

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING

January 18, 2017– 4:00 p.m.

Room 326, City-County Building

316 N. Park Avenue, Helena

1. Call to order, introductions, opening comments – Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Commissioners Haladay and Noonan were present. Commissioners Ellison and Farris-Olsen were excused. Staff present was: City Manager Ron Alles; Executive Assistant Sarah Elkins; City Attorney Thomas Jodoin; Assistant City Attorney Iryna O'Connor; Police Chief Troy McGee; Fire Chief Mark Emert; Administrative Services Director Glenn Jorgenson; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen; Community Facilities Director Gery Carpenter; Public Works Director Randall Camp; City Engineer Ryan Leland; Parks & Recreation Director Amy Teegarden; Parks Superintendent Craig Marr; Parking Director Dave Hewitt and City Clerk Debbie Havens.

Others in attendance included: IR Reporter Al Knauber; HCC Representatives Gary Spaeth; BID/HPC Board members Al Roy and Kathleen Harrington.

2. January 4, 2017 Meeting Summary – The January 4, 2017 administrative meeting summary was approved as submitted.

3. Commission comments, questions –

Upcoming Appointment – Mayor Smith recommended the appointment of George Ballew to the Helena Housing Authority. Term will begin upon appointment and expire August 1, 2021.

Commissioner Noonan commented it has been great to see the Helena Transit bus at Carroll College.

Commissioner Haladay asked City Manager Alles to put the Downtown Master Plan update on a February administrative meeting agenda.

Commissioner Haladay noted the commission is getting a lot of email regarding Central School and asked if those comments could be made available to the public. Manager Alles and City Clerk Havens will do some research and let the commission know.

Commissioner Haladay stated at the last NMTAC meeting it was reported there will be training on Building Healthy Communities available in May and sponsored by the Department of Public Health & Human Services. It is a three-day training with all expenses paid. Commissioner Haladay asked Manager Alles and staff to look at putting together a “city team” of six to include staff, NMTAC member(s), and a representative from a non-profit. Manager Alles stated he will work with staff and NMTAC members to send a team to the training in Butte.

Engineer Leland stated he has attended and spoke at a few of these trainings and offered to work with those interested in attending.

4. City Manager’s Report – Manager Alles updated the commission on the following items:

1. The city crews will not be plowing the slush from the streets as it freezes at night and creates a concrete berm;
2. The TSEP hearing went well and the city’s application is currently ranked 3rd for \$750,000 for the Westside project;
3. Quiet Zone Funding - Manager Alles reported the City Commission first reviewed the Street Maintenance Fund Comprehensive Capital Improvement Program (CCIP) April, 2016. The CCIP covered FY2018-FY2022 and was the basis for the rate discussions that took place in August, 2016. The plan at that time included Airport Road (\$2,170,425) and Carter Drive (\$910,955). The Commission felt that these two projects should be funded with a special improvement district (SID) rather than with Street Maintenance Funds. It was discussed that other priority projects would be considered to take the place of these two projects.

It is important to note that the rate recommendation assumed that funds for these projects would be borrowed and that the rate would cover the required debt service. The rate increase didn’t raise enough revenue to pay for the projects with cash.

Therefore, it would be possible for the City Commission to fund the Quiet Zone with a loan payable from the Street Maintenance/Capital Fund and still be able to accomplish other priority projects. The bid award amount was \$574,925.10 for the base bid and alternate #1. Including a 10% contingency

of \$57,492.51, the potential loan amount could approach \$632,417.61. Other potential projects will be discussed with the Commission this spring as we move toward rate discussions this fall. There are other funding sources that could be used; including 440 Funds or gas tax funds.

Mayor Smith stated he would like Commissioner Ellison here for the discussion. Commissioner Haladay stated he would support using Street Maintenance funds and apply for the InterCap loan to fund the Quiet Zone. It is in the range the commission was looking at. Commissioner Noonan concurred.

Mayor Smith asked if there is any issue with timing regarding the different funding sources. Manager Alles stated no. Commissioner Haladay noted going through the InterCap loan funding the protested taxes would remain in the general fund.

Mayor Smith concurred to move forward as recommended by Commissioner Haladay.

5. Department Discussions:

City Attorney

Reimbursement Resolution for Cannon Street Sewer Projects – Manager Alles introduced the agenda item and explained the original offer the city offered was to put the repayment on the monthly water bills. However, staff is now recommending the reimbursement be repaid through the property owner's property tax bill.

It is staff recommendation to allow this particular individual to reimburse the city through his water bill.

City Attorney Jodoin referred to the two different resolutions and City of Helena Wastewater Infrastructure Reimbursement Agreements. He noted that one set has the repayment through the water bill and the other is through property tax assessment. He asked the commission what they would like brought forward.

Mayor Smith asked how the city will assess this particular property through the water bill and then all future through property tax. Manager Alles stated a separate resolution would be brought forward for the property located at 2215 Cannon Street.

Commissioner Noonan stated most people have their tax bills wrapped in their mortgage payment and it would seem easier and the best option to put the costs on the property tax. The property owners would pay a semi-annual payment versus the monthly payment on the water bills.

Commissioner Haladay stated some people who used the renewable energy loan program had issues with the city having the 1st lien on the loan and would not sign off for them to use the program. He then asked would the recommendation to put the reimbursement costs on the property tax create a similar situation. Attorney Jodoin stated with it being on the property tax, it would be a part of their property taxes. Commissioner Haladay again stated some banks had concerns with the city being the first lien holder through the renewable energy program. Attorney Jodoin stated he was not aware of the issues with the banks, Community Development Director Haugen noted it wasn't that the bank would not sign off on the program, it was the internal authority on who signed the agreement.

Mayor Smith concurred the property tax option is the best.

Consensus direction to Manager – Prepare the resolution for the property at 2215 Cannon with the reimbursement through the property owner's normal monthly water and wastewater bill. Going forward the reimbursement resolution(s) would include the property tax language.

Public Works

Preliminary Discussion on Transportation Alternatives Projects –

Manager Alles noted the ADA project downtown was funded through a Transportation Alternatives Grant; the application for new projects is due in March and staff has listed some identified projects for consideration. Engineer Leland reviewed the following projects that staff has identified as Transportation Alternatives projects:

1. Benton Avenue Trail (as submitted two rounds) - \$992,294.00 (This projects has ranked one spot out of the funded projects both years)
 - a. Railroad crossing on the east side - \$15,000
 - b. Possible crossing arms on both sides - \$64,000 to \$100,000 for both
2. City wide Pedestrian Crossing Improvement (crossing improvements and Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB's))

- a. Henderson Street Crossing – Interim until discussion of pedestrian bridge concluded - \$25,000 per LRTP (LRTP SPOT – 27 option 2)
- b. Highland Street and Montana Avenue Crossing - \$50,000 - \$175,000 (Commission designated crossing)
- c. Granite Avenue and Euclid Avenue Crossing - \$58,000 to \$103,000 per LRTP (LRTP-PED-5)
- d. Lyndale Avenue and Warren Street Crossing - \$50,000 to \$90,000 per LRTP (LRTP PED-15)
- e. Broadway Street and Colonial Avenue - \$25,000
- f. Helena Avenue and 14th Street - \$25,000 to \$41,000 per LRTP (LRTP PED-7)
- g. Last Chance gulch and YMCA- \$20,000 to \$33,000 per LRTP (LRTP PED-13)
3. T intersection at Fuller and Neill - \$145,000 to \$200,000 (LRTP SPOT-20)
4. Intersection improvements at Front and Neill - \$160,000 to \$210,000 (LRTP SPOT – 20 & portion of MSN-3)

Manager Alles referred the Commission to the memo from the Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council which outlined their recommendations for the FY18 budget.

Commissioner Haladay referred to projects 3 and 4 and asked if it is possible to swamp either one of these with project 2. Engineer Leland stated the projects can all be put together; the commission can maneuver the projects in the priority they would like.

Commissioner Noonan asked is the grant amount of \$200,000 typical. Engineer Leland stated there is no limit on grants; however, there usually is a 25% match requirement.

Commissioner Haladay asked what the timeline is in order to turn the application around. Manager Alles noted the application is due in March; therefore, the commission would need to make a decision on how the projects should be prioritized at one of the meetings in February. If there is another project the commission identifies, it could also be included.

Mayor Smith stated he likes the proposal for Benton Avenue.

Commissioner Haladay asked that this be put on an administrative meeting in February for further discussion and to invite NMTAC members to the meeting. At this time, he would stay with the projects identified by staff. If another project is identified, we should wait until next year to submit it.

Mayor Smith stated he is comfortable with staff recommendation. Manager Alles will place the TA projects on an administrative meeting agenda in February.

Parks and Recreation

Walking Mall Management Update – Parks & Recreation Director Teegarden stated due to emerging issues and questions, she was directed to facilitate a discussion among city departments and community stakeholders to identify roles, issues and concerns or questions regarding the Pedestrian Mall or "walking mall". The summary of these discussions were provided to the commission. The purpose was to ensure that ongoing and future management/maintenance activities are met and that policy direction is given to city staff.

In November, city staff and the city manager met to discuss several of the questions identified by staff. Clarification and agreement were made on the following:

1. Per existing ordinance, the City does not maintain the surface within 5 feet of buildings;
2. The Parks Department will continue to conduct maintenance that is "inherent" to the park and landscaping features of the walking mall. Specifically; garbage collection, irrigation, landscaping, and tree care;
3. Because the walking mall is essentially a "closed road", Public Works will be responsible for those items and infrastructure that are inherent to a street. Specifically, street surface infrastructure repair, and capital surface projects;
4. The Parks Department will continue to do snow removal and sweeping, however Public Works will provide funding to support a portion of a Parks FTE and will help fund a new sweeper machine, potentially through a MAKI Grant;

5. Staff recommends that the Pedestrian Mall Ordinance be revised to clarify private businesses responsibility for sidewalk care; management of food vendors and city department maintenance responsibilities.

Director Teegarden stated with the above items being agreed upon, there will be improved management and maintenance of the walking mall. Director Teegarden referred the commission to the "issue paper" that includes a summary of the discussions held between the city departments and stakeholders.

Commissioner Noonan asked that an electronic copy of the memo and issue paper be sent to him. He noted there is an upcoming joint meeting between the city and BID/HPC and suggested that a specific item from the "issue paper" be discussed at each of the quarterly meetings. He then asked if the landscaping on the gulch outside the walking mall is done by the parks department. Director Teegarden noted it should be the responsibility of the adjacent landowners; however, the parks department previously participated in a tree project. Parks staff has been in conversation with the property owners and BID. Commissioner Noonan stated if there are questions regarding the landscaping, it is unclear where the questions should be referred to. Director Teegarden concurred.

BID/HPC member Kathleen Harrington noted it has been great to work with Director Teegarden; she would like to see the updated "issue paper". The BID/HPC wants to partner with the city during this process. There has been some mis-communication on who is responsible for what and how to accomplish the projects.

BID/HPC member Al Roy thanked Manager Alles and Director Teegarden for starting this conversation. The stretch of the walking mall is going to be vital to the success of the Downtown Master Plan. It should not become a major block for improvements.

Mayor Smith noted the quarterly meetings will be a great place to continue this conversation.

Parks Superintendent Craig Marr stated there is confusion on whose responsibilities it is on many of the maintenance issues on the walking mall. It will be good to get good clarification on who is responsible.

Commissioner Noonan commented the walking mall is one of the safest and best places to walk during the winter season.

Manager Alles stated it is important to continue dialog between staff and BID/HPC. Staff will bring specific recommendations forward to the commission for consideration. There are many issues that have to be addressed.

Commissioner Haladay asked if there is an estimate to do a uniform replacement of all the paving on the walking mall. Manager Alles stated a specific estimate has been obtained. There is a lot of issues under the surface on the walking mall.

Commissioner Haladay stated it would be helpful to know what the number was and to move forward. He asked could all the issues be addressed as the surface is replaced. Manager Alles noted staff can look at all options. Mayor Smith noted there was a plan developed to place traffic on the walking mall and use TIF funds for the project.

Director Teegarden stated the first accomplishment is a better understanding of what we are dealing with and identify community questions to bring forward for the community as a whole to answer.

6. Committee discussions

- a) Audit Committee, City-County Board of Health, L&C County Mental Health Advisory Committee, Montana League of Cities & Towns – No report given.
- b) Audit Committee, Helena Chamber of Commerce Liaison, Information Technology Committee, Transportation Coordinating Committee – No report given.
- c) ADA Compliance Committee, Audit Committee, City-County Parks Board, Civic Center Board – No report given.
- d) Board of Adjustment, City-County Administration Building (CCAB), Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Board, Transportation Coordinating Committee – No report given.

- e) Business Improvement District/Helena Parking Commission, Montana Business Assistance Connection, Public Art Committee – No report given.
 - f) Helena Citizens Council – Gary Spaeth reported the HCC has a working group that should become involved with the walking mall discussions. He reported Manager Alles presented an overview of the budget to the HCC and the response was very positive.
7. **Review of agenda for January 23, 2017** – No discussion held.
 8. **Public Comment** – No public comment received.
 9. **Commission discussion and direction to the City Manager** – No discussion held.
 10. **Adjourn** – Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.