on the back nine and 34-years on the front nine and in many ways is approaching the end of its life cycle and is not capable of meeting the demands and expectations of maintenance and patrons. City staff has confirmed that many components installed with the system are no long in production and are near obsolete. The number of repairs to the control system and head replacements has increased in recent years to the point that labor and material costs required to keep the

system performing at acceptable levels have become more costly than replacing a majority or all of the irrigation system.

An irrigation performance evaluation completed in 2013 confirmed that the current system presents a number of problems inherent to old systems:

- a) Dependability
- b) Availability of parts
- c) Inefficiencies (water, energy, time and labor)
- d) Repair and maintenance

In response to the irrigation audit, the city hired an irrigation consultant and landscape architect to further analyze the current system and provide specific recommendations/options and designs for replacement. It was determined that the "below ground" components still are useable and should withstand another 10-years of use. Of greater concern are the "above ground" components of the system such as the pump stations, control clocks and main line. Analysis revealed that these components are poor and the current system is not operating to the designed intent.

A range of recommendations and draft costs were identified and analyzed. Options included the replacement of the entire irrigation system to that of replacing specific components. At this point in time, it is not economically feasible to replace the entire irrigation system. City staff recommends implementing the consultant's recommendations of the above ground components consisting of:

- a) Central Control System - \$36,152
- b) Field Satellites - \$108,231
- c) Mainline Pipe (underground) - \$50,630
- d) Pump Station - \$183,125
- e) Power Upgrade - \$12,000
- f) Pump House - \$19,710

In addition, staff recommends completing some basic landscape and parking lot improvements at the same time to leverage benefits of the irrigation expansion and to increase a "sense of arrival" an to alleviate safety concerns and user conflicts between softball and golf patron parking. The landscaping portion of this project will be funding partially by InterCap loan, capital reserves, MAP-21 funding and donations/in-kind services.

Meetings between Administrative Services and the City Manager focused on the financial "picture" and how the irrigation project could be funded. Based on financial forecasting, it was determined that a debt service level of \$500,000 would be acceptable. Administrative Services applied for, and received approval for an InterCap Loan in the amount of \$500,000.

The project consisting of items A-F was advertised for bid last September. One bid was received and it was excessively over-budget. As a result, the bid was not accepted. City staff and the consultant revised the specifications and project approach. It was determined the best way to approach this project within budget was to have the city serve as the general contractor, bid out the pump station and provide in-house labor as necessary. This approach will not compromise the integrity and objectives of the project. There is a cost-savings by ordering equipment and materials directly, avoiding contractor mobilization costs and other contract expenses.

Pending commission approval and weather conditions the project will begin in February and may be completed by early June. Staff will recommend the commission approved the purchase of a prefabricated irrigation pump station from Precision Pumping Systems at the quoted purchase price of \$161,557.00 and the related issuance of debt through the InterCap loan program.

Community Facilities Director Carpenter gave an overview of the project and how it will work with city staff doing a lot of the work. The system being installed at the golf course is the same as Centennial Park.

Commissioner Elsaesser asked how does the treatment of the water from the monitoring wells affect the golf course irrigation system; are the monitoring wells independent from the irrigation system. Community Facilities Director Carpenter stated yes and noted the monitoring wells should not have any

effect on the irrigation wells. Commissioner Elsaesser asked if in the future the irrigation wells would be affected by anything moving north. Director Carpenter stated he did not think so; the monitoring wells are located south of the irrigation wells and should not have any effect on the golf course. Superintendent Kurokawa explained the water from the mitigation wells is captured and pumped up into the irrigation ponds; it is then aerated and used on the golf course.

Commissioner Ellison noted he appreciates the proposal of staff to do the work in-house; it speaks well for the Parks Department.

Les Clark asked if the water at the golf course is well water. Golf Course Superintendent Larry Kurokawa stated yes.

Mayor Smith asked Mr. Kurokawa how long does he anticipate the below ground equipment to last before having to be replaced. Superintendent Kurokawa estimated ten years. Mayor Smith echoed Commissioner Ellison's comments on staff's expertise.

### **Public Works**

**Transit Assumptions for HATS Budget Discussion** – City Manager Alles commented staff brings the HATS budget before the commission during February each year. He then referenced the materials that were included in the packet material.

HATS Superintendent Steve Larson referred the commission to his memo addressed to Public Works Director Camp that addressed many of the assumptions that staff used in developing the preliminary FY15 budget to include:

- Grant Program Status
  - Current Operation
  - FY15 HATS Budget Changes/Assumptions
  - FY15 East Valley Changes/Assumptions
  - FY15 Rocky Mountain Development Council's Head Start Program Changes/Assumptions
  - Formal action the city commission will need to take
- The following documents were also included in the packet material:
- HATS FY14, FY15 Task Working List Updated (1/31/14)
  - HATS FY15 Preliminary Budget
  - Recommendations from the Helena Transportation Advisory Council
  - Helena Area Coordination Plan (Draft)
  - Transit Functional Needs Evaluation for ADA Complementary Para transit Service
  - ADA Complementary Curb-to-Curb/Paratransit Service Policies and Procedures

At the February 24<sup>th</sup> city commission meeting, the commission will consider the submittal of the 5311 grant application; the Updated ADA Complimentary Curb to Curb/Paratransit Plan; the ADA Functional Needs Evaluation and the Title VI Anti-discrimination Policy.

Supervisor Larson explained the change in the funding formula that MDT has changed to. The city of Helena's grant amount for FY2015 is \$593001.32; with a contingency amount of \$43,231.24 available exclusively till April 1, 2015.

The New Freedoms Program has been eliminated and that funding had been allocated to RMDC for the senior transportation program. The Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funding has also been eliminated; which funded the East Valley commuter route. This program has been combined with the Rural Transit Program and is now a part of the 5311 grant.

Intercity bus service is currently not available; however, Salt Lake Express may return to Helena in the near future. However, the operation of the service may change per staff's recommendation.

Supervisor Larson stated the 5311 grant also includes capital request to add one fixed bus route and funding for six bus shelters. He stated he supports the submittal of the capital requests; however, he noted the state will provide 80% funding for the shelters and the city would be responsible for the match

and the land preparation at the various sites. In addition, there is no funding for the maintenance of the shelters.

Supervisor Larson gave an overview on the following items:

- Key items - ADA Complementary Curb-to-Curb/Para transit Service Policies and Procedures  
Supervisor Larson explained the process that will be required to become eligible to use the Para transit. There will be an appeal process in place where any appeals would go before the city of Helena's ADA committee. If there is appeal filed, the person will be continue be eligible to ride until a decision is received. In addition, there will be a the requirement that riders call 24-hours in advance to schedule the bus. There are options the commission could consider.
- Para transit software is also a top priority of staff to implement. It is currently being reviewed by legal.
- Staff's goal is to get the software in operation by September 2014.

Supervisor Larson recognized and thanked Bob Maffitt, Les Clark and Judy Harris for working on the plan. He then spoke on the involvement of the Transportation Advisory Committee's involvement.

Supervisor Larson then reviewed the proposed budget with the new budget numbers of 580, 581 and 582.

Mayor Smith asked for public comment and the following persons addressed the commission:

Elizabeth Andrews, on behalf of the Helena Transportation Advisory Council, spoke on the responsibilities of the council and in support of staff's recommendations. She noted the Coordination Plan demonstrates the commitment of the organizations to implement the plan. Ms. Andrews referred to the memo from the Helena Transportation Advisory Council (HTAC) and encouraged the commission to support the objectives within the plan.

Vivian Crabtree, Chair of HTAC, addressed the need for shelters and offered her knowledge regarding how to cope with the maintenance of the proposed shelters.

Bob Maffitt, Montana Independent Living Project, spoke highly of the documents presented to the commission. He thanked Supervisor Larson for the accomplishments that are occurring at the Transit Facility. He is interested in assuring that people with disabilities have increased ridership. The number of riders affects future funding and offered his assistance in the future. Mr. Maffitt stated he believes there are changes that are being recommended that will not be popular to all riders. It is important that the city plan on spending all available funding.

Commissioner Elsaesser asked in regards to the intercity bus, is the city looking at staffing the bus service and is the relationship essentially at the transit station. Supervisor Larson noted traditionally the city has operated the service that included providing the employees. Staff's recommendation is to lease space to a private company and not act as the agent to run the operation. The recommendation would save the city of Helena funds by not running the operation.

Commissioner Elsaesser asked if tickets are purchased on-line. Supervisor Larson noted tickets are sold on site and there are a lot of customers who ship freight on the intercity bus service. Supervisor Larson then spoke of the loss the city incurred last year of approximately \$25,000 by being the agent.

Commissioner Elsaesser stated it is important to effectively use resources and he is comfortable with staff's recommendation not to be the agent for the intercity bus service. City Manager Alles noted staff has spoken with MDT and it is their recommendation that the intercity service will use the space rent free due to the funding commitment in the grant.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath referred to staff's memo where it states "a Westside Commuter, a Capitol Commuter, any additional fixed routes, or expansions are not anticipated to be include in the FY15 budget" and noted a recommendation in the Transit Plan was to minimize the curb to curb service and use those funds to pay for a Westside commuter route. She asked staff to comment on why the Westside commuter route is not included. Supervisor Larson stated the first step was to get the curb to curb system set up where the riders would have to be pre-qualified to use the service; after that staff would have to see how much funding would be available; those numbers would not be available until later

in the fall of 2014. With the direction of having a status-quo budget, the consultant estimated the cost to add a Westside route is approximately \$220,000. There are also requests for extended hours and week-end service. The Westside route is a high priority; however, it needs to fit into the financials.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if the funding the city receives is tied to ridership. Supervisor Larson stated there is a relationship; however, the state does not define the relationship. He spoke of how the state funding is distributed to other cities in Montana.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked if it would behoove the city to structure the budget so if money is saved from the curb to curb service, to immediately implement the Westside route so the ridership would be up for the following year funding. Assistant Public Works Director Hauck stated the commission could do that; staff has budgeted to the maximum and used up the entire federal grant. However, if by fall the numbers show a decrease in curb to curb service, staff could use those monies to implement a Westside commuter route. The budget submitted does not include the current services plus the Westside route. Commissioner Haque-Hausrath stated she is interested in using any potential savings to implement a Westside commuter route.

Mayor Smith commented the goal is to capture every federal dollar to fund the current services.

Commissioner Haladay asked if the city has a plan in place to implement the Westside commuter route or would the route need to be planned. Supervisor Larson stated staff does not anticipate hiring new staff for the Westside commuter route. Any savings from the curb to curb service would be used toward the Westside service. The budget does include the hiring of a consultant to look at the implementation of the Westside route and any future expansion of routes. Staff does have the route map the state bus used when in operation that covered the Westside of Helena.

Commissioner Haladay recognized the costs if a new route were added; he asked what the estimated costs might be if the commission were to implement a scaled back commuter route, similar to the route for state employees. Assistant Public Works Director Hauck noted it costs \$221,000 for one bus to run 12-hours per day. Staff could estimate the costs of a scaled back commuter route depending on the service being offered. Commissioner Haladay asked for ballpark figure for a scaled down route. Manager Alles noted the ballpark would be approximately \$75,000 to run a bus for four hours per day.

Commissioner Haladay stated a legislative shuttle route is not anticipated to be included in the FY15 preliminary budget and asked if there are any leads on funding in order to implement a shuttle. Supervisor Larson noted there were several requests during the 2013 session. However, at this time it is not in his scope of work; he has suggested the Try Another Way Committee may want to look at setting up a program.

Commissioner Haladay stated he would like to see the commission consider the implementation of a legislative shuttle in time for the 2015 session. There is an interest to have access to the downtown area from the capital complex.

Commissioner Ellison stated he appreciates the memos from staff and the Helena Transportation Advisory Council. He then referred to the first paragraph of Supervisor Larson's memo where it states "The total grant plus the contingency funding equals \$636,232.56. This compares to last year's award amount of \$706,925.00 although the budget projected using only \$536,250 of the total award due to the general fund match constraint of \$300,000." Commissioner Ellison asked staff to elaborate on why the city is limited that way.

Assistant Public Works Director Hauck explained the 5311 is a reimbursement grant based on actual expenditures and there is varying reimbursement percentages based on the type of expenditures. It is very complicated to figure it out up front; the constraint is the general fund contribution on a certain percentage of reimbursements. For example, the match on the east valley includes the city of East Helena and Lewis & Clark County contributions. The concern is there has been money left on the table; which is true. The reasons are staff understood the JARC funding and the funding for the east valley route was going away. The JARC funding was to be going to be included in the 5311 funds. If the city was going to continue the east valley service, it would be paid out of the 5311 funds.

Assistant Director Hauck explained the budget proposal for FY15 is to use the entire grant funding including the contingencies. This would keep HATS running status quo and using the remaining funds in the amount of \$60,000 to keep the east valley route.

Commissioner Ellison commented other than the potential reduction in curb to curb, once the process is in place is there any reduction in service contemplated for FY15. Assistant Director Hauck stated not in the HATS budget; the east valley has a reduction of hours to 27 hours per week instead of the 40 hours. If it moves to a commuter route, it may be funded for five days with reduced hours. The county and East Helena has indicated there are no additional funds for FY15.

Commissioner Ellison stated this may be the year of the bus; however, with the information provided by staff there are proposals to hire consultants for a variety of items related to the transit system. Commissioner Ellison commented he would hate to see this become the year of the consultant and not the year of providing services to people who need to use it.

Commissioner Elsaesser asked if the 5311 funding is the sole source of funding or is there additional funding for the bus service. Assistant Director Hauck noted this is the entire 5311 funding available. There are no other funding sources reflected in the budget.

Commissioner Elsaesser stated he would support shifting services to fixed routes which would provide the service to more people per hour.

Commissioner Elsaesser referred to the comments that all the grant funds were not spent this year and asked if the fiscal year ends June 30<sup>th</sup>. Supervisor Larson concurred. Commissioner Elsaesser asked if a specific area is chosen for a shelter could those funds be used. Supervisor Larson stated yes and noted HATS is working with city engineering to coordinate the placement of a shelter in the downtown area. Commissioner Elsaesser also thanked staff for the information provided.

Mayor Smith asked if the JARC funding was not being used by employees going back and forth to work but as a commuter route. Supervisor Larson concurred and noted the original use for the commuter route was for Job Access Reverse Commute; however it was used for funding a fixed route and curb to curb service. Supervisor Larson stated the bus does stop at the Helena Pre-Release for those needing to go to work.

Mayor Smith stated he appreciated the comments of Commissioners Ellison and Haladay on the transportation system. The priority should be serving the citizens of Helena. He also commented that he would be more comfortable implementing a Westside route once more of the property is annexed into the city.

Mayor Smith, in reference to bus shelters, asked staff if they had been in contact with a company from Kalispell. Supervisor Larson stated there is a company that will install and maintain shelters. The key part is that they advertise on the shelters and staff is having discussions regarding our city sign ordinance. Mayor Smith also thanked staff and committee members for their recommendations and looks forward to considering them. The bus service should be focused to serve those who do not have cars and unable to drive.

Supervisor Larson stated at the current time, anyone who is over 55 qualifies for the reduced fair for curb to curb service. However, there is no age eligibility in the recommendation in the ADA Complimentary Para Transit Plan Update. Mayor Smith stated he is glad to see no age or income eligibility and is strictly based a person's life situation.

Commissioner Haladay asked if the numbers the city uses to get grant funding includes east valley ridership. Supervisor Larson concurred. Commissioner Haladay then commented if the east valley route is scaled back to be more of a curb to curb route, there would be a decrease in ridership and essentially a reduction in funding. Supervisor Larson concurred funding is based on ridership and funding could be reduced if the type of service is reduced. Staff has looked at various proposals to increase ridership by implementing different types of routes including commuter routes,

Commissioner Haladay commented to the extent the city uses the 5311 grant to subsidize the east valley route; the city does capture a benefit due to the number of riders. As much as he is in favor of

using the 5311 funding for city residents, he recognizes the east valley service provides funding due to the ridership.

Commissioner Elsaesser noted the east valley is approximately 20% of the ridership; the proposal to add fixed routes should increase the ridership and ultimately increase funding.

Mayor Smith asked if the recommendation is to discontinue the Rec-Connect Program. Supervisor Larson explained the program was funding through donations, sponsors but largely through the School District, Youth Connections and a grant through the Parks & Recreation Department. The grant funding is no longer available and unless there is funding identified the program will be discontinued.

Commissioner Elsaesser asked staff to prepare a bullet point summary of grant funding and the required matches.

Bob Maffitt commented the funding is a very complex formula. He is interested in getting the ridership up, assuring the total grant funding is expended and streamlining and improving the curb to curb service. Mr. Maffitt stated he is very interested in working out mechanisms and models to assure all grant funding is expended; one recommendation would be to use grant funding to hire a mobility manager. Mr. Maffitt stated in FY12 there was \$15,000 left in grant funding and in FY13 there was \$77,000 was left. If the money is not spent, it is taken off the next year's grant amount. Mr. Maffitt stated there are smaller projects to improve the transit service that Montana Independent Living Project would be interested in partnering with the city on. Funds could also be expended on purchasing an accessible van that would be operated by a private company to offer rides when HATS is not operating.

Mayor Smith asked Assistant Public Works Director Hauck if he concurred with the amount of grant funding that was not spent in FY 12 and 13 and is it accurate to say the city is in a use it or lose it situation in regards to the grant funds. Assistant Director Hauck stated he did not have the information with him to answer those two questions. Supervisor Larson stated the grant funding for FY12 was \$514,190 and \$495,700 was expended; FY13 was \$575,885 and expended \$ 542,582; FY14 was \$706,000 and to date we are on pace to be reimbursed for \$300,000. If the second half of FY14 is reimbursed at the same \$300,000 there would be approximately \$106,000 of grant funding left. Staff is using the entire grant funding that there is a match for. If additional services are added, the other funding than the city general fund will have to be identified for the match.

Staff has contacted MDT to ask if the grant funding the county received in the amount of \$19,000 could be used as a match; MDT is looking into it. There are additional grant funds the county has received that may also be eligible.

Elizabeth Andrews noted the committee is very interested in the installation of bus shelters. There are a lot of resources that staff could look into in obtaining bus shelters and not have to expend a lot of money. Elizabeth Andrews also noted seniors who use fixed routes instead of curb to curb get to ride free in Great Falls.

Commissioner Haque-Hausrath asked what the restrictions are left on the \$100,000 in the grant. Supervisor Larson explained there are three areas where grant funds can be used: operations, administrative and maintenance with specific funding for each. Each one of these areas list what is eligible and staff continues to look at possibilities to expend the funds.

Manager Alles noted some of the restrictions are there is no match. In addition, one recommendation is to hire a mobility coordinator. He has concerns with the recommendation and the need to continue to fund the staff person even if there is not grant funds or match to cover the costs of the position. Staff will continue to look at one time purchases and not on-going programs where there is not identified funding.

Assistant Director Hauck again reminded the commission the submittal of the 5311 grant is not the final HATS budget. The commission will go through the entire budget using the same process as all department budgets.

Mayor Smith announced that Commissioner Ellison will leave MBAC and serve on the TCC. Commissioner Haladay will leave TCC and serve on MBAC. This will alleviate Commissioner Haladay having two boards that meet at the same time.

**6. Committee discussions**

- a) Audit Committee, City-County Board of Health, Civic Center Board, L&C County Mental Health Advisory Committee, Montana League of Cities & Towns - Mayor Smith - No report given.
- b) Audit Committee, Board of Adjustment, Helena Chamber of Commerce Liaison, Information Technology Committee, Montana Business Assistance Connection – Commissioner Dan Ellison – No report given.
- c) Intergovernmental Transit Committee, Non-motorized Travel Advisory Board, Transportation Coordinating Committee – Commissioner Matt Elsaesser reported on the TCC technical group met this week to discuss the components of the transportation plan, including non-motorized.
- d) ADA Compliance Committee, Business Improvement District/Helena Parking Commission, City-County Parks Board, Transportation Coordinating Committee – Commissioner Andres Haladay reported the Parks Board will be reviewing the boulevard landscaping ordinance and forwarding a recommendation to the commission.
- e) Audit Committee, City-County Administration Building (CCAB), Public Art Committee – Commissioner Haque-Hausrath – No report given.
- f) Helena Citizens Council – HCC Chair Amy Fausser not a lot to report. The executive committee meeting is on February 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. At the February meeting, the HCC will begin to develop a work plan. City Clerk Havens reported Judy Garrity has been hired as the HCC Coordinator. The 2014 HCC officers are: Chair Amy Fausser, Vice-Chair Elizabeth Andrews, Secretary Jeanette Blize and Treasurer John Forbes.

**7. Review of agenda for February 10, 2014 City Commission meeting** – Commissioner Ellison asked Mayor Smith if he had any advice on the resolution to conduct a local government review. Mayor Smith stated it is a constitutional requirement to call for an election on the question of conducting a local government review. By adopting the resolution, the question will be on the June 3, 2014 primary ballot.

**8. Public Comment** – No public comment received.

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

**10. Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.