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DATE: May 31st, 2022

TO: Helena City Commission

FROM: Helena Citizens' Council

RE: Helena Citizens' Council Review and Recommendations Regarding the Fiscal Year 2023 Preliminary City Budget

Summary of Review and Recommendations

Per our mandated responsibility outlined in Article IV of the Helena City Charter, the Helena Citizens' Council (HCC) is providing the Helena City Commission our review and recommendations regarding the fiscal year 2023 preliminary budget for the City of Helena. The Charter reads:

There shall be seven (7) Neighborhood Councils, collectively comprising a Helena Citizens' Council. Operating independently from the city commission or city officials, the Helena Citizens' Council shall review and recommend actions relating to the annual budget, and make recommendations relating to future development of the city.

The review and recommendations that follow were approved by a majority vote of the HCC members present on the May 31st, 2022 meeting.

The HCC commends the City Manager's efforts to present a balanced budget, or "budget reset," and establish funding priorities, including a contingency fund made up of excess funding. This approach establishes sound financial footing for the new, subsequent city manager, and allows a re-evaluation of city priorities in future strategic plans. It is the recommendation of the HCC that any "unforeseen emergency situations" that will be funded by this new contingency fund be documented and approved like any other funding request.

The HCC's recommendations for funding specific department requests and capital fund projects reflect the philosophical priorities for the Council. One budget philosophy that the HCC would recommend the City Commission consider is to ensure funding for emergency services and city infrastructure are prioritized in a budget limited by

constraints. Overall, budget and capital improvement requests from City departments should be funded by available based on the needs identified and discussed during the May budget meetings. ARPA and reserve funds should be utilized to fund long-term budget needs, and leveraged to maximize use.

The Helena Citizens' Council appreciate the opportunity to share our recommendations with the City Commission as they reflect the perspectives that are closely aligned with the citizens we represent.

Department Budget Recommendations by Fund Number

Fund #011 (General Government):

Helena Citizens' Council (011-1701)

The HCC accepts the proposed budget for our operations as shown on page 4 of the meeting materials for the May 4th Administrative Budget Meeting (inserted below). In future budget recommendations, and for any excess funds for fiscal year 2023, the HCC is expecting to increase spending for Other Contracts Services, particularly for outreach efforts like district forums and informative materials.

Recommendation(s):

1. In keeping with the City's stated commitment to sustainability and action on climate change, the HCC recommends continued support for the annual Sun Run, ICLEI membership, grant matching funds, and inter-local policy development funds.

Fund #012 (Police):

No increase in budget with mandated budget constraints. Got rid of a few things to address this but they were not public safety. HPD has made good use of available space for personnel, grant money, and use of technology. Technology like police officer tablets and a centralized-policy system are increasing the effectiveness and responsiveness of HPD. New K9-unit has been launched.

Staffing study underway would interact with city-wide staffing study, but would focus on the efficiency and use of police officers. As far as staffing there are six openings after two officers recently left; two applicants in the background process. One major obstacle is the Academy wait times and requirements (logistical).

Municipal Court

The Municipal Court will no longer be paying for the leasing of the Digiticket printers utilized by police officers dispensing citations. Instead, the printers will be purchased and lifecycle replacements will be addressed later.

Any second courtroom considerations are two to three years away and would most likely start with a part-time judge and grow to be a full-time position. The Municipal Court envisions this second court to focus on drug- and alcohol-related crimes.

Recommendation(s):

1. The HCC recommends providing funding for system upgrades for policy and call-time systems.
2. The HCC supports a new FTE for court's officer, fully sworn or reserved, which is mandated by state law when requested.
3. The HCC recommends providing funding for major equipment upgrades/replacement - firearm replacements and four (4) patrol cars.
4. The HCC recommends submitting the FARO laser mapping tool and drone requests to be funded by surplus or contingency funding.
5. The HCC recommends the City be prepared to accommodate additional training needs requested by the Helena Police Department to meet real-time needs throughout FY23.

Fund #013 (Fire):

The Fire Department has undergone extensive strategic planning efforts to prepare for the challenges outlined on page 38 of their recently reviewed Master Plan, the document informing this year's budget strategy. The HFD was involved with Montana Mutual Aid to assist communities in crisis when we have the ability.

Constraints are a challenge to work through to meet City Manager's balanced budget goal. Utilize the master plan to set priorities, objectives, and work plan items - capital planning. Alternate funding sources. Strategic plan to accommodate the additional station and its staff.

Some of HFD's 2022/3 goals include adding training and physicals, adding office space, and a training facility/space.

Capital requests include capital outlay station office space, hand held radios, type 3 wildland fire fighting machine, two (2) breathing air compressors, and fire prevention and education grants. Additionally, there are rollover projects that need to continue due to product delays:

- New aerial machine
- Command and battalion vehicle
- Thermal imaging cameras

Recommendation(s):

1. The HCC recommends the City Commission engage with the Helena Fire Department to expedite the development of a third fire station identified as a need in the Fire Department Master Plan.
2. The HCC supports the funding for equipment needs identified by the Helena Fire Department to meet the operational needs identified in the Master Plan and budget.

Fund #014 (Community Development)

There are three portions of the Community Development Department's budget: #014 for the general department budget to cover operations, Affordable Housing Trust (#229) is a fund available to serve as a gap financing resource for organizations in our community who are addressing affordable housing needs, Building (#504) for permitting and inspections. There are no capital funding requests for FY23.

The Community Development Department has been active and successful this past year. The Department has completed over 80 land use applications ranging from complicated subdivisions to individual housing modifications, all requiring public notice and feedback. The Department also staffs a number of local boards like the TIF, zoning commission, planning board. Everyday outreach to the community also is an ongoing task to answer questions from the community or work with groups on legislation.

Upcoming activities - updating zoning ordinance for recreational marijuana, signs, landscaping, etc. Implementation of growth policy and one of the first areas identified is railroad areas in Sixth Ward.

Recommendation(s):

1. The HCC supports the continued funding for a consultant for Neighborhood Planning, requested at \$50,000, requested to work with adjacent jurisdictions

standardizing infrastructure planning and regulations on how the City will address future annexation questions.

2. The HCC recommends more efforts like the Affordable Housing Fee Waiver for Fire Tower Apartments, requested at \$30,000, to increase the availability of affordable housing. This would refund costs associated with building permits and plan review.

Fund #017 (Parks and Recreation):

The Parks and Recreation Department is taking advantage and leveraging enterprise assets to increase revenue while also raising wages for seasonal employees. The department is also aiming to increase revenues from fees so cost recovery is 30% (currently below 20%).

Recommendation(s):

1. The HCC recommends the Parks and Recreation Department continue with the conversion of irrigated City Parks to groundwater wells (non-treated, non-potable water) while at the same time supporting continued water conservation and 'water wise' practices.
2. The HCC recommends the Parks and Recreation Department adopt the practice of water conservation and 'water wise' practices at all City properties, including increased use of xeriscaping with native and drought-tolerant landscaping e.g., as will be demonstrated at the Law and Justice Building's new xeriscape garden.
3. The HCC supports the temporary pay matrix increasing wages for seasonal employees.

Fund #211 (Civic Center):

The Civic Center is slowly returning to a normalized business plan as the COVID-19 pandemic, although not over, has become more manageable. There has been a slow but steady decrease in the reliance on general fund support to fund the Civic Center as revenues and expenditures trend to pre-pandemic numbers. What the Civic Center is lacking is the direction needed from the City Commission and the Civic Center Steering Committee established by Resolution No. 20634 in January 2020. A new advisory board is necessary to meet the need created by Resolution No. 20585 dissolving the Civic Center Advisory Board; to date there has been no further development in this area. This is a lingering issue that results in the Civic Center not meeting its full potential due to the seasonal use of the available spaces.

Recommendations:

1. The HCC supports leveraging of grant money with ARPA or Capital Funding to fund the \$1,200,000 (\$770K for auditorium and \$440K) HVAC replacement system. This would allow the Civic Center to safely hold events in summer months.
2. The HCC recommends a renewed effort to strategically plan the Civic Center's future.

Fund #212 (Community Facilities Department):

The Facilities Department has many great goals for FY23. One is to have an energy efficiency assessment on all City buildings. Another is to utilize the new maintenance management software to collect preventative maintenance data and energy consumption; this would allow staff to be more responsive and prioritize building needs.

The biggest priority is to address critical needs identified: boiler system replacement for Law and Justice Center, City shop, and main fire station. Replacement of roofs on Pillar Building and atrium conference room at L&J Center,, Civic Center barrel roof, City Shop roof, Grandstreet Theatre roof. Construction of City/County Building parking lot. The Community Facilities Department is addressing critical infrastructure needs with a mix of department excess reserve funding and match funding with Lewis and Clark County.

Projects funded by Facilities's excess reserves:

- Fire station one boiler replacement
- City shop boiler replacement
- City shop office unit heaters
- HVAC parks maintenance offices
- Fire station one kitchen cabinets and countertops in living quarters
- City shop floor grinding
- Parks Maintenance signage

Projects funded by equal contributions from City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County:

- Law and Justice Center improvements:
 - Atrium Roof replacement
 - Boiler replacement
 - Pillar roof replacement
 - Restroom upgrades
 - Southwest parking lot lighting

There are several projects that have been identified, but do not have identified funding sources. These include Civic Center barrel roof replacement, roof replacement for the Grandstreet Theatre, City shop roof replacement, Civic Center repair and repointing of

exterior wall, Civic Center drinking water line replacement, Neighborhood Center, leased to Rocky Mountain Development Council, asphalt parking lot replacement, and Wastewater Treatment plant. There are several other projects that fall into this category, but these are identified areas of importance for the HCC.

Recommendation(s):

1. Practice water conservation and 'water wise' practices at all City properties, including increased use of xeriscaping with native and drought-tolerant landscaping e.g., as will be demonstrated at the Law and Justice Building's new xeriscape garden.
2. The HCC recommends that projects with available funding be approved.
3. The HCC recommends the Facilities department continue with the focused effort to utilize maintenance management software to monitor facilities needs and prioritize future funding requests.
4. The HCC recommends utilizing ARPA funding, where appropriate, for projects with unidentified funding sources that includes the Grandstreet Theatre roofing replacement, Civic Center roof repair, Ten Mile Water Treatment plant repairs, and Civic Center drinking water lines. If ARPA funds are not appropriate for these funding requests, the HCC recommends prioritizing these areas listed above.

Fund #235 (Open Space District Maintenance):

Department is addressing the backlog of needed trail maintenance by triaging trails that were most in need and leaving trails in a fair state alone; backlog of trail maintenance to be completed FY23. Loss of grant funding is being addressed by raising assessment rates or trail maintenance fees.

Recommendation(s):

1. HCC would support increasing the trail maintenance fees to raise revenue to make up the shortfall of lost grant money that typically funds the cost of open space maintenance.
2. HCC encourages the department to diversify revenue generation for trail system maintenance to capture non-resident trail use. Explore a permit-fee system for bike / hike / running events; explore donation receipt through the 'Greater Helena Gives' annual campaign; partner with Prickly Pear Land Trust for more cost-share; partner with the Helena Area Community Foundation; request donations at key trailheads through a secure drop-box; explore opportunities through the Infrastructure Act revenue; etc.

3. Continue to support the cooperative relationship with Tri-County and support with funding and staff, where appropriate, the education/outreach effort. The budget should reflect city support of continued forest fuel mitigation. It should also reflect support for wildfire response equipment as appropriate for fire mitigation. All forest fuel reduction grants and matching grants should be pursued to minimize taxpayer costs. Support forest health efforts, realizing that a healthy forest saves taxpayer costs.

Fund #237 (Urban Forestry):

The Parks Department is considering raising assessment rates to close the budget gap for the Urban Forestry Division. This division is operating with sufficient reserves to meet and exceed the 90-day operating requirement.

Recommendation(s):

1. The HCC supports the reauthorization of the Urban Forestry district while maintaining previous fee assessment for homeowners.
2. The HCC supports the Urban Forestry Department's efforts to proactively replace our aging Ash Trees ahead of the Emerald Ash Borer threat.
3. The HCC supports the department's efforts to work with Growing Friends and other groups to increase the canopy cover in the 6th Ward.
4. The HCC encourages the department to allocate additional administrative support so foresters and arborists can concentrate on forestry and spend less time on administrative tasks.

Public Works Department, Fund #521 (Water)

We support the ongoing efforts of the Water Division to optimize its operations through energy, chemical, and other efficiencies and the realization of significant cost and energy savings. We also support the ongoing development of the Water Master Plan for Helena's future water supplies, sources, and needs as well as the investigation into groundwater supply wells to build increased resilience into Helena's water systems. We look forward to the recommendations of the City's water rates study later this year and would recommend using some of the increased revenue to support water conservation education and outreach, including funding for a City Water Conservation Specialist.

We support the upgrades of the TenMile Water Treatment Plant and associated infrastructure, including: funding for the Pre-Treatment plant, upgrades to the Red Mountain flume, and Tenmile diversion structures.

Recognizing the critical importance of water in this arid climate, outreach and education is essential to achieving the City's stated goal of reducing per capita water consumption to less than 100 gallons/person/day. We applaud the City's plans for additional outreach and education water conservation – for example the upcoming insert in the utility bill.

Recommendation(s):

1. The HCC recommends the continued promotion of water conservation at residential and commercial facilities.
2. The HCC recommends the establishment of 'water wise' best practice policies for City-owned properties and operations.
3. The HCC encourages collaboration with the Lewis & Clark County Water Quality Protection District on its plans to promote 'water wise' practices and water conservation.

Fund #522 & #532 (Public Works Department - Water/Sewer Service Lines):

Many of Helena's service lines are 50 years old. When these older pipes fail and pipes need to be replaced, the City of Helena can help homeowners who have paid (via utility bills) into the Water Service Line Fund (#522) or the Sewer Service Line Fund (#532).

Recommendation(s):

1. The HCC supports the continuation of this valuable homeowner loan program.

Fund #531 (Public Works Department - Wastewater):

We recognize the efforts of staff and management at the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) as they continue to look for opportunities to conserve energy and water resources. We look forward to seeing the recommendations of the Wastewater Master Plan, currently under development, about how to holistically address and best manage wastewater collection, sources, volume, and treatment to effectively plan for future scenarios.

Fund #541 (Public Works Department - Solid Waste-Residential)

The proposed FY23 budget for the Public Works Department (PWD) is primarily status quo, according to PWD Director Ryan Leland. The PWD is however asking for funding to increase the Sustainability Coordinator position from half-time to full-time, in large part because the City has had a very difficult time the past few years staffing the ½ time position. The other position increase is for a new Industrial Facilities Manager to address the aging and deteriorating conditions of the City's industrial facilities (water treatment plant, wastewater treatment plant, etc.).

In addition, the City Commission will soon consider adoption of a 'Strategic Plan for Waste Reduction' designed to achieve the City's waste reduction goal of 50% waste

reduction by 2040 (adopted in 2021). If the Strategic Plan is adopted, the City will embark on a robust community education campaign in the first phase of the reduction plan (2022-2024). Unfortunately, there is currently no line item in the PWD's current proposed FY2023 budget for community education efforts dedicated to waste reduction.

Recommendations:

1. The HCC supports funding to a) turn the current ½ time Sustainability Coordinator position into a full-time position and b) create a new Industrial Facilities Manager position.
2. Since community education is critical to ensuring that Helena's waste reduction goals are met, the HCC asks the City to add a minimum of \$40,000 to the PWD's FY23 budget for community education. Those funds could be used, for example, to develop targeted education programs to the various sectors of Helena as well as an information website, such as those funded by the City of Missoula and Flathead County. (For reference, please see [Missoula's Pathway to Zero Waste](#) and the Flathead's [WasteNot Project](#)).

Fund #563 (Golf Course):

Enterprise Fund with year round potential offering golf and golf simulators, frisbee golf, golf tournaments, cross country skiing and running, walking, dining, and special events. There are challenges for this enterprise, though, with significant debt services. Primary debt resulted from Muni's Bar and Grill construction and an observed loss of about \$500K due to COVID. Also struggling with staffing, but rising wages are slowly improving this situation.

One significant request from Bill Roberts is for a \$195,000 loan to purchase a new fleet of golf carts. This is an advantageous request, because the golf course has the opportunity to sell the current fleet of golf carts for an estimated \$100,000. This would be applied to the purchase of the new fleet of golf carts to offset costs. The time sensitive nature of this request necessitates approval for the FY23 budget.

Recommendation(s):

1. The HCC recommends the approval of the capital request for an InterCap Loan of \$195,000 for replacement fleet of golf carts.

General Government

Fund: 011

		FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Unaudited	FY 2022			Proposed FY 2023 Budget
					Adopted	Amended	Est Actuals	
Fund	011 General Government							
Dept	1701 Helena Citizens Council (HCC)							
Activity	411 Legislative Services							
Personnel Services								
	Salaries & Wages	9,218	13,260	18,524	19,959	19,959	20,617	20,964
	F.I.C.A. (Soc. Sec.)	572	822	1,021	1,238	1,238	1,258	1,300
	P.E.R.S. Retirement	790	1,150	1,626	1,771	1,771	1,764	1,881
	Health & Vision Insurance			2,125	3,150	3,150	47	3,243
	Workers Comp. Ins.	142	202	194	134	134	113	151
	Unemployment Ins.	41	33	47	52	52	52	57
	Dental Insurance			258	300	300	293	300
	F.I.C.A. Medicare	134	192	239	290	290	295	304
Total	Personnel Services	10,897	15,659	24,034	26,894	26,894	24,437	28,200
Supplies & Materials								
	Office Supplies & Equip	141	196	-	550	550	550	550
	Furniture & Fixtures-Misc		-	-	100	100	-	100
Total	Supplies & Materials	141	196	-	650	650	550	650
Purchased Services								
	IT&S Computer Maint/Spprt	2,128	1,983	1,956	2,237	2,237	2,237	2,436
	IT&S Telephone Service	-	-	-	-	-	-	948
	City-Co Bldg Postage Adm	72	104	117	128	128	128	128
	Postage	-	-	-	150	150	150	150
	Printing & Duplicating	1,460	239	-	250	250	250	250
	250 Printing & Duplicating							
	250							
	Advertising	421	-	-	100	100	100	100
	Required Training	-	-	-	100	100	100	100
	Other Contracted Services	673	45	55	902	1,902	1,000	1,229
	700 Neighborhood Outreach							
	300 Survey Monkey Subscription							
	650 Water Bill Insert Internal Charges							
	(421) Budget Adjustment							
	1,229							
Total	Purchased Services	4,754	2,671	2,128	4,867	4,867	3,965	5,341
Intra-City Charges								
	Copier Revolving Program	-	-	79	83	83	83	83
Total	Intra-City Charges	-	-	79	83	83	83	83
Internal Charges								
	Liability Insurance	368	346	370	529	529	529	600
	Fidelity Insurance	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Total	Internal Charges	376	354	378	537	537	537	608
Total	Helena Citizens Council (HCC)	16,168	18,880	26,619	33,031	33,031	29,572	34,882

HCC Submitted Budget