

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING
January 20, 2016– 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, Farris-Olsen, Haladay and Noonan were present. Staff present was: City Manager Alles, Executive Assistant Sarah Elkins; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen; City Attorney Thomas Jodoin; Police Chief Troy McGee; Fire Chief Mark Emert; Public Works Director Randall Camp; Assistant Public Works Director Phil Hauck; Administrative Services Director Glenn Jorgenson; Community Facilities Director Gery Carpenter; Human Resources Director James Fehr; HCC Coordinator Judy Garrity and City Clerk Debbie Havens.

Others in attendance included: IR Reporter Al Knauber and HCC Representative Dick Sloan

City Manager Alles introduced Fire Chief Mark Emert, who began work on Tuesday, January 19, 2016. Chief Emert addressed the commission and gave his background. Mayor Smith and Commissioners welcomed Chief Emert.

2. January 6, 2016 Meeting Summary – The January 6, 2016 administrative meeting summary was approved as submitted.

3. Commission comments, questions –

Board Appointments – Mayor Smith recommended the following appointments:

Civic Center Board	Reappointment of Craig Wilkerson, Skip Hatveltd and Kendall Stewart to the Civic Center Board. Terms will begin upon appointment and expire March 1, 2019.
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Commissioner Haladay referenced a prior meeting with the school district where it was mentioned a city commissioner was to sit on the sub-committee of the school district's planning committee. Manager Alles noted staff has participated in a sub-committee; however, he will contact the school district to see what the appropriate committee is. The citizens' advisory sub-committee has met and Director Haugen attended and presented the information of the TIF District.

4. City Manager's Report – City Manager Alles reported Attorney Jodoin completed the Amicus Brief on the unpermitted exempt wells and the Montana League of Cities and Towns filed it.

Manager Alles reported as of yesterday, 201 complaints have been filed on sidewalk snow removal. Commissioner Noonan asked if someone complains; is their name given to the homeowner. Manager Alles reviewed the process the Code Enforcement Officer uses when following up on any complaint. The homeowner can request the name of the person who filed the complaint.

Commissioner Ellison stated he was contacted by one person who had received a bill of approximately \$260 and was not happy. Commissioner Ellison noted he had hired someone to clear his sidewalks, the cost was \$60. The commission may want to have further discussion on the assessment. Manager Alles concurred the costs should be discussed; he then explained how the costs were initially set. To begin with the cost was .25 cents per square foot; however, it has been reduced to .18 cents at this time. Manager Alles noted he has taken the liberty of waiving or reducing the fine.

Commissioner Ellison suggested asking the contractors if a minimum charge is an option. Manager Alles will follow-up with staff.

Commissioner Haladay stated he has received some complaints on school district property.

5. Department Discussions:
Community Development

TIF District Overview – Community Development Director Haugen gave an overview of the process and noted the public hearing is scheduled for January 25, 2016.

Commissioner Ellison asked if staff has heard back from the school district after the commission amended the map. Manager Alles noted Dr. Kultgen was comfortable with the boundaries set by the city commission. Their main focus was possible funding for Safe Routes to School.

Director Haugen noted over 500 notices were sent out and she has received several calls expressing concern that their property taxes would increase if the property values increased.

Manager Alles noted the Revenue Committee has been meeting to discuss TIF Districts and Director Haugen attended one of the hearings.

Consensus Direction to Manager – None needed at this time, update only.

Public Works Director

Solid Waste Interlocal Agreement between the City of Helena and Lewis & Clark County –

City Manager Alles referred the commission to the draft Interlocal Agreement and offered to answer any questions. The term of the agreement is for one-year and will expire December 31, 2016 with the option of renewal.

If there are no objections, staff will bring this forward to a city commission meeting in February 2016.

Commissioner Noonan asked what the county's take on recycling is and would there be any change in the city's recycling program. Manager Alles noted he does not believe the county will implement a curb-side recycling program; however, the county residents have the option of using the recycling sites that are located throughout the city.

At this time, there are approximately 300 people signed up for curb-side recycling program. Commissioner Farris-Olsen stated this agreement will not affect the curb-side recycling program. Manager Alles concurred.

Commissioner Farris-Olsen referred to the agreement and asked what is included in the reimbursement the county will pay to the city. Manager Alles stated at this time the county will reimburse the city for Superintendent Anderson's time and any administrative expenses incurred. There will also be the addition of an administrative position out at the landfill.

Commissioner Haladay asked how personnel disputes will be handled. Manager Alles stated the employees will be supervised by Pete Anderson. If there is an issue, County Public Works Director and the County Human Resource office will handle it.

Commissioner Haladay asked prior to the sunset and review of the agreement, that staff provide the commission an economic analysis on how the consolidation has benefited the city. Manager Alles concurred and gave an overview of some of the potential costs savings.

Director Camp commented he believes this agreement will benefit the city, both with costs savings and improving the operations of the transfer station and landfill.

Consensus Direction to Manager – None at this time, update only.

Public Transportation/ADA Bus Stop Discussion – Manager Alles gave an overview on what has transpired and the decisions the commission will need to make in the next few months. He also spoke on the costs of the ADA requirements for the new bus stops for the second fixed route.

Assistant Public Works Director Phil Hauck listed the following commission decision schedule:

January 20th – Administrative Meeting - Policy/Budget Guidelines

February 3rd – Administrative Meeting – Initial Review of Grant Package

February 11th – Staff Commission Packet Due

February 17th – Administrative Meeting – Final Review of Grant Package

February 22nd – Commission Approval of capital ranking, TransAde ranking, Coordination Plan and Grant Submittal package

March 1st – Grant Package submitted to State of Montana

FY17 Policy/Budget Considerations:

1. Governance – The city of Helena is currently the “lead agency” and operates the Transit system for the City of Helena. Attached are the “Transit Planning 4 All” recommendations for possible governance options.

a. Does the Commission wish to continue as the lead agency or discuss alternate options for Governance.

Commissioner Noonan asked what the options are if the city were to look at another lead agency. Manager Alles stated his take from the report is the city is limited to an area where we can offer service. His comment was to make the current system better prior to expanding. At this time, he does not see the benefit of finding a new lead agency. There was discussion if a non-profit were to take it over; they may have access to additional grants. At this time, there is no non-profit large enough that could operate the transit system.

Another option is to look at the creation of a transit district; however, with the recent bond issues failing, he would hesitate to do that.

Commissioner Noonan concurred the option of a non-profit running it, is not a good idea.

Commissioner Ellison stated he would support looking at a new lead agency; however, as much as he would like someone to take it over, he believes the correct lead agency is the city of Helena. Mayor Smith concurred with Commissioner Ellison's comments. Additional financial help from the county would be beneficial.

There was consensus not to pursue another lead agency.

b. Does the Commission wish to delay moving forward with implementing the new fixed routes and the necessary operational costs/capital investment necessary to implement them until the governance discussion is completed.

c. Does the Commission wish to review the current advisory committee structure and by-laws.

Mayor Smith stated there was uncertainty on how HTAC was originally created and he would recommend drafting a resolution that would outline the membership of HTAC. If they are going to advise the commission, it should be a city appointed advisory board.

Commissioner Haladay asked what if another group decides to advise the commission on the transit system, how they would differ from HTAC. Attorney Jodoin stated he does not know the answer. He recommended if the commission wants a recommendation on the plan and the other transit issues, it should be a formal city appointment advisory board.

The commission concurred to formalize the HTAC committee through a resolution. Commissioner Noonan asked if this would be problematic with the current human rights complaint. Attorney Jodoin noted that is one of the issues raised in the complaint. He does not believe the commission should withhold any action on adopting a resolution.

Public Works Director Camp gave the history of HTAC and noted their by-laws changed in 2014.

Commissioner Haladay stated the creation of an advisory committee would replace current HTAC for the purpose of making recommendation on transit issues. Attorney Jodoin concurred. If there is another group, they could always appear before the commission to present their recommendations.

Commissioner Haladay commented this seems to be the best time to consider the creation of an advisory committee. Another option would be the commission would have no advisory committee; it would need to be made clear the commission is not obligated to accept the recommendations.

There was commission concurrence to bring forward a resolution that would create the official advisory board.

2. TransAde Funding- The City of Helena currently receives approximately \$50,000 annually in TransAde funding. This funding has historically been used to fund operations within the Transit System. A change in state law now allows for any agency to request these funds in the same manner as the capital equipment requests. The ranking of these requests is to be completed by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). There is very little time for agency requests and for prioritization of these requests. The TAC is reviewing submitted requests on February 1st and hopes to reach a decision on February 2nd. Staff believes the Commission will need to approve or make changes to these rankings as the lead agency.

a. Does the Commission have any concerns about reprioritizing new program requests (taxi service, north valley service) before completing the priorities of the Transit Development Plan. -

b. Does the Commission have any direction to provide to staff or the Transit Advisory Committee on prioritizing new program requests.

Commissioner Haladay stated if a recommendation is brought forward, it needs to include how does it fit into the commissions priority of a 2nd fixed route and a recommendation on how to back fill the \$50,000.

Commissioner Ellison stated he is in complete agreement with Commissioner Haladay's comments. HTAC's first priority was the second fixed route and he wants to hear their rationale if there is a change in the priorities.

c. Does the Commission want to invite the Transit Advisory Committee to explain their recommendations for TransAde at the February 3rd administrative meeting.

There was commission consensus to invite HTAC to the February 3rd administrative meeting.

Commissioner Farris-Olsen asked if the city has approached any of the businesses to sponsor a bus stop. Manager Alles stated staff has not approached any of the businesses; however, the plan is to contact the various businesses once the decision is made to move forward with the second fixed route.

Mayor Smith noted the city has contacted a number of businesses to partner with ridership and financial assistance. The businesses that have been contacted have all had specific needs for a bus route.

Assistant Public Works Director Hauck noted staff will pursue all funding options to construct the 43-ADA compliant bus stops. There are a number of grants that staff will also look at.

Commissioner Farris-Olsen noted St. Peter's should be interested in funding of one bus stop. Director Camp noted staff is waiting for the full report on the ADA compliant bus stops. Staff has done an on-site visit to each of the 43 proposed bus stops.

Mayor Smith asked Assistant Public Works Director Hauck to give an overview of the state sponsored bus route. Assistant Direction Hauck stated the State of Montana contracted with the city to run a west-side route for state employees, which lasted for two years and the state contributed \$25,000 per year.

Mayor Smith commented Head Start contributes approximately \$30,000 per year toward their Head Start program transportation.

Commissioner Noonan asked if staff knows of any priorities that are going to be in competition for the funding. Assistant Director Hauck noted he believes there will be some competition for these funds.

3. Operational Transit Funding – The transit operating budget has historically been funded with Federal/State grants, fare/advertising revenue, and general fund contributions. In FY16, Lewis and Clark County committed up to \$37,500 to assist with the implementation of the Transit Development Plan recommendations.

- a. Will the Commission consider keeping the general fund appropriation at \$375,000/yr. This amount would be necessary to pay for the increased operational costs associated with the second fixed route. The capital costs associated with the second fixed route will be discussed below.
- b. Will the County commit to continue funding in the amount of \$37,500/year. This amount would be necessary to pay for the increased operational costs associated with the second fixed route. The capital costs associated with the second fixed route will be discussed below.

Commissioner Haladay asked what the status of the county contribution is and is the city's \$37,500 being spent or put into reserves. Manager Alles noted the \$375,000, which includes the \$37,500, was transferred to the transit fund and it will either be spent or put into reserves. If it is not spent, it can be reallocated for FY17. Commissioner Haladay asked if the \$75,000 is not spent, it would be carried forward for FY17. Manager Alles stated the 375,000 was transferred for FY16; the commission will have to decide the allocation for FY17; regardless if there is an ending fund balance.

Commissioner Noonan stated the city needs the two fixed routes; however, there may be other proposals that would prohibit the city from doing so. Not moving forward is not a reasonable recommendation. Manager Alles spoke on the history of HTAC and their previous recommendations.

Commissioner Haladay referred to the preliminary report and if the current fixed route is changed the bus stops would have to be brought up to ADA standards. Director Camp noted the current bus stops are grandfathered, unless the route is changed. Any new stops on the second fixed route would have to be ADA compliant.

Mayor Smith commented the ADA standards originally applied to structures; however, they are now required for transit. Director Camp concurred and noted these new regulations are hindering the implementation of the second fixed route.

Commissioner Haladay commented even the stops that are not going to be touched, they would have to be brought up to ADA standards. Should the city look at a phased in project and identify the stops that need immediate attention and work to upgrade all stops within the next two to three years.

Director Hauck noted staff will not know the impact of the bus stop improvements until other decisions are made. For example, is the city the lead agency and a 2nd fixed route will be implemented.

Commissioner Haladay stated the worst case scenario would be the current stops are going to have to be brought into ADA compliance and staff should begin working toward a phased in program. Assistant Director Hauck concurred and noted the report will identify what current stops needs to be brought up right away. There currently is \$71,000 budgeted for bus stop improvements.

Commissioner Ellison referenced the page 8 of the Regional Governance Model Analysis where it states 14 people were interviewed, he then asked if anyone from the city staff or commission were interviewed. Manager Alles and Mayor Smith were both interviewed.

Commissioner Ellison then referenced page 10 and noted there is an error in paragraph three, first sentence, it should read \$100,000 and not \$200,000. Assistant Director Hauck will pass the error along to the county.

Assistant Director Hauck will prepare the transit budget and will inform the commission on what is included and what is not. The commission always has the option to amend the budget during the regular budget process.

Mayor Smith summarized the commission is not proposing any change in governance, HTAC representative(s) should be prepared to speak on their recommendations at the February 3rd administrative meeting, and there is an initial plan on bringing the bus stops into ADA compliance.

- c. Will the Commission commit to utilizing TransAde grant funding to cover the current costs of operating our ADA para-transit operations. If \$50,000 is allocated to starting a new program, this \$50,000 will need to be added back to the current budget to maintain our federal ADA para-transit obligations or existing services will need to be scaled back.

4. Capital transit-funding – Capital funding is Transit has historically been funded with Federal/State grants, general fund contributions, or from budget savings. The FY14 actual ending reserve balance was \$356,671. A portion of this amount could be used to fund recommended improvements. The City also budgeted \$71,100 in FY16 for bus stop improvements. The City hired Recreation Accessibility Consultants to review all new bus stops along the proposed fixed routes. A final report will be received in Mary 2016. The preliminary cost estimate of \$800,000 for all 43 stops (approx. \$18,600 per stop) is beyond the current resources available in the Transit budget.

- a. Does the Commission want to begin with the necessary bust stop improvements relating to the new fixed route. According to the consultants, a bus stop must be made accessible before the bus can utilize the stop.
- b. Does the Commission wish to consider other funding sources to complete all stops.
- c. Does the Commission wish to consider incremental bus stop improvements within the current budget constraints and limit the number of stops to what we can afford.
- d. Does the Commission want to invite the Transit Advisory Committee to explain their recommendation for capital equipment purchases at the February 3rd administrative meeting.

5. Fares – The Commission passed a fare resolution last year that kept the bus fares at .85 cents per ride. The 2013 Transportation Development Plan stated that “an updated fare structure is an important element of the transition to expended fixed route service. The goal is to encourage use of the fixed route instead of the curb-to-curb. The curb-to-curb fare structure must follow the ADA requirement that ADA qualified riders pay no more than twice the adult fixed fare”.

- a. Would the Commission like to consider adjusting the current rate structure this fall. For example, Butte currently charges .60 cents for fixed routes and \$1.20 for ADA para-transit service. This rate structure is projected to be revenue neutral and would meet the goals outlined in the 2013 TDP.

Commissioner Noonan stated the city has gone a long time without raising fees and we should look at raising the rates.

Commissioner Ellison spoke in support of a rate increase and noted HTAC had also recommended an increase.

Commissioner Noonan stated he is not suggesting a specific amount; however, a smaller increase would be something he would consider.

Manager Alles noted the city of Helena's ridership is more para-transit than fixed route. The city has to implement some type of dynamic that would create more fixed route ridership and less para-transit.

Director Camp stated the goal was to have a maximum 30-minute bus ride; however the current system is someone can be on a bus for over one-hour.

Assistant Director Hauck offered to work with any commission member on a rate structure to bring forward for consideration. The rate does not have to be twice the amount of the fixed route rates.

6. Committee discussions

- a) Audit Committee, City-County Board of Health, L&C County Mental Health Advisory Committee, Montana League of Cities & Towns – Mayor Smith – No report given.
- b) Mayor Pro-Tem, Audit Committee, Helena Chamber of Commerce Liaison, Information Technology Committee, Transportation Coordinating Committee – Commissioner Ellison – No report given.
- c) ADA Compliance Committee, Audit Committee, City-County Parks Board , Civic Center Board – Commissioner Farris-Olsen reported he attended the Civic Center Board meeting.
- d) Board of Adjustment, City-County Administration Building (CCAB), Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Board, Transportation Coordinating Committee – Commissioner Haladay – No report given.
- e) Business Improvement District/Helena Parking Commission ,Montana Business Assistance Connection, Public Art Committee - Commissioner Noonan reported the BID/HPC continues to work on the Downtown Master Plan.
- f) Helena Citizens Council - HCC member Dick Sloan reported the HCC will have their organizational committee on Wednesday, January 27th. There will also be a couple of appointments and finalizing the relevancy committee's recommendations. HCC representatives attended five of the six listening meetings the school district held.

7. Review of agenda for January 25, 2016 – No discussion held.

8. Public Comment – None received.

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

10. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.